

(Bound by) Clandestine Addiction

Shiguresan

Summary:

They were drawn together, irrationally, irrevocably. In the face of fear, hate and pain they always felt the pull to return. For a bond unwittingly formed by Harry's fatal spell? Or something...else?

Notes:

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Chapter 1: Chapter One

Chapter Text

Co-written with my friend Yuki-Kiba-Chan. She is writing Draco and I am writing Harry, this remains even when the switch is more seamless than others.

I already have this story completed on the laptop so I will be uploading a few chapters every 3 days or so to this site until it's all here, so you can look forward to frequent updates :)

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[Chapter One]

It was a chilly, dark morning in Diagon Alley. The icy breath of winter's splintered branches reached over the street and the shop windows were clouded with the condensation of the young witches and wizards huddled inside away from the brisk

winds and lightly falling snow.

Three figures rushed through the street towards the wand shop that had become the replacement of (the still missing) Ollivander's devastated shop. The golden trio kept close together, wary as they approached. They were in need of a new wand for Ron, due to his most recent carelessness.

As they crossed the all-but deserted street, Harry slowed at the prickling sensation that rippled through his skin. His fingers felt hot, the hairs on the back of his neck stood up and he glanced briefly at the entrance to Knockturn Alley. The diminutive light highlighted a flash of white-gold, stopping him in his tracks.

Harry squinted. Through the dim alleyway, he caught a glimpse of Draco Malfoy, rigid with fear, his usual robes bunched up in another's threatening hands.

Malfoy cowered, pinned to the dirty wall by a taller, cloaked figure that Harry couldn't quite make out from this distance. As Ron and Hermione walked ahead of him into the shop and out of the cold, Harry informed them he would catch up. Without waiting for an answer, he continued to follow his senses along the dark and dreaded alley that Hagrid had warned him away from so many times before.

Malfoy and the figure disappeared from sight and Harry ran faster to catch up. Knockturn Alley beckoned him onward, the wispy furls of wintry mist curling in like summoning fingers and Harry was helpless but to follow. The shadows cast down from the high walls made him jump, and glance over his shoulder more than once as he pressed on.

Rounding the narrow corner into the dim, deserted street, the sounds of struggling feet against the cobblestone echoed from somewhere ahead. Harry's fingers clenched around his wand in the pocket of his jeans, and he cautiously approached.

"Take your filthy hands off me!" He heard Malfoy spit, closer than he thought.

"Draco, the Dark Lord needs you, he has chosen you to carry out—" The mysterious, cloaked man stopped suddenly in speech, the quiet sound of blundering footsteps ascending...

Harry quickened his already hasty steps, tripping over himself in his haste and found himself barrelling forwards – into the very people he was chasing. Two large hands thumped him hard, snapping Harry from the clumsy daze. He hurled himself back as he realised, he had unwittingly knocked the assailant away from Draco.

Draco snarled at Harry, who (to his surprise) stood before him in defence. He felt Harry's arm hovering before him, held there like some kind of protection. He quickly shoved him off. "What the devil are you doing, *Potter?!'*" The blond attempted a sneer, trying to hide his surprise as he stared coldly at his saviour, showing no gratitude to the classmate who had just saved him from a near-beating.

Then, suddenly, the older darker figure, vanished with a loud *crack!*

Draco clawed his own forearm. His cloak was torn, his arm obviously hurt from the way he had been held by the mysterious figure that had been shadowing him. He shoved Harry aside further and fled to the darker depths of Knockturn Alley, leaving Harry alone.

As he stumbled through the curved dark ruins of the alley, he only fled a little way before collapsing against the wall. Leaning against it, his arm now throbbed with sensational pain, a crimson colour staining his white shirt. He slid down the green, rotted walls until finally he curled into himself on the ground.

Harry's heart was still thudding madly in his chest, his breath rending his throat into ragged strips as he watched the stubbornly defiant Draco Malfoy stumble away. No sooner than the pale figure was swallowed by darkness, however, than a low cry of agony shuddered across the stone, throwing Harry from his bewilderment.

Leaping to his feet, he shuddered as the hairs on the back of his neck raised on end. He spun on his heel, pointing his wand to the alley behind him, all the while backing towards the darkness of the turning Malfoy had disappeared into. They were not alone in the alley. Had the stranger come back? Knowing the company Malfoy's father kept, Harry thought that any reinforcements would not be welcome...

Hermione had always insisted he was stubbornly brave – to a fault. *Perhaps she was right*, he thought as he backed away with desperation clawing at his chest like the stitch in his side. *Sod this; she's definitely right if I'm thinking of helping Draco Malfoy...*

With a final, cautious brandish of his wand, Harry turned and darted to the fallen blond he could see just ahead in the passage. The sparse light from the slice of wintry sky visible far above caught that head of flaxen hair and alabaster skin, calling him forward like a beacon.

Draco's eyes widened until they hurt and even his own rapid breaths became silent.

“Malfoy, what have you done?” Harry asked to the dimness, jerked from his reverie when that pale hand he had held laxly swiped his hands away angrily.

Draco's head felt a little hazy. The blood had made him feel faint; he was never very good at holding his own and made a point of over-dramatising everything. Sucking it up, he rolled up his sleeve and pulled out his wand. Bandages burst from the tip, wrapping around his marred arm as he watched them fasten tight around the wound.

His arm burned with unexplainable pain, each little movement was agony. He clenched his eyelids tightly shut, instinctively keeping his wand aloft as a means of protection, until he realised it was Harry Potter looking down at him with wide eyes.

Harry stooped at his school rival's side, struggling to decide his next move as he watched that body convulse in sincere pain. Steeling his resolve, his arm reached forward, snatching away Draco's hand that clawed desperately at his opposite forearm. But he was not prepared for what he saw. Not the sight of a furiously inflamed Dark Mark *bleeding* through the bandages.

Draco felt ashamed somehow that Harry was seeing him like this, in such wretched pain. Masking his agony, he glared at the darker-haired wizard. “Get lost, Potter,” he spat as Harry held out a hand to help him. Draco continued to push him away. He didn't want help; he was capable of looking after himself! He stumbled up, hearing a dreaded third set of footsteps somewhere close-by. “You should leave, Harry,” Draco commanded, as he tried to escape further into the darkness and away from Harry. But in stumbling away, he collided with that ominous third set of footsteps.

“Father!” Draco cried as Lucius Malfoy appeared, considering him a moment before glancing over his shoulder at Harry, whom seemed speechless. “Mr Potter, I advise you leave here at once – I have Draco now.”

It maybe the only time Lucius had ever been willing to advise Potter of his proximity to peril, of the danger that would arise if he were to stay in the alley much longer. It was knowing Harry had been concerned for his son, that incited the feeling that he almost owed Harry a warning that Lord Voldemort was coming, even if he didn't say it in so many words

Lucius took hold of Draco's arm and vanished. Just a single flash and a crack of apparition and Harry was alone in the cold black darkness. The wintry breeze rustled his hair as he remained on his knees, blinking in confusion at whirlwind of events that had yet to register in his mind. Finally, a frown creased his brow and he stumbled to

his feet, not pausing to brush the dirt from himself as he raced back through the alley the way he'd come.

Everything was happening so quickly. A searing agony swept over his scar, causing him to sway in his hastened steps, but Lucius Malfoy's words rang clearly with their foreboding message – Voldemort was nearby. Harry could feel it. The light, the hope of Diagon Alley lay ahead at the mouth of the tunnel-like darkness of Knockturn Alley and his fingers numbed from the cold around his wand as he burst into the world of light again.

Suddenly screams of panic shattered his momentary relief. Chaos exploded from the midst of his hope and crowds were rushing towards him. He cried out in pain as he was carelessly shoved aside, flying back against the wall. What was happening?

“Harry!”

He turned to see Ron and Hermione fighting their way through the stampede to reach him. Hermione's hand seized him roughly by the arm, her eyes wide with terror as she held out her other hand impatiently with Ron.

“Hurry!” She called back to him. The red-head bolted forwards, throwing himself at her hand. A whoosh of magic with the force of a gale threw them into the wall and Harry's scar burned with an intensity that made his skull feel like it would split open. He felt Hermione's arm and Ron's weight crushing him more than ever, and the menacing glimpse of masked, cloaked figures he knew all too well was all he caught before he felt a force seize his middle, hurtling him away from the madness.

Pain (something he knew all too well) split across his back as they landed on the doorstep of Number Twelve Grimmauld Place and he lost his footing, slipping back with a crash into the door. A wince distorted his features and a low hiss escaped his lips as he cracked his eyes open to see a flustered Ron and Hermione watching him with apprehension.

He knew what they were thinking.

He had put them all in danger by running off like that. He had been liberated from Hogwarts for the Christmas holidays for but a few days and he had already insisted they rush off recklessly. They should have been more careful, cast glamours on themselves or taken some Order members with them. And more importantly (and confusingly) he'd run off, had abandoned his friends in potential danger without thinking, all because his thoughts had been so suddenly consumed by Draco Malfoy.

He shook his head, signalling to his closest friends his lack of answer. There was nothing he could say. All he knew was that Draco had been in trouble and he had felt an unbearable urge to help him. Ever since he had seen him, heard his terror at the task he'd been handed at the Astronomy tower, he had possessed this need. Draco hadn't wanted to kill anyone, and Harry didn't want anyone to punish him for that.

But Voldemort had summoned him – and he was afraid! He hadn't wanted to go! Harry paused on the doorstep, hovering on the threshold even when Hermione and Ron had stepped inside. Draco was going to be punished, maybe tortured for failing, for refusing the Dark Lord. *And even more for letting me escape*, he realised, and his lungs heaved uselessly. His chest suddenly felt constricted. Draco Malfoy was in trouble, and Harry felt a pull towards nowhere in particular but onwards.

A soft yet impatient cough from Hermione finally drew him in the door and he passed her a sheepish glance before hurrying upstairs. She wanted answers, no doubt, but how could he explain to her... How could he offer the only ridiculous explanation he had?! Harry shut the door to the musky old Black's library loud enough to signal he didn't want to be followed just yet. There was a moment, where he paused at the bookshelf, before he launched himself at it, tearing a few from the shelves.

He had felt this pull, this indescribable *call* to Draco Malfoy ever since that battle in Moaning Myrtle's bathroom. Where he had cast *Sectumsempra*, where he had unwittingly... *Where I nearly killed him*, he thought. Even now, guilt surged in his throat like the foul taste of bile at the memory of Draco lying on the floor in a pool of his own blood – blood he, *Harry* had drawn. Ever since then, he had felt connected, had felt anxious for no reason – when Draco was in danger no doubt, felt...*everything*.

Flipping open the first of the large volumes, Harry chewed his lip distractedly as he thumbed his now only lightly aching scar. There was only one thing similar to this feeling, to this connection he felt with Draco; his connection to Voldemort!

Voldemort nearly killed me, but his spell backfired because of love, he thought. *And I nearly killed Draco*. Some connections must be born out of fatal spells, he supposed but he hadn't used the Killing Curse and Draco didn't love him, or anyone present at the time. So many unanswered questions, so many mysteries he was sure only Malfoy could clarify, and that was why he had to be found – answers. But also, because somehow, they'd forged this unexplainable bond and it was betraying Malfoy's fear all-too clearly...

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Figures draped in black stood in a ritualistic circle. Draco froze beside his father as the atmosphere changed – death was nearby.

Lord Voldemort had arrived.

The clouds above never seemed so dim, daylight didn't know how to reach them here. Since the return of *He Who Must Not Be Named*, Draco had noticed that there were less and less days of the childish brightness, the carefree trivialities he took pleasure in and it terrified him.

Lord Voldemort approached Draco (as if to savour the taste of his fear) and placed his long, spidery fingers on his pure, pale skin. Untainted by sin, something which Voldemort fervently desired to change with the evil ploys that burned inside his cruel, twisted mind. Those fingers seized young Draco by the collar, drawing him closer and closer until his vile lips were close upon his pale ear.

“You must get close to Harry Potter. I want you to bring him to me. I am depending on you...*Draco*,” The Dark Lord whispered. Lucius Malfoy stood, anxious. Seeing Lord Voldemort lay his hands on his son made him feel very uneasy. But he didn't dare voice that aloud. For all their sake's.

Draco shivered, unable to speak, yet he forced himself. “I can do it.” All the Death Eaters deemed to smile, in their own demented ways and Voldemort bowed his head slightly.

“I know you can.”

Lucius stepped forward. “But my Lord, he is just—”

“ENOUGH!” Lord Voldemort bellowed and silence fell over them once again. “Since your failure, *Lucius*, Draco has become far more valuable to me than you,” Voldemort sneered, turning away from him as he floated back over to Draco. “And besides, he has *yet* to earn that mark on his arm...”

Lucius knew better, Voldemort didn't care about Draco's welfare and if he died, it was just another necessary sacrifice in the process of achieving his goal. Draco was being used, being lead to believe that he would be some sort of hero if he succeeded. But what he and his peers did not realise was Draco didn't care about that anymore, had long since lost interest in the childish rivalry and jealousy of Harry Potter. He had discovered where that jealousy was coming from and that was only making things

more complicated for him. But he would go along with Lord Voldemort's plan, if only to please him for the time being. Until he found a way out...

Lucius braved speech once more. "Mr Potter knows that Draco is a Death Eater. Once he reveals him, once they see the mark at that school do you really think they are going to let Draco back?"

"You forget your *place*," Voldemort sneered once more, his final warning. He was fuming; the look in his snake-like eyes bore a sensational malice, informing Lucius that he would do better to stop talking.

He was right though, Harry knew Draco was a Death Eater. He had seen him up in the tower where Dumbledore had fallen and in the alley only moments before this gathering. This, however, did not concern Lord Voldemort, he was determined in his choices. "Do not disappoint me, Draco," he breathed, removing his spindly digits from Draco's shivering shoulder.

As if at once, the Death Eaters ascended into the darkness above, leaving Draco and his father alone in the murky, dilapidated place they had been summoned to.

Lucius flourished his wand over Draco's marked forearm – a glamour. The magic unfolded, enveloping the tattoo and concealing it as if it were never there. "That should do," He assured his son thoughtfully, dwelling on his impossible situation of being unable to save his only child.

* * *

It seemed that recent days carried a fog that no sunlight could penetrate. The empty void of Harry's Christmas holidays had drawn to a close without any of the things he thought he should possess. Sirius was dead, and the Weasleys' attempts to improve upon that were appreciated but unsuccessful. In truth, Harry had spent the majority of the time pursuing leads on a nearby Horcrux (staying at Grimmauld Place had helped more than he thought). But the successful retrieval of the *genuine* Locket of Slytherin did not appease his misery any.

"Harry?" Ron's voice awoke Harry from his pensiveness. Abandoning his trunk with the others, Harry followed after his suspicious friends, staring determinedly at Hedwig's cage.

"Harry, are you quite alright?" Hermione called back to him and Harry shrugged, taking the opportunity to glance up into the Slytherin's carriage. The pull was tugging

at his chest, calling him in, but he remained in place. He needed to speak to Malfoy...

“*Harry!*”

“Come on, Mate, think you need a sit down,” Ron suggested helpfully. Harry just nodded, but then paused on the threshold into the compartment Hermione had chosen (the last compartment before the Slytherin’s carriage).

“Take Hedwig for me?” Harry asked, handing his friends the cage, “I’m just going to hunt down the Food Trolley, think I might be peckish.”

“Pick me up a Liquorice Wand?” Ron asked, his words punctuated by a grumble from Hermione which sound painfully like *‘it’s always about food...’*

It startled Harry, how easy his friends took his pathetic lies. He was never good at lying, but maybe they were just all *too good* at accepting his need for secrets.

Stopping at the gateway to trouble, Harry struggled to make himself see reason. If he strolled in there right now, into a carriage full of Death Eater’s children, he was setting himself up for chaos. Raising his gaze however, he saw that the space was vacant but for a handful of students. *Most of them must have stayed at Hogwarts for Christmas*, he thought, and with his final obstacle eliminated, he marched forward before he could think better of it.

The call was unbearable. It made tingling shocks of electricity lace the hairs on his arms though the sharp pain in his chest was dissipating. *It’s because he’s right there*, he thought, approaching the blond who sat near the centre of the carriage, staring out through the steamed up windows, oblivious to his presence. *It’s because I’m getting closer to him*. The thought made his cheeks inflame and he swallowed his embarrassment. He was not this obsessed with Draco Malfoy! It was answers he wanted! It was a solution to this insane call that he had almost no choice but to answer.

Malfoy must have been near-immune to this *bond*, or at least insanely good at disguising his reactions for he did not so much as look up at him as he approached.

Draco gazed outside; fields flew past as blurs as the train chugged along. For a few moments, he felt blissfully lost in thoughtlessness. Staring into the endless beyond made him calm and somewhat safe from the horrors inside his head. But such bliss was not meant to last. All-too-soon his relaxation was shattered by a small twitching feeling in his neck and shoulders. A thought of Potter flashed instantly across his

mind before it calmed again. He glanced without moving his head to the carriage door to the rest of the train. He jolted his head sideways at the sensation that returned for a final pinch before forcing that feeling from the forefront of his mind and masked any sign of uncertainty with a curious frown, keeping his focus ahead of him.

Pansy grinned at him oddly, one of the few girls who had travelled home over the holidays. “Are you alright, Draco?” She asked. He took a while to reply, and when he did, all she was offered was a “Yeah” in a dullest tone. With that she got to her feet and headed in the opposite direction to the carriage Harry was standing in, evidently requiring use of the toilet.

Harry’s stomach clenched with odd sensations as he watched the slytherin girl disappear in direction of the toilet, and thankful that Draco was now seated alone, (as he had been a lot since the start of last term, oddly enough) Harry slid into the seat opposite Malfoy. The pressure of the bond dissipated into nothingness but for the hum of electricity between them that Malfoy seemed not to notice. In fact, he didn’t seem to notice anything at *all*...

After a moment of struggling to find his voice, Harry braved speech. “Malfoy, we need to talk.” Each of the other Slytherins in the carriage inclined their heads to look at him, eavesdropping! But at last, Draco – *Malfoy* acknowledged his presence.

Draco was alarmed by Harry’s voice, demanding a word from him and his attention fixed on him instantly – along with the rest of the eyes in the Slytherin carriage. Draco leapt to his feet and seizing Harry by the collar, he dragged him bodily into the narrow section that separated the carriages. Locking the doors that lead into the Gryffindor and Slytherin carriages, he drew down the blinds on either window.

Harry swallowed nervously. This was rather *close*.

Draco glared down at Harry in an attempt to disguise the feeling rising up in him at their close proximity. “Make this quick, Potter,” Draco sneered, suddenly recalling Lord Voldemort’s orders. ‘*Get close to him.*’ He shoved that thought away. He wasn’t sure what he was going to do about that situation with the Dark Lord, he hadn’t really had a chance to think about it, but one thing was for sure, he knew deep down, he didn’t want Potter killed.

Draco gazed down at Harry, his eyes appeared cold, and his hair had seemed paler than it had ever been before. He slammed his left hand on the wooden carriage wall and peered over Harry, shadowing him like a Dementor, *waiting* for some sort of reaction...

Harry swallowed hard, thankful that Draco had taken his hand away from his collar, the brief contact had sent a furious sensation of static surging down his body – from such a brief, unintentional touch to his neck. He twisted his head to the side unconsciously as he recalled the bizarre experience. How ridiculous, that he should be reduced to shudders when Draco was not even *phased*! That indignant, self-pitying realisation reminded him of his purpose, and he focused his gaze on the drawn blind.

“I saw you in the tower,” he stated lamely, and although he knew the statement was likely to unnerve the Slytherin. The blond remained still. Harry cleared his throat, swearing that those storm grey eyes were burning into his turned cheek. “You failed your ‘*mission*’ right?”

Draco lowered his head, his white-blond strands brushing against Harry’s nose. He felt a rush of anger boil within him. Harry was right, he had ‘failed’ his mission, his *father* and that made him feel weak, *pathetic* and only continued to frustrate him further. Frustration that automatically saw a target in Potter.

“Prove it, Potter,” Draco glared. “No one at Hogwarts will believe anything you say. Whatever mission it was you think I failed, you have no way of proving it.” Draco looked aside; realising people were gaining closer on them at seeing the silhouettes of students gathering from each side.

“And as for the incident in the alley, *you* can believe and think you saw whatever you want.” Draco slammed the door leading to Slytherin open, leaving a flustered Harry to himself once more and returned to his seat with a rather disgusted look on his face. His dark mark was pulsating beneath the spell which had concealed it menacingly and he struggled to hide the pain.

Harry winced at the sound of the door slamming against the compartment and rushed after Malfoy. This was going completely wrong. A frown creased his brow and his voice strengthened as he seized the *marked* forearm and yanked the blond back to him. “I was in the tower, Malfoy,” he hissed for Malfoy’s ears only, “*Hidden* but present nonetheless so drop the denial rubbish because I saw it all.”

Fury was creeping across Draco’s face and Harry *felt* that anger, as if it were not his own. The same way he felt Voldemort’s anger. So he pressed on. “You were ordered to kill Dumbledore or *He* would kill you? But you didn’t kill him – you can interpret that as an insult but I believe it brave. The kind of bravery I never thought you of all people possessed...” He shook his head as he felt it cloud with the perplexing haze Malfoy’s stare incited, and his voice lowered even more.

“That wasn’t what I came here to say,” He clarified, “Back in the alley... Voldemort was summoning you and you didn’t want to go – you were afraid! Your father had to *force* you to go!” His words were but a desperate hiss once more and he watched with trepidation as Malfoy’s face flushed with fury, the arm under Harry’s grasp tensing as if to strike him.

“That wasn’t what I came to say either,” Harry rushed on, realising how ridiculous this may sound, but it seemed that Malfoy had reached his limit for his pathetic ramblings, for he snatched his arm from Harry’s grasp and drew back with a sneer.

“What?!” Draco snarled. He felt the blood inside him boil to the point of explosion. It infuriated him to think Potter could see inside his head this way. He hated that Harry Potter of all people had seen him act so weak, so feeble and unable to carry out the orders he had accepted. Even if Potter didn’t see it as a weakness, Draco couldn’t help but let his own thoughts of how pathetic he must have seemed that night in the Tower consume him.

That anger inside Draco built up once more, to impossible heights and he shoved Harry off, throwing him forcefully backwards into the compartment door. Harry crashed hard against it, causing the eavesdropping students to jump as it rattled.

Draco slammed open the opposite door and returned to his seat, fuming with un-vented rage. The close contact with Harry made him feel somewhat wobbly, but he could hardly admit such a thing...

Pansy glanced at him briefly (having long since returned from the toilet). Even if Potter was unaware, she could see clearly the confusion and pain in Draco eyes, she could see it as he drifted to a distance place, no matter how much he denied it. She didn’t dare say anything to him about it.

Draco sat rigid in his chair for the rest of the ride to Hogwarts, trying somehow to comprehend how he was going to deal with the task the Dark Lord had set him and Potter’s determination to be involved in it all. His mind was on constant alert, tossed to-and-fro with the tide of the pledge he had made. He did not want to fight.

~To Be Continued...

Chapter 2: Chapter Two

(Bound By) Clandestine Addiction

[Chapter Two]

Harry's pulse raced as he walked ahead of Ron and Hermione to the Great Hall. They had set out together but the call, the tug of Draco Malfoy's presence hurried him down towards the great doors, and everything he was about to say was playing out in his head as he stepped through them into the Great Hall. The misty January morning hung gloomily above from the enchanted ceiling. As ever, there was no sun.

Breakfast was already underway and the noise of the excited students greeting each other again after their Christmas break added to the low buzz that approaching Malfoy incited. *He's here, I can feel it*, he thought, flushing profusely when he realised his thoughts. A glimpse of platinum-blond hair was all he needed and his feet seemed to move before he had even registered the sight.

Breakfast and the 'welcome back' chaos provided enough cover that no one noticed he had even stepped into the hall, not even when he marched right up to the spot where Malfoy sat. He stood there for a moment, knowing the blond hadn't noticed him, and realised (with dread) that he had forgotten every single thing he had thought to say. His mind had gone blank, as vacant as Malfoy's expression as he poked uselessly at the egg on his plate with evidently no intention of eating it whatsoever.

From the place that had taken at the Gryffindor table, Hermione and Ron glanced over at Harry, who had wandered away again instead of joining them. He kept doing that.

"Something feels wrong," Hermione suggested warily, watching Ron, waiting for a more sober reaction as he shovelled down as much food as he could fit in down his throat.

"Hmm?" He murmured, struggling to be serious once he noticed Hermione's anxiety.

"Malfoy?" Harry said finally.

The said-boy stiffened, signaling he had heard, but did not turn to face him – although a good few of the other slytherins did. Sometimes they wondered if Harry liked hearing himself speak.

Harry thought for a moment, casting a glance down the table to ascertain that the closest Slytherin was a good few spaces away and they had little chance of being overhead. Still, he drew his wand as inconspicuously as possible.

“*Muffliato!*” He breathed, and he knew to the rest of the student body, their following *conversation* (most likely *argument*) would be but a dull, incomprehensible hum. And surely enough, almost immediately after, the other slytherins turned away and back to their meal, unaware that the conversation had continued.

Suddenly, Draco spun in his seat to face him, whether at his whisper, impatience or at the feeling of a wand drawn to his back, Harry wasn’t sure, but he looked *less* than pleased.

Draco leapt to his feet swiftly, disgusted that Harry had raised his wand at him, that was until he realized why...

He tore out his own wand, pressing it to Harry’s neck in defense until it was denting his throat. He held it there for a few moments, staring coldly into green eyes, before lessening the pressure on Harry’s throat.

There was that electrical charge once again, buzzing through him. Exactly like on the train. He forced it from the forefront of his mind and shook his head from side-to-side, showing Harry a little weakness for the first time. Though it was possible Harry may not have even noticed, Draco had after all, become extremely adept at masking his pain and forging his mind into an almost impenetrable fortress. Perfecting Occlumency with the help of Professor Snape last year had proven profitable (and life-saving) numerous times already...

Draco felt so frustrated part of him actually wanted to *hit* Harry, though he knew better than to make a scene (greater than the one he was already creating) in the great hall where the staff and the hall-full of students would see. Every time Harry came in close contact, he felt something beneath his skin that was unearthly and bizarre...

It worried him.

“Didn’t you get enough on the train, *Potter?*” Draco snarled, unable (this time) to control his fury.

“I...I just needed answers,” Harry gasped lamely against the wand at his throat, his eyes trailing up the wood, then the arm holding it. That insane buzzing beneath his skin, it made the hairs on the back of his neck prickle and the storm raging in those

grey eyes signaled that Draco recalled Harry's inability to get to the point last time, meaning he wouldn't be given much of a chance to speak...

"Do you have a scar from the...the time in Moaning Myrtle's bathroom?" He asked at last, his voice lowered to a guilty whisper despite the fact that the spell was protecting their words from prying ears. When Draco looked confused, Harry reluctantly elaborated. "When I cast *Sectumsempra* on you...?"

Draco lowered his wand, somewhat stunned. He half-expected Harry to give him some lecture about the Dark Mark on his arm. He glanced left to right, then right to left again. Nope, No one could hear them.

"Why do you care?" Draco hissed.

The only physical scar that remained unhealed was a pale, opalescent mar of his otherwise perfect chest, directly over his heart; the source of that buzzing that sent tingles across his shoulders and neck every now and again, overflowing him with images of the great Harry Potter. He didn't know why, but lately it seemed, he thought of Harry more and more, sometimes without even realising its increase or significance.

Since that haunting day in the bathroom, it was as though he and Harry were still caught there sometimes, he, Draco lying in a pool of his own blood and Harry looking down over him with a stunned, cold expression that Draco foolishly mistook for hate. He had even been *treated* to a few nightmares in which that memory played over and over, until he awoke, screaming in overwhelming confusion. But as with everything else, it was locked away, forced out, all of it. He didn't want to be reminded of Harry, because somehow it hurt.

"I hurt you! I just...Well I didn't mean to!" Harry declared, that buzzing so intense he felt something swell up his suddenly constricted throat causing him to stutter. Why did this feel like his soul wanted to explode out his mouth? Why did he want to declare every misery, every pain to Draco so that he knew him better than anyone else?

"I've never regretted anything more in my life, Malfoy," he said quietly, noticing the way that those eyes, watching him from behind thick lashes had softened in a way he had never seen them. His heart skipped a beat. His fingers tingled. Draco never looked at anyone else like that (that he knew of) and he liked that far more than he should. "When I saw you on the floor I wished you'd hit me with the spell instead," he punctuated his self-loathing words with a small laugh, before mumbling (more to

himself than to Malfoy), “At least then it would all be over...”

As Potter spoke, Draco couldn't conceal the slight smile that escaped the side of his mouth. He'd never imagined Harry Potter would admit something like that, least of all to him, and face-to-face. Such a blatant display of vulnerability, of weaknesses to be abused. He brushed off his smile as Harry continued to speak.

“At least then it would all be over...”

Those words rang clear in Draco's ears, shattering his reverie. Draco groaned, he had never heard Potter sound so pathetic. The *Chosen One*, wasn't he meant to be the one who would teach you to fight for your life, not wish it was over? Though after a lifetime in Potter's position, it would be easy to see how he came to such drastic wishes.

Nevertheless, hearing him talking of his life so callously, it made Draco realize then just how strong the Dark Lord's thrall was becoming. How overpowering it was for Potter, the last hope of the *other side*. Which meant less time for him to figure out what he was going to do...

“Meet me in the Room of Requirement after fourth period, we will talk then,” Draco said suddenly, realising that people would soon begin to get suspicious if they stayed there silent any longer, just staring each other down. At least that's what people were seeing from the outside (it had been a miracle no one had noticed the scuffle with drawn wands earlier).

It was noble for Harry to open up to him, *Draco* like that and tell him how he had regretted nearly taking his life. He felt that meant he owed Harry somehow for that courage and falsely placed confidence. And with that, Draco turned away from him returning to the other slytherins at his table.

Harry's brow furrowed as he flourished his wand. “*Finite Incantatum!*” He murmured, ending the spell and wondering how on earth he would find the Room of Requirement if he didn't know what they would be using it for. Realising that now the spell was over people were beginning to stare at him, Harry moved back to the Gryffindor table, praying that the sheer fact Draco would be waiting in there for Harry to find him would permit him entry to the room.

Harry seized his cutlery and launched an immediate attack on his plate in order to avoid the questioning glares Hermione was passing him. Ron just glanced at him thoughtfully, before spearing another piece of bacon and concentrating on his food.

“Harry,” Hermione began tentatively and Harry visibly stiffened, he knew what that tone meant. It meant questions, he groaned mentally in anticipation. Though luckily, as the questions began, so did their first lesson, not that that meant they weren't going to continue this conversation.

As they all walked to potions class, she continued to persist – relentlessly! “*Harry!*”

Hermione paused for a moment. She could see that Harry didn't want to be questioned and how the signal for Potions class had given him some brief hope of distraction (as opposed to the usual dread). Discomfort was deeply engraved into his features, but as his best friend she had a right – no – she had an obligation to be sure he was okay “What’s going on?” She pried, and Ron continued for her...

“We thought things were weird when you returned with nothing from the trolley on the train, mate,” The red-head elaborated. Both of them stared at him, waiting for some kind of explanation, one they suspected either would not come or would be untrue.

“Harry, you don't think were honestly that stupid, do you?” Hermione asked, her face betraying signs of frustration. “We didn't question it then, but there’s only so much secrecy we can put up with. What is going on with Malfoy?”

It seemed that Harry (and indeed Ron) would be forever flabbergasted at how methodical she was. Harry sighed heavily, how could he have underestimated her wits after all this time? Ron maybe, but not Hermione...

Harry shifted nervously in his seat and pulled out his potions books, delaying the moment when he would have to answer. He could feel the weight of Hermione’s glare and Ron’s questioning gaze however, and sure enough when he was forced to finally face them, they were watching him expectantly.

“About that,” Harry began, watching his own fingers as they fiddled absently with his quill. “I just...it isn’t something I can...” He growled under his breath in frustration at the guilt rising in his throat. Why did he feel like he had to keep these things from them? “I can’t tell you.”

“But Harry,” Hermione started, flicking a loose ringlet of hair back behind her ear. “We want to help you; obviously it's bothering you... And I...” She paused for a brief moment, “I'm scared for you.” She felt a little cut off when Harry kept things from them, she hated it. “Ron, say something!” Hermione demanded, when Harry remained

silent.

Ron glanced over to Harry “Well I...” He began before looking back to Hermione. “It's Harry’s decision to tell us or not.”

She could never work out what it was but in all the years Hermione had known them, they had this silent way of communicating, Ron would always begin to assist in her challenging of Harry, then stop and opt out to support him following some secret signal she could not comprehend. With a frustrated huff, she reluctantly turned her attention to the task the Professor had set. The feelings this lesson were awkward, but Harry seem determined to stick to his guns. He wasn't going to spill for anyone.

* * *

“I can't handle this,” snarled Draco. He had become so bitter and distant from his surroundings this year, (even the slytherins) as if he had lost his place in his old world altogether. “Divination is a waste of my time,” He spat, slamming his chair across the room and storming out mid-lesson. The class stared in awe as he made his over dramatic exit. But he had other, more pressing things on his mind.

It never ceased to amaze him how the Room of Requirement always appeared different and he knew he was there early, but he was anxious and he couldn't sit in Divination class dwelling on what may or may not happen. The room was always equipped to a person’s needs, in this case, the room was draped in long black curtains and decorated with floating mirrors arranged all around him, midair, without a single blind spot. Every movement that was made would be on show for the other to see, they would both be completely exposed. The room altered to his needs, even unconscious ones it seemed as he only possessed a vague idea of why he would require the room to look this way.

Suddenly, the door cracked open, a low eerie screech of the door’s need for oil summoning Draco’s attention. A head appeared anxiously round the doorway, though the face (though expected) strangely did nothing to ease the tension of the room.

Harry’s eyes widened as he laid eyes on Draco, and felt his words catch in his throat. There was a moment, where he froze in the doorway, silhouetted against the orange light from the halls of the Seventh Floor. When common sense beckoned him in and he had completed the (purposefully drawn out) task of closing the door, Harry swallowed hard, steeling his wavering nerves as he approached the middle of the

room.

That same electricity clung to every particle of air that breezed past him. It made every hair on his body prickle in anticipation, it made his stomach lurch as if he were about to lose his lunch (or lack thereof). "I err...I was early so... I didn't think you'd be here." Harry's eyes scanned the dim room, warmed by its security, its *privacy*, yet unnerved by it at the same time. In the countless reflections of Malfoy he caught the briefest flicker of anxiety, before the feeling swelled up inside Harry like water in an air-tight room.

Draco was apprehensive of what Harry might think of the room. The room reflected what Draco felt he required, even if he were not aware of it consciously. A small smirk crept across Harry's lips as he stopped a few feet from the real Malfoy, knowing that if they were to get too close, if they were to touch...

There's no way I can concentrate and say what I still haven't told him about the bond, if he touches me, he thought, almost disappointedly. His face flushed at that. What was *wrong* with him? *Wanting* to be touched by Draco Malfoy? Ditching class to come see him early, feeling excited at seeing him! Harry shook his head. Everything was happening lightning fast and he couldn't make sense of it. It was like falling prey to a furious tide and being swallowed in the tempest. Everything with Draco was so fast and reckless, so unexpected. They had been since that day in the bathroom.

Emerald eyes, glistening with the sparse (far too intimate) light, tore away from the ethereal reflections that seemed to glow with an otherworldly radiance and came to rest upon the true Malfoy. Their eyes locked for a fleeting moment. Harry's heart sped up to a frantic dance, those tingles tormenting his fingers and toes and the hair at the back of his head. It happened so quickly yet so subtly, that he was completely confused when Draco averted his gaze, avoiding eye contact with an awkward colouring to his cheeks. Was Draco embarrassed about looking at him?

Draco felt his insides jerk at Harry's image reflected in the mirror. At first he'd thought he was mistaken, surely Harry would have no reason to arrive early, and looking so...awkward? Draco's gaze met Harry's almost instantly. He flinched. There was that feeling again, that pull, that electricity, that heartache. He glanced away quickly.

For some reason, maintaining direct eye-contact with Harry fuelled that buzz and he wasn't willing to let it accelerate any further out of his control. He couldn't, he didn't *want* to, but that feeling had already consumed him, it was seeping through every muscle and every vein, weaving through into the weakest part of him, the organ

that pounded away between his ribs and his lungs.

Draco knew full well Harry could not help but see that weakness now. He was exposed and unable to fit his mask back in place. How could the room believe he wanted this? His eyebrows indented inwards as he spoke, trying not to choke on his uncertain words. “I asked you to come here, because I... I feel I owe it to you – to tell you...”

He paused, Harry was silent. Draco groaned, that silence was tormenting him. He placed his index finger in his shirt collar loosening his tie from where it had been restricting his already irregular breathing. The pressure was squeezing his frantic heart harder, *harder* and a single bead of sweat had formed upon his pale brow.

“Lord... *Voldemort* is coming for you soon,” Draco stuttered as he lost control of his words and his fear heightened. “He wants me to assist him – he wants me to...to deceive you and bring you to him and...and I simply...” Draco darted towards Harry and slamming him back against one of the mirrors with a sudden rush of fury, causing it to crack behind him.

There was something cold inside his eyes. Fear. Unadulterated fear.

“You have to *stay away from me!*” He shouted, feeling that electricity that Harry had felt so strongly overwhelm him. He drew back abruptly, huffing under his breath as he turned away. His blond hair hung into his eyes as they fixed determinedly to the floor; he could not tear them away, he could not face Potter...

Harry’s eyes were wide with shock. A hand extended, and without thinking, without processing his movements, he brought it to rest over Malfoy’s heart. The reaction was immediate. He felt Malfoy freeze beneath his fingertips, even his chest fell still from lack of breathing. The blond’s head whipped back to him so fast it made Harry flinch, yet his hand remained, bonded to the boy’s frantically pounding heart.

Their eyes met and static charged through his fingers where they touched. Harry gasped and he swore he saw Draco’s body jolt with the intensity of it. There was a force between them, a magic coursing through their surging blood that neither could comprehend. Harry felt his cheeks colour, but did not budge. By Merlin, why was he standing there with his palm pressed over Draco’s – *Malfoy’s* chest?!

“This is the only scar that remained?” Harry breathed, his voice all-but lost to the frantic throbbing of blood in his ears – *Draco’s* blood. “The one over your heart – the one that...almost killed you?” His voice was tense, apprehensive, as was his body,

right down to the fingertips that remained trembling over Draco's chest. *Why am I doing this?*

Draco remained silent, evidently with shock, but his eyes finally dropped from Harry's, and fixed on the hand resting over his heart.

"That scar it's...it's like *mine*—" Harry gestured to his forehead with his free hand, "-But not." He watched as (even with his gaze fixed on that aforementioned hand) a frown creased Draco's perfect brow. Harry scoffed mentally. He did *not* just think *Draco Malfoy* was perfect...

"When I...when I cast the...the *spell*," Harry stammered, "I nearly killed you and I..." He growled under his breath at his inability to find his words with Draco's electricity pricking at every pore of his flesh. "I've read up on it – every day over the holidays – and I... *Merlin*, can't you feel the pull?" He gasped out, the sudden sureness, forcefulness and desperation to his voice failing to draw Draco's eyes back to his face. "There's a connection, a call and I...I *can't* stay away from you! I have no idea why but it's the *bond* we suddenly have – and have had since that day in the bathroom. Can you feel this right now—" He tipped his head to where the static brewed where they were joined, "-Or are you every inch as oblivious to it as you seem?"

"I feel nothing," Draco answered coldly, Harry's hand still resting upon his chest. He lied. He had felt something, some kind of gravity drawing him in, making him want to see Harry – no, *need* to see him, if only to stare for a moment. But he knew better, the more he saw of him, the more Voldemort's plan came to pass, and that was something Draco did not, *could not* allow.

Something buried within Draco awoke to that touch and he stood frozen for a few seconds as Harry's hand remained still against his breathless chest. So many thoughts assaulted him, it was like an onslaught from every thought this boy had ever had. It was as if he could see into Harry's head, into Harry's heart, feel and taste the fear that Harry himself had felt over this endless battle with Voldemort. All the people he had loved and lost...*everything*.

Harry had survived a lifetime of horrors, he now realised. The thought of seeing him in any more pain – Draco did *not* just think that. The ridge of his nose wrinkled with distaste and his eyebrows drew together. "Now get *off* of me," Draco hissed, batting Harry's hand aside. Despite this bond, Draco still felt exceedingly overwhelmed by what had happened in the bathroom that day. Even with Harry's apology, the lingering touch was too much...

Harry jerked back at the slap to his arm as if the swat had burned. He drew his wrist to his chest for a moment, mentally berating himself for being so brazen, so *ridiculous* by *touching* Malfoy, by following him around like a love-struck puppy. He stopped at that. This *wasn't* love! His heart gave a furious jolt, painful for the first time, as if he were being punished for Draco's refusal and he winced, pondering surrender. No good could come of this, he thought, but as if sensing his rejection, the pain he felt coursing through their bond, Draco peered at him from behind a curtain of blond locks, a glimmer of concern flickering in those eyes...

It was so brief the snitch would have struggled to catch it, but Harry saw it and his ridiculous heart skipped a beat, his stomach jerked as if caught with whiplash. A small hopeful smirk brewed at Harry's lips, that Draco's words were not all what they seemed.

His fingers curled in, as if trying to keep the feeling of Draco's heartbeat against it in as long as possible. *Definitely like a needy, lovesick puppy*, he scolded himself with disgust, before turning the full intensity of his gaze on Malfoy. "The bond isn't like what I have with Voldemort," Harry stated, watching Malfoy twitch at the name. "I'm not drawn to him...like I am...with you. I don't know what this is but...when I'm – *we're* apart it feels... I feel anxious, I feel *everything* you are feeling and I know you're afraid, Malfoy, I...I am too..."

He took the risk of admitting a little more than he should, making himself that much more vulnerable and he hoped the risk was worth it. He peered up at the taller boy apprehensively. What was it about him, about this confounded bond between them that made him want to be vulnerable, wanted to be stripped bare for those eyes, so that Draco – *Malfoy* understood everything?

Draco's feigned vacant expression didn't change much as he once again avoided eye contact with Harry. Then Harry mentioned Voldemort's name, causing Draco to sigh as he twitched.

"I feel everything you are feeling and I know you're afraid, Malfoy, I...I am too." Draco groaned as those words replayed in his head. "I am not afraid, Potter!" He denied childishly, he lied. He was terrified.

Draco knew he needed to stay even more cut-off from Potter than he had been in previous years. Draco's first years were full of resentment and jealousy of '*the great Harry Potter*,' whose strengths were rubbed in his face at every turn, but he didn't want Potter dead. People always misread him. Even the one person who should have seen through him, and that person *was* Harry.

Why couldn't he *see* he was trying to protect him? Probably because Draco still hadn't admitted that fact to himself. But Potter was supposed to be smarter than this.

As Draco looked up from under his white-blond strands, he examined Harry's face, adorned with a look he had never seen before. "You are pathetic, Potter," Draco spat, as if emphasising that kind of nasty, uncalled for comment onto Harry would be a means to keep him away. "Run along home to *Mummy*, why don't you?" He laughed grudgingly, punctuating the all-too convincing laughter with a sarcastic mutter of "*scared*" under his breath.

Draco finished with an unreal look of disgust overwhelming his face and he strode forwards, shoving passed Potter, making sure to bash him heavily in the side as he made his exit.

Draco rushed down the (thankfully empty) halls, he had to get away so that Potter would not see the expression that had suddenly consumed his face... It hurt (far more than he liked) to be so cruel to Potter, maybe more so because he had *felt* exactly how much it had hurt...

Harry wasn't sure how long he stood there, but by the time he tumbled back to reality, the torches had burnt out and the only source of light was the reflections from the mirrors. The memory of white-blond hair mixed with Draco's disgust...they brought with them a dark, hopelessness Harry hadn't felt in such a long time. Everything had been tense, had been hard ever since Sirius had died, then Dumbledore but this bizarre connection with Draco, it offered him something, something he had not realised the significance of until just now, when Draco had torn it away...

He had no real intention of making his way down to lunch. It was only just lunchtime and he had skipped his previous lesson – his early arrival would undoubtedly rouse suspicion. *And besides which, Draco is probably down there telling them a twisted tale of how pathetic the Chosen One is following him around making puppy-dog eyes*, he thought bitterly. *How could I be anymore fucked up?*

It was unconsciously decided that he would go to Gryffindor Tower until lunch was over; the main appeal being that it would be empty (forsaken for the great hall and lunch no doubt). So his suddenly weighted, reluctant feet brought him to the Fat Lady.

He was so tired, so shattered from everything that he wondered if anyone

would *ever* bother to stoop and pick up the pieces. *If anyone would even notice I'm broken*, he thought miserably, thinking of the scolding he was in for from Hermione once she discovered he had missed a lesson (which he knew she would). Another appeal of the empty common room – no need to hide his emotions from his all-too caring friends...

The portrait closed behind him and he stumbled miserably into the abandoned common room, looking to sink into one of the comfy chairs and sulk for a good while – except the common room wasn't empty. His stomach lurched. *Great exactly what I needed*, he thought, immediately scolding himself for his selfishness as he watched an intimately entwined Hermione and Ron tear themselves away from each other to the limits of the sofa they were stretched out on.

* * *

Draco rushed down stairway towards his dormitory. His blood was boiling, but this time, with anger for himself. Charging into his Slytherin quarters, a flourish of his wand whipped up a glass of freezing water that he threw over his head, cascading over his hair and dousing his heated neck, where it cleansed him of the sweat that had stifled him in the Room of Requirement.

The rivulets chased each other across his flustered flesh, cooling the red-hot madness that Harry's touch had stirred in him. He was like a madman staring at the full moon, baying at it like an animal – every time he touched it, looked upon it in all its glory he fell a little deeper into his insanity.

He shook his head almost immediately at that thought, the rivulets splattering the floor and his hair hung limply around his flushed features with the water's weight, effectively hiding his expression. He was under pressure. He was finding it hard to keep the Dark Lord's few attempts of intrusion into his own mind at bay. That was without the confusion incited by this pull to Harry, the all-but unbearable force that was becoming stronger every second...

* * *

"Harry?" Both Ron and Hermione chimed in panic as he walked in on them.

"Harry are you alright?" Hermione asked, adjusting her clothing swiftly as she

became very suddenly concerned by the pale misery poisoning Harry's (what seemed to be very teary) face. Though despite her having completely thrown aside the embarrassment of being caught snogging Ron's face off, Ron still shifted uncomfortably as he got to his feet.

"Yeah, mate you don't look too good." They both waited silently, passing each other a concerned grimace as their friend looked away from them – *again!*

"Harry, say something!" Hermione pressed him, her voice betraying her desperation. It was getting dark outside with the looming clouds of winter, dark in that suddenly very quiet room. The first day back after the holidays had never seemed so gloomy before.

Harry shrugged miserably, simply permitting Hermione to press her hand to his forehead. By the look on her face as she withdrew her hand, he knew she realised the sallow, paleness that had so suddenly soured his complexion was nothing to do with illness – at least not the medical kind. His self-loathing mind kept prodding him with the pitiful image of that love-sick puppy...

How could he be so foolish? Chasing around after someone – no – *Draco Bloody Malfoy* – without anything but malice in return? The call was unbearable. Perhaps since they had parted on bad terms and without sating the need that had built up ever since the incident that had forged this connection, it was getting worse? He was not sure; he had hoped to work that out with Malfoy but...*evidently*...

"I'm fine, Hermione," He lied, (and very badly), lowering himself into the cosy chair nearest the fire and furthest from an awkward, embarrassed Ron who was sitting in such a way that Harry knew he was trying to suppress an erection. Harry stared into the cold, empty grate. What was wrong with him? He should be happy that his friends were finally breaching the boundaries of the 'shy stage', and he was – it just...happened to come at a bad time.

A long, exhausted sigh shuddered past his lips. This – *whatever* it was between him and Draco – *Malfoy* – had changed so swiftly and violently that he had not had time to assess the foreign feelings. He hadn't felt this way for Cho, or Ginny, both very immature, inconsequential crushes that had burnt brightly before flickering out. This was no such diminishing light. This was an inferno, a feeling alight with a furious blaze that made his throat dry with thirst for Malfoy, that marred his skin beyond any possible repair. Everything that was *anything* in his life had dived over him as quick as lightning, this was no different, and he knew it would change him. He could feel it in his gut.

“It seems everything is always a secret with you lately, Harry,” Hermione huffed, promptly grabbing Ron by the hand and dragging him from the Gryffindor common room. “Come on, Ron,” she urged him. She had had enough of the lies; there was only so much she could take before needing to walk away completely, especially when she was absolutely certain he intended to keep her and Ron in the dark permanently.

“We will leave you to your thoughts,” She called back to him bitterly. Ron stumbled as Hermione pulled him through the portrait and glanced at Harry before being dragged away by his pushy girlfriend.

“Errr, see you later, Harry,” Ron murmured before they disappeared through the portrait hole. Harry could still hear their voices faintly though they were becoming more distant. A sigh tugged free of his lips and he relaxed into the chair exhaustedly, swearing he overheard mention of Luna and Ravenclaw, but it wasn't clear and he could not really find the strength to care.

* * *

Night was creeping in, ever closer. He had heard tell of a small party being held in the Ravenclaw quarters that evening to celebrate 'Loopy' Luna Lovegood making the house Quidditch team. From what he knew of her, she was probably the last person anyone imagined would end up in such a brutal game. Nevertheless, she was, and a seeker too, like both Harry and Draco were for their houses. Most of the students were to attend, even some of the slytherins talked about going (for the party more than the cause).

Draco, of course, didn't feel much like celebrating and didn't even look up as his *'friends'* disappeared to crash the party. He wasn't one to celebrate that kind of thing in any case but his mood had not risen to such frivolity for a long time. The slytherin quarters were all-but abandoned, deadly quiet, and that suited him just fine.

Draco approached his bed wearily before promptly collapsing on it. His arm was bleeding, the spell that his father had cast upon his arm had faded with the pain and his Dark Mark was blistering with crimson heat. He blanched at the site of his mangled arm and again, that urge arose in his core, for Harry.

His eyes shot open and he leapt up, expecting to find his bed with the green drapes drawn around him, shielding him from the darkness of his dormitory, but found

himself on a couch in the common room. What had just happened? A vision?! The dungeons were quiet, so silent he swore he could hear most of the sounds radiating from the Ravenclaw party. He anxiously rolled up his sleeve, somewhat relieved to find his arm void of blood, but it still burned in warning. Something was about to happen...

* * *

Harry jolted awake with a start. Sweat dripped down his face, his nose; soaking his hair and making his pyjama shirt stick to his damp back revoltingly. He gasped for breath, fingers clenched white-knuckled in the sheets. The slowly dying moon peeked in through the gap in the crimson curtains drawn around his bed. He would really have to learn to perfect the Dreamless Draught in potions if he ever hoped to escape these...visions.

The confrontation between Draco and himself earlier had brought this on, he was sure of it. Dreams of the blond writhing as if in agony, still under the throws of nightmarish slumber. A Dark Mark engraved into alabaster skin, glaring blood-red, haunting Harry, until maniacal laughter stretched across the chasm of his mind, building to a deafening echo that made him feel like his skull would crack open.

After a moment, after his breathing had calmed, Harry reached across the bedside cabinet and swigged a glass of water, sighing as it soothed his throat, raw from screaming. Just across from him, Ron offered him a silently sympathetic look, before rolling over to put his back to him.

That was the good thing about Ron; he knew when to make his support known silently and not to pry. Harry rubbed his eyes exhaustedly, before throwing himself back down to the pillows. He wished Voldemort and Draco didn't take up so much room in his head. If they both continued to plague him so vigorously he was sure he'd have no room left for other thoughts!

His arm fell over his eyes, shielding them from the rest of the world. That once soft, gentle hum Draco incited was now a blistering heat creeping through his every limb. It felt like full-bodied sunburn without the scarring. He was so tired of this endless pursuit. He'd been back at Hogwarts two days and already it felt like an eternity.

He missed the easy days, where Hogwarts was a release, a safe-haven. Now, with a desire to be beside the one boy who would stop at nothing to push him away, he was

missing the quiet solitude of Privet Drive, his prison, to which he would now never return...

He wanted to be somewhere where no one knew his name, where no one knew of Voldemort or the *Chosen One* – where Draco Malfoy was just a name and a hazy memory of a devil with an angel's face. He wanted away from his life, and every misery it brought. Harry harrumphed, pulling the duvet up over his head as he curled into himself. Shivers laced his spine, and his skin prickled with uncomfortable sensitivity. He *needed* Draco, and he loathed himself for it.

~To Be Continued...

Chapter 3: Chapter Three

(Bound By) Clandestine Addiction

[Chapter Three]

The noise from Ravenclaw had long since faded, but Draco hadn't slept, he couldn't. His mind was unable to break away from what the Dark Lord had asked of him. He hated that Potter had said it so openly and unashamedly...

"I'm afraid..."

Draco had never been more afraid of anything in all his life, but it seemed somewhat *more* terrifying hearing Potter say it. He had been trying not to think about it, struggling to push it from his mind, but it was all he thought about, every second. And with every moment that passed, Draco felt part of himself become even more numb and unsteady.

Dawn was peering through the enchanted windows of the dungeon dormitories and the sun's first rays gave a feeble glimmer before dying behind the clouds. Draco felt fatigued from the lack of sleep and awkwardly perplexed about the countless hounding thoughts inside his head.

His neck was burning from where he had been up all night in the same position and all the muscles in his body seemed stiff, his back aching. A shower or *something* was definitely needed to appease the pain before he attempted the day's events. Creeping over to his trunk, he pulled out a fresh set of clothing, shampoo and some other toiletries before he quietly made his way out of the dormitory. He preferred to use the bathroom when not many people were awake, there was less chance of having to wait (or of being leered at half-naked).

The castle was cold on his feet as he tiptoed up the spiral stairs. It seemed like they only carpeted the common rooms these days, and forgot the rest of the castle. Making his way into the boys' bathroom, the walls shone with a blue, ethereal glow, the flames of the flaring torches glaring like crystals. Briefly, he caught his pale reflection, like a ghost, in the mirror as he walked towards the shower and flung his uniform over the railing.

Giving the handle on the shower a twist, he was greeted with a sensation of warmth trickling down his well-toned back. It was nice to feel – the warmth, cascading across his gradually easing muscles, especially in the privacy of the cold room.

* * *

Harry struggled to fall back to sleep, but found it impossible, and so it was that the breaking dawn found him sitting cross-legged on his bed, staring at the magical map of his father's creation. All self-loathing thoughts that usually accompanied his *obsession* with this bond were pushed to the dark recesses of his confusing mind, as he scanned the Marauder's Map, his wand held aloft as a light. Finally catching the name he was searching for, a frown creased his brow. Draco wasn't in bed. That thought was confusing at first and then...

Draco isn't in bed, now the thought was somewhat...*exciting*!

He crawled from his bed, assessing that his dorm-mates were far into the realms of slumber as he stuck his wand and the map in his dressing-gown pocket and pulled his father's invisibility cloak over his head. His path down through the dormitory and the common room was slow, anxious and quiet, but as soon as he'd crept through the Fat Lady's portrait, his anticipation, the surge of excitement at obeying the call possessed him. The journey down the Grand Staircase was a blur, a chaos of flurried haste in the chase of the mark on the map – *Draco Malfoy*.

Suddenly, he skidded to a halt, holding his breath in an effort to silence the frantic rasping for air. He had nearly skidded into Draco entering the boy's bathroom – *invisible*! That was not a good idea, he knew Draco knew of the cloak (thanks to the incident on the train at the beginning of Sixth Year) but he didn't want to keep reminding him of something so precious and useful...

The bond was all-but *screaming* in his ears now, blood pounding furiously as he carefully slid into the bathroom through the closing door, barely missing being caught by it. The bond was sating itself slowly, this was what he needed. He would sit and watch Draco for a while and then leave, having satisfied their bizarre connection, and maybe even be able to catch another hour's sleep before students began to awake.

This, of course, would have been perfect, in theory, if he hadn't snapped back to reality just at the wrong moment. At a moment where Draco Malfoy stepped free from

his robes, alabaster skin all-but glowing in the early sunlight.

Harry swallowed hard, not for the first nor last time, as he lost himself in the vision of water exploding from the showerhead and cascading over Draco's – *Malfoy's* newly revealed flesh. Harry flushed, holding his breath insistently until it hurt. Draco couldn't hear him! He had to get out of here – but he could not tear himself away...

As the water trickled down Draco's body, trailing down over his delicious curves and slender waist, he felt his muscles finally relax for the first time since yesterday. He grabbed the floating soap and massaged it into his hands. Slowly, he pressed the soap into his skin, running his hands down his hips and around his well toned legs, over his limp member and back up along his belly to his chest. The soap eased the tension from his tender muscles, foaming over his pale skin in until the water rushed over the suds, washing away the filth he felt like he had carried for so long.

After lathering the shampoo into his drenched hair, he sighed heavily as the water continued to beat the ache, the worries from his body and envelop him in a hazy steam of mist. The windows and mirrors of the boys' bathroom were completely covered in a steamy fog of condensation as he finished up.

Harry could not stave off the gasp that wrenched from his confined throat, though luckily, Draco was too lost in the steam to hear him. The heat from the shower only added to the burning flush that corrupted his body. His hips squirmed, suddenly cramped inside his pyjama bottoms and then, he could not help himself, his hand snuck down, taking advantage of his invisibility by rubbing himself through his bottoms.

His head flew back, teeth gnawing his lip in an attempt at silence. *This is so wrong*, he thought, but that did not still his hand, which slid between the folds of his dressing-gown to reach his aching, scorching cock. A groan brewed in his throat but he refused it passage, his erection oozed liquid fire and he jerked it roughly, unable to tear his eyes from the pale body illuminated in the steam...

Draco twisted the handle on the shower to stop the water as he stepped out into the cool room and spelled himself dry. He forced his arms through the sleeves of his

school shirt. But as he pushed his legs into the tight elastic boxers that covered his genitals, his movements stopped abruptly. He thought for a moment he heard shuffling footsteps, he glanced behind his shoulder briefly, both left and right seeing nothing and continued. He pulled up his trousers, then fastened the green and white slytherin tie before smearing his hand against the mirror and wiping away the condensation so he could see his reflection. He glared for a few moments at *that* reflection, the pale, ghostly creature who Lord Voldemort was relying on. He forced that fleeting thought away, looking down at himself as he neaten up.

There was that noise again – *footsteps*.

His eyes snapped round to the empty bathroom, was he going mad? He finally grabbed his robe and pulled it on, cautious as the feeling of being watched continued, prickling up his spine. “Who's there?!” He shuddered. Raising his hand slowly, suspiciously, he waved it back and forth through the air before him.

Harry gasped, but simply because he had remained rigid in his place a good few feet away did not spare him from Draco's hearing, the blond's eyes widened and he stalked forwards – surging straight towards him. Harry reluctantly tugged his hand from his pants where it had snuck, and side-stepped Draco at just the right moment, so that the boy missed him. He watched as Draco stopped where he, Harry had been moments before, his head tilting, signalling his listening carefully.

Harry paused there a moment, awaiting the calming of his breath before circling Draco silently. Damp golden locks hung *far* too deliciously into those eyes that continued to scan the bathroom with suspicion. The bond was singing like a siren in his head, so overwhelming was the beauty of this call now, that Harry was beginning to find he *wanted* to give into the song and damn the consequences. He wanted this, wanted to answer the siren's call and he could crash into the rocks and drown in the sea, right now, he could care less.

Hesitantly he reached out, (though still under the cloak) his fingertips brushing those rebellious, flaxen locks from those eyes gently. Draco started at the touch at first, he noted, and Harry held his breath, before leaning forward a little and allowing the warmth of his hand through the cloak to brush down across the blond's cheek. This time Draco's lashes fluttered, and Harry felt the bond simmer back down to a low heat, as if momentarily satisfied. A small smile tugged at Harry's face, Draco could be beautiful when he was like this and a pleasing heat built in his stomach as the Slytherin leant into the touch a little.

Then, suddenly, the blond's arm shot out, diving right for where Harry's arm was.

Harry stifled a gasp, before leaping back out of Draco's reach – just in time. Draco faltered, missing him by inches. *Get out of here*, Harry's mind warned him, despite the bond's demand for him to remain.

Let him see you, let him touch you...

He doesn't want to touch me, Harry's rational mind argued. But whatever part of him he was arguing with did not seem to hear him (or even speak the same language).

You want him–

I don't! Harry screamed mentally, his common sense seizing him roughly and shaking him back into coherency as Draco shot towards him again. *Get out of here!* Draco would kill him if he found out he'd been spying on him – in the *shower* no less! He flushed at the memory.

Draco reached out again, but nothing, maybe it was just all in his imagination. After all, he had even been possessed by that vision last night, so it wouldn't really be a surprise if this was another result of everything going on in his head.

He sighed as he felt calm once again, ignorant to Harry's presence. He finally dried his hair out with the towel and tossed it carelessly to the floor, leaving it for Filch to tidy. Grabbing his toiletries, he paced outwards from the boys' bathroom, *just* missing contact with Harry, who was still hidden under that invisibility cloak.

Draco briefly felt the twinge of a presence as he walked out, though chose to move forward and ignore it. The footsteps, that odd moaning sound that had somehow played into his head and made him paranoid while taking that shower – he was sure they were real. Even though he was feeling slightly more relaxed, he couldn't rid himself of the mild tension that remained from being on edge for so long...

He cast his gaze back over the bathroom one last time as he stood on the threshold to the corridor.

Get a hold of you're self, Draco, he thought as he headed out into the halls, which were slowly filling with students as the time for breakfast drew closer and closer.

* * *

Hermione woke, flying bolt upright in a bed that was not her own. Thank Merlin for privacy spells. She settled as she came to her senses, her red-haired boyfriend lying

beside her snoring. A soft, doting sigh tumbled from her lips. They had tried to go all the way this time but Ron seemed to have lost his nerve half-way through. *There's always next time*, she thought with a small smile, patting down her hair as her gaze wandered to the bed beside theirs, Harry's – which was empty!

She leant over Ron and shook him roughly. "Wake up, Ron!" He merely rolled over with a grunt, mornings never were his strong point.

"Hmnnnnnn?" He groaned as Hermione shook him a second time.

"Ronald, wake up!" She instructed tersely, watching him ignore her to cuddle into his pillow. The girl sighed in frustration, before drawing in a sharp breath, grateful for the silencing charm around their bed. "RON!" she shouted, finally making him jump up in shock.

"What?" he mumbled, clutching his quilt.

"Harry is missing!" She hissed as Ron came around slowly from grogginess.

"He probably just went for a wander," Ron mumbled casually, not really awake enough to realize just how worried Hermione was.

"He is hiding something from us," she insisted quietly, "I just—" Both of their attention flew to the doorway as Harry returned to the room.

Harry stopped dead in his tracks, tucking his invisibility cloak carefully out of sight before Hermione could notice and attempting to banish the guilt from his face. It had been wrong to give in like that (to desires he had not even realised he possessed) to watch Draco at his most vulnerable. Even if the blond hadn't known he was there, it didn't appease his conscience in anyway. Before Hermione could open her mouth to reprimand him, he beat her to it...

"More nightmares," he grumbled (surprised at how convincing his partial lie sounded). "I couldn't get to sleep again after they woke me up so I went for a walk to err...clear my head."

Hermione sighed exhaustedly. "Well next time, Harry, leave a note, or *something*," she said, relieved and content in his response until she caught sight of the invisibility cloak poking out of his pocket

Ron laughed; it wasn't like he had taken off on a spontaneous vacation! "Hermione,

don't you think you're overreacting? Ron added, as she ignored him and enquired about the cloak.

“Why have you got that, Harry?” she asked, pointing to the cloak.

Harry's chest constricted considerably at those words. He pulled the cloak out, staring at it for a moment before sighing exasperatedly and throwing it into his trunk, kicking it shut furiously. “You don't deserve an answer for everything,” he spat, ripping his nightshirt from his body (regardless of Hermione's presence) and beginning to dress in his uniform. “I *said* I would do this alone – all of it. It was you two that involved yourselves in the curse of my life, if you are going to demand answers for everything I do then maybe you should rethink your offer to help me.”

What are you doing?! His mind screamed. What are you saying?! These are your friends, your family – your everything! Harry winced at that. They were all he had, but that was just it, he needed more, he needed something he could *never* have.

They have each other and I have no one, he thought, hating the way that resentment sounded, he wanted them to be happy but that was simply it. He didn't want to burden them with his troubles, didn't want to drag them into Horcrux hunts (even if he truly, could not do it without them). He wanted to know they would be safe, no matter what, and that he would not lose them, would not *kill* them just by existing...

Hermione sighed as Harry shouted, his anger slightly contagious. “Harry, I'm just worried about you and...” She paused, considering how she was to word her thoughts. “We do want to help you, but you are going to have to help us by giving us some details. If we don't know what's going on with you, how can we help you?” She finished with a definite, unarguable tone, her eyes not parting from Harry's distant gaze.

Ron nodded, generally tending to stay out of Hermione's pent up frustration with how ridiculous Harry was being, and Harry's raging outbursts which weren't that much better. He really didn't like seeing his two best friends argue.

“Maybe he's right, Hermione.” She glared at Ron sternly, but he still continued. “It's just...if Harry felt it was important enough that we needed to know, I'm sure he would tell us,” He added, as he too finally began to dress himself after finally climbing out of bed.

Hermione looked back over at Harry, her voice heightened, more high pitched than before. “Harry, we *love* you, I thought after all these years you would have known

that,” She gently reminded, feeling a little less furious and more concerned with each passing moment.

Harry bowed his head, guilt rising and leaving a bitter taste like bile in his throat. He sighed heavily, blinking back the tears pricking the backs of his eyes. Since when had he become such an emotional wreck? “You’re right,” he breathed, “Of course you’re right and if there is any one I owe the truth to its you two. But...I can’t give you an explanation right now and I don’t...I don’t *want* to...” With that he pulled on his trousers, and toed on a pair of shoes and socks before seizing his bag. “Come on let’s just – just get double potions over with.”

Hermione considered him a moment, before nodding slowly. If there was anything you could count on Hermione for more than quick-wit and sheer intelligence it was her unfathomable belief that school was the most important thing in *existence*!

Down in the cool, recesses of the dungeons, Harry winced as his tongue flicked across his lip, which was sore from his incessant chewing. The bitter-sweet tang of blood filled his mouth and he ducked his head, concentrating on something apparently interesting on the floor to keep his self-inflicted injury hidden, at least long enough for the bleeding to stop. He peered up cautiously from his place in the line to head into potions. As ever, one line formed on one side of the door, the other (short line) was formed by the few slytherins taking NEWT potions. And Draco was at the head of that line.

His skin was buzzing so intensely he swore he could *hear* it. His fingers were agitated, fiddling with the sleeves of his robes and running through his obsidian tresses (unconsciously imitating what the late James Potter had done whenever Lily Evans made an appearance). He coughed under his breath as he realised what he was doing, praying that his friends (and more importantly Malfoy) did not see him primping his hair! He mentally cringed.

Checking that Ron and Hermione were still locked in another of their spats, he flicked his eyes to the opposite side of the door, swearing that Malfoy’s head snapped back to face the front suspiciously. Had Malfoy been looking at him? Harry raised a brow, probably not; the blond hadn’t spared him a look the whole time they’d been standing there, waiting for Professor Slughorn to make his overdue appearance.

He understood now that far from sating his urges, watching Malfoy earlier in the shower had only frustrated him further – and worse alerted him to the existence of feelings he’d much prefer to vanish. His feelings were far from platonic, had been since *before* this bond, he now realised. Hate was so strong and resolute that it

lingered perilously close to a boundary line. A boundary that once crossed, could never be passed over again.

“So sorry for the delay everyone!” Slughorn’s gratingly cheerful voice shook him from his musings, just in time for him to realise he was staring at Malfoy and look away before anyone caught him. It seemed he was constantly finding himself gazing in the blond’s direction and that only increased the hurt that still lingered from Malfoy’s words. “*You are pathetic, Potter...*”

“Good day there, Harry,” Slughorn beamed at him, his friendliness still not dissipated (in fact it had simply *increased*) even with the pressure of a war he (Harry) was a large part of. Harry nodded with a small, forced smile. As Slughorn unlocked the door and shuffled inside, the line of students began rising from their seats on the floor or swinging their bags over their shoulders. Harry sighed heavily, his eyes still lowered thoughtfully to the ground.

Evidently not paying enough attention to where he was going, Harry jumped in surprise when his body collided with another’s. He winced in embarrassment at his clumsiness, but that was nothing compared to the horror, the sheer plummeting sensation in his stomach as he met those cool, grey eyes which inspected him with awkward evasion.

“Err, sorry,” Harry grumbled, scratching the back of his neck, again scuffing up his hair unwittingly. His only answer was a grunt and Harry caught his torn lip in an effort to stifle the exhausted sigh that struggled to escape him. He stood back from the door a little, gesturing for Draco – *Malfoy* damn it – to go through ahead of him. It was only when Draco’s eyes flared with horror that Harry realised the significance of his uncharacteristic chivalry (when it came to Malfoy in any case).

All eyes were glued to them in confusion. Harry felt panic surge in his veins and instinctually moved to head through the door, except Malfoy seemed to have the same idea, and they bumped into each other awkwardly and stood back. This time Malfoy looked a little flustered and offered for him to go through first.

Harry, rigid with fury at his own stupidity (and *knowing* Hermione was calculating this from her place in line behind him) did not move. He was paralysed with the charge that coursed through him as a result of their slight physical contact after being starved of it.

Yes, Harry, his mind supplied, He’s right, you are pathetic...

Draco glared. He felt a surge of electricity burn over his shoulders and dance up his neck. All the little hairs stood on end, his eyes staring sharply and coldly into Harry's as he too stood frozen to the floor. Their classmates were bunching behind them, staring and confused. Draco shrugged off the feelings creeping through his skin.

“Watch where you're going, *Potter!*” He snarled as he lifted up his elbow and shoved Harry sideways, causing him to lose balance and almost tumble to the floor; thankfully a table caught his fall. Everyone stared, in shock at the bold movement as Draco rushed past and took his seat, unable to escape that awkward feeling that had seized the atmosphere in the classroom and turned it dry. The other slytherins followed, throwing Harry disgusted looks as they moved to their desks.

“Are you alright, Harry?” Ron asked, lending him a hand so he was able to stand again. Even though Harry said he was fine, the look on his face told a different story, Hermione was no fool.

Draco's elbow felt immensely numb still from where he had shoved Potter sideways less than a minute ago. The contact had made his joints feel stiff. He tried to shake off the feeling as he relieved a small itch on his arm where the Dark Mark would have been, if not concealed by magic.

Gazing carefully round the class, Draco waited for the rest of the students to enter. Nothing ever changed; it was overrun with Gryffindors again, including Harry, who he purposely avoided for the next two hours.

Draco's mind was not in the least bit focused on this class. He wasn't even really *attempting* to listen to Slughorn's constant nattering, he opened his textbook, but the words were a blur. He practically sat staring at an empty potion bottle that was situated on the edge of his desk throughout the entire lesson while his classmates worked.

He sensed Harry was watching him from behind, it was as though he could feel those eyes on him, but he ignored it – or tried to – knowing it would only cause more conflict and he had enough of *that* lately. He could have been wrong, (maybe it was just in his imagination anyway) he wasn't going to make a prat of himself by saying something if Harry *hadn't* in fact been staring at him...

* * *

Dusk was settling outside the castle as Harry, Hermione and Ron reached Gryffindor Tower later on, by which time Hermione had worked herself up once more. She sucked in a deep breath, before seizing her moment, catching Harry off-guard.

“It's to do with Malfoy, isn't it?” She asked, watching a blank expression rise on Ron's face as well as Harry's, but they weren't the same kind of 'blank' expression. Harry's was more faint-hearted and indisposed, giving him a complexion like death, while Ron was flustered with a rosy red confusion and a slightly raised brow.

Hermione half-heartedly pressed on, knowing she could possibly cause more harm, but she couldn't help herself. She had to know. She had to be sure that it really wasn't what she was thinking. “Well? Is it Malfoy?” She waited. Ron's bewildered look fell upon Harry, who stood awkwardly, unable to face them.

Harry bowed his head, dropping his book bag onto their usual table at the edge of the common room. His eyes were brimming with hurt, hurt at Draco's blatant disregard and humiliation at what had happened outside Slughorn's classroom. “It's Malfoy,” he admitted, so quiet that his friends had to strain to hear. “But it's... It's complicated and I just—”

“Come on, Mate,” Ron interrupted, impatient now that they had their best friend finally talking. His irritation bristled at the confirmation that Malfoy had somehow upset his friend, (though he had no idea at how the intimate manner in which he'd done so). “You can tell us anything.”

Sighing heavily, Harry fixed his gaze on the table, so that he did not have to look at the people he treasured most while he admitted his...*stupidity*! “I hope I can... It's just that – well it's not something you're likely to expect or...or even *understand*. I barely understand it myself...” He allowed his voice to trail off into the nothingness he so *desperately* wished he could fade into himself, but when he eventually raised his eyes (still treacherously shining with emotion) his friends were still watching him tolerantly. He really did not deserve them...

“We're not going anywhere, mate,” Ron assured him with a quick look to Hermione. Yet again, Harry could only nod slowly, a sickening feeling brewing in his gut as the look of disgust in Draco's expression played out in his head again and again until he wished he could tear out his eyes.

“I don't think I ever really told you that...when I accidentally used that spell of the Half-blood Prince's against Malfoy in Moaning Myrtle's bathroom...” He winced, the guilt, the shame filling him, even now. “If Snape hadn't arrived to counter it, Draco

would've died – he was dying on the floor in front of me because of *my* recklessness!”

Ron looked confused and stunned, and Hermione's mouth was open on the verge of speech – Harry cut across her. “But because of that...somehow, because I nearly killed him, we have this...*connection*.” He flushed a little at how intimate that sounded, and how much he had come to *like* the idea of being connected to him, despite the affects.

“Like my connection to Voldemort but *not*... I feel his emotions, when he's hurt, I *feel* when he's nearby and when he is far away it feels...*wrong*. It's like a call – I just gravitate toward him!” His voice was becoming more desperate for them to understand when they only looked confused, and he was ever grateful that they were alone in the common room. “When I brush against him in the corridor – when he shoved me down in Potions – it was like an electric charge!”

Only then did he realise how impassioned his words had become, when he saw Hermione shift uncomfortably and Ron blush darker than his hair. Harry swallowed awkwardly, practically *seeing* Hermione's apt mind working it all out. There would be no denying it now. She *knew* – she *knew* how he felt! He could see it in her eyes. “But...but Draco wasn't protected by love, for some reason he has one scar from the spell that just wouldn't heal and it...it connects us. I'm not sure why and when I went to Draco for answers he denied feeling anything...”

Harry considered his friends carefully then, waiting for their response – a response of any kind. He realised (belatedly) that his voice had hit its lowest in misery in admitting Draco's denial and finally (perhaps in aid of saving Ron's complexion if nothing else) Hermione rose to her feet.

“Harry,” Hermione started, standing tall as she began, “Whatever Malfoy did or didn't do, he probably deserved it. He's vile, *vulgar*, I mean...he's a *slytherin* for goodness sake – a Death Eater! Even with this...this *pull* you talk about, that's no reason to feel guilty, or for you to think that you now have some gravity defying bond with him. It's probably just the after-effects from the spell, simply taking time to heal,” she suggested, though did not seem Harry agree.

“Or maybe it's in his head,” Ron spat, a disgusted look having stretched across his features as both Hermione and Harry looked at him in sync, surprised at such a forward allegation from someone who tended to avoid conflict most of the time.

Ron felt a rim of jealousy run over him slightly. The thought of Harry associating himself with a slytherin without telling him or Hermione about it straight away left a

churning in his stomach that felt like it was being twisted inside out. It was uncomfortable, and he didn't like it!

“And since when have you referred to Malfoy by his first name, Harry?” Ron cringed. He wasn't stupid, and he hoped to *Merlin* that this pull was all it appeared to be, and nothing deeper, but by the look in Harry's eyes, it was obvious it was a lot more than just a daydream Harry had built up inside his troubled head.

Hermione slapped Ron hard, the palm of her hand stained red at the full force of it colliding against his cheek. He instantly lifted his hand to cover where she had just hit him, as if in shock. “Ron!” She practically hissed. “You're suggesting that he's *mad* after all the rumours he's had to deal with?!” Ron and Hermione both glared at each other, equally annoyed with the other.

“Oh, so it's okay for you to tell Harry that Malfoy deserved the attack, *just* because he's a slytherin, but when it comes to me telling Harry he's obviously gone barmy, *I'm* the one who ends up getting slapped? If you wanted to hit someone, go hit Harry for hiding this from us!” Ron finished, still clutching his throbbing cheek in his hand.

“You're the one who's getting jealous because Harry has a bond with Malfoy that's deeper than anything you can offer him as his best friend. I suppose I'm upset he didn't tell us but Harry is the one who's facing this bond, not us. Harry is the one who has been dealing with this alone, unable to tell us, because he knew this is how you'd react!”

“It's no wonder he didn't tell us, I mean you're—” Ron's words cut short, and both he and Hermione looked over at Harry who had started laughing.

The pressure of this inevitable moment, when the two people he cared about most would discover his secret, it had built inside him, every moment, crushing his organs with the strain. And then...*this*?

“I'm sorry,” he gasped through the laughter that shook his ribs so hard that they hurt, “It's just – you two were just – such an anti-climax!”

Hermione looked affronted, whereas Ron just blushed beet-red.

Harry sighed through his dying laughter, shaking his head slightly. If he was honest, their reactions could have been much worse, they seemed to just think he was going soft-in-the-head; relief eased the ache Draco had inflicted in his chest. “I'm sorry,” he

breathed, calming somewhat, “I really just...I can’t explain it to you any better than that.”

Ron raised a brow, his complexion settling once more. “You sound barmy, mate.”

Hermione shot him a glare, but before the previous argument could resurface and continue forevermore Harry cut in before her.

“What happened to Draco... He deserved a lot of things, but he didn’t deserve to die, and who am I to take up the responsibility of punishing him for being an arse?” He watched a smile of pride twitch at the corners of Hermione’s mouth, whereas Ron seemed stunned by his words (and still quite a bit irritated evidently).

“I don’t think this is some side-affect of the spell,” he continued, answering Hermione’s earlier suggestion. “It...it feels more than that. And this isn’t just because of *guilt* – I’m not pulled to him because I’m *guilty*.” A frown creased his features, the feather-light freedom of his laughter moments before dissipating as Malfoy’s frustration crashed through his relief, plummeting like iron in his gut.

“It’s something about that spell, it’s like a magnetic pull to him and if I resist I feel...*bad*, like I...I need...*him*.” He winced at how girly and ridiculous that sounded, *certain* that Ron was struggling not to laugh behind that look of disgust. “I know I’m not making any sense,” he assured them, scratching the back of his neck awkwardly. It felt like his skin was burning with a furious itch only Draco’s presence could satisfy. “But it’s not just the bond either. I *can* resist it, despite the burning and the tingling and...*everything*. I can walk away from him when he’s standing right in front of me without saying a word. But lately I’m...I’m not sure I *want* to...”

Hermione’s stomach felt like it had dropped as she recognized that what Harry was describing was similar to her feelings with Ron. But surely it couldn’t be that. *Surely*.

But it was.

Ron’s hand had now lowered from his face where Hermione had hit him, and he was once again a little flabbergasted by the things spewing out of Harry’s mouth. It was as if he had been hit with a highly inappropriate verbal incontinence spell! “Harry, mate, you sound a little pathetic.”

Hermione glared at Ron once again, wondering to herself what exactly it was she saw in him. “Oh, that’s right Ronald, make him feel worse.”

“What?” Ron asked as he walked over to the blazing fire to chuck in some more firewood (effectively distancing himself from the conversation which had become *far* too uncomfortable). Hermione continued.

“Harry, when you say you...you *need him*, in which way do you need him?” Hermione patiently awaited an answer. The expressions crossing Harry’s face, they possessed a passion, a sadness she had never seen there before, a kind of shy, awkwardness.

“I need him to be with me,” Harry whispered, as if he didn’t really want her to hear him. That was it, he had forced it out, admitted it at last as he had not even done to himself. “I want to be the reason for...” He shook his head in dismissal, not *believing* how honest his words suddenly wanted to be – the instinct for truth was just too overwhelming to lie. “I want to be on his mind as much as he is on mine,” he admitted, ignoring Ron’s fake vomit noises from the fire (which silenced immediately at Hermione’s death glare).

“...I want him to smile just because I did!” Harry blurted out, every admission easing the ache of his long suffering in silence, the relief overwhelming, though it did nothing to help the burn of Draco’s connection. “I want him to lie awake at night – I want him to know everything about me – I need him to *want* to touch me instead of freezing then swatting me away like a *bug*!”

His breath was slightly laboured as he caught himself before the final admission had escaped him. *I need him to love me*. He would *not* voice that aloud, not to anyone, nothing would be so humiliating... To admit his love struck, doe-eyed naivety, his foolishness especially after such blatant rejection. He shook his head, ashamed of his detailed answer, despite the relief at finally sharing it with someone. But Hermione was watching him with those warm eyes, and he felt suddenly as disgusted with himself as Ron must be.

The realisation of his feelings, they had struck like lightning through his body until it shook with the intensity. His hatred had changed with the flash of his spell that day in the bathroom, so swiftly and suddenly he had not had chance to get used to the idea. And right now, contemplating it, though it made sense, he wished with all his heart that it didn’t. “*You are pathetic, Potter.*” He cringed. He could not push that from his mind, the dark, mirror-filled room where he had felt Draco’s heartbeat under his fingers...

I’m so fucked up...

And then, a warm hand settled on his shoulder, irritating his already prickly skin (that hummed in demand for Draco's presence) but he remained still under it, opening his eyes to see Hermione gazing at him in concern.

Hermione drew him into a hug, holding onto him in worry for a few moments, before leaning away again, both of her hands still resting upon his shoulders. "Harry..." She paused, a little dumbstruck as to how to word the sentences that were to follow.

Ron's throat had tightened, he couldn't believe what he was hearing. After all this time of knowing his best friend, knowing *Harry Potter*, he just realized he didn't really know him at all anymore, and the made him feel uneasy.

"Harry, I didn't know you were queer?" Ron spat spitefully, his eyes unable to stay focused on Harry without feeling slightly disgusted, watching him flush as Hermione began, her hands no longer on Harry's shoulders.

"Harry, are you out of your mind? For one it's Malfoy, *Draco* Malfoy, Not to mention he's a..." She trailed off upon seeing the shamed look cross her friend's features, and it hurt. "Look, Harry I just..." Hermione was struggling to speak. She wanted to say something to comfort him, but everything rolling off her tongue was sounding more and more like she was having a dig at him.

"He's a Death Eater, a...well..." She sighed in frustration, the words she wanted to say seemed to have stuck somewhere in her throat, refusing to come out. "Harry, are you sure it's not just this *bond* that's making you think these things? I mean, would you even be thinking them without it?" She watched as Harry's eyes widened. He wasn't sure how to answer her.

"I don't know, alright, Hermione?!" He yelled, the pressure of the pull overwhelming him. Even now, when he wasn't near Draco at all, there was an underlying buzz that ate away at him, and watching his two best friends look at him in ways he never thought they would, it seemed to be fuelling the magnetic connection. It was if somehow disapproval from the people he loved made it that more powerful, that much more vital.

It was more of a shock to them than anything else, finding out that their best friend was having thoughts of Malfoy in *that* way – well, it was enough to disturb anyone, including himself, but their attitudes weren't making it any easier on him. "I'm...I'm going to go get some air," Harry gasped out, his forehead dotted up a sweat. The bond, it was calling him, he couldn't control it, he *had* to see Malfoy again.

He threw open the portrait hole, allowing it to fall shut behind him on Ron and Hermione, who were still overwhelmed by Harry's confession. Yes, they had wanted to know what was going on with him, but neither of them had anticipated what had come.

Harry rushed down the castle stairs, hopelessly, foolishly, he wasn't even sure what he was doing, each portrait insulting him as his pace quickened. He had gone from such extremes in record time back in the common room. Anxious, relieved, terrified, guilty and now...

Your own friends are disgusted by you, a voice in his head reprimanded, only it was not his own voice – *You are pathetic, Potter* – it was Draco's. Harry winced, overwhelmed by *everything* as he descended the moving stairs two at a time. He needed to get away, to distance himself from the confused disgust imprinted on his friends' faces.

He was so conflicted, on one hand, a part of him knew that this was wrong, Draco was a Death Eater, was a slytherin and whilst that wouldn't have mattered, he wasn't a particularly nice person either. But then a larger, more dominant part of him, the part that prickled with every mention of the blond's name, could not seem to care what Draco was. *How can I love him? He hates me. Even if he doesn't want to be a Death Eater, the fact that he loathes me, that he feels nothing will never change...*

Suddenly, a vast shudder shook his body, and he seized hold of the banister to steady himself as the feeling dissipated into tiny shocks of static. Draco was nearby; he could feel it in every pore of his being. He closed his eyes against the spinning world, the staircase moving beneath his feet as he pondered Hermione's question. *Would* he be thinking these things were it not for the bond? He shook his head, probably not, but that didn't mean he was only *feeling* these things because of them now. They had started because of the link between them, of that he was sure, but now...

Now it's something more, he realised, his fingers clenching on the banister until his knuckles whitened. If Draco could deny the bond, could push him away then couldn't it be that...if Harry didn't possess the strength to pull away and Draco did then it was because his feelings intensified them. *It is more than that*, he corrected himself, *I don't want to pull away, I don't even try!*

His skin prickled uncomfortably then, as if in agreement, and Harry shot down the stairs. They were moving again, and he leapt across the small gap appearing between them and the landing, too impatient to wait for them to move back again. *And besides*, he added, *I can feel him getting further away*. He took the last set of stairs

with practised ease and bolted down the corridor, rounding the corner out into the Transfiguration courtyard. He came then to a sudden stop as he slammed full-force into a hard, unyielding body.

Harry gasped, catching himself on the stone archway, clutching at his frantically breathless chest as it (and the heart beating furiously within) failed to calm. His body sung with panic and bliss all at once, and Harry raised his eyes hesitantly, *knowing* who was standing (rather disgruntled) in front of him before he'd even seen those grey eyes shining in the darkness of the courtyard.

"M-Malfoy?" He breathed, flushing at the ridiculous way his voice sounded just then, and not failing to notice the way the blond's nose wrinkled with distaste, even in a face overcome by shock (probably at seeing him there so suddenly after-hours.) He met that intense gaze faultlessly this time, unable to look away even if he wished to. He had needed to see him all day...

"What do you think you're doing, Potter?" Draco hissed, rubbing his sleeves off as if touching Potter had dirtied him. Draco looked around, thank *Merlin* no one had seen his collision with Potter, he felt embarrassed enough. He neatened his white blond hair, brushing it aside slightly with his fingers.

A bounding surge of electric bolted up his spine and he shivered. This feeling was getting worse, every time he happened to make contact with Potter, something under his skin spiralled and left him with this sickening uneasiness that would only be left to lay on his stomach for the rest of that night.

"Well? Aren't you going to say something, *Potter*, or are you just going to stand there?" Draco tried to tear his eyes away from Harry, but he couldn't. His face was frozen and his nose was crinkled with distaste. This static between them was becoming more unbearable every time it struck! It wasn't just a weird feeling, it was often painful, like someone had taken a potato peeler and ripped layers from his skin, leaving him raw and aching.

"Well?" He repeated, impatient to get away.

Harry shook his head, clearing his hazy mind of all the wild imaginings that voice conjured, especially if (by some miracle) they were not always full of such loathing disgust. "Sorry," he apologised, his hand scratching the back of his neck before unthinkingly rising up to ruffle his hair. He saw Draco stiffen out of the corner of his eye and quickly lowered his hand *knowing* the blond had seen his unconscious primping.

Draco stared sharply at Harry, at his apology, unable to think. His mind suddenly became hazy as his vision blurred in and out of focus on Harry's lightning shaped scar. His Dark Mark was burning; Lord Voldemort was trying to penetrate his thoughts again. He could feel it, that silent aching that throbbed under the hidden mark.

Resisting him was hard, but manageable, unlike this connection to Harry which seemed unbearable. It was like a force he had never experienced. It was nothing like that of the Dark Lord, it was far more powerful than anything *He Who Could Not Be Named* had thrown at him, and each time they met he was finding it harder and harder to resist it, harder and harder to say no to him.

Draco's eyes were trained on him intently, shining with something indecipherable, something completely opposite to the abhorrence in that face.

Deep in Harry's gut, the pressure that had built inside him plummeted, making him feel quite sick. "You...you really *do* hate me, don't you?" He murmured, more to himself than to Malfoy. His hands clenched into fists as Draco's mouth twisted into a sneer, and Harry's whole body shook with bitterness. Why couldn't, for once, something go right? Why couldn't this boy bend to the wind, at least a little?

Every breath brought their chests just a little closer, the heat of those exhalations warming his cheeks slightly in the bitter cold of the courtyard's archways. That wretched humming he could not sate sung so loud he *swore* Draco must have heard it, and braving that gaze again, he *himself* swore he saw it. Draco looked uncomfortable, irritated even but there was no denying the minor fidgeting and sparse beads of sweat littering that alabaster flesh even in this chill.

Harry caught his lip between his teeth as his jaw set in determination. He'd never seized what he wanted – ever, had never wanted anything badly enough, and now he did... There was just no way he was going to let Draco deny he felt *anything*. Even if he didn't possess the feelings Harry did, he knew he felt their connection.

The crescent moon peeked from beyond the clouds outside, and caught each strand of golden hair, causing Harry's breath to catch in his throat. He had been wrong earlier; the itch was *not* satisfied by Draco's presence. It only intensified until Harry thought he'd go mad with it! It needed touch. It needed more!

Suddenly, his body lurched forwards of its own accord, his heart pounding furiously. Blood throbbed in his ears, so loud, second only to the gasping breath that drew through Draco's lips, just as Harry pressed his own to them. It was clumsy, adolescent

but it made his body soar and flip as if he had wings.

The mouth against his was soft and frozen with surprise. He smiled against him, his tongue flicking out to trace their defined shape, as his hands reached up hesitantly to trace the flaxen locks at the back of the Draco's neck. He felt that body shudder against his and drew his lips away with a very Malfoy-*ish* smirk playing at his lips, his hand still resting *far* too intimately at the back of that neck.

Draco's mind blanked as Harry darted forwards at him, and his heart jerked when he felt those tender lips brushing with a warmth upon them that he never knew existed. For a brief moment he wanted to close his eyes and lean into that kiss. wanted to shove his tongue deep into that throat and make Harry his...

What was he thinking?

He tried to gravitate away from the pull, it was making him think and feel things he knew he shouldn't. But then, those fingers caressed his hair and Draco swung his head sideways at the touch, allowing each of Harry's digits (if only for a moment) to send escalating shudders down his spine. His entire body exploded with feelings he'd never dreamt of, shook in ways he never knew it could, leaving him with a few delayed vibrating chills that ran profusely up and down his quivering torso. He forced himself away from the magnet like feeling he had now devoured his entire self. He had to resist, even if he didn't want to...

Did he just think that?

"Tell me you felt nothing," Harry demanded, his voice heavy with lust as he regarded the suddenly dark eyes watching him carefully. Seeing the protest brewing on those kiss-bruised lips, he caressed the back of the blond's hair a second time, ripping a shudder from that body in answer. His smile broadened. "Deny it if you dare."

The words stabbed their way into Draco's mind like a rain of needles as he forced that feeling away once again. He would not allow it to touch him anymore!

SMACK!

Draco resisted any allegation and threw Harry backwards with his fist, the fall echoing throughout the courtyard as his slytherin ring crunched into Harry's lip. Draco glared as the boy tumbled backwards and hit the floor.

"I feel *nothing*!" Draco lied, walking ahead of Harry and kicking him in the ribs as he

strode past. His silver, moonlit eyes narrowed with a cold shimmer as he caught Harry's dim eye gaze briefly once more before departing. "You're sick, Potter," he spat, leaving Harry still on the cold floor.

Harry held his ribs in pain as he twisted to watch Draco move further and further away from him, before the pale figure faded into the distance.

Draco pulled up his sleeves; he had built up a heavy sweat again. How much more resistance would he have to take? With every moment he drew closer to Harry, he felt Lord Voldemort becoming stronger, as if he somehow knew what he had asked of Draco was being fulfilled. But he couldn't, Draco could not allow him to win.

The more he and Harry collided like this, the closer the Dark Lord would be to killing him. Draco quickly forced that momentary thought out. It wouldn't come to that, he wouldn't *let* it – Did he just think that too? What was happening to him? He could not help but think he was somehow losing part of himself in the chaos of this game.

Draco's gut plummeted. No matter how much pain he had to endure when resisting that pull, it didn't even come close to the pain he felt at leaving Harry so helpless back in the archway of the courtyard to pick up the pieces he, *Draco* had scattered. Though he played ignorance, Draco could clearly see, this was swiftly falling apart around them. He was at a loss. Each path carried a no-win destination...

* * *

Harry stared vacantly ahead. He had been standing outside the portrait of the Fat Lady for what seemed like an age, unmoving, not possessing the willpower to take another step forward. Filch would be making his rounds for students out of bed soon, but he could not seem to care. He brought his fingers up to touch the place where his mouth had been linked to Malfoy's, wincing as they caught his split lip carelessly. A sad, sour smirk twisted his mouth. So like Malfoy to give a kiss so bittersweet...

Suddenly, the portrait swung open and Harry stumbled back, narrowly missing a tumble down the stairs by catching himself on the banister.

"Harry!" Hermione's voice reached him and the void in his gut spread. He hadn't been prepared to face them after...earlier. His head was even more occupied of self-loathing confusion than before, and above all, he wasn't in the mood. "We were so worried when you didn't come back!"

“We checked the Marauder’s Map, mate,” Ron muttered with no small amount of guilt, but whether it was for his borrowing the Marauder’s Map without asking or his earlier spiteful comment Harry wasn’t sure. “*Harry, I didn’t know you were queer.*” Those words kept revolving around in his head alongside everything else, their spiteful tone increasing with every echo.

Finally, he looked up, finding them both framed in the portrait hole. Hermione offered Ron a wary look at Harry’s lack of improvement in temperament. *Maybe they prefer anger to misery*, he thought distantly.

“We...we saw you...on the map,” she began tentatively, her eyes shining with concern, “With...with Malfoy.” There was a moment then, where Harry stared at her, completely comprehending what wrong conclusion she had come to. *Whatever she is thinking of could never happen*, he thought miserably, before offering her a desolate shrug. When she and Ron shared another look (as if he couldn’t see them) he pushed through them into the empty common room in an effort to escape the comments he knew were coming.

A heavy, exhausted sigh tore from his lips. Everything, he was so tired of *everything*. Hearing the portrait close behind his friends as they followed him into the room, he felt his last shred of resolve crumble and he dropped himself into the nearest comfy chair by the dying fire, resigned to the fate of facing his friends’ rightful opinions of his...self-destructive *stupidity!*

That’s what love is, self-destructive, he thought bitterly as he watched his friends take their places on the couch opposite him, verging on speech.

Hermione quietly followed Harry into the common room, knowing once again, that whatever had happened with Malfoy just now couldn’t have been good. The look on Harry’s expression was far too formidable to misplace. Ron trailed a little distance behind, still rather agitated about this mess.

“So, how did things go with Malfoy,” Ron asked bitingly and Hermione’s glare was on him again. Apparently he was upset still, but he really was acting petty and childish, it wasn’t as though they were *lovers*. He cringed at that thought, he was far too happy with Hermione – and *women* in general. But they were close, best friends, and Ron felt that something as important as sexual preference was something he deserved to know. Didn’t he have rights?! Didn’t he? He wondered, his thoughts panning out, only serving to wind him up further. Were Cho-Chang and Ginny just cover-ups for this dirty secret? Had Harry had used his sister?

“What about Ginny?” Ron asked randomly, only to see Harry's face fill with confusion.

“RON! Stop acting like a brat,” Hermione interfered, while Harry remained in silence, all-but ignorant to their words. Emerald eyes were drowned with an emotional glaze and heavily focused on the crackling, orange flames, as though part of himself wasn't really there with them, as if part of himself were still under the archway, lips to Draco's... He found himself touching his broken lip again. It stung, like the memory.

“I'm not acting like a *brat*,” Ron muttered, trudging over to the empty single couch in the corner of the room and plummeting heavily into it. “I was just asking a question, Hermione,” He finished as she swung a very angry look at him.

“Fine, I'm going to bed,” Ron grumbled, knowing by Hermione's expression that if he were to stay it would only make things worse. And right now, he was just being selfish; he could see that despite not being able to get past the barriers of confusion and hatred for Malfoy...

Hermione sat beside Harry on the couch, besieged with concern as she spoke gently “Harry, what happened to your lip?”

Harry shook his head shaking the image of his fuming red-headed friend from his mind. *Use Ginny*, he thought in confusion, *one mutual kiss couldn't be considered that, and after how I ended it at Dumbledore's funeral, there could be no doubt that I...* He trailed off with a frown.

“Things between me and Ginny never felt like this,” he murmured, ignoring Hermione's question momentarily in favour of clarifying that. He raised his now focused eyes to her, blinking back the moisture.

“I ended things with Ginny at Dumbledore's funeral and...I...I've just...I've never felt anything that even compares to what I'm feeling now – for...*Draco*.” He watched Hermione's nose wrinkle with badly hidden distaste. She clearly didn't approve but out of his two best friends, she was the most likely to understand, even if she didn't like it.

“And it was *Draco* that happened to my lip, okay?” He replied, snapping as suddenly from his lucid daze as if Draco's fist had collided with him once more. He touched the broken skin of his wounded mouth again, relishing in the pain, because it reminded him of what had occurred just before it. “And you can disapprove of what's happening, Hermione, you and Ron can hate it but believe me there's *nothing* you can

say that will hurt any worse than what he's said."

Hermione sighed, bringing her hand up to rest over Harry's shoulder. "I don't hate it, Harry, I just don't understand it. For six years Malfoy has caused nothing but trouble. He is a vulgar little maleficent cockroach and suddenly you're swooning over him like a lost kitten?" She sighed, with a smile.

"Look Harry, if you're happy pursuing Malfoy, then I won't stop you, but..." She paused, reaching over to his lip and gently placing a light finger upon the crack, drawing back almost instantly at Harry's flinch. "Is that what you want?"

Startled by her acceptance in the name of his happiness (though he should have expected no less really) Harry blinked a few times at her question before daring to answer. "It's what I want," he confirmed gloomily, "But it doesn't matter because he won't have anything to do with me." He punctuated his final words by gesturing to his split lip. "And this is all I'll ever get for trying. We don't always get what we want, do we?" That said, he seized his bag from where he had dropped it by the table earlier and approached the stairs heading up to the dormitories.

"Thanks, Hermione, for understanding," he said turning back to her to force a slight smile. "Maybe you can convince Ron a bit more for me but...I'm just really tired, it's late, I...I really just want to sleep." With that, he hurried up the stairs, with absolutely no intention of sleeping and *every* intention of lying there wide-awake and moping to himself under the safety of the blankets.

Hermione smiled as she watched Harry leave, knowing that whatever it was he was going through, surely could not end well. She could see destruction thriving all over him like its own aura, and it scared her.

* * *

It was past midnight and all the students were sound asleep. Silence filled the castle's halls and corridors, not even whispers were voiced. A light, distant sound of trees brushing together in the building wind, and the slight splatters of the lake splashing against the shore seemed to calmly divert Draco's thoughts, as he lay in his bed awake staring at the ceiling.

Beyond the stone barrier, the clouds beckoned, shady greys and blacks storming above. Draco could feel his arm burning again, a tingling heat of the Death Eaters'

gathering commencing. He was being called.

He gasped as the prickling began to rise. Throwing himself out of bed, he reached for his trousers and threw on his school shirt and jumper, not bothering with the robe or tie. He quietly crept out of the Slytherin dungeon and out of the castle, thankful for the practice in avoiding Filch, who was guarding the corridors like a hawk.

He had completely forgotten to put his shoes on, and he felt the crisp, cold ground move between his toes outside of the castle. But he wasn't willing to go back now, he was being called. The gates of Hogwarts beckoned ahead, and as per Voldemort's agreement with Snape (who had remained a double-agent after his secret hand in Dumbledore's death) they shuddered open silently to allow him passage through.

An eerie whoosh of energy flew past him as he stepped out of the protection of the grounds (which were fixed to permit only himself and Snape through at times like these). However, no sooner had they snapped shut behind him, than a loud *CRACK* made him jump sideways.

"Father?!" Draco said abruptly, his heart racing, startled as his father appeared before him. He came to a halt, seeing the older man staring down at him.

"The Dark Lord wishes to see you, my boy," Lucius said, looking down at Draco's bare feet with disdain. "Honestly Draco, are you incapable of everything?" He snarled, whipping up a pair of shoes for his son with his wand. "Come on."

His father cast a quick, cautionary glance around the grounds, despite knowing that, with Dumbledore gone the chances of their presence being discovered here was minimal, but one could never be too careful. Locking his hand around his son's upper-arm, he dragged him down away from the gates of Hogwarts until they were out of sight of the castle and then he stopped, finally looking down upon his only son once more.

"He is not displeased but he is impatient, Draco," he warned him, concern edging into his voice. "Keep your mind closed to his probing searches, show him not a *glimpse* of whatever you have been wasting your time on. He will ask, you will lie and lie *well*." He paused then, reaching forward to flatten the golden locks of his son's usually pristine hair. "Our family depends on this, Draco. Do what you will behind closed doors but play your part well, at least until I can find away around this..."

Suddenly, his hand gripped his son's shoulder, and a sharp, vicious tug behind their navels tugged them both up into oblivion, releasing them in a place that they both

knew all too well. Malfoy Manor would be housing the meeting tonight, evidently. Lucius felt his son stiffen under his grasp and he knew what he was thinking – they had opened their home to a lunatic who would kill them as soon as look at them if they failed him again...

“Ah, Draco, Lucius,” the low, foreboding hiss called to them from the dark circle gathered in the main drawing room, a place that had once held nothing but happy memories for a young Draco. But not anymore. Voldemort’s menacing, spindly fingers reached out, to *Draco*, calling to him with less force than the bond with Harry but there was still no room for refusal. That did not stop a shudder of revulsion from building at the base of his neck when those vile fingers touched his shoulder, and Lucius, who knew his son so well could *sense* his struggle in hiding his repulsion.

Draco felt relieved in a sense to know his father was trying to help find a way out this mess just as much as he was. It didn't change the fact that he still felt alone in his task though. Draco felt strange being at home, with Lord Voldemort amongst them. And yet he couldn't help but smile reassuringly at his mother who was standing over in the doorway wringing her hands anxiously.

“Tell me, how have you been fairing on your mission, *Draco*?” His name was a serpentine slur on that foul tongue, polar-opposite to the way it *could* sound, coming from someone else’s lips...

Empty your mind of such thoughts, a warning voice hissed in Draco’s ear.

His attention snapped as the Dark Lord spoke, his low chilling voice sent shivers down Draco's spine as he asked the one thing Draco had not prepared an answer for.

He had to think and fast, think of an answer he could give, something he could remember; too big a lie would end up backfiring. *Think Draco, Think.*

“Potter, he likes me.” And just like that, it rolled over his tongue. Lord Voldemort advanced in on him waving his hand as he spoke.

“*Likes* you?” He cooed, considering him for a moment before floating back away, circling the room. “How so?”

Draco stuttered, he wasn't even sure what he meant, and remained there awkwardly silent. His father tapped his shoulder subtly, reminding him that he was behind him. For all the good his presence did.

“My Lord, I mean...that he and I have been meeting up more frequently.” Draco winced, hoping that would be enough to appease the spine-chilling creature. It wasn't a complete lie, so why did he feel like he had just sold Potter out?

Voldemort paused in his circling of his prey and reached out, his fingers pressing insistently on Draco's head without invitation. The digits threaded into blond locks and he felt the smaller body freeze beneath the evidently unwanted touch. A smirk laced his reptilian mouth. All of his followers felt the mark burn like fire at his touch, each handled the pain differently, but headstrong little boy Death Eaters always struggled to remain unfazed under his hands...

A flash of persistent green eyes darted across his vision when his hand touched Draco. The younger Malfoy's feelings were absent entirely, and yet oddly (for reasons unknown to him) the Potter boy's emotions rang as loud in his ears as a bell's chime. But then, a vision of his enemy leaning in against Draco's lips split his investigation and he was forced roughly back from the blond's mind, whether from the child himself or the pure sincerity of Potter's warmth (which he had always been susceptible to) he was not sure.

A delighted, chilling laugh, filled the room, and by the entrance to the foyer, Narcissa Malfoy shuddered, passing a look of concern to her wary husband. What had the Dark Lord seen in Draco's mind?

Snake-like nostrils flared in manic pleasure and Draco visibly eased as the Dark Lord stepped back from him.

“I never realised you gave yourself so wholly to the cause, Draco,” Voldemort nearly *purred*, his followers wincing at the strange noise. “Feel free to take pleasure of your own on this mission but do not stray far from your duty.” His twisted mind replayed the delicious hurt in emerald eyes as Draco's fist collided harshly with his face. There was nothing so intoxicating as such innocence betrayed. “I feel sure you will have him eating out of your hand in no time,” he chuckled, his perplexed followers watching Draco for answers, except for his father, who regarded him with narrowed eyes...

Lord Voldemort caressed Draco's face with his silky, textured palm, so cold it felt like death itself was running over him. He tried his utmost not to react to it.

“I knew I could trust you, Draco,” Voldemort sneered, readying his wand for departure. “It's a good boy you have there Lucius, sometimes, one wonders, if he would exceed you one day?”

Draco watched as the Dark Lord and his followers vanished as suddenly as they had flashed into his vision earlier. He felt a little faint, but nonetheless relieved that they had gone. His feet were unable to move from the spot in which he stood.

“I never realised you gave yourself so wholly to the cause, Draco...”

Draco shied away from that statement, forcing himself doubly-hard not to let his pale cheeks colour any darker than they probably were.

A disgruntled look passed over his Father’s features, evidently not amused by the Dark Lord’s parting comment. Lucius walked over to his wife and held her close. He was just as concerned for Draco as she was, but it was clear she was the one needing the most support of the two of them. They both glanced over at Draco's back simultaneously, smiling at one another. Their son was alive. With the end of every meeting came that relief that he had escape death yet again, survived despite being surrounded by death only moments before. He was still standing before them. That thought alone was enough to smile for now, despite the situation that none of them could find a way out of.

Morning’s break was creeping in, but there was no sun, the sky outside was blue and dark, the trees hung low, casting menacing, shadowed reflections on the wall through the windows. It was slowly getting lighter and clearer with every moment, had he really been there that long?

“Draco, what exactly was it the Dark Lord saw?” Lucius asked, striding back towards him.

Draco's attention snapped back from the daydream he had been lost in at his father’s voice. “I think I should get back now. Back to Hogwarts,” he answered, ignoring the question in hopes that his father wouldn't pursue an answer, because frankly, he wasn't even sure what had happened with Harry himself, or what it had meant. And until he did, he didn't want his father knowing and drawing his own conclusions.

He supposed the one good thing to come from the Dark Lord knowing was that he had been given more time, time, he so desperately needed to find a way out...

“Take me back?” He asked again, a small smile to his lips as his father took out his wand.

* * *

Harry frowned as he stared down the slowly increasing line of the slytherin table. Sleeplessness had driven him from his bed early, (even on a Saturday morning) and he had been the first down to breakfast, rubbing his tired eyes as he waited for that familiar face to pass through the doors. But it never came. Panic surged in his chest. The few moments of sleep he had stolen last night were filled with images of Voldemort, masked Death Eaters and Draco, and that unhinged him even more than usual. By the time Hermione and Ron slipped in to sit beside him (the latter still very reluctant to look at him), Draco was still nowhere to be seen.

Harry's skin was dull. The call still existed, he still needed to go to him but that hum was practically non-existent. He murmured a half-hearted '*good-morning*' to his two friends before pushing his cold, untouched porridge away from himself, getting to his feet.

"Harry?" Hermione asked, confusion lining her eyes, "Where are you—"

"I need to go, I just...*can't*." And with that he fled the Great hall, not missing the resentful glare from Ron, nor the accusing whispers (that he was all too used to) thrown at him from the rest of his classmates.

The feral wind bit into his flesh like thousands of starving beasts, he winced, but his pace did not slow. The outside world was an escape from the hectic reality he was fleeing. Like flying, it tore him away from his concerns, distanced him from any self-loathing thoughts. But he could not escape them all...

Why am I doing this to myself? He snarled. His ribs ached from every rapid breath as the icy wind tore into his lungs. Snow did not line the January grounds just yet but it was not far away. Wearing no outerwear beyond his cloak, he was freezing but he did not stop, did not give so much as a thought to where his unruly feet were carrying him, that is, until he ran out of ground to tread.

The undisturbed serenity of the black lake stared back at him, welcoming, calming. He wanted that peace, that blissful state of thoughtless oblivion, if only for one moment. Stooping at the lakeside, he dipped his fingers in, startling at the iciness of it, but not pulling away. His lips against Draco's, the thought of it struck his mind with as much force as the freezing water did his skin. But so did the smack to his jaw and the look of sheer contempt in those eyes.

Those eyes pierced him like a knife, even in his memory, and he stood bolt-upright,

staring out across the darkness of the water once more, to where it disappeared into the limitless, grey horizon. Remembering that time (seemingly so long ago, before Voldemort's return, before the outbreak of war) where he had stumbled blindly into the Second Triwizard task of conquering the black lake to save his most precious...

A small, thoughtful smile bloomed at his lips, chapped from the biting cold as he raised his arms to unbutton his robes. There was no one outside this early on a Saturday (especially given the chill to the air), no one would see him. He would just escape, for a little while. How bizarre that he was now planning on wading in for something as simple yet just as precious as piece of mind, instead of a person close to his heart.

No, you're planning it to escape all of the people closest to you, he corrected himself.

His robes, his shirt, everything shuddered to the dewy grass-bank, where he intended to leave *everything* else behind, if only for a moment. The breeze hit his exposed body like a bucket of ice, and the hurt ebbed away as he dipped his foot in thoughtfully. He wanted to dive in and wash away the bond, wash *Malfoy* from his head; his smile, his stupid arrogance, perfect hair and soft lips. He wanted to douse every single memory of him with the frosty waters until there was no hurt left to remember. And drown those thoughts he would...

Draco climbed up from the pebbly floor below, he hated being apparated by someone else's power at the best of times, but to fall into a stony pit of sharp-edged rocks and pebbles was a new level of (until then) unexplored unpleasantness. As he climbed up, he brushed himself down, groaning upon seeing and *feeling* that his feet were bare once more. "Couldn't have waited until I went inside the castle, Father?" He moaned in a low tone to himself.

His attention broke from resentful thoughts of his father to a brief splashing sound in the lake, as he passed it. His head snapped to the side, glancing over across the dark water only to see a student, (*naked*) who appeared to be either a really bad swimmer or drowning. His pulse heightened with anxiousness and suddenly his chest felt heavy as he realised...

It was Harry.

~To Be Continued...

Chapter 4: Chapter Four

(Bound By) Clandestine Addiction

[Chapter Four]

Harry gasped for air at first, his body going rigid as the ice-cold water struck him with all the force of a thousand knives. He remained still for a moment, simply sinking into the welcoming abyss, with his eyes (glasses forgotten on the shore) staring up at the surprisingly glaring light above. It was so strange, how much clearer and brighter everything seemed from down here. The light of the skies, hidden behind such darkness glared brightly down on him with such intensity he had to squint to look up at it.

And Draco, the thoughts of him were crystal clear. The bond between them, it was the gravity drawing him in circles around Malfoy; it was the cause of the prickling static when they touched, and the persistent hum over his skin when they were near. The call lured him in, but his *feelings* were why he stayed, why he did nothing to resist, why he wanted Malfoy – *Draco* more than anything, more than even Voldemort's demise. This wasn't obsession, this was something much more chaste, impassable and complicated...

With a wheezy gasp, his fingers reached out fitfully, scraping handfuls of water. His lungs cramped and he felt the unhelpful waters lap at his limbs, allowing him to sink back further into the darkness. He was running out of air!

Suddenly, two strong arms seized him roughly round the middle. He winced at the iron-grasp; electricity surging through his body with a current so fierce it made his back arch, his head smashing back against his saviour's shoulder. He felt the body behind him struggle to stay afloat, he felt it convulse in the same way as he, though he also felt his rescuer's thoughts, his fear – for *him*.

Harry gasped, drawing in a suffocating mouthful of water. As he choked, he stared down, almost as if in slow-motion to the pristine, white hands clutching his naked chest determinedly – the source of the jolts shaking his body. *It's Draco*, was all he managed of coherent thought, before he was swallowed by a white light.

The white, unforgiving world he had left behind sliced him with its icy-cold, as the bitter chill on the air lashed at his naked, soaked body. His body screamed soundlessly as he was thrown to the muddy bank. Those hands, they stabbed at his chest with

reviving punches, until his chest heaved and water escaped his mouth. Harry gasped for air, shuddering from the spiteful cold. He sat up swiftly; searching around with bleary eyes for his clothes, but could not make them out without his glasses (which he had left atop of them). His teeth chattered.

A familiar blur wavered in front of him – *far* too close, but he stared intently at the fuzzy shape, unperturbed without his sight since he did not have to meet the intense eyes he knew would be glaring with furious light. Suddenly, his body lurched, overcome with the cold and he felt those hands at his shoulders steadying him, just before that voice, laced with fury tore through his hazy cloud of existence.

“What the devil are you doing trying to kill yourself, *Potter?!* ” Draco yelled, clutching Harry's shoulders in his hands tightly, with fear, with worry. He felt a sick and uneasy stab to his stomach as Harry regurgitated another mouthful of water.

Draco's white-blond hair hung low over his eyes, completely drenched in icy water, that dripped down around the curve of his nose. His eyelashes flicked against the droplets as he attempted not to keep his focus on Harry who was shivering, and unconsciously picked Harry's shirt up and threw it to him. “Here,” Draco snarled. Harry looked a little stunned as he caught the shirt. Harry's naked body shuddered as the icicle-like globules raced down his skin. Draco couldn't help but glance over every now and again as Harry pulled his arms through, tugging at the hem so that it covered his freezing nether-regions.

“Well, Potter? Are you going to answer me?!” Draco asked once more. But Harry sat still, silent. He shivered once more and Draco glared down at him, in such a way, that Harry felt an uneasy vibe course throughout his body, not like that buzzing sensation that made him reckless, made him need. It was almost like those eyes were feeding him with disappointment, dismay. Harry's body was almost as white as his. Draco had never seen Harry so pale.

Draco held out his hand to Harry, maybe for the first time, showing him kindness as he offered to help him up. “Well?”

Harry blinked, his chapped and frosted lips parting as he surveyed the hand offered to him in confusion. He shuddered, teeth chattering as he slipped his icy fingers into Malfoy's hand, which curled around him slowly, drawing him to his feet. Breath escaped his mouth in wispy furls of fog and he stumbled, steadied by the hand that tightened around his blissfully not letting him go...

“I wasn't t-trying to k-kill myself,” he stuttered from the cold, staring into Draco's

softened expression. He longed for the cover of his clothes but was reluctant to pull away from the blond's grasp, knowing he would never be permitted this again. He tugged more insistently on the bottom of his shirt. "I was j-just...wanted to go...g-go for a swim...c-clear my h-head..." He knew how ridiculous that sounded but could not find the willpower to care. Everything had been crystal-clear in the water, he knew *exactly* why he felt the way he did.

He drew in a shaky breath, which cut his throat with the coldness of it. He still could not make Draco out to be anything more than a blurry shape without his glasses and for some reason that made him feel braver. Wondering dimly what he looked like in Draco's eyes at that moment, damp and wearing only his school-shirt, his lashes fluttered closed and he leant towards Draco's lips.

The blond's free hand came between them to stop him, though not with the harshness of before, merely gentle insistence that he remain, fingers splayed across his chest the very way Harry had done to him before.

Draco clenched his teeth together tightly, he could feel the tightness of his them etching painfully along his gum, gasping slightly to Harry's advance. "Harry, don't," he warned him, keeping his hand between their too-close bodies so Harry could not get closer.

That fierce, full buzz that had overwhelmed Harry so much had taken control of Draco's soul, he could feel himself weakening to it, and it hurt. He hated knowing that something inside him had so much control over him, more than he was beginning to be able to handle. As his hand rest between him and Harry, he felt that surging force electrocute him. He wiped his hand across his forehead at the building sweat.

"Y-You need to stay away from me!" Draco insisted, lightly pushing Harry away. His hand fell to his chest, where he pressed against the burning scar there. His head bowed down. His feet twitched against the cold and he felt something stabbing into his heel, he glanced down and grabbed the object that had scratched his foot.

He handed Harry's murky, mud covered glasses back as a static pull wrenched his chest once more. It hurt. It felt as though someone had sliced his scar open again and was pouring acid into the aching crease. He clawed at it again, winding motions overrunning him and he struggled to breathe.

This was the first time Harry had seen the scar on Draco's chest with his own eyes, the one that he had caused, the one he had...

Harry's thought trailed off before the regrettable guilt could rear its ugly head. He took his glasses from Draco's free hand, (the one that the blond had seemed to forgotten was wrapped around his) wiping them on his damp school shirt before sliding them back on and Draco's fuzzy outline shimmered back into focus. Water clung to blond tendrils that stroked Malfoy's pale cheeks, the droplets trickling down his tense features, creating an irresistible path to that exposed chest, imperfect for only one scar, a scar that Harry could not escape responsibility for.

He pushed forward to close the gap between them, Draco's hand at his own chest offering little resistance. His own fingers reached out, tracing the scar carefully, Draco stiffened but did not pull away, and soft, soothing pulses, unlike the erratic shocks he'd felt before trembled through his skin. "I don't *want* to stay away from you," he murmured, jaw set to keep his voice from shaking from the cold. "You can push me away but I'm not going anywhere. I'm only asking for a chance to prove—" His words were cut short by the slight shake of Draco's head and the sudden press of his hand to keep the last inch of space between himself and Harry. A small exasperated sigh pulled Draco's lips into a drained smile, and Harry smiled warmly in response, hope flaring in his chest despite the (expected) possibility that Draco might crush it at any moment.

Determination set Harry's brow and he chewed his lip for a fleeting moment, before he reached in for Draco's lips again.

Draco felt his heart accelerate, Harry was too close. He felt so exhausted with having so little sleep and his momentary rescue attempt, he was about ready to collapse. His eyes shimmered as Harry leant in on him and with that underlying surge throbbing stronger than ever, Draco wasn't sure if he was going to be able to resist him this time. Because what Harry wanted, he so desperately needed.

This bond between them, whatever it was that bound them together was only becoming stronger, and with every second that passed while he stood so close to Harry, it pulled him deeper and deeper into its depths.

Draco immediately raised both hands up to stop Harry's still dripping face, lips maybe a hairsbreadth apart. Each palm pushed roughly against his soft wet cheeks as he glared for a moment, their eyes like magnets as neither he nor Harry could bring themselves to resist. He sighed lightly and with a sudden plunge, smashed Harry's lips forward into his own.

Yanking the dark locks roughly, he pulled himself harder and harder against Harry's tender pink lips, mouths open and devouring the other hungrily. Suddenly he was

battling Harry's tongue, exploring the wet texture of that hot mouth, discovering everything he had to offer, and he found himself hating that he liked it this much. His tongue slithered over his as he rolled it around, saliva of Gryffindor and Slytherin clashing with an immense force. He sank deeper into the very wet, very heavy force of the kiss; Harry was struggling to contend with it as Draco overpowered him.

With a sudden, surging heartbeat, he threw Harry backwards away from him, lips parting with a splash of saliva that dripped down Draco's fine chin. Harry tumbled to the muddy floor with a thump, like he wasn't already in enough pain just dealing with everything else. Hadn't Draco given him enough bruises? He felt his heart shatter as he sat watching Draco's angry expression in apprehension.

Draco wiped the side of his lip with his arm, his face curved in a disgusted way as he stumbled over to Harry and glared down at him. He bent down and gazed into those faded orbs of Harry's, once more reminding himself of how much he was hurting him. But he couldn't get close, that was what Voldemort wanted. He began mumbling, "*You're sick Potter,*" over a few times, as he finally readied himself to get up.

As he stood, staring down at Harry's shattered shell, he hurled up a ball of saliva and spat in Harry's face. "Sick!" He shouted once more, and Harry flinched away.

* * *

Long, slender fingers toyed idly with the diamond-encrusted cane, and Lucius watched his only son carefully through the flames of the fire-call. They couldn't keep whisking Draco out of Hogwarts or it would begin to be suspicious, and the Owl post was watched constantly. Besides which, there were some things best said face-to-face. He surveyed the boy's posture, stiff and proper but with eyes that (would no doubt betray his thoughts so carefully concealed with occlumency) were lowered to an apparently interesting patch of carpet. His son had perfectly mastered the art of wearing his emotions behind a complacent mask of porcelain, but there were some things he could not hide from his father...

"You are aware, of course, that you are taking your role too far, Draco. It has unleashed just as many repercussions on you as it has on the Potter boy, more so in fact, since it is you that is dealing this unnecessary behaviour. It is most unbecoming, Draco. Consider your actions very carefully, my boy," the endearment caused the younger blond to raise his gaze to him at last, "because I am not sure you comprehend just how deep you may become."

He watched as Draco surveyed him vacantly for a few moments, before parting his lips in speech.

Silver shimmers glistened from Draco's eyes as he sighed. He wasn't ready to tell his father about this connection between himself and Harry yet, because he had only just started to accept it himself. He gazed skywards for a few small moments, allowing the dark void of the ceiling above to fill him with a clear and open mind as he readied his words.

“Look, Father, the closer *Potter* and I become, the more chance the Dark Lord has of destroying him. He chose me to do this – after what happened with Dumbledore, I can't afford to let him down again, and if that means doing anything in my power to get as close to Harry as I can, then that's what I will do. It's nothing more than a ploy, and I'm disgusted that you suggest that it ever would be.” Draco sneered. He was almost fooling himself, if not for the slip of the tongue – for calling *Harry* by his first name it might have succeeded.

Draco's expression saddened, as he began to think about what would happen if he kept getting too close. He shook his head slightly at that thought. It wouldn't come to that.

“You indeed *cannot* afford to let him down, Draco,” Lucius agreed, his voice low with warning, “Yet I do not believe you have considered just what this task will require of you, it may not always be a mere *act* once things get out of hand. Have you given thought to what you may have to do to get Potter to fall completely?” He raised a suggestive brow, sure that his son was *quite* aware of his implication.

“Can you honestly look upon a devoted Potter and do what must be done?” The confliction flickering behind the blond boy's grey eyes suggested he was thinking over that heavily. “I care not for his trifling heart,” Lucius clarified coolly, “But I fear it might undo you if you break it.”

“I said I can do it, didn't I?!” Draco snapped, even though he had no intention of doing such a thing to Harry, deep down in his heart he knew he couldn't, nor did he want to. But it was still frustrating that his father doubted him, even if in worry. Had he really seemed that pathetic when he was unable to perform the killing curse?

“I'll show you – I'll prove you all wrong!” Draco snarled. For a slight moment, Draco's anger overpowered him. For a brief second he wanted to carry out Lord Voldemort's wishes and in fact bring the great Harry Potter to his knees. A moment's malicious thought hung, then quickly vanished.

He sighed as he clenched his fists in such a way he swore he felt as though his nails broke the skin. He knew what his father was saying was one-hundred percent true. He would never be able to kill Harry, even if he wanted to, he would not be able to take him to his death.

“Nor take his body and heart without complications in your conscience,” Lucius stated, reading his son’s thoughts in the moment when the walls around his mind shivered with dread of his task. “I do not think you weak or incapable, my son, I merely...” He paused, shifting slightly from where he stood in his study, his head leaning in through the emerald flames of the grand fireplace.

“Your mother and I worry – I more so, for I know what is required of you. Take care and do not fear coming to me.” He bowed his head after a moment, losing himself to the disgust of involving his family in such danger. “I will contact you soon, Draco.” And with that, he drew back, his head vanishing from the fireplace, leaving Draco entirely alone with the raging inferno of thoughts that struggled to swallow him whole.

Draco gave the grate his father had parted from a slight smile, all he really wanted was to help him, yet Draco had angered himself over something so minor. He probably should have just opened up to his parents, allow them to take the burden from his shoulders, but he wanted to handle it by himself. He felt it was his obligation to handle it alone, for them, a trait that he and Harry had so deeply in common. They both never wanted nor believed they needed assistance, unwilling to except help, when in fact they were both two of the people who needed it the most.

Everything about his mission was getting to him, and just holding himself together was becoming a mission in itself.

* * *

A week of lightless moons passed, all of the concerns Draco carried for his task subsiding slightly without the immediate pressure of the Dark Lord on his mind. But the one thing that had been weighing him down relentlessly was Harry. When their lips had touched, it was as though the connection had intensified tenfold. He would just be sitting in class when suddenly the need to see Harry overwhelmed him.

Unlike before when he was able to simply push those thoughts away, now he was

forced to excuse himself to the bathroom because he found himself either building a sweat or having a little trouble down below. All of which, started to really embarrass him. Luckily no one had noticed yet, but with the way things were going, someone was bound to catch him soon, and that was the last thing he needed on top of everything else.

Sat in the great hall, eating lunch with the other slytherins, Draco scanned the room for Harry. Even though he knew he couldn't get close, there was no harm in looking at the forbidden fruit. As his eyes bounced from person to person, they finally landed on Harry.

Harry could not help but thank whoever created the *Muffliato* charm, (Hermione probably knew) it was the only spell he knew of that permitted he and his friends to discuss such important, covert things without being overheard or arousing suspicion.

“...When Dumbledore discussed Voldemort’s *magpie* behaviours I truly believe he was referring to his inability to resist using the greatest and most significant of objects for each Horcrux,” Hermione relayed. Harry and Ron played along with the illusion the *Muffliato* charm created by picking at their food as she spoke (although Harry was sure Ron was playing his part and enjoying his dessert a little too well).

“That makes sense,” Harry nodded, “The locket, the ring... The ring was *Slytherin*’s!” He gasped the last part, clocking on to what his friend was saying. Hermione’s lips tipped up in a triumphant smile.

“Exactly,” she practically hissed, lowering her head a little, as that frighteningly brilliant look crossed her face. “The others, they *must* be belongings of the Founders. Ravenclaw, Hufflepuff and Gryffindor are left—”

“Great so now we just have to rift through everything those three ever owned,” Ron snorted, earning him a glare from Hermione that silenced him instantly. He went back to his pie.

“I have narrowed it down due to the information we’ve gathered over the holidays,” she answered, her retort almost reprimanding. Harry could not help but smile a little. “Gryffindor is a complete mystery, I cannot figure it out for the life of me – maybe that was the one he intended when he set out to kill Harry and therefore never got round to it but in any case...”

Hermione glanced around, making sure no one was watching before pulling out her text book, one Harry did not clearly recognise, though it certainly looked worse for wear. “Hufflepuff’s chalice – a *cup*, I am *sure* that was what he chose but–” She clucked her tongue impatiently, “I can’t figure out where it may be. Now *Ravenclaw*...” She trailed off, ensuring no one was watching, before pointing down at a picture in the book. A dark, faded engraving like the kind Harry had known the druids for, lay beneath her delicate finger.

“What’s a *diadem*?” Ron asked, mouth full of his pork pie. Hermione grimaced in distaste.

“Essentially a tiara, Ronald,” She bit back, turning her gaze to Harry, “It’s *here*, in the *castle*!”

Harry’s eyes widened. “At Hogwarts? But that’s *brilliant*!”

“In geographical terms, yes,” she agreed, though a small frown still creased her brow. “But Hogwarts is a big place, with numerous hidden passageways and enchantments. It could be *anywhere*.”

Harry pulled his dessert about a bit more, watching as Hermione subtly closed the book and tucked it away when Neville and Ginny glanced their way. No one could tell what it was but it was best not to risk it. “With the Marauder’s map and your brain Hermione we’ll find it,” Harry assured her, noting her broad smile at his complement. And with a murmur from his companion, the spell protecting their conversation ended.

“Good pie,” Ron chewed out, finishing his final mouthful. This time even Hermione looked like she may laugh at his indifferent attitude, he always could be a little anti-climactic. There was a moment of silence between them, of thoughtfulness and then, Harry felt an elbow in his ribs.

“Not that I want to know,” Ron began carefully, with no little amount of awkwardness, “But err...you and Malfoy... What’s happening there?”

Hermione choked on her pumpkin juice and Harry felt his gut plummet a little in recollection of their last encounter (he had successfully avoided him since the kiss on his lips followed by the spit in his face). “It’s not happening,” Harry confirmed, not bothering to disguise the bitterness in his voice. He had acted out his indifference to all things *Malfoy* well the last week or so, even in front of his friends and so did not feel guilty expressing his resentment.

“Why’d you ask?” he questioned the red-head. Ron shrugged, looking back to his plate and helping himself to another portion of pie.

“Malfoy is looking at you an awful lot.”

Harry tipped his head back at Ron’s words, catching those stormy eyes watching him intently. He felt his stomach flip jerkily at the look he caught in those eyes before they looked away hurriedly. Harry felt the smirk flicker at his lips as he turned back to his friends, dipping his spoon into his treacle tart. “Can’t *imagine* what he’s looking over here for,” he said a little too sarcastically (and far too smugly).

Hermione rolled her eyes and Ron coughed unnecessarily under his throat in awkwardness, but Harry delighted in the look he’d caught on Malfoy’s face just then. It seemed his (Harry’s) outward display of dealing, of distinctly not moping was driving him insane. *I can practically hear him seething*, Harry thought as he took a bite of his dessert.

Draco grabbed his fork and stabbed his pasty, as Harry ignorantly glanced for only a few moment's before turning away.

He's ignoring me.

The blond continued to stab violently at his food, waiting for Harry to crack and look over, but he didn't, almost ten minutes passed and Harry hadn't looked back at him once. It was as if he was *trying* to wind him up – and it was working!

“Draco, are you alright?” Goyle asked, jumping as Draco threw his plate to the floor. The tin sound of his cup following it echoed through the hall, drawing everyone’s unwanted attention over at him. He abruptly leapt to his feet.

“I’m leaving,” he hissed back at Goyle, and unintentionally everyone else who had turned their focus on him. Draco's robes flared as if to express his fury as he briskly made his exit.

What’s wrong with me? He wondered, *You told him to leave you alone, you told him to stay away, it's what you wanted!*

“Shut-up!” Draco shouted to no one other than the voices contradicting his temper. By

the time he had reached the Astronomy Tower and had begun climbing the stairs, he had still not won the battle against the thoughts of Harry. Whatever he said, whatever he decided he did or did not want to do, Potter was like a ghost haunting him, one he could not get rid of (even when Potter made the effort to steer clear of him). And an irritatingly small voice in the back of his head had begun to whisper that it didn't want to either. *Shut it*, Draco hissed again.

Harry had been far too tempted to follow Draco out and catch him mid-sulk, but it seemed like ignoring him, liking doing exactly what he had asked and '*staying away*' proved more effective at getting the blond's attention (oddly). So it was, that he eagerly ate up a second helping of treacle tart, feeling a little uplifted by his minor triumph when he followed Hermione up to Astronomy (Ron having moved his separate way to Muggle Studies).

The climb up to Astronomy was always tiresome, and yet, knowing Malfoy would be there only made him more eager to reach the classroom. Once he did however, he did not know what to do with himself. He was too wound up by his success that he had to pause to gather himself outside, before entering. His eyes roved the students filing into the room, spotting the familiar blond just ahead, already taking his usual seat. For once, Harry was grateful his usual place was a few seats across from the Slytherin.

That familiar, blissful buzz tickled his skin, and he dug his nails into his palms as he felt delicious tingles of Malfoy's frustration (of more than one kind) cause his trousers to tighten. Hermione inclined her head to him a few times, knowing that his tenseness must have had something to do with Malfoy, but thankfully not seeming to notice the predicament Harry was barely controlling under the desk. He shuddered with the intensity. They had been apart for too long after that kiss, after Draco had pulled him in for it – and it was driving him mad!

Never mind that he pushed me away, Harry thought, *all I can think of is the damn kiss, and his hands on me – naked. Oh, Merlin, he saw me naked!* His teeth grinded in the determination to *not* flee the class and fist his burgeoning arousal to completion – what had him panting so suddenly?

His gaze flickered sideways to Malfoy, who was watching him still, the frustration pounding in his veins... *The memory of that kiss*, he added mentally, *is that all Malfoy's doing?* He turned back to face the class as a sharp elbow from Hermione alerted him to his Professor's approach, but too late...

“Do you find your daydreams more pivotal to your NEWT scores than my lecture, Mr Potter?”

Harry shook his head, horrified as he stared down at the blank parchment before him. Malfoy may have seen his façade of remaining ignorant to his (Malfoy’s) presence, but beneath it all, Harry was thinking of him so erratically that he hadn’t written a single thing down.

“See me after class, Potter,” the Professor barked, before marching to the head of class. Harry ducked his head, hastening to copy the notes Hermione had taken, as his left hand subtly shoved his persistent erection down. He was *definitely* not looking up at Malfoy again this lesson, whatever the bond demanded, Harry would obey the orders barked at him with spiteful rejection.

I’ll leave him alone if that’s what he wants, he thought.

Draco fiddled with his quill as the lesson wore on. He ran his index finger over the tip and pushed against its point end every now and again with frustration. His face scrunched up like a bratty child as Harry remained indifferent to him and when the teacher confronted Harry’s lack of attention, Draco felt a twinge in his stomach. His fingers stretched forward across his desk and clung to the end as his neck twisted sideways against the pull. He couldn’t take his eyes away from the *Chosen One*.

He leant back into his chair, exhausted by his very thoughts, until the lesson came to end. He grabbed his bag, telling Crabbe and Goyle to go ahead and wait for him in the dungeons and purposely took his time filling his bag with his pencils and textbooks, while the other students quickly vacated the room.

Approaching the door himself, he glanced over at Harry, (the only remaining student) who was *still* paying him no mind and hissed as he left.

Harry huffed under his breath as he swung his bag higher over his shoulder. That had been the last thing he needed. Detention, a lecture on how important NEWTs were and how bad his scores had been recently – *any* of those he could have taken in his stride. But a sympathetic speech on his efforts for the fight against Voldemort?

Harry winced, yet more special treatment for the *Chosen One*. Were it not for Snape

making his life a misery as usual in Defence Against the Dark Arts, he was sure he'd go mad. He stopped at that, shutting the door to the classroom behind him. Never had he ever expected to rely on *Snape* to be the model teacher, although now he thought about it McGonagall didn't give him any unnecessary reprieve either...

A sudden slam into his side made him jerk roughly from his musings. Harry yelped, and he caught himself against the wall, rough stone grating against the flesh of his palm, while his bag tumbled to the ground, scattering its contents. He gasped raggedly from the shock. Tingles like lava licked up his spine, until his neck snapped to the side from the pressure. He could not help but permit a low gasp of pleasure escape his lips as he was thrown roughly back into the alcove under the stairwell. He knew instantly who by.

Inside, his organs were churning, heart thudding frantically, his lungs were writhing for air but outwardly, the moment he looked up into those eyes, (darkened by lust) he betrayed nothing but calm surprise. Draco Malfoy was the one seeking him out, the one pressing inappropriately against his body, that meant, with their roles reversed, Harry was to play the impassive bastard.

I think I can manage that, he thought gleefully, recalling the passion of the kiss as Malfoy had pulled him to his body and then the humiliation spat in his face a moment after...

"Can I help you with something, *Malfoy*?" Harry asked coolly, though making sure to accentuate the blond's *surname* (not dignifying him with his first name as he had been doing in his mind) with as much bitterness as he could manage. He would prove he was not that whimpering, love-struck puppy (not entirely) though he was unsure who he was attempting to prove this to, himself or Draco...

Tensed palms, and curled fingers held Harry painfully tight beneath them, even with a slight struggle, the *Chosen One* was unable to move. The cold surface of the stone behind him chilled Harry's neck, causing it to pimple slightly while his heart pounded beneath those strong, Slytherin hands.

Draco's glowing, silver eyes burned with immense fury at Harry's calmness. He felt frustration pump through every vein in his body down to the last fingertip as he held Harry in place in the shadows beneath the stairs. His white-blond strands hung between them, interlocking with Harry's unruly locks and his angered smile eased slightly, reminding himself just who was in control.

Their eyes met, and neither Harry nor Draco were able to blink or glance away from

the other. Harry was wearing that smug look which made Draco grip at his wrists even harder, forcing his thumbnails into them until Harry yelped. He smiled at the slight pain he inflicted.

Harry swallowed hard as Draco leant forwards, hot breath steaming over the flushed skin of his neck with heated puffs, crackling energy riding across the tormented flesh each time Draco drew breath. The gravity surged with electrical pulses, drawing them closer and closer. Harry's tongue swept across his lips in anticipation, and Draco's darkened eyes darted to the movement, relishing the sight of nervousness.

"You don't fool me, *Potter*," he whispered, a warm wetness running over Harry's ear while he continued to speak. "You *loved* it when I kissed you, didn't you?" Draco's pants sent chills over Harry's earlobe and he twitched slightly when Draco bit into it hard, as if probing Harry to answer. "*Well?*"

Harry's back arched a little, his fingers reached up to snag hold of the sleeves of the Slytherin's robes. His lips caught between his teeth to stifle a groan (badly) as his eyes screwed shut. "What does it *matter?*" He ground out, jaw set. Malfoy would *not* do this to him. Not push him away then clasp him to him once more – he wasn't *anyone's* plaything! *Not even to a Malfoy*, he mentally hissed.

"You told me to stay away from you enough times; shouldn't you be relieved I listened?" His voice was fighting to remain indifferent, but the all-too *slytherin* smile twisting those lips suggested the fight was in vain. "Now you don't have to soil your perfect pureblood hands with the *Chosen One*," he added with no little amount of bitterness, still burnt by the affection *spat* back at his face.

"You can go tell *everyone* how pathetic I was." His voice was stronger, braver than he felt inside, where his lungs trembled with breath, where his stomach clenched in rejection of his words. Inside, where a voice was screaming at him to sink into the rough embrace and melt under the force of the flames.

Malfoy's grip on Harry's wrists weakened slightly at his stern, more confident words. He had indeed told him to stay away, but the fact that Harry seemed like he was purposely avoiding him (actually doing as Draco wanted) frustrated him all the more. Because then he didn't have an excuse.

"Shut up, *Potter*," Malfoy sneered, his hands tightening back over Harry's wrists and his nose crinkling in that familiar, disgusted look that betrayed the confusion and for the first time, the *heartache* that this bond was forcing upon him.

The pull was overwhelming him; it always seemed stronger when he was in closer contact with Harry. His body seemed to double in temperature, and his chest ached, the scar of *Sectumsempra* still burning beneath his robes. But that wasn't as bad as the pull itself, or the Dark Mark, which, on top of everything else, was also stabbing at him with the deep, unbearable sensation of hot needles piercing him continually.

“What do you *want*, Malfoy,” Harry growled through a wince, not surrendering by looking away from that glare. *Because it certainly isn't me*, his mind supplemented bitterly. But with that question Draco pressed forward, his knee sneaking between his thighs. A stunned gasp escaped him and he tossed his head to the side, his neglected erection throbbing agonisingly beneath the unrelenting pressure of Draco Malfoy's body.

Blimey, he mentally gasped. *Why am I letting him get to me? This is so wrong.*

You aren't letting him do anything, another voice argued. *You don't have a choice when it comes to him...*

Draco felt something hard brush against his leg and grinned slyly as he noticed the bulge in Harry's trousers. “What's this, *Potter*? Got a little hard-on, have we?” Draco laughed, mocking him as he moved his hand down to grab the heated bulge. Harry winced, letting out a little groan as Draco's hand made contact with the throbbing member.

“Not so indifferent to me now are we, *Potter*?” Draco teased as he pulled his hand back, satisfied that all Harry's attempts of overlooking him somehow faded when he made that contact. He clucked his tongue shamefully at Harry, whose cheeks had turned a pinkish shade. “And *you're* supposed to be the *Chosen One*?”

Harry shook his head frantically at that question, at the way Malfoy gave a tut of feigned disappointment, and his eyes shut tight behind his slightly fogged up glasses. The blood filling his aching cock felt like lava, and the nails pricking his wrists injected him with the burning need for more *everything*.

His head tilted to the side, unwilling to betray the treacherous flush to his cheeks as his arms tensed with the half-hearted attempt to throw Draco off. Draco remained unmoved, in fact only leant in further, so that his lips were a hairsbreadth from where his adam's apple visibly quivered in his throat.

“Aren't you supposed to be a *Death Eater*?” He hissed with no real force to his words, and the smile against his skin suggested Draco knew it. The wrong, lustful purse of

those lips that blew against in his ear made his hips jerk forwards uncontrollably. Draco jerked at that statement. “*Aren't you supposed to be a Death Eater?*” He knew he was a Death Eater, but the truth was, he was doing everything but act like one.

“Shut up!” Draco snapped again, bringing Harry forward with him before he threw him hard, slamming him straight back into the wall with a brutal force. “How do you know what I am?” Draco growled, yanking Harry at the wrists, obviously agitated by the fact that he had brought up his mark, which was undeniably aching against his skin.

“And aren't you supposed to be dating, *What's-her-face?*” Draco asked, implying Ginny as he looked down at Harry's heated lump once more with a grin, before bringing his head back up and leaning closely into Harry's ear. “By the looks of *things*, apparently not,” he spat, ensuring his every breath left a stain on Harry's ear.

He grinned as inclined his head to face Harry, his slate eyes staring sharply into green. A direct line of something between love and hate stifled the remaining air between them.

“If I were with anyone I wouldn't be standing here letting you fondle me,” Harry breathed, his electrified nerves still shaken by the look flickering in the blond's eyes, eyes that narrowed with a menacing grin at his words. *You aren't letting him do anything*, that same, smooth voice whispered, licking delicious quivers up the back of his neck, sounding all-too-much like Malfoy.

“I told you,” he murmured, cheeks still coloured with the thought of even *whispering* the following words, as he turned to meet those eyes with his own emerald gaze at last. “I want you – *you!*” When Draco's grip on him relaxed a little in surprise at his honesty, he tore his hands free, sinking his fingers into the blond's robes at his shoulders and jerking him forwards, so that his cock grinded deliciously along the hard apex of Draco's thigh.

Electricity laced his every move, and he raised his own leg slightly to rub the bulge in Draco's trousers. The fingers of one hand traced up, tickling the little blond hairs on the back of the Slytherin's neck with static tingles.

Draco's twitched at the tickles of Harry's soft fingers, it sent a discomfiting shudder of pleasure to his spine and over down to his hips, pleasure he pretended he didn't want as he flinched his neck away.

Pale lips let a laugh roll over them as he took control of Harry once more, forcing him

backwards with struggle. Harry refused to allow himself be thrown against the wall again. Draco flung him sideways and tumbled down to the floor with him. He knelt a distance above, trying not to let his own erection touch Harry, who lay flat to the ground, shadowed by the Slytherin, their legs tangled.

Draco breathed in deeply, pausing for a moment before slowly exhaling. He was losing control. Beneath him, Harry shifted and Draco lunged, pinning those hands to keep him in place. "Tell me again," He whispered in a husky voice.

Harry shuddered at that guttural whisper, throwing his hips up to grind up against Malfoy's so that his clothed arousal met the one above. A few moments of gratifying gyrations were all he stole before the blond clucked his tongue (through a badly stifled groan) and held his hips to the unforgiving ground once more with a hand firmly placed on his stomach.

"Admit that you feel it," Harry insisted, his words nearly a hiss, as his fingers slid across his robes to caress the hand holding his hips down. The blond's fingers twitched beneath his, and he looked up with shining, lust-glazed eyes for an answer. When none came, he traced the soft veins of that alabaster flesh and laid his hand over the *Sectumsempra* scar, watching those eyes as he had done before. *He must feel it*, his mind insisted, *there is no other reason why he'd be drawn to me if not...*

As he drew from Harry's kiss, he grinned, a smug look had overriding his features. He couldn't help but broaden the smile playfully at Harry, as he watched him wriggle around below him, his chest brushing up against him every now and again with his struggles.

"Admit *what*?" A sly sneer cornered one side of his smile, which quickly faded when Harry's hand reached his chest. His scar gave a twinge at Harry's touch. His head fell down, and his gaze was wandered over Harry's stomach as he denied it once more. Pain overcame his face, and he hid it behind those white-blond curtains.

"I told you already, Potter, I...*feel*...nothing." His features betrayed his true feelings too well as his the pained look in his eyes met Harry's for the first time. He took hold of Harry's erection and yanked it with an unnatural, painful jerk, as if to punish him for trying to get inside his head.

"*Sick* Potter – You're pathetic!" He yelled once more, seizing Harry's robes once more and shoving him down so that his head bashed on the floor with a crack.

"I AM PATHETIC!!!" Harry screamed, seizing hold of Draco's shoulders and

throwing him back roughly so that the blond skidded into the wall on his arse. Harry flew towards him, seizing a fistful of his robes to keep his attention. "But you're a bloody awful liar, Draco, and that's a whole lot worse," he let the Slytherin ponder the way his first name sounded rolling of his tongue for a moment before continuing.

"I am sick because I want you, despite anything you can possibly say. I'm drawn to you regardless of the bond. I'm pathetic for letting you get to me but at least I'm man enough to admit it." His voice did not so much as shudder, fury and arousal pounded through him like adrenaline. He reached down with his free hand, rubbing Draco's erection through his trousers roughly, and felt those hips arch into his hand against the blond's will.

"At least I can admit when I'm scared or in over my head. You can't even admit we're connected through some kind of curse! I *know* you can feel it because there's no other reason you'd touch me!" He pressed down harder with his palm, feeling the heat through the restraint of the cloth. It felt so weird, touching another boy's cock, but he didn't dislike it, and he didn't pull away.

Blond hair hung limply in those dark eyes he wanted to see, and he bit his lip in the effort to keep silent at the sight. Draco's hands that had been at his shoulders tensed, and the hardness under Harry's hand pulsed heatedly.

"You're going to come in a second and I bet you won't have the guts to admit that either? Will you? *Tell* me that you feel it." Even *he* could feel the tingles pulsing through his fingers with each stroke, there was no way Draco couldn't feel what it was doing to such a sensitive place, and there was no way it wasn't driving him crazy.

"Don't act like you know so much, *Potter!*" Draco snarled, staring with more intensity than any of the times he had before, straight into Harry's deep, green eyes. He darted forwards and threw Harry backwards into the opposite wall. Harry's hand did not move from his cock an inch, even as the pair of them stumbled and slammed into the concrete with a smash. Their chests were buzzing from the closeness.

"I'm *not* lying, and I'm *not* a coward," Draco growled menacingly, seductively, trailing off as he pulled out his wand and directed it straight down at Harry's hardened area. Poking it, he drew the tip of the wand along the bottom of his bulge and dragged it upwards slowly against Harry's tightened school trousers, tickling the tip through the fabric as he cast a spell over it.

"*Fulitrio*," He chanted, grinning as Harry wriggled under the light, feathery tickling that enveloped his penis. He would have preferred anything but a tickle torture charm.

He hated being tickled at the best of times, but especially *there* a place that had no business being ticklish!

“I wouldn't get off over something as sick as *this*, *Potter*. Shame we can't say the same for you,” Draco implied wearing that smug smile he was so good at, as his dampened hand moved away from Harry's come-stained trousers.

Harry gasped for air, spluttering as if drowning. His body quivered, shuddered with convulsions, but his eyes burned a furious green staring up at an obviously lying Malfoy in determination. “S-Stop! M-Make the spell stop!” He begged, the sensations overwhelming his oversensitive flesh. When Malfoy merely stood back, staring down at him, Harry dived into his robes for his own wand, aiming it at himself. “*F-Finite...Incantatum!*” He hissed, the relief of the end making him topple sideways.

He was blushing, he *knew* he was. But he could not help it. He'd just come – in his *underwear* in front of Malfoy! The said blond moved to stand over him, and Harry groaned slightly at the aftermath of sensations surging through his body. Maybe it was better in some ways that Malfoy had not deemed him worthy enough to come by his bare hand. *I definitely wouldn't have been able to get up if he had – stupid bond...*

Struggling to sit up, on his knees, he held his quivering hand over his soiled robes again. “*Tergeo!*” He managed out, sighing with relief as his spendings vanished from his trousers. That perfect shadow still loomed over him, and looking up with glistening eyes he saw Malfoy still there, surveying him with confliction flickering in his own stormy orbs.

“What are you still doing here, if you're not connected to me?” Harry asked, not expecting an answer (at least not an honest one). *If he wants to be a pouf in denial so be it*, he thought, *I know the truth*. He'd felt Draco hardening, felt it through their bond even *before* they'd even touched. *The idiot will realise he can't lie to me sooner or later...*

“Or maybe...you want a turn?” A smile twitched at the sides of his lips as he watched Draco's brows rise in embarrassed shock. Harry's smirk broadened and he knelt up further, shoving Malfoy's thighs roughly until he stumbled back to stand against the wall.

“Well you're in luck; you're the only frigid pouf in denial,” he illustrated his intentions as he reached in, pulling Draco's cock out to caress it teasingly. “*With a hard-on*,” he added. Above him, Draco snarled in anger and reached down to push him away. Harry dropped his wand to his lap and his now free hand smacked Draco's

away. He leant in, heartbeat racing with anticipation as his tongue flicked over the pink, swollen head.

Draco felt infuriated, grabbing hold of Harry's hair and yanking his head backwards as he reached for his cock. Dark locks wrapped around his slytherin fingers and caught on his silver snake ring. Draco glared for a moment into Harry's shining eyes, before roughly pushing Harry's head back forwards towards his cock. Those lips were parted and waiting for him.

This is so wrong, Draco's mind insisted, but he ignored it, he couldn't help himself. It felt too good, and he had longed to have Harry's touch ever since this bond began – no, maybe even before that. He pushed himself forwards into Harry's mouth past his pink wet lips and deep into Harry's throat.

"That's right, *Potter*, suck it," Draco snarled, rolling his tongue over his cracked, dry lips as he continued to push himself deeper and deeper into Harry's throat.

Harry choked and spluttered on his mouthful. The taste wasn't so bad, it was clean at least; it just tasted like...*skin*. The static between them teased his tongue with sinful vibrations and he groaned, steadying himself with his hands on Draco's hips as he struggled to breathe through his nose. His eyes were shut tight, gasping with each retreat from his mouth, choking with each lurch back into it.

The fingers in his hair were spiteful and his eyes watered. This isn't what he wanted, but Draco was groaning, clutching him close – Draco *wanted* him. He wasn't going to stop.

Draco moved himself in and out quickly, both hands moving Harry's head along his pulsing member, all that rolling around on the floor had been building up to this magical explosion, and he didn't want to waste it. "Ah! I...I'm...I'm coming!" He yelled as he felt himself swell with pleasure. An explosion of white, sticky liquid burst from his engorged tip and splashed over Harry's face as he pulled out and tumbled back against the wall, panting with all his soul. His eyes were hazy as he began to catch his breath.

He looked down smugly at Harry, whose face and glasses were splattered with his come. He hurled up a mouthful of phlegm and spat at the ground beside Harry. "Sick Potter!" He hissed, re-zipping his pants and knocking past him as he grabbed his wand from the floor.

Harry's nose wrinkled as Malfoy spat at him again, and leapt to his feet, seizing his

wand and bag from the ground before chasing after him. He reached him after a short sprint, seizing his arm and roughly turning him on the spot to face him. Draco's face drew into a telltale sneer, and his lips parted for another insult no doubt but Harry cut him off, sealing their mouths with a kiss.

He groaned at the feel of Malfoy's lips against him, it set his body alight as if he were doused with petrol. An inward smirk glowed behind their joined lips. His free hand seized a fistful of blond hair and Harry held Draco to him as his tongue swept out, pushing the remainders of Draco's come with it. He drew back, triumphant at Draco's disgust as he realised what he (Harry) had done, beginning to spit the shared ejaculate on the floor.

"Next time you open your vile gob and spit at me," Harry began, walking away from the Slytherin, "You just remember who still has a mouthful of your come." And with that, he walked through the archway, disappearing round the corner and out of sight. *That's it, he thought, for once he can be the one left standing there, confused...*

~To Be Continued...

Chapter 5: Chapter Five

(Bound By) Clandestine Addiction

[Chapter Five]

The dungeons were cold during the February month, so even more firewood was required to keep the Slytherin common room free of chill. Ron had previously earned himself a weeks worth of detentions and his punishment had been helping Hagrid in the forbidden forest to collect firewood for just that. Without magic. He wasn't happy in the least about it. He was missing an extra meal chopping firewood for a house he loathed.

“That’s what you get for talking back during class, young Ron,” Hagrid murmured to his complaints, before throwing the wood over to Ron, who placed it into a large brown sack with the rest of the wood they had already collected.

“Why didn't Harry and Hermione get the same punishment then?” Ron asked bitterly, it had been them who caused him to talk in the first place. However, he supposed it was *he* that had snapped back at Professor Snape after the deduction of *far* too many house points...

“Keep to it, Ron,” Hagrid encouraged, completely ignoring his last question. It wasn't surprising really, he did ask it under muffled breath. “You can take that bag now, when you're done, come back for more,” Hagrid instructed, still chopping at the woodblocks as Ron left miserably. Asking him to do perform manual labour made him sour, especially when it involved hard work, if it had been Harry or Hermione, they would have just got on with it, but not Ron. He always moped about things, feeling sorry for himself when it came to anything like this, to be fair, he was rather unlucky when it came to getting caught talking...

As he entered the Slytherin dungeon, (which were left open for him by Professor Snape) he noticed Malfoy sitting strangely alone. “Where's ol’ reliable Crabbe and Goyle?” He asked in a tone designed to provoke, walking over to the fire and throwing in the wood.

Draco looked blindly at Ron. He couldn't even bring himself to respond. He had other things on his mind, and the events with Harry a few days ago were still ringing clear images through his mind. He hurt.

“Well? I asked you a question, Malfoy,” Ron sneered, his red hair flicking in his eyes

as he gazed spitefully over at the blond.

“What's it to you, Weasley?” Draco finally replied callously, glancing over at the boy who stood bewildered and murmuring under his breath. *What does Harry see in you?* He mumbled, watching as Draco stood to his feet.

“What did you just say?” Malfoy asked tersely, wondering if he had heard him correctly.

“Just wondering what the hell you did to make Harry go so soft for you,” Ron sneered, his hands tensed into fists either side of him. *You've ruined my best friend.* “Way I see it he'd have done better to have done away with you than let this...this queer bond glue him to you. He bloody well watches you – *wherever* you go! And what's worse you can't even give him the time of day!”

He pulled the now empty wood basket into his arms, giving himself an obstacle to walking right over there and smacking that shocked look right from Malfoy's face. He growled exasperatedly under his breath. “He was all-but set to marry my sister until you came along and somehow made him believe he's in love with you! Though how anyone can love *you* is beyond me...”

Draco laughed, throwing aside his amazement, mostly because he was a little shocked that Harry had told his friends about this, when he himself was struggling to except it.

“Like I want him to be all over me *all the time*, it's *pathetic*. Potter ruined *himself* the day he turned me down to become a Gryffindor and mixed with the likes of you, *Weasley*.” Draco looked the red-head up and down with disgust; coming into the Slytherin room to accuse him of such petty crimes? It sickened him.

He never asked for this, not for any of it. He hated that he was bound by the Dark Lord to carry out any wish he desired. That a spell cast upon him by Harry had formed something stronger than magic itself. He hated it all of it. Because he had never felt more pain than this, than knowing in the end he would have to take Harry to his death. He closed his eyes for a moment, and the pain subsided, if only for a moment. In that single moment he held his hand over his chest and into his cloak.

“GET OUT!” Malfoy shouted suddenly, pulling out his wand and directing it at Ron.

Ron's eyes widened with a flicker of fear and anger. He fumbled for his own wand, keeping it trained on Malfoy as he backed towards the door. “You made my best mate fucking queer! You made him love you then you use him as a convenience for

mopping up your hormonal *spendings*! As much as it makes me sick he loves you – *somehow*! So if you're man enough to do *You-Know-Who*'s bidding than be man enough to fix the mess you've made of him!"

At that moment Ron saw Malfoy lose it, saw him send a crimson curse aiming for his head, and bolted out the door, the spell narrowly missing him. He did not stop until he was well clear of the dungeons.

Draco sighed heavily, putting his wand away, Weasley was long gone as he returned to the couch he'd occupied just before, and he plunged down onto it with a small sigh. His head fell back and creased against the emerald-green and white cushions. He had this sick feeling churning around in his stomach and his heart was pounding. His eyelids felt heavy and his Dark Mark continued to sting at him with all the venom of a scorpion's tail. It hadn't calmed at all since his and Harry's little clash at the top of the Astronomy Tower.

He slowly pulled up his sleeve and gazed at his burning skin, even though the Dark Mark was concealed, a red rash remained in its place. Needle-like sensations all stabbed him at once with threatening reminders of his pledge to the Dark Lord. His eyelids clenched shut, as a few small droplets of water fell from the corners of them. He wiped them dry quickly as he re-opened them.

"Why is this happening to me?" He whispered quietly to himself. "If it wasn't for this ridiculous deed with the Dark Lord, none of this would be even be happening." His teeth scraped together in frustration. If Harry had never worked out he was a Death Eater, he would never had cast *Sectumsempra*, and there would be no bond between them. But it was his mark he blamed more, rather than Harry, that ugly tattoo, *that* thing was responsible for all of this.

His sadness soon turned into something far more dark and powerful as he leant up, angry all of a sudden. He wanted to get rid of this thing that was causing all this pain, and all the problems attached to it. He quickly jumped to his feet and rushed over towards the exit, fury carrying his footsteps along the cold concrete that lead him finally to the boys' bathroom.

He gazed up beneath white-blond locks as he reached the sinks, his reflection showing back something and someone he didn't want see. He squinted at himself, turning away from the person staring back and grabbed his wand. Holding its tip to his arm he began to chant, casting a spell that sliced through the skin as if it were no more than butter.

Crimson blood, splattered the sinks as he used his wand like a knife, the substance seemed almost *black* with the amount flooding from him. With his white skin now painted with his own blood, the Dark Mark appeared blacker and more furious than before as the snake-like-shape fought against his self-affliction.

“I don't want this anymore!” were the words that muffled over his stuttering lips as he repeated his spell against the burning, resisting flesh.

Even if he could wipe away his Dark Mark, the bond he had Harry shared would still remain, and the problem that was Lord Voldemort would not go away. His foolishness to 'cleanse' himself of it was overbearing, every time he cut, he knew there was no way out of this and his desperation flew to new heights of madness.

He knew it. But he refused to accept it.

“*Expelliarmus!*” Came a cry from behind him, and as Draco’s wand flew from his hand he turned, only to meet a crack across his cheek.

“What do you think you’re *doing*?!” Harry snarled, seizing a stunned Draco’s bloody arm and examining it. Amongst the blood, the butchered skin he saw the dark magical ink glaring furiously at him, and something akin to vomit caught in his chest. He had never seen Draco’s mark this close before, and it felt like the biggest sin on earth that it was there at all, marring his perfect, comparably innocent body.

He doesn't deserve any of this, he thought and every inch of his loathing for Voldemort intensified as he raised his wand over Draco’s arm. “This is only for minor injuries but it’s better than nothing – and you can hardly go to Madam Pomfrey,” he stated, watching Draco blink at him confusingly, as if his brain had not caught up that he was there just yet. “*Episkey!*” He watched with morbid fascination as the skin moulded back together slowly, though the severity of the wound meant that shallow cuts still remained, and blood still cried from the torn flesh. Harry frowned, wishing that he could do a better job.

“Sorry,” he murmured at his partial failure. Draco was watching his face with trained concentration, and it made Harry a little uneasy. As much as their closeness, their touching pleased him (and that infernal bond) that dazed look, as if Draco were looking into his mind frightened him a little. He had not seen the Blond like this ever; the closest he had come was that night...

Where this damn bond started.

Harry cleared his throat needlessly, giving his wand a final flourish. “*Ferula!*” He chanted, bandages appearing from the end of his wand (making Malfoy jump at their sudden burst) and wrapping tightly around the wound. “I’m no Mediwitch I guess,” He laughed awkwardly, “But erm...yeah...”

Draco was *still* watching his eyes, and Harry realised that he was probably crossing the line by still holding Draco’s wrist and let it go immediately, even stepping back to permit the blond a little more breathing space. But Draco did not move, scarcely blinked, as if his problem, the reason for his staring were for something else altogether.

“I would ask you why you were doing that to yourself,” Harry dared to speak, leaning against the un-bloodied sink closest to Draco, “But I suppose...I can relate.” He tugged his fringe unconsciously over his scar with a sad smile, waiting for Draco to speak, to move – *anything*.

Draco flinched, trembling as Harry appeared from one of the toilet stalls to grab his arm, clean fingers running along his bloody wound as he chanted a healing spell over him. He watched hazily as bandages formed round his sliced, marked skin. Standing in shock for a few moments, he stared blindly at Harry who was still clutching his wrist and gasping for air, he shoved him away.

The words he wanted to say struggled to roll over his lips as he turned away from Harry with distress. An overwhelming look of pain saturated his troubled expression and he forced his gaze to remain the other way, the way that kept Harry from looking into his face.

His breath faltered slightly as he sneered. “Leave,” he groaned half-heartedly through his teeth, his eyes swelling and causing his voice to turn croaky as tears seized control of his voice. He must have seemed pathetic. He growled at that thought. *I’m not pathetic!*

He stood infuriated as Harry remained, and moved his face nearer to the boy’s, donning a disgusted look as his angry features mixed in with the suddenly overwhelming misery.

“I said *leave, Harry!*” He shouted, as if using his first name would show he really did want to be left alone. Draco felt ashamed, a sudden rush of regret that Harry had to see *that* ran over him. The only thing he could do to handle this situation was turn away from it. His eyes moved from Harry again as he turned his back to him. He didn’t want Harry to see him like this. His fingers clenched tightly into fists, straining

the muscles in his mangled arm, and he watched the lines of blood force through the bandage with the pressure, as if punishing himself further from Harry witnessing his act. He waited but Harry didn't move.

Please go away, he prayed.

Draco turned round to finally face Harry again, who was still standing without intention to move. Marching over to him, Draco shoved him backwards harshly with eyes stern and dark, almost black, as he insisted that Harry leave again.

“I’m *not* leaving!” Harry spat as his back crashed into the unforgiving porcelain sink. “You can’t run away from things forever, least of all Voldemort, and *certainly* not me!” His eyes caught sight of the crimson stains bleeding across the bandages and his hand shot out, grasping the top of Draco’s arm tightly to stop him from aggravating the wound. His emerald gaze remained on the bandage, as Draco’s self-loathing, his wretchedness swept through his body.

“You know...in the Graveyard, when Voldemort returned—” He watched Draco flinch at the name, “He had me trapped, he cut my arm in the same place and it hurt and I was scared...” His voice trailed off to a soft whisper, in relaying something he had spent the last few years struggling to forget, the nightmare of that night, the place that had plagued his dreams every night since. His thumb hovered over Draco’s wound, stroking the air just above without actually touching it. How he wished he could just rub the vile mark away for him...

“It might seem cowardly or...or *pitiable* but... You took the mark because he would have killed you and then your parents didn’t you?” He paused, but Draco did not answer right away, and Harry did not give him time to. “If it were me...I...I would have let him kill me, just to escape it all, because I’d have been too afraid to take the mark... In fact if...if Cedric hadn’t been there with me that night in the Graveyard, I might have been wretched enough to let him kill me and that’s...that’s *far* more pathetic and weak. What *you* did was...*brave*.”

His voice was all-but a whisper on the cold air between them, and the desolateness sounded strange on his tongue. He’d had to be strong and silent for his friends, had to remain unmoved by tyrants like Umbridge and worst of all, he had to go on, despite how much it hurt, all because he was burdened with that stupid *prophecy*!

He was the only one to kill Voldemort, so he couldn’t give up. And the unfairness of it all; of being a boy carrying a man’s burden was wearing him down bit by bit. *I guess I can see why Dumbledore was so accepting of the fact that he was dying, and*

so ready to suggest that Snape kill him, he thought, raising his eyes to meet Draco's once more.

This was what he wanted; he wanted Draco to need him in the same way, to stop pushing him back when he offered help. There was something about Draco that made him feel like he could give in for a while, something that made Harry vulnerable, and he liked that – perhaps a little too much.

He makes me feel embarrassed, and shamed and hazy with feelings this figure-head the wizarding world makes me out to be shouldn't feel. He makes me feel human...

Harry watched that perfect, ghostly face, unwavering, waiting for the explosion that always seemed to follow this kind of intensity.

A large sighed tumbled out of Draco's throat, part of him was angry and annoyed and another part of him was ready to crumble. Even with Harry's kind words, it didn't change much, and he had it wrong, so wrong.

“The only person who can be considered cowardly here is me,” He started, but stopped as Harry became all too intrigued.

The truth was, he didn't bare that mark out of bravery. No, he carried it with fear. He was far too scared to die being brave and defending good, so afraid that he took on the mantra of evil and carried out the Dark Lord's wishes in order to live. Harry had it so backwards. Wasn't it more noble to die knowing you had done what was right, than live a life you hate, just because you feared leaving this world? He was anything but *brave*.

Harry half-expected Draco to continue. But he didn't. He left Harry without an answer as to why he was the coward. But Harry was smart. Draco didn't need to give an explanation. He would work it out eventually wouldn't he? And for the sake of admitting how much of a coward he was, he preferred not to carry on and give Harry the satisfaction of seeing him completely fall apart.

“I'm going to go and clean this up a bit,” Draco sighed, allowing Harry a smile for a few moments, before the frown returned.

Harry felt his insides flutter at that brief, fleeting smile, but before Draco could turn away, he reached out to grab his shoulder, only to let his hand fall away uselessly under Draco's gaze before it reached him. How could he possibly help someone who

didn't want to be helped, least of all by him?

"Okay," he began shakily, "But you didn't kill Dumbledore. You made purposefully doomed attempts, you talked the talk but when it came to the actual task – taking someone's life, you didn't do it. I heard LeStrange screaming in your ear to do it but you lowered your wand. Despite the pressure and all of the people there, that could kill you if you didn't. You may have done a lot of rotten things but you've never killed anyone – and *don't* tell me it was because of Snape, because your wand was lowering before he got there." His eyes were burning with belief, with passion so much so that he swore he could *feel* it.

"You went against the crowd despite the repercussions and...that's what *bravery* is." He stopped then, allowing his words to sink in, but when Draco's frown increased with disbelief, Harry felt something in him ache. "Why don't you believe anything I say to you? Why do you...push me away?"

Draco halted, swallowing hard at Harry's accusations. He really hoped Harry wasn't going to bring that up, because he knew that again, he had been too afraid then to *kill* anyone. It wasn't bravery; it wasn't any of the things Harry said it to be.

He felt strips of pain flash through his chest from Harry's agony. Until now, he had never really grasped just how much it had hurt Harry to see his headmaster (whom he considered a loved-one) fall to his death right before his very eyes. Not just Dumbledore, but all the people Harry had watched die. Those feelings flooded through Draco as he turned to face Harry at last.

"You want to know why, *Potter*? You really want to know why?" His anger besieged him again. He was tired, and near delirious as he finally answered Harry's question in such a way that made him seem like he had completely lost it.

"It's what I...what I want." His words stumbled as he reached for his wand.

He sighed as if unable to follow through with what he wanted to say, what he needed to say, because as soon as he said it, Harry would only fall for him all the more. And he didn't want resist him, he couldn't, not with the worn out state he was in.

"I *need* you to stay away from me!" Draco snapped back at Harry who continued to ask why.

"*Flipendo!*" He shouted, watching Harry fly backwards across the floor.

Harry struggled to sit up, shooting a furious glare at Draco. *Maybe this version of him should be called Malfoy*, he thought as he held his own wand aloft as protection. “You need me to stay away but you don’t *want* me to, do you? I said it once, I’ll say it again – you’re a bloody liar, Malfoy!” He leapt to his feet. “If you *wanted* me to, you wouldn’t find staying away from me so hard. You wouldn’t have waited for me in the Astronomy Tower!” He stood there, frozen for a moment, before shaking his head exasperatedly. “I did what you asked, I stayed away from you before and you came looking for me. What’s going to stop us going round and round in circles?”

Draco turned and strode towards Harry, seizing the collar of his shirt and shoving him backwards until he reached the sink. He pushed Harry's head back into the bloodied sink, which burned the boy's back with the unnatural arch. With a furious, fiery glare from the blond, he twisted the hot tap on over Harry's face. Steaming water burned that honey-hued flesh, and crying pleads wrenched from Harry's throat. Draco pulled back.

“SHUT UP! JUST SHUT UP!” Draco shouted, raising his wand to Harry again as the boy stumbled away from the steaming water.

“*Locomotor Mortis!*” Harry screamed, his face burning from the scalding water and he watched as Malfoy was almost thrown by the way his legs locked together, freezing him where he stood unless he wished to topple over. Harry felt pained tears brew in his eyes and he blinked them back defiantly, he’d felt worse, and he’d be damned if he cry over such a trivial pain just for Malfoy. *Even if it’s the fact that this is his doing that makes it hurt more*, he thought, clutching the burnt side of his face gingerly as he approached Malfoy.

“Don’t come looking for me again unless the first words you say to me are ‘*I’m sorry*’ and ‘*I lied*’,” Harry sneered, swatting Malfoy’s wand out of his hand. “Good luck getting down to the dungeons with that leg-locking curse on *Malfoy*.” Harry considered him a moment, eyes still watering before he turned away, heading towards the door.

Draco groaned angrily as he attempted to hobble out of the bathroom.

“Potter!” He mumbled beneath his breath as he finally reached the doorway, but Harry was long gone. Maybe he had gone too far this time. He forced that thought out. *No. He needs to stay away from me. And I can't keep giving into him. Or myself.* He flinched at the reminder as he continued to struggle along back towards the Slytherin dungeons, hoping no one would see him in such an embarrassingly feeble state.

* * *

“Ouch!” Harry winced as Hermione dabbed at his face with healing salve. He grimaced at the icy, stinging sensation that spread across his face each time she brought it to his skin, and his stomach lurched at the pungent smell. Ron’s nose wrinkled from where he sat on the bed opposite, though Hermione merely rolled her eyes.

“The more it hurts the better it is for you,” she recited, holding his chin with her free hand as she continued, the concoction seeming to wipe away the scalded flesh, leaving clean, unblemished skin in its place.

“You really are brilliant, Hermione,” Harry said through a grimace, “Thanks.” He saw the infuriated expressions crossing both of his friends’ faces and knew what they meant. They knew this was Malfoy’s work, and he wasn’t entirely sure what to say to them that would appease their anger any, if indeed there was anything he *could* say...

Luckily, their fuming silences came to an abrupt end, saving him a search for words.

“Harry, why are you letting him *do this* to you?” Hermione asked with concern, breaking the silence that had previously been looming. Harry's broken expression was all too much for her to handle. “I hate seeing you like this,” she added. Her words were soothing and calming, reminding Harry that though she didn’t understand, she still cared

“I’ll tell you why! Because he’s a bloody idiot that’s why!” Ron cut in furiously, marching over to Harry worried, for the first time offering him a little sympathy since finding out about this entire mess. Sympathy in his own way that is

“Ron.” Hermione shot him a warning glare as he went fuddle-faced.

“What? I was only saying – it’s true though, ain’t it Harry?” Ron smiled, trying to lighten the situation with his bad attempts at humour.

Harry offered a feeble smile, and Hermione (sitting back in front of him now that his face had been repaired) gaze at him thoughtfully as he spoke. “I guess I am an idiot,” he admitted with a distant look. He should have been furious with Draco! Livid! And he had been, but with the burn of the water washed away and the memory of that half-smile on the blond’s lips, his anger was swiftly diminishing.

“I just don’t understand how he can... Urgh!” He growled under his breath, kicking the table before him sharply in frustration. “He’s insane! One minute he’s screaming at me to get away from him and the next he’s looming after my classes and...” He trailed off at his friends’ blushes, recalling just how awkward it had been when he’d told them about his *‘interaction’* with Draco at the Astronomy Tower. “I just don’t...know how to *fix* this...”

He dropped his head into his hands in an effort to avoid their sympathetic stares and closed his eyes slowly. The ever-present buzz of their connection was still there, he had become accustomed to it now so that it only really shocked him (literally) when they touched. *Like today*, he thought, recalling how his assistance had been thrown back in his face once again.

How can I care about someone who lies, who hurts me, who hates me so much?

Hermione felt her insides clench. Harry was utterly overwhelmed by these feelings for Draco. It was obvious, even to her, and she could not help but remember how much it had hurt when she saw that Lavender Brown girl all over Ron last year. She could relate to that kind of pain. She knew how it felt to have her heart broken, even if it wasn’t in the same way.

She reached for Harry and pulled him into a hug. No words she could offer would take away the pain, and she knew that. It seemed Harry’s life was full of pain, of every sort and she sometimes questioned herself about whether she would be able to be as strong as him, if she had been in his shoes. Probably not.

Ron fidgeted a little as he too walked over and placed his hand over Harry’s shoulder. Maybe he wasn’t as understanding as Hermione, but he was not completely dim-witted enough to *not know* Harry needed his friends right now.

“It’s just Malfoy,” Ron said, smiling at Harry and hoping he would see the light side of that statement.

“It’s just Draco,” Harry agreed, his body suddenly weighted, as if his veins had been pumped full of lead. “And I won’t go to him anymore.” His body stiffened with determination. He had meant what he’d said to Draco, he didn’t want to see him again unless the first thing out of the boy’s mouth was an apology and the truth. But his resolve didn’t appease the hurt any.

“Listen,” Hermione said softly, drawing back from him a little, “Let’s put this out of

our minds for now – I’ve got a lead on the diadem!” Her voice was excited suddenly (and rather pleased with herself). Harry tilted his head slightly at the devious smirk crossing her features.

“Well I asked around the Ravenclaws, who I might add are *very* unhelpful considering who I was asking *for!*” She gestured to Harry with an irritated scowl. “Honestly, you would think they didn’t *want* the Light to win!”

“Wandering from the point, Hermione,” Ron prodded, earning himself a scowl from his girlfriend.

“*Anyway,*” she continued, “When the *living* members of Ravenclaw proved to be entirely unhelpful, I singled out the *Grey Lady...*”

“The Ravenclaw House Ghost?” Ron asked, his expression twisting with confusion.

“More than that,” Hermione answered, her voice lowering the way it always did when she relayed her findings. “She was – *is* Rowena Ravenclaw’s *daughter.*”

“She knows where it is?!” Harry gasped, literally on the edge of his seat. But Hermione shook her head and both he and Ron visibly slumped.

“No, but the horcrux – it is *definitely* the diadem! She told me the story of how the tiara was lost and just *who* else do you think she told the story to?” She perked a brow, perhaps to accentuate her point, perhaps at how easily seduced the ghosts of Hogwarts were. “A ‘student who had seemed so charming and understanding’ –”

“*Tom Riddle* knew,” Harry concluded, “So it’s definitely the tiara and it’s *definitely* a horcrux.”

“Brilliant,” Ron murmured, falling into the chair beside Harry, “Like you said before though, Hogwarts is a big place, with some places that are hidden inside it! How many more rooms that are concealed, just like the Room of Requirement are there? Hundreds probably, in a place this size! We don’t even know where to *begin* looking for somewhere like that or how to get in to them if we find one!”

Harry and Hermione both looked at him so quickly they risked whiplash. Hermione watched her boyfriend, mouth agape. “Ron!” She gasped, reaching forward to snag his arms and shake him slightly. “You’re brilliant! *Brilliant* – don’t you see?”

“I’m brilliant?” Ron asked, unable to move past that hurdle. Hermione gave an

impatient tut.

“The Room of Requirement! Of course! It is so obvious!” She turned to Harry, without releasing her crushing hold on Ron’s arms. “Why didn’t we think of it before? When you hid the Half-Blood Prince’s book that’s *exactly* where you did it! It’d be anyone’s first guess to hide it there!”

Harry nodded slowly, his mind reeling like a runaway film in fast-forward, struggling to process such a vast amount of information. He massaged his temples slowly, closing his eyes against the room. “Right, so when do we go get it?” He asked, “The Sword of Godric Gryffindor is still hidden upstairs in my trunk, why can’t we get it now and we can be done with another Horcrux?”

Hermione agreed that now was as good a time as any to go after it, and by the uplifted look on Harry's face, it was probably a just as well – he really needed a distraction.

Hermione announced her ideas in caution to both Ron and Harry. “Well firstly, I think we should work this out a little, I mean, the last thing we want is for people to see us sneaking around the castle. Maybe it would be better to get at night, that way there's only Filch to worry about,”

Ron and Harry nodded in harmony as Hermione continued. “We will of course be needing your invisibility cloak, Harry.”

Harry nodded. “Tonight then, we’ll stay down here late and finish some homework, and then as soon as its lights out and everyone is in bed, we’ll go get it.”

~To Be Continued...

Chapter 6: Chapter Six

(Bound By) Clandestine Addiction

[Chapter Six]

Harry fought to withhold a smile as Ron swore loudly after bumping into the sofa, earning a warning stamp on his foot from Hermione. “*Stealth, Ronald!*” She hissed as they struggled out of Gryffindor Tower under the invisibility cloak. Harry stared down at the Marauder’s Map in his hand, taking slow, careful footsteps so as not to reveal their feet from under the cloak to Mrs Norris who was doing her rounds of the Sixth Floor.

“Rotten cat,” Ron whispered as they stepped onto the moving stairs that headed up to the seventh floor.

Harry scanned the map a final time, ascertaining that no one was in the area besides themselves and Mrs Norris, who had just so happened to walk up the same stairs just in front of them. “*Mischief Managed,*” Harry muttered almost inaudibly to the map, wiping it before stowing it away in his pocket. Behind him, as they approached the Room of Requirement, Hermione clung to his left arm to stay with him and Ron stuck close to his side as his free arm held the sword of Godric Gryffindor. Soon they were at the space where the door would appear, but Filch’s cat was still lingering.

“Go away you blasted thing!” Ron growled under his breath, fidgeting nervously under the cloak.

“Ron! *Shhhh!*” Hermione silenced him with an elbow to the ribs. They watched the cat warily as she stared at the space where they stood for a moment, before beginning to turn around the next corner. “And stop that fidgeting you’re going to—”

CLANG!

The sword dropped from Ron’s grasp, landing on the floor with a deafening crash that rang like a church bell in the silence. Ron swore. Hermione panicked and Harry watched as Mrs Norris came charging round the corner, hissing and spitting at them before she belted off to the Grand staircase.

“She’s going for Filch!” Hermione gasped. Ron dived down; retrieving the sword and Harry threw the cloak off them as he began pacing. “Harry what are you doing?!”

“Shh!” Harry snapped, his eyes narrowed with concentration. How could he get into the room and guarantee he could find it?

His heart was racing; Hermione had snatched the map from him, wand aloft over it as a light as she watched the tiny Filch-labelled speck rapidly approach them. “Harry he’s coming!!!”

I want a place where everything’s hidden, he thought at last pacing back and forth in front of the opening. Nearby Ron hopped from one foot to the other, clinging to the sword as if his life depended on it – as if that would do them any good now.

“He’s coming, Harry!”

At that moment, Harry stopped, staring up at the door, and for a moment, the wall stared blankly back at him, the way it had done when he had tried to catch Draco in there the year before. But then, the stone shifted and that large, ornate door appeared before them. Harry felt a breath he hadn’t realised he was holding escape.

“Harry! He’s on the stairs!” Hermione gasped. Harry nodded, throwing the door open and gesturing for her and Ron to go in, they didn’t wait for a second invitation. Ron stumbled through, Hermione close behind and with a final glance down the corridor, Harry saw the shadow of a frantically limping Filch rounding the corner before he dashed inside, shutting the door carefully behind him.

Harry froze for a moment, his back flush against the closed doors protecting them from the deranged caretaker. He exhaled shakily, sliding down to the floor, where he remained for a moment, catching his breath. If they had been caught trying to get in here with the sword of Godric Gryffindor there was no way it would be kept secret. *And if word had gotten back to Voldemort, he’d have realised we were looking for his Horcruxes*, he realised, closing his eyes as he recovered from his panic. The reality of how close they’d come to failure was hitting him.

“We have to be more careful,” Harry murmured to his friends, rubbing his eyes under his glasses tenderly.

Hermione glared down at Harry for a moment and offered a hand to help him back to his feet. As he straightened up, they both looked over at Ron, who stood bewildered at the room that had appeared before them. There were all kinds of objects cluttering the floor, mounds and mounds of shiny trinkets and artefacts that seemed to surpass all the other objects.

Ron bent down, reaching his hand out towards one of the gleaming cups. Hermione's fearful shout halted his movements.

"Don't touch anything Ron!" She warned, thankful that Ron stopped and backed away before he had reached it. She looked at Harry with a worried face, unable to understand why so *many* objects were in the place, where everything was hidden. Surely all of these items didn't necessitate such protection? Surely not *all of these* could be product of people's sins?

"We never know what kind of enchantments lay on these objects, we need to be careful," She reminded both Ron and Harry with caution as they stepped further into the maze of trinkets.

Harry frowned as he stared around at the piles upon piles of lost treasures, some evidently more valuable than others, but not what he was looking for. He scanned the chaos of it all, not knowing where to begin.

"Harry look!" Ron called him and Harry turned to see the red-head approaching him, a very familiar object clasped in his hands. *Advanced Potion Making*. Harry released the book as if it had burnt him, the memory of what it had made him do to Draco sending a warning flare in his gut. The book tumbled to the floor, falling open where it read, *Property of the Half-Blood Prince*.

But then it hit him.

"Ron!" Harry exclaimed, "Where did you get this?"

Ron frowned, gesturing to the pile behind him, a few objects upturned where he had obviously moved them to get to the book. Harry flew over to it, diving through the pile. Of course! He had seen a battered tiara here before last year and paid it no mind. It was the object which he had used as a marker for where he had hidden the book!

Ignoring Hermione's squeals to not touch anything, to be careful he swatted the toppings aside, finally finding what he sought. He froze for a moment as he stared down at the diadem, remembering the incident with the past horcruxes and took off his school robe, wrapping it carefully inside.

Ron reached down, ignorant to Harry and Hermione who were clutching the desired object. The both of them fixated on it.

"This is it, Harry, now lets get out of here," Hermione pleaded, trying not to step on anything as she strode forwards quickly towards the exit.

She froze, rigid in her pace as a siren sounded, piercing through the silence not only to them, but to most properly the entirety of Hogwarts. She and Harry looked back in unison to see Ron clutching a glistening, golden plate.

“Ron, you *idiot*, why did you think I told you not to touch anything?!” Hermione yelled, running over and knocking the plate from his grasp as she took that hand and ran with it. “You idiot!” She repeated, sprinting towards Harry who was waiting at the door for them.

“How was I to know that certain objects were protected?” Ron answered petulantly, avoiding his wrongdoing and the embarrassment that came with it.

“Here take this,” Harry gasped, Hermione instantly realising he was suggesting they split with less chance of being caught out. Harry panted as he handed over the invisibility cloak. They were the ones with the Horcrux, the sword, so it was only safer they use the cloak, plus there were two of them and one of him.

It would be me who ruins the plan wouldn't it? Ron thought, a hand at his arm yanking him in the opposite direction to Harry.

Bolting in the opposite direction of his friends, Harry turned just in time to see them disappear beneath the cloak. *But they still need time to get clear of the Seventh floor or they might collide with anyone rushing to see what happened,* Harry thought and glanced around himself frantically, spying a large, stone vase on a plinth beside him. He whipped out his wand, aiming it at the artefact.

“*Reducto!*” He gasped, and flew backwards at the force of the blast, shielding his face from the flying fragments. Voices were nearing. He had certainly pulled the heat of the attention to himself. Scrambling to his feet, Harry flew through the passageway down to the lower part of the castle. He would hide in the One-eyed witch passageway until the danger had passed.

Harry felt his lungs tear as his breath sliced through it with spiteful claws. The footsteps of Filch and *Merlin* knew who else were close behind. It wouldn't be so bad, being caught without the incriminating objects, as long as they were safe with Ron and Hermione in Gryffindor Tower that was all that mattered. He was sure they were safe now; all he had to do was get back to them without being caught...

Sprinting down through the endless maze of halls he had come to know so well, Harry felt his sides ache with the sensation of a cave-in and knew they were gaining on him.

He stared about him, spying the nearby door to an empty classroom and threw himself into the suit of armour nearby. “*Colloportus!*” He whispered, his chest heaving, almost sick for breath. When the sound of a magical click reached his ears, signalling the door had been locked he shot on through a side-passage of winding stairs.

There came the sounds of infuriated voices behind him, but they did not follow and he knew his distraction had worked. They thought he had knocked over the armour in his haste to lock himself in the empty classroom. That would buy him enough time to hide, but not enough time to get to the One-eyed Witch passage. *And Filch knows about that now I am sure*, he realised with a pang of horror.

Just then, a shadow cast across the opposite wall from the corner he was approaching. The telltale whoosh of robes sounded and he flew backwards, throwing himself into the darkened archway behind the gargoyle statue. The figure was approaching and Harry clasped his hands over his mouth in a failed attempt to stifle his gasps for breath. The voices of his other pursuers had long died away, but the new footsteps were getting closer and closer...

Harry’s eyes widened as the shadow stopped before him, and there was no doubt they could hear his gasps. Something was leaning closer; he felt the hairs on the back of his neck prickle. Every muscle in his body tensed.

“Harry?!” Draco gasped in alarm at bumping into the *Chosen One*, so surprised that Harry's first name had calmly rolled over his lips, as if he were talking to a friend or family member. “What are you doing?” He questioned in a more bitter tone, the likeness to his usual attitude returning instantly as he noticed the cowering, hiding stance that Harry was in.

Draco jumped as Harry swept him backwards with his forearm against the wall, so he was beside him and out of sight from any passers by. The darkness of the passageway consumed their figures as finally, the footsteps and commotion from all around died down. Harry finally let out a sigh of relief only to be put back on edge as he realised Draco Malfoy was still standing right beside him.

Draco's all-too rational mind lost control for once, shoving all thoughts of the bond and his Dark Mark as far aside as he could; this was his chance to...to say sorry for the wrong he had caused. He hadn't been able to stop thinking about what he had done to Harry in the bathroom the other day, the violence that had slapped the boy’s kindness back into his face. And even though to an extent he needed Harry to keep his distance, it didn't mean that was what he, Draco wanted. Part of him didn't want to run away anymore...

With a stern look, Draco slammed his hand on the wall beside Harry's head, cornering him where he stood, Draco's arms boxing him in. It was moments like this that he was grateful he wasn't claustrophobic.

"What do you want, Malfoy?" Harry hissed as Draco lifted a hand to grasp his chin in between his index finger and thumb tenderly.

"You," Draco admitted, finally leaning in and pressing his lips solidly against Harry's.

Harry groaned into the kiss, for a moment losing himself and opening his mouth willingly, his tongue beckoning Draco's into him. His hands reached up knotting in the boy's robes, the warmth pressing into him suddenly reminding him of his cloak back up in Hermione's grasp and how cold that left him in the castle at night. His eyes fluttered shut and he pushed back hard into the kiss before coming to his senses.

He mumbled in half-hearted negation against those lips, before shoving back hard, but one of Draco's arms remained pinned beside his head, trapping him. "I thought what you wanted was for me to stay away from you?" Harry stated as confidently as he could manage with his hazy mind fogged up with the feelings of Draco's lips pressing against him, and the sound of Draco *wanting* him...

"In any case," Harry pressed on, attempting to shake the dazed look from his face (and failing badly by the way Draco was smiling smugly at him). "Did you also forget that I wanted an apology to be the first thing out of your mouth?"

Draco remained silent. His darkened eyes were shadowed by flaxen locks. He stared into Harry unwaveringly, with a fusion of emotions Harry had never seen before and it made him shiver as he was pressed even more insistently between the stone, cold wall and Draco's warm body.

"Do you still feel nothing?" Harry asked, exhaling sharply, making their chests to touch, just barely. He swore he felt a static charge from where his heart thudded in his body, close to the scar across Draco's, the scar that connected them. *As much as I want this, he thought bitterly, any second now he'll shove me away or worse, and I can't keep playing that game...* Something in his chest hurt at the possibility of never having this intensity again. *Why do I have to want him so badly?*

Draco watched him closely, fumbling with his questions, none to which he felt the need to answer immediately.

Draco had never felt '*nothing*'. There was always '*something*' and he hated that Harry literally wanted him to say it outright. He wasn't going to belittle himself by admitting anything to Harry, even if it was true he didn't want to accept it and there was no way he was going to either. He had his slytherin pride to live up to, he wasn't about to be humiliated by someone as...*sick* as Harry.

He cringed at the sudden memory of the Harry and him at astronomy tower, forcing himself to recognize such an act as filthy and wrong, but his cringe was a fake, he didn't feel that at all, even if he forced himself to *think* it.

“Why do you *need* to keep asking me that when you *know* the answer?” Draco stressed, his hand gripping the wall with all his might as he answered Harry's question with another. He knew Harry could feel his pain, his hurt, his denial, *everything*. Draco drew back from the closeness, a prickled pain radiating over both Harry and himself at the same time, causing them both to flinch their heads in opposite directions at the pull.

Harry grimaced at the out-of-body confliction assaulting him, unconsciously reaching forwards and pulling Draco's warmth back to him. Bright lights like tiny explosions burst behind his eyes at the contact, but the pain abated into a rush of heat and he fell back against the wall, those arms forming a cage around him once more. One he had no intentions of escaping.

I didn't go to him, Harry thought, pondering his earlier promise to himself and his friends. *He came to me...*

“I know you feel something,” Harry gasped out, a wince still shaking his features, “I just don't want you to lie and throw it back in my face again.” He raised his eyes (suddenly shyly) to look up at Draco, somewhat bashful in front of this *version* of him; the one that kissed him instead of hit him.

He blinked slowly, as if testing that this was really him standing there, hovering over him the way Harry had imagined so many times before. Drawing in a slow, bated breath, he watched those stormy eyes linger over his lips, and felt something inside him flutter embarrassingly.

“If I take that kiss as an apology...” He began, seeing he had caught the blond's interest with the suggestion that an apology may not have to be *admitted* to.

“Then...k-kiss me again.” It sounded so stupid and *girly* when he said it aloud. His voice was a barely there whisper on the chilly air, but the arrogant smile that graced Draco's lips signalled that he had heard perfectly well and Harry's cheeks suffused

with colour.

Draco grinned as he crashed his lips back into Harry's, a burning passion forcing them together tightly as he lifted Harry forwards from the stony yellow wall with both hands to hips, then smoothing them up and underneath his white school shirt with a thrill. His grin spread, watching the squirming *scar-head* below him wriggling in a way that was much more satisfying than the word *pleasure* could explain.

Harry twitched at the cold, but smooth hands that suddenly caressed over his bare hips warmed him. They danced up along his sides, around his shoulder-blades and up over his actual shoulders until Draco was tangled with Harry in an embrace that he had never felt with anyone before. The buzzing now surged so potently through them both from their closeness, that it would probably be enough to light an entire Christmas tree if it hadn't been burning between their heated bodies.

Draco threw Harry back roughly into the wall and their bodies knotted together deliciously. The touch was too much for the pure-blood Slytherin, who quivered from the intensity, lost in a hazy mist of passion, hate, love and lust, stuck somewhere between the close net lines that joined each – that he had just forced open.

“I just don’t want you to lie and throw it back in my face again.”

Draco ignored how pathetic that had sounded and focused on giving Harry, finally, an answer to his question in actions rather than words. He dived even further into the kiss.

Harry groaned again, body arching forward like bowstring, pulled taut by Draco’s searching hands. His eyes fluttered closed, glasses fogging up slightly. It was all too much and yet all-too little. “I...I *need* you,” He gasped between kisses, those tasters of static he had felt before biting into his body wherever Draco’s skin met his. The most mouth-watering currents of pleasure swamped his body, making him dive up onto his toes for a deeper kiss.

He can be as much of a bastard as he likes. Harry managed coherent thought through the fog of arousal congesting his mind. *He can spit in my face and deny it, but he can’t deny this...*

Draco’s leg slid in between his and his hips jerked forwards eagerly, grinding his growing erection into Draco’s hungrily. Just as intense but different from before. The fingers of one of Draco’s hands clasped the obsidian locks at the back of his head, tugging it back and forcefully ripping their lips apart. *I think I love you, Harry*

thought, not daring to say it aloud and not realising that every swell of emotion leapt straight through the tongue stroking his own eagerly, translating every feeling coursing through his body into Draco's head.

Draco jolted his knee up into Harry's crotch once more, only a lot harder this time with the emotions being transferred from Harry's head to his own, making the dark-haired boy squirm below him. He leant in to Harry's ear, breathing slowly over it as he spoke the words, "You like that, Potter?" His sly voice almost returned from the calm one he had been using moments before, and his humid breath trickled deep inside Harry's ear, sending chilling vibrations throughout his entire body.

Draco grabbed both of Harry's hands, pinning them firmly above his head and he dived into his neck, nipping it roughly but laying small kisses in between, as he witnessed *The Great Harry Potter* melting under his touch. He winced through his grin, and the blond drew back as Harry struggled to say something beneath his breath (or lack thereof).

"I like it..." Harry groaned shamelessly, grinding his throbbing flesh hard into Draco, making sure to rub the blond's hardness with his own frantic leg in answer. He felt those teeth catch his flesh, bruising then soothing it with the soft, seductive pass of a tongue. He was too hot, it was too much. He reached between them, boldly unzipping his trousers and tugging out his desperate, pink hardness. His teeth caught his lip as he stifled a moan, unable to resist stroking himself a few times before he reached forward to free Draco's burgeoning arousal.

Glancing down, he studied the revealed flesh through his hazy vision, jerking the hard, pulsing heat. Draco released his bruised throat with a gasp at the sensation, and his fingers reached forwards to grasp Harry's cock harshly, hastening Harry's strokes over his own flesh. Harry pinched the tip between the blond's foreskin teasingly, slightly peeved that the erection pulsing under his touch was larger than his own. Above him, as if reading his thoughts, Draco's smirked smugly and Harry could not help but cry out as that mouth caught his earlobe, sucking it ruthlessly.

Desperate for more Draco, more *everything*, Harry reached out, steadying his hands on the alcove and pulling his hips up to rest flush against Draco's slightly taller body. His legs locked around pale, slender hips and for a moment, Draco looked up at him, in a perplexed daze before his hand slid up the flawless plains of Harry's back to steady him against his body. Their dripping pricks slid together deliciously and Harry pressed his head back hard into the stone wall, struggling to remain silent.

With panted words, Draco tugged on both his and Harry's members, huffing as his

speech stumbled out over his lips, "I knew...that mine...would be bigger."

A hazy look reached Harry as Draco grinded forwards against his dick harshly, causing dry friction to run through his organ, the sensation of his cock burning raw alongside Draco's. This kind of pain was bearable though. It was a delicious kind, that pulsed through his tumescent flesh as the underlying buzz of their touching skin made it shudder.

Draco pulled back, his cock bouncing back with him as he reached his hand down over Harry's organ and he rubbed it. His mind was a blur as Harry also reached out, taking hold of Draco's pounding length once more. Unable to control himself, Draco stroked back, pumping the dark-haired boy's penis until it stood high in his hand, swollen and sensitive. He continued to jerk his hand along it, his pace hastening as he felt his end near...

"Oh, God...!" Harry breathed, pre-emission slicking their thrusts against each other, "This is so weird..." He felt the telltale pressure knotting his belly and released the wall in favour of entangling his fingers in Draco's sweaty locks. His back arched and he could not silence the sound that escaped his throat as he released himself over Draco's clothed chest.

Spiralling back down from the frantic oblivion, Harry opened his eyes, glancing down in time to watch Draco's throbbing, purpled prick explode in his hand, painting the path Harry's spendings had already created up his chest. There was a moment, when Draco looked up, gasping and Harry swore he saw his dazed, breathless smile return for a fleeting moment, before he was pushed down to his feet roughly.

Harry flushed from the remaining heat of his orgasm, wiping himself off and tucking himself back into his trousers before meeting Draco's irritated gaze.

"Nice aim, Potter," Draco sneered, hesitantly wiping at the white streaks now staining his clothing.

"Sorry," Harry panted sheepishly as he drew out his wand, gesturing to the obvious mess decorating the Slytherin's robes. "*Tergeo!*" The evidence of their tryst evaporated, and Draco examined his clothing carefully, as if making sure the spell was capable of cleaning to his standards.

"Err..." Harry began, not really sure how to begin. He knew something about Draco felt different this time, still biting and hurtful but different...as if his heart were no longer in it. He also knew that he had allowed things to go too far, or perhaps they

both had. Mutual gratification meant something more intimate than he was sure Draco had been willing to give, but that didn't mean that *he*, Harry didn't want that.

Of course you want it, you idiot, the very *Draco*-sounding voice admonished.

"D-Draco?" He started carefully, "I err...want...want to see you again." The words seemed to blurt out with adolescent awkwardness once he finally seized them and Harry lowered his eyes to – *anywhere* besides that face, his words evidently far more embarrassing than rubbing his naked cock into Draco's.

Draco zipped up his fly, chuckling spitefully at Harry's words as he smoothed his blond locks back in place. He carefully avoided eye contact with him, ashamedly gazing around to check no one was watching them. Though he didn't seem concerned a few moments ago when he was spellbound by those hazy feelings...

"I didn't even want to see you this time, Potter," he snarled, watching Harry's broken expression while he continued to break him even more, "Besides, I'm not some queer little faggot like you, go get you're kicks somewhere else."

Harry felt the spiteful sensation of needles pricking the backs of his eyes, and shook his head slightly to wash away the broken feelings those words incited. *He's so different to how he was when he first saw me just now*, he thought in bewilderment. *It's like he has a split-persona.*

"You know, your mood-swings are worse than a pregnant woman's," Harry bit back, shivering slightly from the chill of the castle creeping through his flimsy sweat-soaked shirt. "You won't burst into flames if you're honest with me. In any case, I was just... Well Ron and Hermione were talking about the next Hogsmeade visit...it's on Valentine's Day..."

He stopped there, guessing where this was going before he had even finished talking. *Can't hurt to ask, who knows he might have another mood-swing and agree*, he mused. Donning his brave façade, Harry stepped an inch closer, unconsciously smoothing the flaxen locks that had rebelled during their encounter back down flat once more. Draco's eyes widened, startled by the compassionate touch.

"I was wondering if you...wanted to meet up, in Hogsmeade at some point. Like...just us...?" Harry could not fully quash the foolish hopefulness from his voice and he winced at the sound of it. *Pathetic, remember, Harry*, he thought bitterly, wishing he'd never opened his mouth. He already knew where this was going...

Draco's over-lustful eyes paled as Harry asked him something that caused him to cry out in a fit of laughter and slide back into his pushy arrogant self. He sniggered hysterically; his voiced echoed the passage way as his laughter evolved to anger instantaneously. Did Harry really just ask him out on a *date*? Part of him cringed.

WHACK!

A simple punch and Harry's glasses crushed onto his face, the frames falling crooked as the glass from them dented into the skin around his eyes, narrowly missing them as the hard fist pounded into it. His nose cracked. A gushing stream of blood flooded out of his nostrils as Draco watched him raise his hands up to where he had just been struck. "That's your apology," he hissed.

Harry gasped and spluttered through the blood, ripping his glasses off his face and touching his eyes to discover there was no real damage done to them. He winced at the pain of a few shards cutting into his skin and snarled under his breath as he flew to his feet, wand in hand. He felt more than saw Draco jump backwards.

"I don't want to play these games with you anymore!" He sneered, "You're too scared to be honest with me, other than when you've got a boner! Well if that's all we're going to have then you can find someone else to wipe your hands on! *Diffindo*!" He spat the last of his words and with a flourish of his wand, a ripping sound tore through the air. In that instant, Draco felt something around him give way and across from him Harry's face remained contorted with agony, both emotional and physical, as the spell screamed at him split the seams to his clothes. The useless, unbound fabric shuddered to the ground.

Harry stood there, frozen for a moment as the moonlight streamed in through the windows, lighting the alabaster flesh exposed to him, unhindered by clothes. And above it all, the luminescent scar of *sectumsempra* shone brilliantly as if lined with diamonds.

Snapping from his daze, Harry marched towards the stairs that would lead him up to the Grand staircase, stopping to throw a look at Malfoy over his shoulder. "I'm sick of trying to read you and getting nowhere. If you can't say what you feel then don't come for me again, because I don't want you like this." he ascended a few stairs before calling back again. "Better hurry up and fix your pants, Malfoy or Filch might find you flashing that pureblood arse."

He stood humiliated and bare as the cold rushed over him, his features angered as

Potter distantly faded away in departure. Draco rushed over to the golden-yellow and red tie that Harry had left without realizing it and glared down at it with *hate*. He snarled, his nose wrinkling in that way it knew so well. The corner of his lip cracked at his frustration of being humiliated by Harry of all people and he felt overpowered him with a rush of fury.

His eyes gazed at the tie as he took his hand to his cock and pulled it backwards slightly. A steamy yellow substance trickled out with a slight fog as he sighed deeply at the satisfaction urinating on Harry's tie brought him with every drop that fell, he wasn't about to be made a fool off.

“*Reparo!*” He chanted, his clothes fixing themselves to his body as he leant down and picked up the soiled tie carefully, avoiding where he had just stained it. He flew after Harry, his anger driven feet carrying him as fast as he could around the corners of Hogwarts until he finally caught a glimpse of the dark-haired Gryffindor who halted as Draco called out to him.

“Oi! Scar-head, you forgot this!” Draco shouted, fuming as he walked over to Harry and shoved the tie into his face, smothering the soiled material up Harry’s nostrils as he laughed. No wonder he was put into the Slytherin house, there was indeed a part of him that felt very evil right now.

Draco glared at Harry's wrinkled face as something inside him snapped.

Harry sneered, humiliation and anger and most of all agony licking his insides like a match on a matchbox, setting the fuel of his other miseries alight. His body went up in flames. “I...I *HATE YOU!*” Harry screamed, loathing how much the words sounded like I cry.

Draco felt the backs of his eyes sting with guilt as he caught his angered breath and walked away. What had he just done?

Harry watched back of him as the Slytherin walked away, a mix of hate and love he wished would combust like his heart burning inside him. He clutched at his soiled tie, unable to force his fingers to let it go and with that he bolted blindly up the stairs, stumbling as he went.

His body wavered with every desperate step and the air around him felt uneasy whenever the stairs moved beneath his feet. All-but blind with blood racing down his face, he fumbled to find purchase, shaking a few times before catching himself on the final set of stairs. His foot twisted the opposite direction to him, and he screamed,

falling flat on his face before the Fat Lady's Portrait. And there he remained.

A dry sob wrenched from his throat, and he drew himself up slowly, running his bloodied fingers over his face. "Why do I have to love someone so horrible?" Harry whispered, tears gathering but unwilling to fall from his all-but blinded eyes. Snagging his fingers into the wall, he pulled his suddenly heavy body up, partly wishing he could just remain on the floor and wither away.

He stood there a moment as the Fat Lady's portrait swung open, and stared at the opening into the warm common room. He had to gather himself, push away the tears before he could face them.

"Harry! Harry!" Hermione's frantic voice reached him as he climbed through the portrait and something in him broke.

"Mate," Ron began, neither of them having noticed his plight. "We waited for you to get back to destroy it – did you get caught—"

"Why were you so long?"

Harry shook his head at their voices, throwing himself in the nearest chair and suddenly he felt them stop, evidently just seeing him properly – covered in blood and sweat and *worse...*

"Just...just give me a second," he breathed, staring with blind eyes blankly ahead, at nothing in particular. His friends looked at each other, anxiety crossing their features as they approached him.

Hermione walked over and propped herself in front of him, allowing him the silence he wanted as she concentrated on his injuries. "Your nose, Harry?" She stated, seeing his nose broken and out of place. It was worse than Harry had first noticed and she pulled out her wand with intent on fixing it. "This may hurt a bit, Harry," Hermione warned, watching his face tense in preparation, it wasn't the first time his nose had been broken by Malfoy and he certainly remembered the instant pain he felt when Luna fixed it last. Waving her wand in a single swish, his nose cracked back into place.

"Arghh!" Harry screeched, the mending click tearing through his face. Hermione had already bent down and was clutching Harry's foot, fixated on healing his twisted ankle he had gained tripping up the stairs.

“You were with Malfoy, *weren't* you?” Ron accused, causing both Harry and Hermione to look up at him. “Look at his neck, Hermione!” Ron instructed, clucking his tongue as he turned the other way. He couldn't bring himself to look at Harry; he didn't want him to see the disgust that had overcome him. He couldn't help it, he physically felt sick that Harry was not only being intimate with Malfoy, but was allowing him to attack – basically torture him at the same time.

Hermione looked back at over Harry, who was trying to cover his neck and failing. She could not help but notice the heated, red love-bites on his neck, the bruising decorating the flesh all the way down to his collarbone. They were unavoidable. “Harry–” Hermione started, but stopped again by the sadness spreading across his face.

“I s'pose you've already conjured up a way of covering those have you?” Ron asked, still in that bitter tone as he tried to calm himself.

“You could always use your scarf,” Hermione added with a slight smile, trying to lighten the tension that was building in the room between Ron's bitterness and Harry's silence.

“Was he the one that injured you too?” Ron asked, disgusted at the state Harry was in.

Hermione shot Ron a stare as he continued. He didn't know where to stop, even if he had agreed with all of Harry's decisions, it didn't change the fact that here they were waiting in worry for Harry while he was off getting his dick stroked...

“You'd choose getting your dick stroked? You'd choose *Malfoy* over destroying the horcruxes? That's a first and you're supposed to be the *Chosen One*, Harry! The one who's going to defeat Lord You Know Who!” Ron reminded coldly.

“Ron! Shut up! Can't you see–” Hermione started as he intervened.

“No Hermione, can't *you* see? While we were here, waiting and worried out of our minds, he was off with Malfoy, snogging probably!”

Harry hid his blush at that statement.

“And what's wrong with that?” Hermione asked in defence, frustrated with Ron for being so shallow minded. She thought he was over that.

“*Nothing*, I just don't trust him. Malfoy could have stopped Harry as distraction. He

could've been following instructions from the other Death Eaters! It would be easy for someone to come up here and retrieve the diadem from us with Harry out of the way, even with the castle's protective charms! Anything could have happened." Both Harry and Hermione remained silent. Part of Hermione agreed with him, even though he was over exaggerating a little bit...

"He's risking *all* of our lives mixing with Malfoy!" Ron yelled, his voice deepening with anger.

"When we asked to help Harry, *Ronald*, we agreed we would risk our lives, *didn't we?*" She snapped, holding back her frustrated tears. This was the first time she really, *really* wanted to hit him. He was being an insensitive prick and because she knew the pain Harry was in, she could only begin to imagine how much worse Ron's spitefulness was making him feel.

"Risking your life and throwing it away are two completely different things, Hermione!"

"My life is mine to throw away as I choose!" Harry screamed, leaping to his feet as his silent awkwardness dissipated under the swelling fury inside of him. "You two were never in any danger, not with the teachers patrolling the corridors looking for me and not with my cloak. And as for my life, well that's *mine*. I'm sick of people telling me I have to live it just to defeat Voldemort! Do you think I *like* that hanging over my head? Do you think I want to be strong and infallible all the time! NO! Sometimes I want to cry! Sometimes I want to be weak and *yes*, Ron, sometimes I want to get my *dick* stroked!" A loud CRASH sounded as he swatted the table over in front of them, scattering his friends.

The diadem rolled out from the safety of his cloak, gleaming, ominous and deadly in the dim glow of the firelight. Like it had cast a spell over him with its sudden presence, Harry froze in his rage. He approached it slowly, eyes never leaving it, as if it were a snake resisting its charmer. If he destroyed it, he would feel different, he would feel *better* he was sure. His hand smoothed over the couch, his fingers snagging hold of the sword of Godric Gryffindor as he approached the locket. Magic hung like a heavy veil around it, prickling his skin as he neared and as he stood above it, the sword poised to strike it let out an awful screech.

~To Be Continued...

Chapter 7: Chapter Seven

(Bound By) Clandestine Addiction

[Chapter Seven]

Ron Weasley fidgeted in his bed, he half turned to glance over at Harry who was still awake, staring down at the Marauder's Map as if under some kind of addiction. He wasn't blinking at *all* and Ron knew the name he was staring at. Rolling back over, the red-head gave a frustrated sigh. His overtaxed mind was blinded by the flashes of how their argument had come to close earlier...

A sudden moment of relief overcame the room, Harry had destroyed the horcrux and silence had fallen between them. Their heated conversation and Harry's sudden outburst had taken them all by storm. The three of them looked at one and other before departing in different directions to separate parts of the Gryffindor tower.

Ron blinked back at the lack of closure, the things that needed to be said. He hated leaving an argument open, bad feelings left up in the air. It bothered him. He leant up and looked over at Harry, who was doing all in his power to ignore Ron as he spoke.

"Harry, about earlier," he began. "I didn't mean to say some of the things I said."

Harry tore his eyes away from the Marauder's Map slowly, as to postpone the moment when he would have to look his best friend in the eye. He didn't want to fight with Ron, not now, but he couldn't deny how the words had hurt him. "Don't worry about it," Harry assured him quietly, "I get that this is all...a little...hard to digest." His fingers wandered up to the obvious, violent bruising across one side of his throat, almost lovingly.

It was hard to process everything with the memory of the Diadem's destruction still ringing in his ears.

Hermione and Ron flew back at the sudden scream that ripped through the diadem. Harry could vaguely make out Hermione murmuring a silencing charm, so as not to alert anyone beyond the room of the noise. At the same time, a blinding, fiery light erupted from the tiara, and Harry stared down at it, mesmerised, unable to look away...

Pathetic, you're pathetic, Potter!

The voice screeched inside his head, with all the spitefulness Draco Malfoy had spat at him. And he felt his body tremble with it, but it wasn't the real Draco. It would hurt more if it were him. The magic surrounding him crackled furiously.

You're a fool, Harry Potter! And you will lose EVERYTHING!

Harry smiled bitterly at the sound of Voldemort's curse in his ears. I have very little left to lose, he thought, before bringing the sword down. It stopped, an inch above, as if a force from the diadem itself were holding the end and attempting to shove it backwards.

Sweat dripped from his brow and he threw himself forwards onto his now aching arms, swearing he felt the muscles beginning to tear and give way. Indecipherable screams of every insult he had ever heard mingled together inside his head, all from the horcrux. The noise, it was so much that he was sure his skull was about to split open.

Suddenly, he caught movement from the corner of his eye, and then Ron and Hermione were beside him, hands joining his on the hilt of the sword. Adding their strength to his own as always, a final, retching scream sounded from the tiara before the trio forced the blade down, slicing the horcrux in two. It crumbled, the whisper of Voldemort's soul fading with the dying light and Harry gasped for breath as if he had been saved from drowning.

His fury had diminished after that, after his friends had helped him, yet again. He could not maintain his anger in the face of their selflessness. *They love me*, the present Harry thought as he stared at his red-haired friend, *it's only natural they disagree with something that hurts me...*

"And it's fair play to say I'm losing my mind, even I think that some times," he paused, lowering his eyes to the map once more, finding it impossible to look at Ron when he continued with, "He does the most, evil, vile, *cruel* things, Ron..."

Ron blinked at Harry's honesty in description of Malfoy. He hadn't done anything helpful for him lately, the least he could do was offer to listen to his best friend's heartache, even if he wasn't sure he wanted to hear or *know* the details. "I was just worried, Mate, that's all. You've already lost so much, I don't want you to have to lose anymore, but if you, you know...want to talk?" Ron suggested. Harry smiled at his kindness at last.

"I won't scar you with the details," Harry began with a smile, "But I...I'm..." He

shook his head, unable to force past the sheer truth. "I'm really lost..." The last few words were a shuddering gasp and he swore, out of the corner of his eye he saw Ron stiffen on the edge of the bed, as if deciding whether to come to him or not. He remained there awkwardly, poised for movement.

"We're connected, like I said but... It's more than that – *for me*. I get close to him and he tells me to stay away but...when I do he comes looking for me. It's like...like he's two different people! And one of them *hates* me..." He drew off, having elaborated on some of the details beforehand, like the sexual rendezvous and ensuing violence, and did not want to embarrass both himself and Ron again by repeating himself.

"I'm not really sure this is ever going to end. We keep going around in the same circles."

Ron felt his insides tighten at Harry's doting. He had never seen Harry act like this; there were those moments where he seemed distant over Ginny and Cho, but nothing quite this intense. "Maybe he didn't *intend* to come looking for you earlier, well I mean... All the students were walking around, it was probably just a coincidence," Ron suggested. He finally slid from the edge of his bed to his feet.

"No," Harry shook his head, "He didn't intend to find me but he... He *kissed* me and it was...different from before. It was like he wanted me..." He looked up at Ron again, his eyes glistening with an emotion he'd prefer not to show his best friend. "Ron it's never felt like that before and I wanted it so badly but...when – when I tried to ask for more it was like he became this other person – the *Death Eater*."

A low, exhausted sigh tugged from Harry's lips as they upturned in a sad smile. He couldn't believe how pathetic he had been. Putting the map and the destroyed horcrux away carefully, Harry threw himself back on his bed with no intention of sleeping. "I actually *asked* him to go to Hogsmeade with me."

Ron made a choking sound in his throat. "What?" He gasped. "As in...like...a *date*?"

Harry laughed quietly at himself. "Yeah, mental, right?" He didn't even have to look at Ron to know his eyes were wide with shock.

"Mental," Ron agreed, but then, as if realising what a predicament that left his friend in, continued. "But look, don't let that arse ruin your only escape from this place," he suggested, turning over as he rested his head down on his pillow. "Come out with me and Hermione, it drove him mad when you were having a good time in spite of him didn't it?"

“Yeah, I guess so,” Harry murmured, staring up at the dark ceiling above. *And despite not wanting to go around in circles, I want to drive him mad, he thought, I want him to come back to me, so I can give in again...*

* * *

By the time the weekend of February 14th drew around, the snow had finally thawed and lush, green grass was reaching up for the misty, sunless sky. The students had been permitted their annual Hogsmeade outing but security around the village was strict, aurors placed at every corner; there was no way Death Eaters were getting through. Though right now, Harry wasn't worried about Death Eaters, he was worried about his two best friends, sitting hand-in-hand opposite him in Honeydukes, breathing sickly sweet things in each other's ears. He shifted uncomfortably. It did not feel good suddenly, being the third wheel.

His mind wandered to the possibility that if he had someone it may have been made easier. But somehow, the thought of the one person he would have truly wished to accompany him sitting there, holding his hand, breathing in his ear with his friends *watching...* It seemed all too impossible. *This is a day for lovers and girlfriends and boyfriends*, Harry mused, sipping his hot chocolate awkwardly. *Draco made it perfectly clear that I'm not worthy of being either of those for him...*

Suddenly, Hermione and Ron's attention diverted to him, and he sat up a little straighter at their voices.

Ron suddenly felt awkward, as did Hermione who had noticed Harry shifting uncomfortably before them. “Shall we move on?” Hermione asked, trying to break the awkward tension. “Yeah,” Ron answered dimly as they moved towards the exit. *Poor Harry*, Hermione thought, giving his distant expression a quick glance as they paced through the door out into the street.

“Look, let's go into Zonko's Joke Shop next,” Ron pointed, rushing over to the store before Harry and Hermione could argue.

“Looks like that's where we were going next,” Hermione said, her bag full of sweets rustling in her hands as she leaped to catch up with Ron. Harry trailed over at his own pace.

As they entered the shop, their gazes were caught by all the interesting potions and jokes that the shop had on offer. Ron picked up a little pink bottle from the stand near the front of the shop, looking at it with amusement before handing it to Harry. “You could always use a love potion,” Ron laughed, and Harry blushed, setting the bottle down hastily, his face now filling angrily with embarrassment.

Hermione giggled. “Oh Harry, it was a bit funny.”

“Here, want a *free* manual on making wizard love?” Fred and George chimed harmoniously swinging of the railings of the stairs above. Hermione blushed as she took the magazine, noticing the cover had a picture that she wished she had never seen, she quickly handed it to Ron.

“What are you two doing here?” She questioned them, with no little amount of suspicion. The twins grinned.

“Merely checking up on our latest purchase,” Fred answered.

“Zonko’s is now a branch of the Weasley Wizard Wheezes – suppose we should thank You Know Who for some things, eh?” George continued.

“You’re *pleased* he’s putting people out of business?”

“And putting us *in* business!” The twins corrected at once, almost affronted. Hermione looked as if she might say something else, but then Ron’s terrified voice broke their conversation.

“What is Snape wearing?!” Ron gasped, noticing his Defence Against the Dark Arts teacher, sprawling the cover in nothing but a thong.

“Don't you just love magic?” Fred added, laughing as he and George disappeared to the back of the shop. Ron giggled at the picture rolling the magazine up so it was easier to carry.

“You're not going to keep that are you?” Hermione asked. Ron shrugged.

“Never know when it might come in handy,” he retorted.

“Handy for what?!” Hermione asked, slightly fuming that her boyfriend wanted to keep such a magazine that made fun of people.

“Bribery material, of course,” Ron explained, looking over at Harry unconsciously as he spoke, noticing he was fiddling idly with a comical Umbridge imitation. “Maybe it’s more your thing,” he laughed handing Harry the magazine.

“Thanks, Ron,” Harry grumbled, placing the miniature Umbridge back on the shelf only to clutch the rolled up magazine in his hand instead.

“Come on,” Hermione sighed dragging Ron out of the shop finally by his collar, the smell of chocolate filling the street as they stepped back outside. As they left the shop, Ron handed Harry a little striped bag with the Zonko’s logo on it.

“What’s this? Harry asked, curious as he didn't remember seeing Ron purchase anything.

“Open it, Harry,” he laughed, watching as his best friend revealed that little pink bottle they had all been gawking over in the shop. Harry didn't look amused. *Ron never did know when to stop.*

“Harry give me that!” Hermione commanded, removing the magazine from his hand with a force to whack Ronald over the head with it.

“What did you do that for?” Ron cried, rubbing his head where Hermione had just struck him.

“That’s for taking a joke too far, Ronald,” She glared, watching as Harry readied himself for departure.

“I'm going to go for a walk, guys, give you some... Some time alone,” Harry said waving as he walked in the opposite direction.

“Now you've done it, Ron,” Hermione moaned, hitting him over the head once more as Harry merged into the crowd.

Harry let out a sigh of relief, his breath misting up in the air before him. He adored his friends even more so for trying to cheer him up and not allowing him to stew in the common room while everyone else was out enjoying their chance at freedom. But he couldn’t bear another moment of their needlessly sneaky hand-holding and smooching. He shook the image from his head as he trudged along the lane, weaving through his fellow students in the opposite direction to the crowd.

It was the first time it had been deemed safe since for them all to venture outside of Hogwarts, and his classmates were rife with excitement. His own mood however, could not cope with it much more, and he sought the winding path up away from the town, to the one place he was sure a gaggle of excitable teenagers would avoid...

The Shrieking Shack stood just a little way from him, towering above him in all his nightmarish memories. It did not seem anywhere near as terrifying as it had the night he had first met Sirius, (his heart twisted at the thought of him) quite the contrary, the familiarity, the silence eased him.

An eerie, otherworldly peace swept through him as he approached the door, running his fingers over the hideously ornate doorknocker, which looked suspiciously like an impression of a troll's head. Wondering if it was ever locked, (given that almost everyone except for he and his friends were terrified of the place) Harry pressed the length of his hand against the knocker and shoved it forwards. The door crept open with a creak and he shuddered at the icy-coolness of the forged metal. That was...he *thought* it was because of the metal...

A familiar prickle that he could not misplace *anywhere* slithered like a serpent over his skin, and he closed his eyes for a moment, breathing in the clean air in an attempt to compose himself. A figure lingered behind him. His arm fell limply to his side, clenching into a fist.

"Did you follow me down here?" Harry asked without turning to face the figure shadowing him. He sighed when he received no answer; evidently it was another question to which Draco found it impossible to answer. "What do you *want*, Malfoy?" He tried this time, making no effort to disguise his exhaustion, his misery.

The blond walked over to Harry (whose back was facing him) and placed his arms over his shoulders, almost lovingly, curling them round into an embrace as Harry stood unmoved beneath him. "You asked me to come here, didn't you?" Malfoy reminded, referring back to the sweet gesture Harry had put forward in asking him out on a 'date'. "And I..." Draco sighed, unable to finish his sentence.

Part of him wanted so desperately to apologise, but another part wanted him to walk away. He felt in such a predicament. And he couldn't help but hate what and who he had become. With everything resting on his shoulders, he wasn't sure how much more he could take. He knew he had to stop giving into temptation like this, because he was a Death Eater, whether he liked it or not and he had ties to the Dark Lord. All the feelings inside him were overwhelming, overcoming him as he became more and

more secretly infatuated with the Chosen One, with Harry.

Harry had seen everything. Him at his very lowest, cutting the shame from himself in the bathroom that day, and he hated it. He glanced at his still bandaged arm as he clung to Harry, electricity surging in his veins as his thoughts continued to process.

In a strange sense he was relieved, that Harry was there to witness that self-afflicting action, because somewhere inside he knew Harry would finally know he didn't want to be doing this and that when the time he had to bring Harry to Voldemort came, he would know he wouldn't be doing it willingly. That thought brought him the slightest comfort as Harry stood frozen in his arms.

He quickly shook away all images of the deeds he had promised the Dark Lord he would complete. With this connection, the last thing he wanted was for Harry to discover them...

"I asked you," Harry agreed, "But I seem to remember my request being answered with laughter, humiliation and you pissing on me." His tone was relatively calm, but again, that match-like strike of Draco's voice had lit a spark in his chest, one that was beginning to build into an inferno. Another sigh escaped him. He was angry at this sudden mood-swing and the way that the blond seemed to think warm embraces were enough of an apology for the vile things he had done to him recently.

Mostly, he was angry that the warmth from those arms did feel like enough and that he was melting into it like the snow had melted into spring.

I can either have him like this or not at all, Harry realised, resting his head back against that shoulder so that he felt the blond's hot breath against his cheek. *Isn't that what love is supposed to be? Unconditional?*

"If you want me, why do you do such vile things?"

Draco sighed, pushing Harry's head backwards further against his shoulder with his fingers as he trailed tickles along it.

"It's *because* of that, that I do such vulgar things," He whispered, tender breath sweeping down the depths of Harry's earlobe as he nibbled it.

Harry shuddered, turning his head to the side and exposing his ear, his neck, *everything* to Draco's attentions. His eyes flickered closed and his fingers reached up, grasping at the arms wrapped around his shoulders. Why couldn't it stay like this? Why did he have to revert back to *'the bastard'* again afterwards? It was all

an act, this he knew, but who for? Voldemort? Lucius? *Most likely Draco himself*, his mind suggested.

Suddenly, Draco's tongue dived into his ear, the sound of the blond's breath, laboured with passion making Harry hiss with pleasure. "Tell me that you want me," Harry panted, unwittingly pressing his arse back into Draco's body. "*Please...*"

He couldn't say it, Draco knew as soon as he said it, that would be it, there would be no escaping it anymore. How could he admit something to Harry, that he didn't even want to admit to himself? Not to mention that he knew that he couldn't keep doing this. He *knew* he shouldn't, but then there was that surge, like Harry, that needed him to.

"Shut up," Draco purred gently, grinning slightly he pinned Harry's back tight to his chest, forcing the slightly smaller body forwards against the shrieking wood of the shack. The structure grumbled in complaint as his hands reached under Harry's knitted jumper in heated passion, the one that Harry had received from Mrs Weasley last Christmas. No wonder Draco couldn't wait to remove it from him. He forced his aching penis up against Harry's backside, the flesh boiling with lust and that familiar tingling sensation from the lack of friction licked their bodies when he stopped to see Harry quiver.

Harry shuddered as Draco pinned his forearm to the wall, forcing his sudden, needy erection into the wall and rendering him unable to move or see Draco's scheming expression. Draco glared into the back of Harry's haphazard hair as he tugged those slim hips backwards again, his hands rushing down to shape of Harry's arse and grasping the cheeks tightly, until Harry's head flew back and his mouth parted in a groan. That sound made something in Draco twitch, and his hands ghosted over the body he wanted, before he spun Harry back around to face him. The blond smiled.

Harry gasped as that dangerous smile graced those lips; a smile there was no way of misplacing. Harry returned it with a knowing smirk of his own. *Actions speak louder than words*, he thought, *he doesn't have to tell me for me to know he wants me*. His hips pressed forwards almost involuntarily, seeking friction again hungrily. He stared defiantly up into those eyes, darkened by pleasure, and the fire within grew. He was insatiable, he needed more.

His arms reached up, snaking around that neck and crushing those lips to his. Harry groaned aloud at the feel of that mouth opening to his searching tongue. The taste of that hot wetness made him tip his head to the side, breaking the kiss with awkward embarrassment. It was still so... *strange* kissing a boy – or *kissing anyone at all*, his

mind reminded him. Even if he really wished it and closed his eyes as hard as he could, Draco *definitely* did not feel like a girl. He was firm and unyielding, and Harry definitely didn't mind too much either. He felt his arousal flare at the wrongness of it. Kisses with Ginny and Cho certainly hadn't felt like this, but was that because this was a boy, or because this was...Draco?

He couldn't think. A sharp pressure on his chest, a shove from Draco's hand sent him flying through the doorway and into the musty room just off the hall. He stumbled to catch himself on the decrepit arm of the couch only to find a harsh grip around his wrist, tugging him back to his feet.

"So clumsy, *Potter*," Draco crooned as he steadied him, eyes scanning the breathless smile that reached Harry's lips despite the roughness. Those hands were all over him, ripping his tie away from his body and his shirt open. The fabric hung open, exposing Harry's hairless chest to the dim, flickers of light creeping in through the boarded up windows.

Harry lunged forwards to span the gap between them, hands fisting in Draco's robes and pulling him flush against his body. It felt so overwhelmingly good, the closeness and Harry pressed his mouth upwards, grazing his teeth along the line of Draco's jaw until he felt the blond's breath hitch. The slender hands on him shoved his robes away roughly, desperation increasing with every lick Harry made along his neck, until they slid down into his trousers, ravaging his bare arse savagely.

"That feels...weird," Harry gasped as hot hands palmed him roughly. No one had ever touched him there, never touched him like that before and his cock hardened at the foreign sensations.

"Just don't talk, alright?" Draco instructed in a tender voice as he ruffled his fingers through the dark tendrils of Harry's hair. His hands slid away from his locks and trailed quickly back down to his bum. He ripped down the trousers from Harry's hips with urgency, leaving his back end completely exposed and Draco reached around to grasp his throbbing member.

Draco smiled, satisfied at the sounds of Harry's muffled groaning into the arm of the chair. "You like that?" He husked, feeling the organ in his hand swell larger while he stroked it. Harry let out a little moan.

Golden strands tickled the side of Harry's neck as Draco leant up against his back and licked at the top of his spine, that cock still stiffening further in his hand while it rubbed it. He jerked it up and down slowly, allowing Harry to enjoy the feeling for a

rare moment before pulling his hand away. Kneeling down with both hands free, Draco pressed his thumbs and fingers into both of Harry's bum cheeks; stretching them apart he unzipped his own pants. He leant in to Harry's entrance and slathered the tightening hole with his wet tongue, hearing Harry cry out with pleasure every time his tongue met the skin.

Harry fell forward with surprise, his arms rigid; steadying himself on the back of the couch as Draco spread him wider, exposing his tight, untouched hole to the blond's eyes. His skin flushed furiously at the thought of anyone touching him there, much less *licking* him, and he shifted his hips in awkwardness while those fingers spreading him massaged his cheeks.

Draco's one instruction echoed in Harry's mind as his lips parted in speech, and closed again soundlessly. That tongue flicked over his muscles, torturing them into spasms. It traced his resisting entrance with leisurely, feather-light strokes until Harry released a strange, whining gasp from his throat and Draco's tongue breached his entrance.

"What're you doing to me?" Harry groaned, his voice a lot higher than he'd like. "That's definitely not..." His voice trailed off and he shuddered, swearing he felt Draco murmur something akin to '*no talking*' against his flesh. Then that tongue was in him again. That was too weird. *Draco's tongue is me, that's too weird.* He felt saliva soaking his walls, felt Draco's mouth hot and eating him and it was all too strange. His stomach shivered and his body arched frantically.

Then Harry's awkward compliance evaporated between the heat of their bodies. He turned, seizing Draco by the back of his hair and yanking him hard up to his mouth. His fingers struggled with Draco's belt desperately as he tried to maintain his hold on those lips devouring him. "Get – it – off!" He gasped urgently between kisses, stepping free of the remaining clothing clinging to his body. He felt Draco smile against him and the dark-haired Boy wrapped his arm around the pale, defined torso the second the barriers of cloth were torn away.

Harry latched onto that fair column of throat, wondering absently if Draco had noticed the bruising that had not yet fully faded from his own neck, as he sucked heavily on the pulsing vein. Harry licked his lips, gathering Draco's taste off his mouth before leaning in again, but this time, Draco stepped backwards, tugging his tie, his only remaining garment off his neck and hooking it around Harry's.

The kind of smile that promised things Harry was sure he had only dreamt of, played along those lips, and those fingers curled around the end of the tie, reining Harry

backwards with him towards the stairs.

The rickety stairs creaked, dust trembling from the surface as their passion met the stairs, the tie tightening around Harry's throat with each step Draco took upwards, dragging Harry up into his mouth for that tongue's exploration. Harry stumbled onto the landing, dragged by his make-shift leash into the nearest room. He vaguely made out the slithers of light from the boarded windows before he was shoved roughly to the floor, Draco tumbling on top of him.

Harry lunged for that throat again, his mouth ghosting over everything he could, his lips chasing the bead of sweat down Draco's chest. He felt that body tense the way his own did at the prickle of static between them, and he glanced up as best he could to watch that face change as he flicked a dusty, pink nipple with his tongue. When Draco's eyes fluttered shut, he sucked the bud gently, before grazing it with his teeth. He smiled at the gasp he wrenched from that body, and feeling braver than before he dared speech.

"Touch yourself," he breathed, and Draco's gaze snapped down to him, stunned. Their eyes locked for a moment, and Harry realised why the blond shook off his words, sliding down his body to part his suddenly tense thighs. He forced his shaky limbs to fall back the way Draco pushed them gently and stared down at the blond, not as brave as he had felt mere moments ago now the passion had dipped a little, and his coherent nervousness rose.

"So I'm the...the bottom then?" He asked, but he already knew the answer, and Draco gave him a knowing smile that looked far too soft on that face. Harry swallowed, *hard*. He had been hoping to escape this confession...

"D-Draco?" He tried, again, loathing the way his voice pitched a little higher than normal. "I'm not really...that experienced." Those eyes, softer, and sweeter than he had known them to be before, and Harry looked down nervously, kicking himself for destroying something that had been going so well this time with inexperience. "N-Not with...girls either..."

"Are you saying this is your *first time*?" Draco asked, chuckling slyly as Harry flushed all over. "It is *isn't* it?" He pried. Harry didn't answer. "Don't fret, *Potter*, I'll take it easy," He lied. And part of Harry knew that from the way he toned his last name, but that wasn't enough to stop him from letting Draco continue. He didn't think there was anything that would stop him from offering himself up for the slaughter.

Dragging Harry forwards by the necktie he violently nipped down around the neck,

fighting with Harry for control as he sank his teeth into those veins, deeply kissing the tender skin surrounding his collarbone. His kisses trailed up and down, tormenting Harry's body so that it trembled with his own. Flesh to flesh, Draco felt his aching member crushed against Harry's as he leant in closer, so Harry felt the shards of glass and dirt on the floor press into his lower back.

Draco took complete control as he forced Harry downwards, finally releasing the tie and allowing him to rest his head against the floor. His digits tweaked at Harry's right nipple, twisting and turning it slowly he rolled it under his finger and caused it to crinkle at his touch. He lowered his mouth down and pressed his wet lips against it, his hot spit trailing over it, as he used his tongue to flick it a few times before pulling back up to whisper in to Harry's ear. "You like this, *Potter*?"

Draco brought his head back up and crashed into Harry's lips, both of their mouths opening to taste the other's saliva. It was even sweeter than their previous kisses and Draco's tongue encircled Harry's, exploring every secret inch he had to offer. His pink muscle swirled in circles over Harry's, exchanging saliva as he pulled in and out of the deep kiss until it broke.

The blond reached into his pocket and pulled out a condom then, using his teeth to rip it open he handed it to Harry. Spells could be used, of course, but he didn't fancy having to explain that to Professor Snape when he performed his random prior spell checks on the slytherins' wands. "Put it on me," he instructed, a huge grin spreading as wide as the wings of an eagle across his. Harry's sudden bewilderment was so delicious.

"What are you doing with all of those?" Harry asked with a flush, reluctantly taking the item in his hand, but before Draco could answer, he was pressing the rubbery *thing* (he couldn't bear to think it's real name, much less the fact that he was using one) to the swollen head of Draco's erection. He wasn't really sure what he was doing, and it must have showed, even before he slipped it on wrongly, catching the sensitive tip roughly when he tried to right his error.

Above him, Draco hissed, and Harry yanked his hand back, swallowing hard at his embarrassment. "I *told* you I haven't done anything like this before," he breathed apprehensively.

"Fine!" Draco snapped, snatching the broken condom off his penis and throwing it across the room. He quickly pulled out another and knelt backwards so Harry could watch. He pinched the tip of the rubbery plastic so the air was unable to fill it and slid it down against his large organ as it swallowed the head and then the rest of the meat

within. Harry watched from below with a slight look of admiration on his face – it was only a condom.

Draco leant back in then, forcing Harry's legs backwards with his shoulders as he positioned himself. Lining his cock in place, he held it at Harry's entrance, only just noticing the slender arc of Harry's cock (probably because he was too busy teasing him about the size). He could see it throbbing slightly mid-air and stroked it a few times, fondling his balls quickly as he caressed his own to full hardness once again to fit inside.

He grinned, forcing Harry's legs further apart as his stiffened cock pushed into the tight but soft inner walls of Harry's opening. Harry cried out as he felt himself stretched agonisingly.

“Draco... It...it hurts!” Harry moaned from below.

Draco felt a buzzing sensation hit the end of his penis as it grinded into Harry, and he pulled his cock back slowly, relishing in his tightness, in the overwhelming sensation of it all. It had never felt like this before. Suddenly something inside him snapped.

What are you doing? And with Potter? You're sick...

Shut up!!! Draco argued mentally with himself as he took hold of Harry's dark hair and rolled him over so his belly met the floor. Harry screamed in negation as he forced his hard cock back into Harry's tight arse, only from a different position this time.

“What, too much for you, Potter?” He groaned, his soft expression overtaken by a new batch of anger as he forced himself deep in Harry's virgin tightness. “Lift your arse higher!” Draco commanded, bitterly pulling the hairs from Harry's head as he rammed himself deeper. “You like that, *hmm?*” Draco yelled, hearing muffled screams from the sheets below.

“How can I like it?!” Harry hissed, “You're breaking me!” Harry winced, teeth grinding furiously against each other in agony. He bowed his head to hide the glassiness to his eyes, only to have Draco yank back hard on his hair. Again, he had changed so suddenly, to this spiteful, spitting serpent. Harry raised his hips on shaky legs, spreading them as far as they would go to alleviate the pain. He heard the blond make a pleased noise in the back of his throat, as if the movement had been made specifically to please him.

Harry made a choking noise, his stomach felt weird as Draco pounded into him ruthlessly, and *definitely* did not feel good. He reached back, pressing the flat of his palm against Draco's taut stomach in an attempt to slow his movements, but Draco merely swatted his hand away.

"*Stop!*" He cried out, giving a dry sob in accompaniment. "You're *tearing* me! STOP IT!" His nails grated into the wood floor, knees bruising and his member softening under the pressure of the pain splitting him open. He pressed his forehead to the floor, catching a glimpse of a thin, crimson trail trickling lightly down his thigh. He felt slightly nauseous in this position and he wasn't sure he liked the feeling of his arse tensing around the stretching.

Draco held Harry's limp, lifeless hips as he slammed into them, noticing, but perhaps not truly realising the agony of the *Chosen One*, not while he continued to force him to endure such cruelty. Draco felt his dick throbbing, pulsing to unbearable hardness at the heat, friction burning as he moved quicker and quicker inside of Harry's tortured backside.

"Cumm...ing!" He groaned in panting gasps as he pulled himself out of Harry's doll-like form, his cum splattering Harry's back and the floor below them with a creamy white liquid. He collapsed backwards in pleasure away from Harry, whose cries appeared to become louder as the blinding orgasm faded.

Draco's hazy eyes softened at the sight of Harry's broken body. Realising, *again* what he had done, he reached over in an attempt to comfort him. Harry whacked his hand away, still curled in the same position he had fallen in when Draco dropped him.

"Get off me," Harry snarled, eyes glazed and cheeks streaked with tears. "I don't want your pity!"

Draco ignored him, turning Harry over slightly and placing his lips at the tip of Harry's penis. Harry's eyes shot open as he took the length in.

"W-What're you *doing?*" Harry breathed, but this time this was something even *he* understood. His legs, bruised and scraped instinctively closed around Draco's shoulders. Draco made an indecipherable, humming around his cock, and Harry's back arched upwards, his uneasy stomach pulling taut in anticipation. The blond's fingers petted his thighs hesitantly as he held them open, as if realising his previous cruelty and repenting for it. *He's always sorry*, Harry thought, the last coherent one he was likely to have for a while. *But never sorry enough...*

Then everything rational, everything beyond the boy in his lap was smothered with an intangible mist, and he dared to look down, meeting those intense eyes as his cock reappeared from that mouth. His fingers skittered through blond locks gently and the intensity between them, the call that wanted to pull them into each other only increased as Draco permitted the touch.

Harry watched a pink tongue flick over his tip, gathering the pearl of pre-emission seeping from his hardening arousal. His lip caught between his teeth and he tipped his head back in the struggle to remain silent. He wanted to say '*more*' but the possibility of shattering this perfect illusion was too probable.

Draco's head bobbed over his cock, sucking it noisily while those fingers traced slow circles inwards, before gently stroking his heavy balls. Harry gave a gasping cry, his fingers knotting into pristine blond hair. Perhaps it was a tribute to how sorry Draco was that he didn't push him off.

"You-You're..." Harry shook his head uselessly, his mouth gaping for air as if he were drowning. He turned his face away into the floor as he felt heat enflame his cheeks. He was so close to something more amazing than he'd ever delivered with his own hand, even with the throbbing, pinching pain in his backside. "D-Draco that – feels – really *good*!"

A low vibration hummed through his cock and he moaned shamelessly, his hips arched off the floor and into Draco's mouth as he sucked him into his throat. Harry's fingers curled. His toes tensed and he felt them numb. This all felt so different. "I'm – I'm cumming!" He cried out breathlessly and felt that hot, wetness, sink over him completely as he spent himself inside Draco's mouth.

From somewhere in his white oblivion, he felt Draco swallow around him and he gasped at the pressure on his oversensitive organ, which was softening by the time Draco released his hips and sat back slowly.

Harry cracked open his eyes, fighting to see for the glaze covering his vision in a film of what was *definitely* not leftover tears. *Of course not*, he thought sceptically, as he sat up shakily, realising that Draco wasn't looking at him, but staring shamefaced at the wall opposite. Frowning, Harry sat up a little straighter in an attempt to draw his attention back again, only to let out a low, pained gasp as his backside rested on the unforgiving wood. That snapped Draco's attention back to him, and their eyes met awkwardly for a moment, before Harry diverted his gaze. He felt strangely shy for someone who had just had all of his most personal (previously virgin) areas violated by the boy before him.

“Will you kiss me or is that not in the rules?” Harry asked through his haze, his tone slightly bitter. Draco seemed to consider his words for a moment, but said nothing and so Harry leant over, brushing his lips over Draco’s in a sweet, barely there gesture that the blond seemed unable to make out. With that Harry watched him awkwardly a moment, before curling hesitantly at Draco’s side, he knew instantly he had done something wrong, (not that he was in a position what was or was not acceptable before, during or *after* sex) for the blond stiffened at the contact.

Draco grabbed the invisibly cloak from the floor where Harry had dropped it and covered both himself and Harry under it as he sat back down next to the dark haired boy. He (to Harry's surprise) reached his hand round under the protection of the invisibility cloak and pulled Harry close. “You can be really *stupid* sometimes, Harry,” he said, leaning in for a few short moments before hearing an exposition from below.

Harry’s head snapped up from Draco’s shoulder and he froze for a moment, listening warily to the noise from below. Someone – no more than one, for there were voices too, harsh and whispering... Whatever, whoever they were, they were being too cautious. “They’re looking for something,” he whispered to Draco, he looked up as he felt the blond shake his head ever so slow, and instantly read the meaning from those suddenly wide eyes.

They’re looking for us!

Suddenly, he remembered the aurors at every gate that he’d had to sneak past – he’d *known* they were there to protect the students from Voldemort, from *Death Eaters* but had come here anyway and Draco had followed. Nothing that lurked below, exploring one of the most haunted buildings in Britain, was good. It was not Voldemort, he would have sensed it if it were, but that did not mean they wanted to be caught!

Harry snatched up his cloak and yanked Draco roughly back into the furthest corner from the door, slamming his back into it painfully in his haste. Draco landed, naked between his legs, cursing him for his roughness. “Sssh!” Harry hissed, throwing the cloak over them. The footsteps were on the stairs now. Harry’s heart was hammering and he felt Draco panic, not only through the bond but from the breathlessness wracking the body before him. His arms wrapped tightly around Draco’s chest, pulling him flush back to his body, Draco froze instantly, but not from the calm Harry wished to instil, he was sure.

“Something must have happened outside,” he whispered, the footsteps deadly near – on the landing now. “Death Eaters must have breached the protection at Hogsmea–” He was cut off as Draco’s hand flew back to cover his mouth, just as the bedroom door (which had stood ajar) creaked open.

A masked, cloaked figure they both knew the significance of stepped over the threshold, three more Death Eaters following close behind. *But how did they know someone was in here?* Harry wondered. Then it hit him. *The door! They’d left it open!* Harry shut his eyes tight, pressing his nose into the nape of Draco’s neck unwittingly and breathing in softly to calm himself. He only prayed they did not see their clothes sprawled about behind the couch in the lounge...

Draco’s heart dropped as the room filled with Death Eaters, the black swathed figures standing before their very eyes, he had never felt so terrified, even in the presence of Lord Voldemort. Maybe because this time Harry was with him, and if they were revealed, he would most probably killed along side him.

Trying to protect him...

You could always hand him in, I’m sure the Dark Lord would reward you greatly for taking Potter to him so quickly, Draco's mind suggested, supplying him with options. But they were not options.

No, Draco argued, the voices in his head stinging at his conflicted mind. For a brief moment, he considered handing Harry in, and glanced behind him at the dark-haired boy whose arms were clinging to him tightly, face pressed into his bare shoulder. Those menacing figures stood all around him, looking blindly at them before turning back to other corners of the room. With that Draco sighed, reminded of just how deadly this task was and what he was getting himself into in relating himself to Potter. But it was too late now and even though he had done some cowardly things in his lifetime, he just couldn’t bring himself to sell out Harry. He didn't want to.

You do Draco, You want to hand him in. You want it to be over.

Shut up! Draco thought, as that voice continued to string him like a puppet.

You're not really going to keep doing that are you? Fucking another man? Disgusting! And Harry Potter no less, his mind sneered once more, finally forcing a mental scream directed at himself as the footsteps moved closer.

“Come quick!” Someone said, muffled from below. Harry’s heart leapt and he winced

against Draco's hand. *The clothes?!*

The blond's hand rested closely against Harry's mouth, still covering him as he heard a Death Eater from below calling. Draco's heart raced too, hoping their clothes hadn't been discovered. He silently signalled Harry to silence by using his index finger against his lips. Harry obeyed as Draco brought his hand away.

"What is it?" A deep menacing voice growled, and the speaking Death Eater and his companions walked back towards the top of the stairs, beginning to climb back down them.

"I think I heard something outside," The dark figured suggested, stumbling as the others shoved passed him.

"Come on, let's get out of here – it stinks of death–"

"Afraid of a few ghosts, eh?" One of them taunted, their voices quickly moving on. And with that they exited the shack.

Draco and Harry sighed in relief at that statement. Incredibly, no one had even taken notice of the odd scattered clothes lying about, they must have assumed they had been here a while or not assumed at all.

After waiting a few moments, Harry watched Draco get to his feet and peer round the doorframe before beckoning Harry onwards. They leapt down the stairs, rushing into the dilapidated living room and rushing into their clothes. Harry swore his heart was still thudding wildly in his breathless chest as they approached the door; the Death Eaters were still outside...

"Here," Harry murmured, moving to span the space between himself and Draco, before pulling the invisibility cloak over their heads. "We'll have to go slow," he whispered, his hand locking around Draco's wrist as he stepped slowly out of the Shrieking Shack. The three, masked figures remained a few feet away and did not so much as turn as they moved, quietly, carefully along the path back up to the village. "We have to get back to the village, where the Aurors are, maybe they can–" But his words cut off as something caught Draco's foot, sending him sprawling backwards, out of the protection of the cloak.

The Death Eaters flew towards the boy on the floor and Harry watched it happen, as if in slow motion. Draco tipped his head up to where he stood (still invisible).

"Get *away* you idiot!" The Slytherin hissed and Harry took two hesitant steps

backward, but did not turn and did not run away.

Draco shifted before him, but as he stood, the figure to the right shrieked. “Stay where you are, Boy!” The deep, unrecognisable voice crowed. “*Stupefy!*”

Harry’s eyes widened and Draco’s body hurtled backwards onto the dirt-track of a path. They were still coming and Harry felt terror twist his insides at the sight of Draco’s expression, knocked unconscious.

“*Impedimenta!*” Harry cried out from beneath his invisible barrier and the two outer figures slowed in their advance, but the centre Death Eater kept on coming, having dodged it somehow. It was then, that Harry threw off his cloak. His wand shot down to the unconscious boy at his feet. “*Ennervate!*” He gasped and without looking down at the reviving Slytherin, turned his wand on the advancing figure.

“Stay where you are!” He called, his arm shaking with the adrenaline. But his opponent did not halt. “I said stay there—”

“*Crucio!*”

“*Expulso!*”

Harry’s eyes flashed with the light of two wands, neither his own. He swore he *saw* the menacing, spiteful light flying from the Death Eater’s wand, but before he could counter, or prepare himself for the agony of the spell, an arm slammed into his chest. The blow threw him backwards a few steps as Draco’s revived body rose between him and the curse. The blond’s own spell hurtled towards their attacker, crashing into the ground at the man’s feet. The exploding debris sent him flying backwards just as Draco’s body stiffened and convulsed with the fleeting, unforgivable agony of the torture curse the Death Eater had meant for Harry.

Harry’s arms flew around him, catching his body before it hit the floor. “Draco? Draco are you alright?” The said boy winced at the desperation in Harry’s voice, offering the shorter boy a horrified look through his grimace and Harry knew what that expression had meant. Draco was one of them, at least in name. Most likely he would have suffered, but not been killed once they realised who he was; there had been no need for Harry to save him – yet he had.

The foremost Death Eater struggled to his feet, his shattered mask falling free of his face as he rose from the splintered rocks and wreckage. Harry’s heart caught in his chest as he stood frozen in his protective position before Draco, wand trained on the

three Death Eaters. The now unmasked one, *Lucius Malfoy* stared between the two teenagers in horror.

Harry looked back to Draco as they both backed up, neither sure how the remaining Death Eater would react. Harry knew he couldn't hurt Draco's father, not even if the man gave him reason to. His wand arm snapped back to the elder Malfoy and his body stiffened. "*Expelliarmus!*" Harry shouted, kicking Lucius Malfoy's wand away when it flew towards him. With that, he and Draco bolted up the path, Harry snatching up his fallen cloak as he went. But as he looked back over his shoulder, he swore he saw Lucius Malfoy retrieve his wand with calm composure, and simply watch their flight. It was as if he had no intention of following after them...

And he did not.

Chaos seemed to have descended like a blanket of darkness over the once cheery little village. The clouds billowed, black without sunlight, the eerie shape of the Dark Mark hanging above like a beacon for madness. Harry skidded to a halt, nearly knocked flying by the screaming students being herded by aurors in a haphazard mass back up to the castle. Harry's body swayed under the panic and he felt the heat of Draco's body close at his side, his anchor in the nightmare. It was just like that night at the Quidditch World cup. Fire and pain and fear hung in the air in thick smog, and it choked him.

"Did you know this was going to happen?" Harry whispered, his voice almost lost, but Draco looked at him and shook his head slowly. Harry stared into his eyes for a long, thoughtful moment. He was telling the truth. *And he chose me*, he realised. *He is a Death Eater; if he was really with them he could have let his Father have me. I'm sure that would've done more than redeem their family in Voldemort's eyes. But he stayed with me...*

That one notion weighed more than any other mercy he had been offered, and his fingers slid down from their place on Draco's wrist, slowly interlocking with the blond's unmoving, slender digits. Harry's eyes trailed up the boy's body to those eyes again and waited to see if the action would be refused.

"Hurry up there, boys!" Came a gruff, demanding voice of a nearby auror hurrying them on, giving them a shove into the mass of panicked students. Harry nodded his understanding distantly to the man, unable to tear his hopeful gaze from Draco, who had yet still to brush him off.

"BOYS! *Get moving!*"

Draco's fingers felt so soft against his own. That was all he could think about, even as the Auror pushed him roughly again, jerking the blond along with him through their connected hands. Harry's inner euphoria, so bright despite the darkness above froze as Draco's features knotted with fury, but Harry was startled to see that irritation spin and turn on the man all but shoving them into the oncoming crowds.

"We're moving, you cretin!" The blond spat, he and Harry mingling with their panicked classmates in the rush back to the castle, the safety of it's grounds.

Harry crashed roughly into all the other students as they filled the main courtyard of Hogwarts with alarm, teachers standing nearby to calm them while some bolted for their dormitories.

"Everybody calm down!" McGonagall preached, trying to slow them in their pace. But not many listened. Draco was still next to Harry as they rushed through the courtyard into the entrance hall, the crowds crashing into their bodies without care or apology. Despite the warmth, the protective veil of impenetrable magic that Hogwarts was now protecting them with, their terror didn't seem to abate. Harry's heart was pounding still, but not from the thought of Death Eaters launching an attack on Hogsmeade. Even with all the chaos, he couldn't help but stare over at Malfoy - starry eyed.

Draco huffed, His father had seen him with Harry and he would have guessed there was something between them for Harry to want to risk his life to save him so readily. His father wasn't stupid. *That's it.* Draco's dilemma came to a crashing halt as he finally decided on an end for his conflict. His heart dropped, he didn't want this.

Dragged along by the tide of the crowds, Harry winced, as someone slammed into him head on, sending him tumbling back into Draco's chest. Hearing Draco's muttering curses, Harry raised his eyes to the red-head who was grunting acidly under his breath.

"Mind where you're walking," Ron grumbled to the Slytherin, his face set with a sneer as he surveyed the Slytherin until he saw Harry – with Malfoy. His eyes shot wide open and he came to a halt in his mutterings and his steps, alongside Hermione who was regarding the three of them with (a well-reasoned) distrust, as if they might leap in to attack one-another at any minute.

Harry also stopped, pulling Draco back by his arm when he seemed content with carrying on. They all stood gazing at one another in an uneasy silence, until the

corridors emptied of chaos, leaving them quite alone. A few minutes of further stillness filled the air and the tension rose until Harry was sure he was near *choking* on it. Death Eaters all over Hogsmeade and Harry was strangely running along side Malfoy? It was too much to be a coincidence. There had to be *something* going on here. Malfoy was lying. Ron was sure of it.

“I bet the Death Eaters were something to do with *him*,” Ron implied with a slight spit, glaring over at Malfoy in disgust. But the blond was not taking the least bit of interest in him and his irritation only increased at that casual ignorance.

“Leave it out, Ron,” Harry protested, watching his best friend stand with spite alongside Hermione who was also quite shocked at everything that was happening, and a little terrified.

“Ron's right, Harry – at least consider the facts,” she added carefully, “How much of a coincidence is it that you're with Malfoy while all this was happening?” She worried, trying to avoid eye contact with the Blond, who appeared to be standing awkwardly a few more inches away then Harry was all of a sudden.

“I said leave it out! Harry snapped more forcefully this time, watching Hermione recoil a touch.

She hated when Harry shouted. But she did not shudder away completely in face of his brewing anger – Ron was right, how could they trust someone like Malfoy? Hermione knew feelings could overrun you, control you, make you do things you wouldn't normally do – make you incoherent to all else. She knew because she had felt that, that sense of self-destructiveness with Ron at several points, even more so now they were actually a couple. But it was knowing that which petrified her.

Harry may do *anything* for Malfoy with those feelings, allow him to needlessly take away her best friend's life with no regard for those around him whatsoever. And there wouldn't be anything she could do about it, because of those devastating feelings. She sighed as Ron continued to argue, perhaps embarrassing Harry more than actually helping.

Draco stood bemused as they argued amongst each other. He sighed at just how petty they were, though it was odd and rather *nice* to see Harry being so protective of him... He quickly erased *that* thought. Malfoy gave Ron a look that showed nothing but disgust and superiority. As if the red-head were some kind of *thing* that didn't deserve to breath, didn't deserve to even *be* in his presence.

“Dunno who you’re looking down you're nose at, Malfoy,” Ron spat as Harry shot him off with an angered glare to warn him away once more. The blond tugged Harry's sleeve as he spoke lowly in that dull, set tone.

“A word?” Harry slipped aside with that tug, with Draco who whispered, with little discretion in his ear. “You need to stay away from me...” His voice trailed off and Ron and Hermione witnessed Harry's face fall with those words. Draco huffed as he saw them looking at him, shoving Harry off as he stood bewildered and scared before him. The blond couldn't bear to look at him, or his friends.

Draco knew now, that this connection *was* real and that there was something inside him that wanted Harry, in ways he'd forced himself not to think of, until today, when they were too powerful to be avoided. Valentines Day was a mark in history for him; it carried events that had made him realize that he had duties and the seriousness of them.

He needed to concentrate more on how he was going to work himself out of this! And the further and further he involved himself with Harry, the more and more harm he was bound to cause him. For that reason and that reason alone, he knew that he had to keep Harry away. He felt something inside him (something he didn't know *existed* until it exploded with blinding pain) break as he shoved Harry back further. He could tell without even looking at him that something inside him too was ready to crack. He could feel it in his veins.

Draco's throat swelled, it cracked as he felt water build in the back of his eyes. Shoving Harry backwards for a third time, he strode ahead, the breeze incited by his fast pace stinging the tears clinging to his lids. He couldn't let them see him *cry*.

~To Be Continued...

Chapter 8: Chapter Eight

(Bound By) Clandestine Addiction

[Chapter Eight]

There was a distinct uneasy feeling across the hall the next morning as the students sat at their breakfast tables, their morning meals untouched while they stared at the teacher's table, expectant and silent. Harry was among the last of those to straggle into the hall, having not exactly felt overexcited to get up after yesterday's...*whatever* that had been.

The bruises over his legs, back and the aching agony in his backside were making themselves known this morning, as if the sleep had only enhanced them. He struggled to withhold a wince and made his way along the aisle between the Slytherin and Gryffindor tables, casting a furtive glance to the right of him where a pensive, unfathomable gaze stared back.

Harry fidgeted with his shirt collar absently, wishing that he had had the foresight to ask Hermione for that glamour charm to cover the bruises littering his throat. Realising he was taking longer than need be (and that people were beginning to stare – as usual) Harry slid quickly into his seat beside Ron and opposite Hermione, his features contorting with pain as his backside hit the bench.

“Harry?” Hermione asked warily, but Harry shook his head as McGonagall rose from the Headmistress's chair, clinking her spoon on her goblet. The noise rang through the sudden silence and any distracted eyes fell upon her once more.

“I feel the need to explain to you all the severity of yesterday's...*catastrophe*,” McGonagall began, staring over her students, her usual stern, strong posture falling back to that of a concerned grandmother. “Extreme security measures were placed within the village of Hogsmeade specifically for your day of freedom. Alas... The Ministry was infiltrated, outwitted and the aurors were struck by Death Eaters...”

An eerie whisper broke out amongst the students and as Harry slumped a little lower to avoid their gazes, Ron and Hermione straightened, as if daring them to look. Despite their efforts, some stares eluded them, including Draco, who was staring intently into Harry's eyes. Harry flushed at the memory of yesterday, not yet sure what to make of how the Slytherin had behaved and looked back to McGonagall.

“...We are not sure as to what they were searching for,” she continued, her voice

cutting across the murmurs, drawing the students' gazes away from Harry. "But luckily, thanks to some quick thinking and sheer talent of the aurors responsible, no students were harmed during the attack." She paused, as if searching for the strength to go on. "Unfortunately, a few aurors were injured and a few of the villagers were..." She trailed off again, though this time, in her silence, the confliction in her face seemed to resolve and she stood a little straighter.

"There will be no further Hogsmeade visits as of yet. Care of Magical Creatures lessons will be conducted on Hogwarts' grounds and *no one*, I repeat *no one*, with any excuse whatsoever is to enter the Forbidden Forest, leave the castle after dark or to venture outside their houses past curfew." Harry, Ron and Hermione were sure she looked distinctly in their direction as she said this. "I urge you to not let this hamper your studies, Hogwarts is, as you may have guessed, the safest place for you in these troubling times. Follow the rules set in place for your safety and no harm will befall you." That said, she gestured for them to continue with their meal and took her seat once more. The hall erupted into noise.

Harry glanced around at the Slytherin table as soon as the cover of the students' chatter appeared and sure enough, the blond had not taken his eyes off him. Harry snapped his head back round and pulled some toast towards himself. Why should the arse make him feel so uneasy? He had no *right*, not after what he had done...

"Something's up with you, mate," Ron nudged him as he took a swig from his water goblet.

"That something wouldn't happen to be *Malfoy*, would it?" Hermione asked imploringly, when she clearly knew the answer. She was definitely more considerate of the whole thing, Harry realised, she was softer in her approach but she certainly didn't like it.

"And was that something up your arse?" Ron grunted callously. Harry flushed, choking on his mouthful of toast at the comment. His friends shared one of those knowing looks he despised, before Hermione took the wheel...

"Harry... You *didn't*?" She looked terrified, as if he were about to admit to being diagnosed with some dreadful illness.

"I didn't," Harry clarified rigidly, not having forgotten their behaviour when they had found him with Draco yesterday. "He did."

Ron made a disgusted sound in the back of his throat whilst Hermione merely looked

at Harry as if he were a lost child. Or maybe he was...

"I don't want to talk about it," he hissed, wincing as he shifted in his seat. His arse was burning! "Though I certainly don't know what all the fuss is about... Why do so many people do this if it hurts so damn much?" He mumbled grumpily to himself, though he watched Hermione and Ron glance at each other again, as if regrouping for their next speech to unleash upon him. He *really* wished they'd stop doing that.

"Well, it was your first time wasn't it?" Hermione whispered across the table as quietly as she could. Though none of the surrounding students were paying much attention anyway she still glanced around at them carefully, while Harry looked up at her dumbly.

"It always hurts the first time," Ron added, feeling somewhat superior that he was the one informing the knowledge for once. Harry continued to choke against his toast as he took another sip of his drink and cleared his throat.

"Though, I mean, what with taking up the...you know...?" Hermione paused; her eyes squinted and she glanced awkwardly from one end of the room to the other. That thought was too much for even for her to comprehend and she was hardly a prude. "I guess it might be a little more painful," she finished, trying to wipe out the homosexual images that had warped her comparably innocent mind all of a sudden.

"But sex in general *does* start to feel good after a few times though," Ron reassured him, but Harry sighed. *Great, a few times*, Harry thought, knowing that would have been the only time. At that thought, he looked back over at Malfoy who at that moment was *not* glaring at him.

"It wasn't...it wasn't just that it hurt," Harry began quietly, "It was... Is...*it* always so...brutal?"

Ron wrinkled his nose and turned his head to stare up the table, distancing himself from the conversation as much as possible. Hermione considered Harry thoughtfully, leaning across the table so that they would not be overheard.

"Well that depends," Hermione said softly, "whether you're making love or just—" She cast a glance around her warily as her cheeks flushed. "—Just *'fucking'*." She winced with distaste at her own words and Harry thoroughly wished that he could drown himself in the butter dish.

"Just a fuck," Harry murmured wretchedly, "Yeah that sounds about right..." He felt

the spiteful, familiar prick of tears at the back of his eyes and blinked them away, hard, before leaping to his feet. His skin prickled as *that* gaze fell on him, and his bruised body wavered under the pain, but he did not look up at *him*. “I’m not feeling so good – I’ll meet you in Potions, okay?”

Everyone’s eyes followed him as he marched down the aisle and he hastened his steps to flee the Great Hall. He wasn’t going to cry, not over *Malfoy* and certainly not in front of the student population that gossiped about him at the best of times...

Draco shifted from his seat as he noticed Harry’s departure, maybe this would be his chance to talk to him alone quickly, since last night what he had wanted to say hadn’t *exactly* come out according to plan. “I’m just...just going for some air,” He informed the surrounding slytherins who weren’t really paying too much attention to him in any case.

The doors of the castle shuddered shut behind Harry as he dropped himself onto the stone steps, regretting his carelessness instantly as pain raced up his spine from his backside. Staring out across the empty courtyard, he cuffed the few stubborn droplets that escaped his eyes and began the fight to compose himself. The dark heavens above groaned with the promise of an oncoming storm and he could not help but want to scream in unison with the menacing thunder.

Gathering himself hastily, Harry moved further out into the courtyard. He needed some air, needed to feel the breeze the storm was blowing his way... The world, it was stifling him!

“Harry, are you alright there?” A light voice called from a distance. Long blond locks flickered gracefully across his vision and Harry looked around to find a familiar girl coming to stand beside him.

“Luna?” He gasped. It was nice to see her face. She smiled as he turned, her radish earrings tingling with the building wind.

“You seem lost, Harry,” she pried with all her unwitting, dazed charm.

“Well I suppose I’m... Why aren’t you inside with all the others?” Harry asked, avoiding her question.

“I was with the nargles,” She replied dreamily, “They need to eat too you know.”

Harry smiled at that. “But it's forbidden to enter the forest now, didn't you get caught?”

“No, I was careful,” she was still offering him that hazy (oddly warming) smile. “Well I'd better go, after all, I need to be fed too – you should eat more Harry, you're getting rather skinny.” She beamed as she skipped away. There was a spirit about her step that somehow lifted the spirits of others. Harry suddenly felt a little better, if only a little. It didn't last long...

“Oh! Hi, Draco!” Harry heard Luna chime in passing, just a few feet away. His head jolted backwards as he heard that name and he saw Malfoy coming towards him.

Harry took a few, useless steps back as he watched Malfoy's approach. His fingers curled in on themselves in an attempt to hide his wince and he backed up into the stone archway a little too hard. He felt that telltale wetness stabbing at the backs of his eyes and tipped his head back, as if hoping to let gravity draw them back into his body. Malfoy had reached him by now, was standing but a few inches away, staring at him expectantly. Harry smiled sadly, bitterly. It was as if the bastard was waiting for him to be through with his miserable attempts at trying not to cry.

“What is it this time?” Harry asked raggedly, and raised his eyes to the blond standing there, praying his gaze did not *look* as wet and shiny as it felt. Draco's face was impassive as always, staring into his features as intently as if reading a book. Harry inhaled shakily, feeling oddly sensitive after yesterday. Did it always happen this way?

“You've torn up my arse – you've had your *fuck*,” Harry spat, “Scamper off back to your *Master* and tell him what a pathetic, *sick* freak you've turned Harry Potter into because there's nothing worse that you can do to me now.” He stared, eyes burning into Draco's, daring him to answer. He struggled to look furious, to look *livid* but knew the most he could manage was hurt...

Draco leant in towards Harry, his hands still tucked in his pockets as he dipped his head and whispered into the dark-haired boy's ear. Finally, Draco's perfect lips parted with his response. “Never did tell you what an idiot I thought you were for saving me yesterday,” Draco started with a grin, standing awkwardly as he drew back to continue.

His eyes met Harry's at last and his expression softened. Harry could have sworn he saw him smile for a moment, but only a moment.

"I meant what I said," Draco continued with a frown, "About keeping your distance from me." His voice mellowed and Harry knew he must have been serious by the sound of it. He wasn't angry or frustrated, or yelling for that matter, like any of the times he had tried to distance himself before. He was different.

"The more you and I..." Draco couldn't bring himself to say it. He felt that familiar frustration build inside him as he painfully shoved his desires away from the forefront of his mind. He had to make sure Harry knew he was serious this time about staying away. But, part of him didn't *want* Harry to stay away.

"This connection," he pressed on, seeing Harry's eyes widen in realising that Malfoy had finally accepted its existence. Draco had tried to pretend to deny it still, but it had become impossible to ignore. "If it does exist – like you said, it's only going to get worse, isn't it?"

Harry exhaled unsteadily, shaking his head in answer, still reeling from Draco admitting it at last. It was one small mercy, he supposed. "It can't get any worse than this," he breathed, hot breath coming out in furls of mist in the diminutive space between him and Draco. He stared up at him unwaveringly, making sure he understood what he meant.

What had happened between them had been mouth-wateringly extraordinary, before the pain, but even then, *after* that... He blinked hard at the brewing moisture in his eyes again. He was sure he remembered Draco's arm around him, those fingers in his before they were torn away under this ridiculous pretence of 'keeping clear' of him.

"I can understand you not wanting me," Harry muttered with self-loathing, looking away from Draco as he spoke. "I can understand *anyone* wanting to steer clear of me. I'm well-aware that I'm scrawny and bony and under-built..." He shook his head as his voice trailed off, he was digressing, and Draco had to understand. "What I *don't* understand is luring me in then shoving me away. If you don't want me, don't take me, don't hurt me. If you think I should stay away then at least give me a reason!" He wasn't quite sure when his voice had raised, but he knew it was in fear and anger and he couldn't calm himself no matter how hard he tried.

"Answer me!" He demanded, but Draco continued to watch him as if carefully calculating his next move, while Harry was shaking with the intensity of the feelings coursing through him. "Just give me a reason. Do I disgust you? I can understand

that.” Draco winced at his suggestion, as if he had been slapped in the face, but still remained silent and Harry felt those irritating tears again. “What was my arse not accommodating while you were tearing into it? Did I make the wrong noises? Did I *do* it wrong? *Merlin*, just tell me you hate the sight of me and I’ll save you the trouble of looking at—”

SLAM!

Harry’s words cut short as Draco’s hands crashed into the stone either side of his head, trapping him between the cool arch and Draco’s hot body. Harry flushed, remembering the night before and his arse throbbed painfully.

“Look at me.”

Harry’s trembling stilled at the sound of that voice, low, raspy and offering no room for refusal. He looked up, fixing his eyes on the Blond’s neck. “Keep going,” the voice murmured and Harry reluctantly raised his chin, meeting the soft, grey gaze.

They were too close, everything of Draco’s was too close and for some reason, (maybe because of last night) Harry felt more sensitive to it. The hair on the back of his neck shuddered and he struggled in resisting the urge to turn his head awkwardly into the stone wall. Draco didn’t feel or look angry, Harry had felt this tempest of emotions from him before, but still had not deciphered where they came from or what they meant.

“This isn’t about *that*!” Draco snapped, his gaze falling to the floor as he leant over Harry, painful twinges pricking at his eyes as he fought to withhold his emotions. His voice deepened at the strain and it clogged his usually self-assured, smug tone with something he did not care to name...

“You have something you need to do right? To *You Know Who*?” Draco asked, forcing the words from back of his throat. He glared unwaveringly into Harry’s emerald eyes, the dark flecks within shining brilliantly – a brilliance mimicked within his own as the pull drew him in indomitably.

“Yes,” Harry gasped, hesitantly. “I’m the only one that can kill Voldemort—” He felt Draco shudder against him at the name. “—It has to be me but...there are...*other* things that need to be done first. But that’s... That doesn’t mean that I can’t...have you as well.”

Draco made an exasperated noise in the back of his throat and Harry’s back

straightened. He tilted his head to catch Draco's gaze, forcing him to look once more. "You're not a Death Eater – that mark on your arm, it was forced on you through circumstance. But that doesn't make you one of them." Harry stared up at him pleadingly, his fingers sliding up along the folds of the blond's robes, and falling hesitantly over where he *knew* the *Sectumsempra* scar lay. Draco's skin throbbed under his touch. Harry started to feel a little warm.

"Murder, violence, insanity, torture, *they* make a Death Eater." Harry stroked the scarred flesh slowly through the fabric of Draco's shirt. "Draco," his voice was nothing more than a husky purr rolling from his tongue, and it made those grey eyes darken a little. "You're not a monster; believe me, I should know, because every vile thing you've done, you've done to me. And I...I still..." He ground his teeth together, unwilling to say *the* words aloud. "I want you, and I...want you to want me."

"Harry, you don't–"

"-Why should Voldemort be allowed to take away everything from me?" Harry demanded, the husky shyness dissipating from his voice, replaced with a hollow confidence that went no further than the surface. "Is *he* the reason you're pushing me away? Draco was...was yesterday...okay?" Harry swallowed hard. "Was I ok? Am I ok or is it...is it just *him*?"

"*What*–?" Draco flushed a little at Harry's questions. He blinked hard, shaking it off under the magnitude of the more pivotal problem. "Don't you understand?! We can't keep *doing* this, and I don't *want* you to..." He was lying, lying about his desires. And Harry knew it; he could feel everything Draco was feeling through the bond coursing like an electric current through his skin.

"...I don't want you to *die*!" Draco finally admitted with a groan, grabbing Harry by his shoulders and forcing him backwards against the cold stone. His heartbeat had leapt into maddening palpitations with those words and Harry stood before him in shock, his own heart pounding furiously against his ribcage.

* * *

Ron pushed his food around his plate, his brow furrowing with worry until he could stand it no more – and rose from his seat. Harry had been out there a while now and with everything that was happening, he couldn't help but panic.

“I'm going to go see if Harry is okay,” he murmured. Hermione just smiled, but Ron knew she was concerned for him too. He grabbed his half-eaten pumpkin pie and departed the Gryffindor table, taking in the unlikely beauty of the enchanted, stormy ceiling above as he walked down towards the exit. It reminded him of his first steps into Hogwarts, when everything seemed so magical, so innocent – when there was no Voldemort to ruin that. After that first year, every return to the halls had become darker and even though throughout those times, he had found wonderful memories, he couldn't help but feel consumed by that darkness lately.

His eyes widened as he reached the courtyard. An uncomfortable feeling sinking into the depths of his stomach as he witnessed Malfoy, the *git's* hands over Harry shoulders, like a cage.

Harry stared at Draco, eyes wide with amazement and an emotion somewhere between heartache and bliss. “I don't want to die either,” Harry breathed, feeling the hands on his shoulders gripping him firmly, as if he meant something. “But Voldemort will try to kill me with or without your help, and I... If I die, I'd rather do it knowing that at least...” His cheeks flushed treacherously. He inhaled deeply, as if breathing in courage and lifted his chin so that his and Draco's lips were a mere hairsbreadth apart. “At least I had you, for a little while...”

Draco stared at him, as if reeling from the statement and Harry smiled sadly. His lashes fluttered, dusting his enflamed cheeks as the low, growl of thunder grumbled above. Rain wept from the clouds above, splattering the ground below and the two boys that were barely concealed beneath the archway. Harry offered a final glance up to the halo of white-blond hair, flecked with raindrops as he leant up and pressed his mouth to Draco's.

The static intensified with the water, it seemed, with how warm Draco was compared to the rest of the world around him and his skin burned as if he had fallen into a hot bath. The warmth washed over him and Harry made a noise in the back of his throat, like something inside him had broken. His arms knotted around Draco's shoulders and he gasped between kisses. He felt Draco draw back a little for breath and Harry could not help but stare dazedly up at him. Just then, he swore he saw the briefest glimmer of a smile on those lips.

Draco let Harry's mouth touch his, for the first time, without fighting him. His heart fluttered as he stood against them, rain falling down, the icy droplets on his flushed cheeks making the palpitations hasten all the more. He wanted to kiss him, he *allowed* Harry to kiss him and when the kiss broke, Draco didn't push him away. Harry was right; he had in fact seen a brief smile from his lips.

But then something moved, Harry watched a blur over Draco's shoulder, just out of the corner of his eye and when he inclined his head slightly, he saw Ron, watching him with absolute horror. Somewhere above him, Harry swore he heard Draco call his name softly, asking for what was wrong.

"Harry," Ron's voice called stiffly, and Harry felt Draco go rigid in his place slightly before him, as if on defence. "Harry, mate, what the hell are you doing?"

Harry's mouth opened and closed soundlessly for a few moments before he gave up on speech. The way Ron was looking at him...it hurt.

"Harry," Ron insisted this time. "Get away from him."

Harry didn't move, didn't say a word but flicked his eyes up to Draco, whose gaze was fixed on Ron, deadly still.

"Shut-up, *Weasley!*" Draco snapped, giving Harry a slight shove sideways. This situation felt *anything* but comfortable. Harry glanced between Draco's and Ron's fierce expressions, until Draco's (amazingly) softened. "Weasley is right, *Potter*, get away from me." Malfoy shot him a half-hearted glare. At that moment, the rain didn't seem so blissful and all his surroundings came crashing down as he felt his final efforts wash away.

I was so close, so close, Draco was about to accept it... And now... Harry's eyes stared at Ron sharply, coldly.

"Why is it *everyone* feels they have more of a say in my life than I do?" Harry hissed, looking between the two of them, but allowing the majority of his fury to fall on Ron. "You two, Hermione, bloody *Dumbledore*, Voldemort! Why don't I get to decide how I want to live and how I want to die?" He could still feel the ghost of Draco's lips over his mouth, he had been close, if Ron hadn't been there, they might've finally...

"If the only way you guys think I can live is like this, distant, controlled, my decisions made for me then I may as well have not lived at all." When both sets of (so *radically* different) eyes watched him in horror, Harry merely turned his attention fully to Draco. "It's not fair," He breathed, a barely there whisper that Ron could not quite hear. "You want me so *have* me."

"Harry that's not it at all mate, I just..." Ron paused mid-sentence as he watched Draco move closer to Harry. Harry was right to a degree. But it was *Malfoy*. Ron had

still been unable to come to terms with the fact that Harry *wanted* Malfoy – and it was showing.

Disregarding Weasley's words, Draco seized Harry, ripping his head back by his hair, he heard the red-head gasp in stunned horror as Draco held his best friend tightly within his grasp.

"You have a death wish, *Potter!*" Draco yelled, some of the remaining saliva brushing through the gaps in his teeth at the hiss. "He has set me another task, and I *can't* let him down this time! DON'T YOU SEE?!" He screamed, releasing Harry's hair as he leant in to his ear.

"If I give you what you want, the Dark Lord wins, and it is game over, and I won't let that happen." He spoke loudly and boldly. But Ron had only caught half of what he had said. The hardness of blond's features faded until his face became a blank picture. He stepped backwards slowly and began to speed up his pace as he swerved back to face the correct way, the last glimpses of Harry filling his head as strode back into the castle.

Ron stood flabbergasted at what he had just witnessed. "Draco *flipping* Malfoy wants you after all," he choked, causing Harry's eyes to fly to him and widen in shock. Sparing only a moment to glance between Ron and the door closing swiftly behind the Slytherin, Harry bolted after him, leaving his red-haired friend alone in the rain.

"Draco!" Harry bellowed as he skidded in through the doors, spying the Slytherin beginning to slink downstairs to the dungeon. "Draco, wait!" The blond halted his steps, but did not turn to face him. Harry gasped air into his starved lungs as he flew down the stairs to reach him. His hand shot out, turning the Slytherin forcibly by the shoulder to face him. A torn look crossed those features briefly, until the cool mask of indifference slid back into place.

"So you are going to kill me then?" Harry asked, brows descending into a frown. "Or at least drive me to him so he can do so? That's your mission, right? So will you do it?"

Draco looked insulted by the accusation and offered Harry a disgusted glare before turning away. Harry shot after him again, wincing at his wounds from yesterday but not permitting them to inhibit his movements. He knocked Draco into the wall, pressing himself in, pinning him there with his own body.

"Well if you won't do it, then you'll be killed. Whether or not you stay with me or

not, so get close to me. Show him how close you're getting and buy us *both* some more time."

Draco regarded him with wide, sceptical eyes and Harry growled in frustration. "Is it so repulsive? The idea of being with me in spite of the odds?" His tone lowered considerably, and he leant in so that his whisper brushed feather-light over Draco's face. "I won't let you die just for me. I already have a bounty on my head but that doesn't mean you have to die too."

Draco made a disgusted noise in the back of his throat, shoving Harry back so that he could stand up straight. Harry worried his lip for a moment, before daring speech again. "There are things I have to do before I can kill Voldemort," the dark-haired boy said quietly, confidently. He trusted Draco. "But when I do, I want you to fulfil your order. I want you to take me to him. That way I get to Voldemort and even if I'm killed, you will be alright."

"Things? What things?" Draco asked, suspicious at Harry's forwardness. Harry remained silent as Draco patiently waited for an answer. *You can't tell me can you?* Draco thought, instantly turning the other way, so Harry could no longer see his face. "Don't tell me how to handle this situation, it's for me to deal with, *not* you!" Draco bellowed.

"Why not?" Harry snapped. "You're telling *me* how to handle *my* situation. At least my way we both have a chance at living to see eighteen! At least my way we don't have to be alone!" Draco still did not turn to face him and Harry sighed heavily.

"Someone once told me that...on my own, I'm not as much of a threat. If you do this alone, then you're leaving me alone as well. Wouldn't you rather be there to stop me from doing something stupid and getting myself killed?" His tone was almost teasing, and he hoped that Draco caught onto it.

But those grey pupils blurred as Draco stared upwards, the ceiling was so far above, lost in the cavernous abyss of the castle's magic. He swallowed hard. "If it wasn't for this bond, I wouldn't even feel like this," he started calmly, even as he felt something fiery and hot and *agonising* rise in his chest. "If it wasn't for this bond, we would never be having this conversation in the first place!" His hands flew up to his head then, gripping his hair as if to tear it from his head in frustration.

"If you die, then it's your fault! I didn't ask to *feel* like this!" He could clearly hear Harry from behind the protection of his hands, heard the choking whimper rising in that throat as he, Draco failed to relent in his spitefulness. "This isn't love, this is *hate*!" He declared, finally turning to face Harry. "Hear that, I HATE YOU!"

“I don’t care if you hate me!” Harry countered, moisture he loathed swelling in his eyes. “No one’s ever made me feel *half* of the things you make me feel! If that’s hate then I’ll take it because it’s the best I’ve ever felt in my life – even when you hurt me!”

Draco was shaking with something akin to anger, and Harry felt his last resolve crumble. His body wavered, as if with nausea and he shuddered to the ground. And there he remained, on his knees at Malfoy’s feet. “You don’t hate me,” he breathed and a warm, firm grip touched his shoulder. He leant into it, without raising his head, but the voice that followed was not Malfoy’s.

“Mate,” Ron whispered softly, “Mate, come away...”

Harry raised his head slowly. Ron and Hermione flagged his sides and he had the sensation of being lifted to his feet by them, but could not feel his feet, nor his arms where they gripped him. He could feel nothing but the expanding hole in his gut.

“Come away, Harry,” Hermione insisted softly, even as Harry glared up at the impassive blond with shining, emerald eyes.

“You don’t hate me,” Harry insisted, without any confidence to his words. “This bond started it all but however it came about, you still feel *something*! You wanted me – I saw it. Yesterday I felt it!” He heard Ron and Hermione murmur something but he could not focus on that, could not realise anything but the arms folded across that chest and the sheer contempt in those grey eyes.

Draco shuffled his leg a slight as Harry lost grip of him. “Get a hold of yourself, Harry,” Draco demanded, his voice oddly low as he watched those tears slow slightly at his accidental use of Potter’s first name.

“No, Malfoy,” Hermione said, standing back to her feet. “You get a hold of *yourself*! You *took* him, you made him yours! You can’t just walk away like this!”

”Can’t I?” Draco sneered, offering Harry a disgusted look. He couldn’t believe he had told his friends about that. “I don’t think that’s any of your business, is it *Mudblood*?!” He fumed, finally walking away and towards slytherin common room. “Don’t follow me!” Draco snarled back at his fallen conquest.

“Harry, come on, mate,” Ron insisted, trying to help him to his feet. He shared a quick glance with Hermione, they had never seen him act so weak. So why in front of Malfoy, would he fall to the depths of destruction?

* * *

Draco stared at the bruises that glistened under his skin where his dark mark lay. The lingering marring on his flesh where his wand had cut into him reminded him painfully of Harry, and how he had tried to stop him.

It wasn't just his scars.

Everything reminded him of Harry. Now he had finally accepted it – that he wanted him, he didn't want to stay away. His head, his entire *body* ached as part of him longed to be his own person, live his own life without Voldemort owning him, without these *feelings* constantly making him want more of Harry.

He wanted to just take his life into his own hands (and he realised at this point he was thinking too much) and decide what direction he wanted to take. How could he, with everything resting on his shoulders, keep running away from the person who made him *feel* more alive than he had ever felt before?

~To Be Continued...

Chapter 9: Chapter Nine

Notes:

(See the end of the chapter for notes.)

(Bound By) Clandestine Addiction

[Chapter Nine]

It was the first time in an age that the darkness overhead diminished and the sun broke through, bathing those below with an inconstant flickering hope of sunlight. Harry glared up at it, his fingers freezing on his broom handle as the ‘Gryffindor versus Ravenclaw’ match raged below.

Harry swooped down, circling the pitch for sight of the snitch. The escape brought by being up in the air and flying freely again had uplifted him more than he’d expected. The wind rushed through his hair, growling in his ears, as if spurring him on. His body tingled as all his worldly worries flew past him, washing away like leaves on the breeze. In a rush of bliss, he threw himself flat onto his broom, diving down, down. The ground was hurtling towards him and he felt the Ravenclaw seeker, Cho Chang hot on his heels, believing he’d seen the snitch.

Suddenly, mere inches from the ground he yanked his broom hard and soared back up past the stands once more, Cho was seething behind him, offering him a glare he had known all too well a few years ago. His heart thudded madly, excited as he hadn’t been in weeks. A relieved, blissful smile reached his entire face as he hovered by the stands, watching the game carefully, without letting his sincere grin slip.

“You should be more careful about where you’re flying, Harry,” Cho chimed as she hovered beside him.

Harry’s smile did not falter. “I can handle myself, thanks,” he answered politely.

“I didn’t mean the dive,” she replied softly, *far* too flirtatiously for Harry’s liking as she gestured over his shoulder. Harry turned, the glaring green of the Slytherin stands banner meeting his gaze, as well as the blond seated in the centre, watching him unwaveringly. Harry snapped his gaze back, a little embarrassed that Draco had been watching him so intently, especially when he’d been showing off and grinning like an idiot.

Don’t bother with him, Harry reminded himself. *He hasn’t spoken to you in nearly*

two weeks! After how he left it you barely owe him a thought...

A small giggle from his side drew his attention back to the girl edging closer to him. “You’ve changed a lot since fifth year, Harry...”

Harry raised his brows in disbelief, before offering her a smirk.

“Oh yeah,” he agreed, “A lot has changed.” *Including my sexual preference*, he added mentally with a small laugh, implying his true meaning with every syllable, before flying off away from Cho Chang and the Slytherin stands.

Suddenly, there was a roar of dismay from below and Harry spun in time to see Ginny come flying off her broom, the ill-hit bludger hurtling straight for *him* next. Harry swerved, narrowly missing hitting one of the goal posts. He snagged the post with his hand, using the grip to steady his firebolt, and stared up at the centre goal, where Ron hovered nervously.

Ron raced though the air on his broomstick towards the Ravenclaw chaser who was clutching the quaffle. “Can't catch me, Weasley!” He tormented the anxious Gryffindor who was stalking him from the goal-posts. As he looped the ball through the hoop Ron growled with frustration, losing his focus on the game for a mere fleeting moment – and the goal that he was still racing forwards.

“Ahhhhhhh!” He screeched, but it was too late. His head collided with the hoop and his broom groaned menacingly at the force of the collision, splinters breaking off, showering the ground below. He plummeted rapidly after them. A groan of pain tore from his lips as he slammed into the ground. Thankfully, he had not been too high up; the drop had not been fatal. In fact, he felt more humiliated more than anything else...

Hermione leapt from her seat as she witnessed her lover collide in a blinding clash with the metal, and she flew down the stairs and across the pitch towards him. All eyes were on the Gryffindor as they heard Madam Hooch inform them the match would continue without their keeper.

“Ron are you alright?” Hermione asked breathlessly, helping him to his feet.

“My broomstick!” He whimpered as she dragged him off the field and back into the stands to get some medical attention.

“It’s fine, you baby,” she admonished. “Come on...”

Draco watched from his seat in the slytherin stands, his eyes scouring the pitch – he couldn't help but focus on Harry over all else while everyone else was focused on the Weasley.

Harry growled furiously under his breath. Without a keeper, Ravenclaw would slay them! Three goals had already soared through the hoops. He scanned the pitch intensely, praying for a glint of gold. He found a glint of gold, but it was not the snitch. Across the pitch, the golden-strands of Draco's hair caught him, and Harry froze. How ridiculous, he realised, that *nothing* the Slytherin did could spurn him.

That's love, I suppose...

It was quite eerie how easily he found him in a crowd, how his skin hummed despite their distance. But that didn't change anything. It never would. Draco had let him kiss him, had let him hold his hand, Draco had *fucked* him but that was all it was, and evidently none of it meant that he was enough for the Slytherin to risk *anything* for. He smiled sadly at the realisation. He wasn't worthy of so much as a prolonged thought, and judging by the way the blond had so effortlessly avoided him lately, Draco truly did not care very much at all...

"Hear that, I HATE YOU!"

The memory of those words echoed through his mind like a foul nightmare, one he could not shake off.

Suddenly, the stadium erupted into a mix of cheers and screams of dismay. Just across from Harry, Cho Chang was tailing the snitch. Harry threw himself forwards, his firebolt hurtling across the pitch. His broom was superior in every way, but Cho was closer. He descended like a starved hawk, desperation throbbing in his veins, but whether it was purely to save the victory in order to save Ron face, or to impress Draco, he was not sure. And he had no time to ponder it.

Cho threw a glance back at him as he bolted after her and his insides seared at the coquettish smile that lingered there. The fire erupted and somehow, he shot past her, nearly sending her flying with the speed, his fingers reached out and ensnared the tiny golden ball. The crowds yelled with delight and Harry felt the victory buzz through him for a full second, before he saw the nearest standing hurtling towards him. He pulled back hard on his broom, but was too close. He was going to hit it!

Then, his body screeched to a halt midair, he winced at the feeling of his neck snapping back from the shock of the sudden stop and gripped his broom madly, as

slowly, gently, he was lowered to the ground by some unseen force.

Everything was a blur when he reached the ground. People surrounded him, patting his back hard, ruffling his hair, tugging the arm holding the snitch roughly into the air for all to see. His smile was sincere but distant, dazed and when Hermione finally reached him he threw his arms around her under the pretence of a hug.

“Tell me you did it,” he gasped in her ear so that only she could hear him. He felt her shake her head against him and he drew back to look at her in confusion.

“I didn’t save you, Harry,” she revealed with confusion crossing her features. “I was back with Ron until a moment ago – just in time to see you stop. I don’t know who could have acted so quickly and efficiently, if the spell had gone even slightly wrong you could have hit that stand a lot harder than you would have.”

Harry broke free of her gaze and stared up at the stand he had nearly collided with, seeing the slytherins piling out in disgust already. “I think I have a pretty good idea who it was,” he mumbled as the excited crowds slowly parted from the pitch.

“Be careful in your assumptions, Harry,” Hermione warned gently, “There are a good many teachers that are considerably more qualified for such a successful spell.”

Harry nodded, without really hearing her. It was stupid, he supposed. Draco hated him; the sight of him hurtling into the stands at warp speed would have probably pleased him to no end...

Hermione had lingered, had been the only one not to rush off for celebrations or to sulk, but Harry had dismissed her quietly. He wanted to be alone right now, not smothered by overzealous gryffindors. It was as if the elation, the freedom the air and his firebolt had brought him, had completely faded. It was as if all of his concerns had crashed back into him the way his body would have crashed into the stands.

I almost wish it had, he thought wretchedly, as he gripped his broom, slowly heading along the path the others had all followed out. The dimness of the bleachers was far more pleasant than he had remembered. The diminutive sunlight slithered in through the gaps in the seating and Harry smiled thoughtfully as he stared up, the lines of light reflecting on his face.

Suddenly, there was movement beside him. He did not move. He had heard it alright, but could not find the strength nor will to care or even think to draw his wand. If a grumpy, resentful Ravenclaw or Slytherin wanted to hex him, he would welcome the

excuse to visit the Hospital wing and escape the inevitable, unwanted attention that awaited him in the common room...

But then, he saw it and he felt his lungs freeze for a moment, felt his heart cease. Turning slowly, he swore something caught in his throat, perhaps words, perhaps his ridiculous emotions, clawing at his insides like a caged feline. Draco stepped through the abandoned bleachers slowly, like a predator calculating his next move, but when he finally reached Harry, the soft glint the sunlight evoked in those eyes were *nothing* like a predator's.

The afternoon air was calm and still, sunlight flickered through the bleachers, illuminating Draco's pale skin, he *glowed* with the sparse sunlight in all its radiance. He moved forward across the space between them, a different kind of smile gracing his face as the warming sun glistened in his usually cold, silver eyes, entrancing Harry when he came close enough for the dark-haired boy to see.

"You were right, I can't stay away from you," Draco began huskily. The sun vanished behind the clouds. Harry's mouth dropped open a little.

"And I don't want to either," Draco finished, leaning in and seizing Harry's parted lips with a kiss.

Harry's lashes settled against his cheeks, eyes closing as he leant in with wanton abandon. He had played this moment weeks over and over in his head every night for the last two and it had never felt as good as this. He choked on words and when he felt Draco begin to draw back Harry's fingers knotted his pristine, blond hair, mussing it up unintentionally.

Two, strong hands seized his shoulders, prying him from the Slytherin's body. When he looked up with kiss-bruised lips parted in silent protest, he felt Draco's hands slide back to caress his shoulder-blades thoughtfully. Harry shuddered at the ghost of a touch, leaning in to capture Draco's mouth once more, but that grip help him steady and a smile flickered at those lips, unhindered by worldly worries for that brief moment. Harry froze at the sight of it.

"If this is some cruel joke," Harry began shakily, not sure he wanted to shatter the dream, "I'll never forgive you."

Draco crushed Harry's words back with a more forceful kiss this time, sweeping his tongue ravenously through Harry's mouth, causing his jaw to ache slightly from the force. Drawing back from the wet kiss impatiently as he groaned, "*I want you*" the

rumbling in the back of his throat.

Dropping to his knees, he brought his mouth to the hardened area in Harry's quidditch trousers, nibbling at the base of his clothed cock and running his mouth over the material slowly. He took the zip between his teeth and pulled it downwards, glancing up at Harry every so often as he used only his teeth to remove the hindrance of cloth.

Draco leant in and licked fiercely at Harry's erect cock through the layer of material. He drew away then with a teasing grin and the words, "*Take your trousers off*" stumbled over his dirty lips.

Harry groaned at those entirely inappropriate words tumbling from those lips in such husky tones. He nodded dumbly, reaching down with slightly shaking hands to drop his trousers completely. Perhaps entirely over-eager, Harry threw aside his quidditch uniform, until he stood there in nothing but his white underwear. A slight chill caressed his bared, honey-tinted torso until his dusty nipples stood erect and he slid his arms in front of him awkwardly. The last time Draco had coerced him into such a compromising position, he had not paused to offer him more than a glance. This time he was studying him carefully with a wicked look crossing his features, as if committing his every freckle and scar to memory.

For some reason just standing in front of Draco in his underwear was more embarrassing than anything at that moment. Harry pulled at them, suddenly they felt too tight, too small and he flushed at the obvious outline of his hardening prick, that left a small damp patch of pre-emission. A shudder licked over his spine at the coolness the breeze created over his damp tip.

"Draco?" He asked uncertainly when the blond still hadn't moved, and he fidgeted uncomfortably. "Is there something wrong?" No answer still, only that unnerving, stunning gaze and he looked down at himself as if to search for the flaw that had his...*whatever* Draco was right now, so engrossed.

Draco licked his lips deviously as he looked Harry up and down with a grin, observing him closely, every curve as he stood quivering before him. Leaning in, he rubbed his hand against Harry's aching cock; it was desperate to break free. "Nothing is wrong..." He reassured him, biting the top of Harry's ear, before standing back to survey him critically once more. "...Apart from the fact that you're not doing as I asked." When Harry seemed confused, he gave an exaggerated noise of disdain through his teeth. "I told you to touch yourself, now do it!" He crooned huskily, forcing a little more aggression in that tone as Harry began to fidget.

Harry whined low in his throat. A few weeks ago he was sure that would be the most embarrassing noise he would ever make, but with Draco stroking him, breathing so hotly on him, he was sure there were many more embarrassing noises for him in store. Draco stood back but an inch or so and watched Harry with calm indifference.

Slowly, his body shaking slightly with anticipation, Harry's hand slid down over the bulge in his y-fronts. He gave a shuddering gasp, but then heard Draco cluck his tongue impatiently.

"Don't make me ask again, Harry," he murmured dangerously, "Take off your pretty little knickers and touch your cock."

Hooking his thumbs under the waistband of his underpants, Harry drew them down his skinny legs, entirely self-conscious as he straightened up slowly, stepping out of them. Breathing erratically, he reached down, finding he had all-but forgotten the basics with Draco watching so intensely and his fingers circled his weeping cock. It felt so hot and hard in his cold hand and he gasped unrestrainedly.

He stroked himself, the touches hesitant and feather-light as they traced the tip teasingly with each upwards stroke. His eyes fell closed against the embarrassing sight of Draco's hungry eyes devouring his every move and groaned quietly, ashamedly as he tugged his foreskin down revealing his sensitive pink tip.

Grasping his cock harder he squeezed it, felt it pulsing wildly beneath his fingers. Everything about this was so wrong but it felt better than he'd ever felt before – and Draco was only *watching* him, he had barely touched him yet. "This is embarrassing," he panted, fisting his oozing prick a little faster.

"That's it Potter, *rub it*." Draco grinned, watching him carefully and feeling his own prick harden at the sight of him. This bond had completely consumed him, every part of him wanted Harry more than he could have ever imagined. Forcing this connection out for so long had only made it that much worse as his eyes devoured that throbbing pink cock flesh wrapped in Harry's tight grip.

His eyes widened every now and again, as Harry let out little groans of absolute pleasure. Draco drank them all in greedily, his gaze surfing over those slender hips and perfectly toned arms. But his focus always fell back to that cock that swelled with every stroke, a desperate purple colouring the tip as the pleasure rode him. He yelped again, shudders of pleasure radiating through Harry and surging into Draco through the bond. Intense, outbursts of electricity bolted through Harry's core, transferring to Draco as every jerk stoked the building heat.

“Use this,” Draco said whipping out his wand and holding it over Harry’s palm. A whispered spell and a thick, cold gel burst over Harry’s skin. “Well go on,” He prompted, glaring at him seductively, a dark, lustful glaze overcoming his eyes.

The fluid felt freezing to Harry’s hand and a low hiss escaped him as he brought it in contact with his burning prick. “This...is...humiliating,” he clarified for Draco once more, as his hips started to jerk involuntarily into his own hand. The lubricant slicked his strokes. Dirty, wet sounds punctuated the now frantic, maddened jerks over himself and he fell back against the support beam of the stadium, turning his head to the side so that Draco could not see the shameful, debauched expression he felt on his face.

“Say my name as you stroke your cock for me, *Potter*,” Draco instructed, an intense need rushing through him as he moved that much closer to Harry. He could not tear his eyes away for a moment. The tip of Draco's nose pressed up against Harry's lightly as he finally made contact. His own chest inches away from Harry's now.

“So hot,” He murmured huskily under heated breath, inclining his head to Harry’s chest. With a groan, he drew an erect bud into his mouth. He sucked gently. His lips leaked saliva around the perky point when he teathed them a little rougher. Harry's hand slowed below then, evidently distracted by Draco's touch.

“I didn't say you could stop,” Draco hissed, expecting Harry to continue tossing himself off. And after the prompt, he did.

Fisting his cock harshly, Harry’s entire body quivered under waves of spasms. He arched into the hot mouth sucking his needy nipple and the teeth that caught it briefly, gently. It was all too overpowering – *devastating*! “Draco,” he purred, stroking himself harder as the name fell from his lips. Draco’s hands reached behind him, seizing his cheeks and roughly spreading him open as those intoxicating fingers kneaded his backside.

“*Draco...*” He drew it out this time and he felt Draco panting against his chest. Harry tilted his head to the side, to press his flushed cheek against the mussed, blond hair and inhaled deeply. The fingers of his free hand knotted in the blond locks, anchoring him in the unlikelihood that this was in fact, reality.

“Draco?”

The Slytherin looked up at him this time, eyes dark with lust and passion and Harry

blinked, lost for a moment within as his touches intensified. “Are you...are you going to...to *fuck* me or...make...?” He winced at how weird the words sounded. “Make-love-to-me?!” The last of it came out a jumbled, rush of lustful, incoherent words, and Draco frowned a moment as he caught up with them. And then a small smirk played along those lips.

“You have been spending *far* too much time with Granger,” Draco murmured slowly, bringing one of his hands back up and sucking deeply on one of his own fingers, suggestively foreshadowing what he was about to do next.

He laughed at those words – mocking him. *Make love?*

“Don't speak nonsense *Potter*, now turn around,” Draco commanded, watching as Harry obeyed his request. “That’s right, spread your legs a bit.” Draco glared at his ripe, peachy buttocks, pulling the wet finger from his mouth (covered in saliva that dripped onto the floor) and started probing Harry's opening with it. He hissed with pleasure in feeling the tight flesh constrict around his nail slightly as it pressed into the first knuckle, before pulling back out again.

Harry groaned at the finger gliding in and out of him, and jerked back a little into the *too* light touches.

“I'll be careful,” Draco reassured him (which was a lot considering what had happened the last time) as he held Harry’s hips fast. “Now come on, spread your legs wider,” Draco asked again and Harry stretched his legs out as far as they would go. Draco gazed at his pulsating slit, it was flinching erratically – it wanted him. He dived into it and scooped it with his tongue a few times, before repeating the teasing finger nudges into his entrance with the tip.

Harry’s arms tensed against the wall uselessly. He was spread open and vulnerable to the cold air and Draco’s heated gaze. It felt as electrifying and new and terrifying as the first time and he pressed his forehead hard into the wall of the stands. Laboured pants poured from his lips, and he winced in embarrassment as his hips jerked back to Draco’s exploring tongue.

Suddenly, the tongue slid up from his twitching hole, tasting the tensed globes of his arse as that finger slid in once more, this time a few inches and *this* time curling slightly into something that made Harry cry out loudly. He pushed his arse back in unintentional attempts at getting more and he felt Draco laugh softly against his skin before the blond’s teeth grazed his cheeks. Harry felt himself tremble and he was beginning to find himself unable to care.

"I...I like that," he admitted shyly, feeling Draco chuckle again against him. He remembered before, remembered Draco's purring hum of "*relax*" echoing in his ears, and he struggled to do so. Another finger slid in slowly alongside the other. Harry gasped as he felt himself being prised open, right beneath Draco's gaze. The stretching feeling felt sinfully gratifying and he rocked himself back into the digits, groaning as they brushed the place that made his body betray him.

"How much do you like it?" Draco asked teasingly, almost cruelly as he stopped and waited for Harry to beg him to continue.

"A-A lot!" Harry winced, pushing himself back along those fingers so Draco didn't have to do the work. Draco leant in, trailing licking kisses over his backside and over the hollow of his back, causing Harry to only moved faster on those fingers until he finally pulled them away.

"Beg me! Beg me if you want more!" Draco insisted, trying to distract Harry from working out his next movement. He slowly pulled his wand out of his pocket and pressed it against Harry's back. In one, swift motion he drew the tip down the shape of Harry's spine. Harry's back arched into the tip of the wand that caressed him with light, feathery strokes and he swung his head to the side, overwhelmed by the swelling pleasure.

"*Dilugero!*" Draco whispered, quietly conjuring so Harry didn't hear him and a transparent, blue jelly trickled from the end of his wand. He carefully placed the wand in position over Harry's needy opening and slid it slowly into the slit.

The wooden smoothness of his wand pushed in through Harry's convulsing tightness and slid in deeper, causing a rush of sinful sensation to ripple through Harry's walls at the naughtiness of it. Draco laughed smugly as he *heard* Harry realise that wasn't his finger...

"Aahhh!" Harry gave a long and tortured moan as it glided into him. His muscles clenched around the unyielding wood in spasms. "Draco, get it out of me!" He spluttered, wriggling madly as he felt his tight chute being prodded unmercifully by Draco's wand, the blond laughing in a strangely seductive way as he forced it in deeper. Harry trembled. His cock hardened up to his belly, leaking wickedly over his taut stomach when a strange, cold jelly erupted inside him from the wand tip.

It felt bizarre, it felt cold and it made him shudder, but it felt good, and he could not stifle the humiliating, whimpering gasp that left him.

“How does *that* feel?”

Harry heard dimly, from somewhere seemingly far away. He shook his head, unable to answer Draco’s brazen torment. His bashfulness, his silence was punished by a rough jerk of the wood in his soaked channel and he groaned as the hard tip plunged into *that place* again. And his knees buckled. Harry’s fingers scraped into the support beam, he grasped at it desperately to keep himself up as his insides throbbed and squeezed feverishly. He was gasping for air again as if drowning and he winced, flushing with mortification as the liquid overflowed, trickling down the backs of his thighs.

A slither of pre-emission across his aching cock mimicked the stream at his backside, and he clenched his hole in an attempt to keep it in. *Why does it feel so good if he’s humiliating me?*

“You want more?” Draco toyed with him, grinning madly as Harry clenched tightly against his wand. He felt Harry’s body shift uncontrollably against the wood. He *did* want more.

Draco moved his wand in a quick jerk and forced it to spurt out the blue jelly in swift flicks deep inside of him. Like a tap that had been left to drip. Harry’s hole twitched like a little, greedy mouth, dribbling cool gel shamelessly. Draco flushed hungrily at the sight and rushed his trousers down.

“I can’t wait any longer, Harry,” He panted, pulling down his slate-shaded boxers. His eager cock sprang forwards quickly and bounced a little as he kicked his clothes aside.

“C-Condom?” Harry reminded in a gasp. Draco laughed.

“You’re learning quick.” Draco flicked his wand and the familiar plastic suddenly jumped into his hand. He stretched it hastily over his hardened prick.

Harry’s body recoiled a little as he felt Draco’s swollen head at his twitching entrance, unable to help himself. But then he felt the blond lean over him slightly, pressing his forehead into the nape of his neck. Harry relaxed back into him, feeling that breath brushing over his flesh, sweating in anticipation as that familiar pressure pressed against his hole.

It resisted, but only for a moment and Harry’s jaw tightened at the uncomfortable sensation of the head popping through his ring of muscles. His arms were tense

against the wall, the air was freezing in comparison to their heated bodies and he felt something in him give as Draco slid in slowly. Harry gave a choked sound at the invasion of his backside, it still felt weird, but his stomach didn't feel uneasy and there was no grating, spiteful friction.

The lubrication sloshed in his hole as Draco slid further in and Harry flushed at the feeling, pushing back onto the pulsing shaft, hasty to draw it all the way inside him. A pale hand flew to his hips, steadying him as Draco's panting breaths steamed over the back of his neck. The fingers of that other hand circled him, caressing a feather-light trail down his sternum to his stomach and back up again, as if calmingly. Harry groaned in frustration, his muscles clenching and needy around the thick organ.

"I-It feels nicer this time," Harry managed out hazily, not willing to admit that the fear of that personal pain from before had been all-too prominent a few moments ago. The lube eased the strokes and tingled in a pleasant way when they remained still for that moment. It drove him mad, like an itch he couldn't reach and he struggled to move back onto Draco further, only to feel his smile against his throat.

The blond's hands held his hips steadily as he thumped slowly against out of them. "Tell me how much you like this, Potter," Draco requested, his tongue rolling at the back of his throat as he grumbled with the overwhelming feelings rising up inside him.

Harry remained silent, unable to talk with such pleasure consuming him. Draco felt those hips spasm as that blue liquid let out another eruption in his arse, driving him to dive forward more forcefully into Harry's welcoming, wet heat. He raised both of his hands up to Harry's shoulders and clung to them. Harry's back arched inwards as he moved quicker into him. Reaching around with one hand, Draco gripped Harry's semi-erect cock, forcing it to rise again with ravenous tugs.

Harry's body was steaming up, sweat beading across his skin. Already sticky from quidditch, his flesh dripped as Draco rammed into him forcefully, the pumping of his hips unyielding as a machine. The fist holding onto Harry's cock was sloppy with the heavy missiles of pre-emission that drizzled out with every pull. "*Fuck!*" Draco groaned out, from the top of his lungs. He could feel something inside him rising, something magical.

"Tell me how much you like it, Harry!" Something buzzed through him as he moved faster – tossed Harry faster. "Tell me!" He pleaded again.

"I like it!" Harry screamed and his throat felt raw, choked from the sensations

coursing through him like a river. Somehow, the liquid slicking the leaps into his body did not diminish and Draco was thrusting harder into his very willing body. His hips arched frantically, jerking back into the cock pounding his backside or the hand fisting his weeping prick.

“I like it. I *like* it!” He gave a dry sob and pressed his head insistently against his arms which supported him on the wall. “Tear me in half! *Fuck me!*” He groaned at his words, humiliated at the desperate begging sound to his voice. Second time having sex and he was already screaming such debauched, embarrassing things...

An unbearable heat was swelling in his loins. His walls clenched down furiously on Draco's pounding erection, eliciting a dangerous hiss of pleasure from those lips. Everything was tense, like elastic pulled taut, about to break. He cried out with each furious lurch into his backside, but there wasn't the pain or the blood there was before and he was nearly undone. Everything was too hot and too much and he was sure a continuous stream of noises he would regret later was falling from his parted lips.

“Do you *like* fucking the *Chosen One's* arse?” He groaned, feeling the fingers at his hips dig into his flesh. “Show me how much you like it...” He couldn't believe what he was saying?! What had he turned into?! And with just a few gentle words...

Draco's face formed a wide smile and he took Harry harder, with bruising force at his words. “Ugh!” He groaned, fiercely, almost animalistic in his fervour. “Ah, fuck!” Draco groaned out, ramming harder and harder into Harry's backside. “I'll show you...I'll show you!” He panted, all sorts of phrases stumbling over his lips as he felt that familiar rise in his gut.

Harry tensed his buttocks against Draco's invading thrusts, feeling something tingling in the centre of his own penis. Draco grasped Harry's hair and yanked backwards with both hands, as he pushed in, a burning pleasure gathering near his tip. “I'm going to cum, *Potter!*” He groaned darkly in the most seductive deep voice he could manage as his fingers clenched in the boy's hair.

“Go on, *ask* me to cum inside you! *Beg!*” Draco yelled.

“Cum inside me!” Harry gasped out instantly, embarrassment lost upon him for that one brief minute and Draco's fingers tightened around as he spilled himself over them. He came, gasping and panting, his knees struggling against the instinct to buckle under the sudden weight of his body as he spiralled down from the insane high. Draco shuddered behind him, around him, *in* him and Harry felt a sharp, electrifying jolt fly through his body.

With the sounds of Draco's climax echoing in his ears, Harry felt himself slump slightly. He was so dizzy with it all; he needed to lie down...

Draco's arms wrapped around him, steadying his body and holding it upright for a moment and Harry realised with a flush (as his self-consciousness returned) that the blond was still inside him. "You're...*amazing!*" Harry settled on, smiling breathlessly. "I rather think I...like you more than I should," he laughed softly, closing his eyes for a moment against the reality of the real world brushing with startling coldness over his sweat-slicked skin. "I really like you..."

Draco felt all too hazy as he came down from the high, his entire body radiating a glow from the explosion he had just experienced. Still panting hard, he managed to squeeze a few gasped words out in reply. "I should hope you like me fucking you too..." He groaned, not really grasping the entirety of what Harry had said as he finished that sentence. "...No one has ever complained before." He pulled away a little then, staggering backwards dazedly.

Harry looked distant for a moment. *He's been with other people*, he thought sadly as Draco continued to catch his breath. The slytherin spoke with panting, broken pauses.

"You do...*realise*...that...*this*...has to stay...between just us...*right?*"

Harry sat upright suddenly. "So that's *all* I am, your dirty little secret?" He spat angrily, unhappy with the callous remark just made.

"You got a problem with that?" Draco glared darkly, finally looking over at him.

"Do you want secrecy so that you can fuck others without letting them know they are sucking the same cock that's been up the *pathetic* Harry Potter's arse?" Harry asked bitterly, quietly, as if the very breeze could whisk his words away. "Or do you want it because you're ashamed of me?" He hated the taste and sound of insecurity on his tongue, and couldn't bear to look Draco in the eyes.

As he had expected, his perfect, hazy image of Draco admitting he wanted him was shattered by the blond's thoughtlessness. He chewed his lip for a moment, before raising his hurt eyes to the Slytherin. "Am I really just a...*fuck?*" He hated the way that sounded; it created a pain his chest that could easily rival *crucio*. He shook his head slightly, running his fingers through his hair as he realised how ridiculous it sounded. "Ugh," he growled uselessly, "Tell me I'm an idiot. Tell me I mean something, *anything* more than *just* a fuck and I'll stop embarrassing us both."

He realised he had asked more than one question there and he wondered, briefly, which Draco would answer first. If any...

Draco's eyes shot open at his sudden statements. *Who said I was fucking anyone else?* He wondered, but never spoke aloud. He had never thought of Harry as just a fuck.

"I showed you a good time because it was what *you* wanted, wasn't it? And you're still not satisfied?" Draco growled, unwilling to give Harry more than he had asked for. Hadn't fucking him and allowing him to enjoy it this time been a good enough of an answer? Draco's insides boiled with his anger. He had finally given in, and for what? A lecture?!

"You're a twit, Potter," He spat at Harry's accusations. "You can take me as I am or not at all," He finished, dodging Harry's questions by replacing them with his own.

"It's what I wanted," Harry clarified quietly; his voice a tad more dejected than Draco cared for. "I can take you as you are, even if you don't answer my questions." Harry wasn't sure exactly what it was, but something in the Slytherin's eyes just made him feel exceptionally foolish. He had felt the way Draco's mind was when he was dazed with passion, sensed him cumming before it had even occurred, through the bond. *If Draco were fucking anyone else, you idiot, you'd know.*

He really was an idiot, spoiling everything when Draco had actually come as close to...nice as Harry thought him capable. With Draco glaring at him, as if insulted by his questions, Harry looked up at him sheepishly through his eyelashes, before leaning forward and pressing an unmistakably apologetic kiss to the boy's lips. He drew back an inch, staring into the grey eyes watching him with suspicion.

"I like you," Harry said lamely, but sincerely and Draco blinked at him. Draco could not mistake it this time. "You're important to me..." Harry trailed off, stopping himself from adding what he had truly wished to say, but hoping they were discreetly implied by the way he was looking at him. *You make me happy* and worst yet, *I love you*, would have probably earned him a sneer and most likely result in him being left alone and naked under the bleachers.

"If you can handle being the *Chosen One's* lover then I can be your dirty little secret," he murmured with a teasing edge to his voice now, his words breathing over Draco's lips, which tipped up with the smallest smile.

“Hah, of course,” Draco said proudly, grabbing his underwear from the floor where he had kicked them. “So, are you going to put my pants back on for me?” He grinned seductively, watching Harry's cheeks flush a tomato-red at his request. He handed Harry the garment and watched as he knelt down to 'service' him.

Harry eyed him carefully as he pulled the grey underwear back up to cover the organ that had just been inside him, hoping it wouldn't be too long before he would see it again...

“Harry, are you *blushing*?” The Slytherin laughed. The Chosen One was a little pathetic and it satisfied him indescribably to see him this way. “Don't be so *camp*!” Draco spat, nudging him sideways as he continued to pull on his trousers.

Harry quirked a brow. “Am I supposed to understand what that means?” He asked sceptically, getting to his feet, only to be pulled hard and roughly into Draco's chest. Fingers knotted in his hair and Harry did not resist the grip in any way, on the contrary he merely smiled mischievously. Those lips descended firmly – *ardently* against his own and he groaned shamelessly against them, frowning in negation as Draco pushed him away.

With a small (frighteningly contented sigh) Harry watched the Slytherin climb into his clothes elegantly. “You realise this is the first time you're leaving me without hitting me or anything?” He said, mostly to himself as he stooped to retrieve his own clothes. No sooner had he bent over, however, a harsh, stinging smack crashed across his backside. He jumped up, whirling around to face the smirking Slytherin.

“What the *hell* was that for, you arse?” Harry snapped, rubbing his sore cheek. He realised before Draco had even answered though – that was Draco's answer to the ‘hitting me or anything’ remark.

“Potter,” He snapped smugly as he brought his hand away from the blistered red cheek, leaning over and grabbing his cloak as Harry finally pulled up his underwear. Draco glared from where he was sitting as Harry redressed himself. Thankfully, the Gryffindor wasn't facing him as he dressed, otherwise Draco's flushed complexion would have caused a whole new set of questions. He quickly took his eyes away from Harry and picked his wand up from the floor.

Walking over to the oblivious Gryffindor and pulled Harry backwards into his arms. “Now every time you're alone in the shower or in bed, you'll have the memories of this to jerk yourself off to, you can just imagine I'm watching if you're ever having trouble getting it up,” He whispered tenderly in his ear, punctuating his words with a

teasing lick of Harry's ear (one last time) and released him to finish getting dressed.

Harry frowned, almost petulantly for a few moments upon being released and turned to face the now fully-clothed blond. "If I have trouble getting it up I may just sneak into your dormitory wearing my cloak and jerk off over your sleeping body," Harry retorted. Draco raised a brow, as if deciding whether or not he would do such a thing. Harry smirked as he approached him.

"So do I get to hold your hand?" Harry asked, smiling sincerely, teasingly. He swore he saw Draco reciprocate the action, if ever so briefly. "Will you walk me to my classes and kiss me when we say goodbye?" Draco merely stared vacantly down at him and Harry's smirk broadened. "Am I pushing my luck?" he laughed.

Draco gave him a glare that made him feel inadequate for even suggesting they *hold hands* as a joke. Remaining silent and un-amused at those questions, he ignorantly walked ahead and onwards from the bleachers.

"Draco!"

The blond stopped as Harry called after him and remained still, even as Harry moved before him, leaning up to slide their lips together. Harry flicked his tongue out, briefly touching the other's, while his mouth kneaded Draco's and then he drew back. "See you around," Harry said simply, before hurrying off across the grounds towards the castle. Draco stood there for a moment, watching him with irritation (and something else he'd rather not name) burning in his chest. How dare he steal himself something as trivial as a *goodbye kiss*?! Draco winced as he felt his cheeks colour.

~To Be Continued...

Notes:

"Dilugero" is a spell created by ourselves, derived from "deluge" which is running water. No fiefs! Lol ask and credit before ya borrow thankies!
Please comment if you have time! It's all appreciated!

Chapter 10: Chapter Ten

(Bound By) Clandestine Addiction

[Chapter Ten]

The flames in the hearth licked at their fuel hungrily, joining the light from the torches in illuminating the room with a warm, comforting glow. McGonagall sat bolt upright at the Headmistress's desk, fingers folded neatly together in front of her as she regarded the figure standing, silhouetted against the fire, deadly still.

"And I suppose this is entirely necessary?" She questioned the figure stiffly.

"Bringing Draco into the knowledge of this predicament? Surely if the Dark Lord were to—"

"Draco is more accomplished in occlumency than yourself," the stranger cut across her, causing her lips to purse disdainfully. She had never approved of stronger wizards (Dumbledore included) drawing youngsters into the messes not of their own making.

"Of course," she replied, "Were he not, he would have been dead by now."

"Another thing he and Potter share are their uncanny abilities to survive," the silhouette mused and she nodded in agreement, just as a knock came on the door of the office.

"Come in," McGonagall summoned and the ornate door swung open, closing quietly behind a bewildered Draco Malfoy. The Boy stepped into the room, scanning it cautiously. He offered his Headmistress a vacant look before glancing to the shadow lingering by the fireplace. His posture went rigid. As if sensing the Boy's shock, the cloaked stranger turned slowly to face him, his pale face and hair almost eerie with the fire's glow.

"I expect you are wondering why you have been called here?" Lucius Malfoy asked his son softly, while McGonagall surveyed them carefully. "And no doubt, what I am doing here, under the scrutiny of your Headmistress?"

Draco gazed around the room in the flickering firelight, over at Professor McGonagall then back over at his father who was propped up just half in the shadow. He quietly walked towards the centre of the room, wondering why he had been summoned and what was going on. His mind screamed *Voldemort* just his attention turned to the woman who breeched her pursed lips to speak, wiping the sudden fear blank with her explanation...

"Your father has come to me with a peace-offering of secrets," McGonagall explained

quietly, watching as Draco's wide eyes turned to his father. Horrified.

"Severus and I will be playing both sides, my son," Lucius clarified for him carefully, dangerously. "You know that above all, this family is the most important, the most precious and I will do whatever it takes to ensure it's survival." He paused a moment, beckoning his son closer. Draco seemed indisposed briefly, before he took a few tentative steps towards his father.

"The Dark Lord went too far in involving my son in a mere *punishment* tactic for my indiscretions," Lucius explained blankly. "I will relay information for the Order, and when the time is right, your mother and yourself will retreat to a safe house." He watched his son's face distort with a sneer and his mouth open, but Lucius held his hand up to silence him. "What I must ask of you requires too much as it already stands," he muttered, setting both hands on his son's shoulders, pressuring them gently as he met his eyes. It was most disconcerting, particularly for a Boy who had possessed a mother with all the affection and strength of a parent but a father with only the appearance of it. *Why is he so bothered now?* He wondered.

"I must ask you to continue under the illusion of seducing Harry Potter, continue to simulate a Draco Malfoy intent on securing Potter for the Dark Lord's grasp." He watched his son's cheeks colour and his eyes flicker treacherously at the mention of Potter. Then he just looked indignant.

"Alright," Draco agreed, breathing out, he wasn't happy about any of this, but what choices did he have? None. He didn't have any. He couldn't do *anything*, though they were mistaken on one thing, he would be doing his own thing when the time came, he had no intention of going with them to a *safe house* and hiding away. Not now this connection to Harry was growing, not while he *needed* him. He nearly choked on his own spittle at that thought, feeling ridiculous.

"I'll do whatever you want, if it keeps me safe," Draco assured them once more, keeping his mind shielding from any prying his Father may deem necessary. His true intentions were nowhere to be found in his blank words or his mind.

From beyond the cracks of the door was a pair of emerald eyes, watching, witnessing and an ear not too far away from those eyes listening. *He's being asked to seduce me?! Harry felt bile rise in his throat and winced lightly at the thought. He's just been a puppet this whole time for Voldemort – he's been using me?! No wonder he's been all over the place.* Harry felt his insides swell as he listened to the conversation continue...

“I would never allow you to come to harm,” Lucius’s soft voice insisted, “And of course, you will be withdrawn before the time comes for you to *actually* give Potter to the Dark Lord.” He paused, offering his son a knowing smirk. “I would not ask something so taxing of you.”

Draco’s shoulders tensed under the elder Malfoy’s grasp at those words and Harry watched from his place outside the door as Lucius’s smile broadened.

“You believe I was not aware of how attached to the Potter boy you have become?” He asked and both Harry and Draco flustered. It was bad enough that somehow Lucius Malfoy knew something was going on that was *far* from platonic, but for *McGonagall* to know...

The only thing worse would be if the entire Gryffindor quidditch team had spied on us that day under the bleachers, Harry thought with horror, as inside the room, Draco snapped.

“Close to him? What is that supposed to mean?” He drew his wand on reflex as he spoke, pointing it carelessly towards his father at the suggestion. It was hard enough keeping Harry under grips with it, but the adults too. He cringed knowing they *knew*.

“Now come, Draco, lower your wand, there will be no need for that,” Lucius stated coolly, gesturing for Draco to lower his wand. Slowly, the younger Malfoy did as he was instructed, feeling uncomfortably awkward with this situation.

“I’m not seducing him the way *you* seem to think,” Draco sneered.
”And what way would that be?”

Draco fell silent at his father’s words. He wasn't going to say it. He felt like his own father was mocking just by countering his statement.

“Like I care if Potter gets taken by the Dark Lord. I don't *care* what happens to him, as long as I'm safe,” He lied, only making himself look like even more of an idiot as he tried endlessly and needlessly to move away from the suggestion he so badly wanted to avoid.

Professor McGonagall twitched at Draco's words – Harry Potter meant a great deal to her and even if Lucius could see through Draco, she could not. She didn't feel happy with him talking so brazenly of offering up another to save his own life. “Potter is a wizard like you, Draco, slytherin or not. Anyone who could be considered human would not be able to just sell him out so carelessly.”

“If he had died at birth, there wouldn't even be this problem,” Draco spat, his insides churning in revulsion at his own words. Recklessly, he continued. It didn't matter what they thought and how he spoke about Harry because they weren't the ones he was concerned in proving how he really felt. Harry was. And Harry wasn't present.

At that thought his chest tingled with the familiar sensation of needle pricks and he skimmed the room in haste. Harry wasn't there, was he?

Harry froze at Draco's words, his head swimming, dizzying him with everything he had witnessed. Draco's spiteful, loathing words revolved around his head and a fleeting madness descended over him. *Of course*, he thought, over and over again though the words made no rational sense. *Of course he doesn't care, of course...*

A hysterical, hazy whisper of a laugh escaped his lips and he watched as all occupants of the room he had been spying on looked at the door in panic. Harry could not care. He stumbled backwards, dizzy from the madness and fell against the wall of the stairs to prevent himself from tumbling down them. He gasped out. He couldn't breathe, everything felt tight in his chest, like being trapped in a coffin under six feet of earth and Draco was the coffin and the rest of the world was everything piled on top.

It was enough, all of it – he'd had enough.

Footsteps thundered behind him as the statue circled with the stairs, allowing him to stagger into the courtyard. His lungs scrambled frantically to inhale the fresh air scraping at his cheeks, the night breeze but he could not. Everything was compressed, too tight. He heard Draco's voice behind him, at least he thought it was Draco, but it seemed very, very far away.

“Of course,” he murmured aloud, still possessed by cloudy hysteria as he felt someone seize him by his robes roughly. Lucius's snake-headed cane rapped sharply against Potter's neck as one hand grasped the red collar of his robe.

“Listening in on other people's conversations, are we *boy*?”

“Only when the conversations are about *me*!” Harry snarled, viscerally trying to break away.

“I'll take it from here,” Draco snapped firmly at his father, who released in an instant only to watch as Draco dragged Harry quickly out of sight. Draco bristled as he heard a voice distantly call to him.

“Know your place, Draco,” Lucius reminded him, allowing him to pull Potter away and leaving Professor McGonagall to stand awkwardly, worrying as he did so.

“Come on,” Draco demanded, stumbling over Harry as the boy tried to struggle from his grasp.

“Get off me!” Harry snarled as Draco dragged him bodily through the archway and out of sight of the two adults. Draco’s voice in that room and just then when he had snatched him away from Lucius, his *face*...the perfect epitome of a pitiless Malfoy. Rage and hurt burned through his skin with a spiteful fire in a way that he had hoped never to feel again. He was furious with Draco, so furious and so in love with him he swore his body would combust with the clash between the two.

Crossing the threshold of the wooden bridge, he roughly yanked his arm back in search of freedom – pointlessly. His struggling was pointless when his bones felt like jelly, but he could not and would not follow willingly. He would not be the lost lamb he had been anymore, traipsing haplessly after the wolf only to forget what they were. It was inevitable, Draco would always hurt him and Harry would always go back, in the face of fear, hate and pain he always felt the pull to return.

“Get off me!” He screamed again, eyes steaming up with the fog of tears. “Get off me – GET OFF ME!!!” Draco released him roughly, tossing him against the frame of the bridge. Harry caught himself on the support of the wooden sill, his body slumped and he made no rush to turn and face the Blond who stood, far too close behind him. Tears stabbed at his eyes and he closed them sharply, only succeeding in driving them over the rim of his lids and down his cheeks.

“*Pathetic, Potter,*” he mumbled to himself, echoing Draco’s scathing tone. “What was that?” He heard the true Draco ask and he merely shook his head. “As if it matters,” Harry answered bitterly, “You don’t care if Voldemort kills me, tortures me. You don’t care what happens to me – If I had died when I was supposed to your life would be just perfect, wouldn’t it?”

Draco twisted Harry around sharply by the collar and slammed him further into the rim of wood along the bridge as his anger raced to the surface. “Shut it, Potter!” Draco yelled. His spiteful conscience (that in the events of what happened under the bleachers had seemed to fade was now returning tenfold) rushed to stab him in the chest as at Harry’s words. Harry opened his lips to speak again but was instantly cut off.

“I said shut up! JUST *SHUT UP!*” He screamed, finally silencing Harry’s hateful tone with his own. “Why does it even matter to you anyway? It’s not like we’re *lovers!*” He spat spitefully, making a show of cringing and wrinkling his nose in pretend disgust.

“You're nothing to me!” He declared, feeling the pull stab him in retaliation to his lies.

“You don't care what happens to me...” Harry's words rang over and over in his head like a church bell as he growled at them under his breath, bidding *them* into silence this time. His breathless body tumbled to the floor, blond stands disguising his eyes as his throat turned numb. His hands gripped his head tightly as Harry stood above him, looking down at how pathetic *he* was.

He didn't want Harry to hear him say those things. And it hurt.

“That's a pity,” Harry answered, evenly, his voice husky. He knelt down, bringing himself to the Boy's level and pressing the flat of his palm to the Blond's pounding heart and the scar above that was so susceptible to his touch. He watched that body struggle to withhold a shudder. “Because you're everything to me.” Harry allowed those words to permeate the air for a moment, before he leant in, the blond locks brushing over his cheeks as he pressed his forehead into Draco's for a moment.

“I don't care if you insult me in public,” Harry whispered softly, never drawing his hand away from the Blond's chest. “I don't care if you hit me and you can tell your father I'm nothing, you can tell McGonagall and Snape and anyone who'll listen that I'm revolting and you wouldn't touch me with an eight-foot *pole*!” His tongue swiped out to wet his suddenly dry lips and he reached up with the other hand to caress the back of Draco's head.

“But don't tell me you don't want me and don't lie to me anymore.” When Draco said nothing, did not so much as return a glance or touch, Harry sighed, getting to his feet slowly. What was it about Draco's anger at him that made him cave in? He saw him furious and struggled to appease him. *Because you love him*, that very Draco voice whispered in his mind, *and he's too proud to tell you the truth...*

“Fine then,” Harry offered in a very nonchalant manner and the finality of it drew Draco's eyes from the ground. Harry threw his wand to Draco's feet and heaved himself into the nearest arch of the wooden bridge. Perching his backside on the edge, he steadied himself on one of the supports, staring down at Draco blankly. “If you don't give a damn about me as you say, you won't mind if I just sit here...” His voice trailed off and as if on cue the frail ledge creaked ominously. Harry saw Draco's eyes widen and barely managed to keep his face vacant at the clear horror there.

Draco gazed up at him, feeling somewhere between hurt and confused as the words he'd wanted to say to Harry since the very first time this bond became apparent, fell from his lips. Something built up in the backs of Draco's eyes as he finally breathed

out. “Is it so wrong that I...?” He paused, purposely staring in the opposite direction to Harry as he got back to his feet. “Just...don't...want you to die...?”

“Prove it to me,” Harry suddenly announced, causing Draco to look at him at last as he continued, “If you really meant what you just said and you were only saying those things as a distraction then prove it.” Harry wanted answers, he needed to hear Draco say it.

“Why should I prove it? You're the one who's always telling me how I feel; I don't need to prove anything to you!”

“Actually you do,” Harry replied, swinging his legs absently from his dangerous perching, the protesting sounds the wood gave making Draco uneasy. “Because it doesn't mean anything unless it's *you* that tells me how you feel.” Draco snorted at that and Harry sighed. “I'm not asking for fucking *love declaration!*” Harry's words were a frustrated growl, “I'm asking you to tell me that I mean something to you! Saying you don't want me to die is a lot from you – but it's not enough...”

The movements and the foreboding creak from the bridge seemed to have Draco hypnotised with anxiety he was not at liberty to express and so Harry hopped down slowly to his side once more. Picking up his wand, he examined it for a moment thoughtfully, before brushing down the bridge of Draco's nose softly with it to gain his attention.

“You really can't say it, can you?” He murmured, more to himself than Draco, yet the Blond sighed, apparently resigned to whatever fate his confounded Malfoy pride led him to.

There were two things Harry really wanted to ask at that moment, but his cheeks tinted with colour at the sound of the latter in his head and so he dared to voice the first. “Do you really believe that...? Did you mean it when you said if I had died the world would be...better?” He asked waveringly, not sure he wanted the answer – for he had pondered that question far too often in his own mind ever since the night of the Graveyard...

The pressure of the bond between him and Harry rushed straight to his throat, burning it. Every time Harry asked him these things, he choked on it. Draco did everything in his power to avoid eye contact as he finally managed words. “Who am I to say whether or not the world would be a better place? And why does my opinion even matter – it doesn't mean anything?!” That was the closest Draco could scrape together for an answer, apology, whatever you wanted to call it...

It was probably expected that Harry would have been stubborn, would have demanded more than that incomplete apology – but he didn't. A sincere smile spread across his lips and he leant in, brushing them over Draco's cheek, wrapping his arms around his shoulders so that he was completely slumped into the Blond's body. "You know, Draco," Harry began in his ear softly; "Sometimes I think you're quite fond of me." A soft laugh punctuated his words and he drew back to look the young Malfoy in the eyes, his own glowing as he braved his *other* question...

"You don't like words, so show me instead," He breathed, "Let me take you – just once. *Prove it to me.*" His final words were near a moan and though he felt Draco stiffen at the sound, the look on his face was quite clearly set in it's answer.

The slytherin glared blankly at that request. "Take me?" He asked, wondering if he had heard Harry right and exactly what it was he was implying. He laughed spitefully at the request. "*You* want to top *me*?" He continued to laugh as his smile sank to a frown. "Don't make me laugh, you wouldn't know where to stick it," He sneered, shifting as Harry darted for him.

Harry fisted Draco's robes, throwing him back hard against the wooden floor, his face merely inches above. Draco knew how to push his buttons, but he had still not completely figured out the consequences of them. Harry smirked. He had always been known for his confidence to flare up under torment; Umbridge, Snape and Malfoy himself were fine examples. "I know exactly where to stick it," he hissed seductively, his eyes dark with his intentions. "I'll make you prepare your little virgin hole yourself and then I'll fuck your pretty little white arse until you can't walk..."

Draco glared up at him before shoving him off roughly, but that did not wipe the smug look from Harry's face. If Draco hated anything more than being ignored, Harry was sure it was this – Harry's own random bursts of confidence. Whether he admits it or not, I get to him, Harry thought complacently.

Draco rolled Harry over and pinned his hand to the wooden floor, yanking him as his eyes shot a dark glare down to him. "Keep dreaming, Potter!" Draco growled, clearly irritated at his confidence. Harry wasn't giving in.

"Always," he answered with a smirk, "but taking you just once isn't much to ask is it? You have to give a little, Draco. You just automatically decided I was the bottom and fucked my arse raw without preparation 'til I *bled*!" The pain hadn't bothered him, he was used to pain, it was the carelessness he hadn't been able to bear. It made him feel better though, that Draco's eyes flickered with regret.

“Are you afraid I’ll hurt you?” He asked carefully, realising that the Blond did not have his high threshold for pain. *And he's too proud to admit it if he is in pain.*

Draco's head flinched. “I'm not scared, Potter!” He leant up, releasing Harry's hands from his grip as he knelt backwards. “I just know enough not to let an amateur near my arse,” He finished, standing to his feet at last. “See you later,” He grunted, walking ahead of the bridge to leave Harry in wonder. Now he was definitely clueless about where they stood with one and other. But that didn't matter. Sooner or later, Draco would give in and whether he cared to admit it or not, Harry was the top in more ways than just intimacy...

* * *

Harry's lungs ached and a stitch was biting into his side as he flew through the door to Charms, straightening his haphazard appearance as he went. Everyone's eyes flew to him as he entered, still desperately trying to straighten his robes and flatten his hair. “Err... Sorry I'm late, Professor,” Harry apologised, his cheeks heating as he hurried to his usual seat beside Hermione and Ron (who he happily noted were holding hands under the table). He felt quite optimistic lately and Draco had everything to do with it.

“Where have you been?” Hermione gasped as Harry settled in his seat, still patting down his hair breathlessly, *still* under the rapt attention of his classmates. “Why are you so flustered?” Ron asked suspiciously, but Harry was saved from having to answer...

“You're late, Mr Potter,” Professor Flitwick reprimanded him, *studying* him along with everyone else. “You can stay after class and help me clean up,” He said, drifting back over to what he was previously talking about.

“Well?” Hermione persisted under her breath, despite their Professor watching them carefully from across the room. Harry pulled out his books and wand, smiling broadly, partially at his ‘*dirty little secret*’ (as he and Draco had dubbed it) and partially at the memories of what Draco's wand had given him just a short week ago on the quidditch pitch...

“I really *love* magic, Hermione,” He laughed, catching Flitwick glaring at him out of the corner of his eye, but no sooner had the wizard moved to confront him, the door opened again. Flitwick made a noise of disdain. “Nice of *you* to join us also, Mr Malfoy.”

Harry's head snapped round automatically, even though he had known the Blond

wasn't far behind him. *He probably went to preen himself to perfection before he entered*, Harry mused, adjusting his shirt collar up carefully to cover the fresh bruising the Blond had inflicted on the base of his throat just moments ago... *When you were supposed to be in class*, a Hermione-sounding voice scolded. But he brushed it off as Draco walked further into the room, Flitwick still glowering at him.

Draco sat down as the class progressed, sinking into his chair as he flickered a look at Harry every now and again, causing him to lose concentration on his studies every time he tried.

"I just need to pop next door to collect the props for my next class, students. Keep at it," Professor Flitwick announced and encouraged, carefully walking with a skip out of the door. No sooner has he disappeared through it, Draco seized his chance. "How did you get those?" Draco taunted Harry from across the room, gesturing obviously to his love bites. Harry flushed as the entire class looked round at him.

"I'm surprised any girl is interested in you!" Draco laughed, Crabbe and Goyle guffawing ridiculously, joining in with his spite. Draco's eye's glowed furiously as they caught Harry's – he was reacting the exact way Draco wanted and Draco was *thriving* in it.

Harry tugged his shirt collar up uncomfortably. He felt humiliation colour his cheeks but it felt...different. The usual malice was not in Draco's words, yet Hermione and Ron looked livid, so perhaps it was there and he was merely just able to...see through it now? He caught the glint in Draco's eyes as he smiled, even if it was from debasing him. *I've become a masochist*, he mused, *he's definitely ruined me*. It worried him that that fact did not faze him as much as it should and he ducked his head down to copy the work off Hermione's parchment, as if his participation in the argument would reveal his desires to all...

That and I can't stop looking at him!

"And we are surprised anything that *breathes* is interested in you," the Red-head sneered.

"Some of us are aware of the protocol for a simple relationship between *humans*," Hermione interjected rationally, though her gaze was scathing and accusing and though no one else knew what she was talking about, she could see Draco knew she was referring to his violent outbursts. Harry flinched beside her, wishing nothing more than her silence – rubbing Draco's face in it wasn't going to erase anything, but if he, Harry had forgiven him for it, what business was it of theirs?

“Just shove off, Malfoy,” Ron spat, with more malice than Harry knew him capable of. He swallowed hard. His best friend and his (secret) boyfriend glaring daggers at each other was not good, they’d have to curb their animosity if they were going to be able to even be in the same room. And then Harry’s flush darkened furiously. He’d just thought of Draco as his boyfriend. *Straying from the point*, he realised and Draco was already answering back. Harry shifted uncomfortably in his seat – again.

“Interested in *me*?!” Malfoy laughed at Ron’s words. “You’re not exactly one to talk *Weasel-bee*, have you taken a look in the mirror as of late?” He spat, giggling then turning his attention to Hermione, who had also opened her mouth in defense. “Don’t talk to me, *Mud-blood*!”

Fury burned under Hermione’s skin, even though it was *just* Malfoy. She couldn’t help but get wound up at that insult and the fact that Malfoy barely even acknowledged her because of her blood status. It was so unbelievably cruel and wrong. And she *hated* him for it. But furthermore, she hated him for taking her best friend and making him into such a docile *puppet*!

Hermione couldn’t comprehend at all how a relationship between Draco Malfoy and Harry Potter would *ever* work. *Harry is far too good for him*, she thought spitefully, as she tried to understand thoughts of them even being intimate. Not that she wanted those images. The atmosphere between them was anything but nice...

“Maybe you should look further to home than you think for just who gave Harry those—” Her words cut short by a nudge to her side.

“Shut up!” Harry croaked in a low enough tone, so only she could hear.

Crabbe and Goyle looked at Malfoy, confused at his sudden retreat from the argument. He realised now that Granger knew and her warning him was working painfully. “Stupid Mud-blood!” He hissed quietly as he drifted back into his own conversation between his house-mates. Hermione let that slip and respected Harry’s wishes. Ron did not.

“Don’t talk to my girlfriend like that!” Ron glared, pulling out his wand and aiming it at Draco. Draco’s attention snapped to him as he too drew his own wand in defence. Harry’s insides were doing back flips. That moment when Hermione had stopped, he was sure that vicious natter would be over. *Trust Ron...*

“You actually have the guts, Weasley?!” Draco taunted, seeing Ron becoming more and more frustrated at his constant teasing.

“I’ve got a lot more than you, you spineless little twerp,” Ron sneered, despite Harry’s

imploring look. “Spitting in the faces of the few people that give a damn about you, that’s all you’re capable of without *Daddy’s* help! You filthy death—”

“Ron, shut it!” Harry hissed, cutting across his friend and now sitting bolt upright in his seat. Everyone’s eyes snapped back to him and he swallowed hard under the pressure, under the weight of Draco’s stare which seemed...stunned.

“But *Harry*,” Ron began. Harry shook his head meaningfully.

“He insulted *me* first, you didn’t have to retaliate,” Harry stated and Ron and Hermione looked furious.

“But Harry, he was humiliating you,” Hermione whispered, for his ears only.

“That’s what he *does*,” Harry murmured to his two best friends, “I’m used to it...”

“But you shouldn’t *have* to get used to it!” Hermione spat, and this time her voice was loud enough so that everyone stared at her now in confusion. Harry bristled.

“Maybe you just like *any* attention,” Ron sneered, again, loud enough for anyone to hear. This time, Harry felt the humiliation churn his stomach. “No matter how negative it is, you can’t seem to get enough of it...”

Harry flinched at the revulsion in his best friend’s voice, unwittingly looking up to meet the unreadable expression in Draco’s eyes. *Is that what he thinks of me?* He wondered, suddenly feeling very, very vulnerable...

Draco’s stiffened expression and deep slate eyes cut across to Harry glaring at him with a look darker than death. He realised Harry had a big gob when it came to telling his friends about his problems, but he never imagined he would sink as low as to talk to them about the dark mark (which Harry clearly knew bothered him after that *self-affliction* incident in the boy’s bathroom). *My mark*, he thought, staring at Harry accusingly, though he wasn’t exactly the perfect role model of an angel himself...

“What do you know, the red head said something right for once – Potter will do anything for a reaction,” Draco hissed, mainly at Harry, as if agreeing with what Ron had just said would be enough to spite Harry for not showing the least bit of discretion, though why that surprised him was a question in itself. He felt the pull tug tightly at his chest. But Harry didn’t seem to show any reaction.

Harry watched as Draco twitched, shivering as if in pain, as he did when their bond swelled. But Harry felt nothing, only betrayal. He studied the confused look on Malfoy’s face this time, perhaps the Blond saw he was not affected by it. Maybe it wasn’t the bond. *Maybe he’s grown a conscience at last*, he thought bitterly, merely shuffling along the bench to distance himself from Ron and staring determinedly at his parchment. He hadn’t expected Draco to stick up for him, but it would have been more than welcome if he had at least shot Ron a nasty retort. *It would have been nice*

to feel he cared enough to let Ron to know to back off, even if no one else heard it...

“That’s right,” he said calmly to the classroom, though in truth, the calmness was a badly feigned mask for his misery. “I asked Voldemort to kill my parents when I was a year old for attention. I asked him to try to kill *me* for seven years so I could have all *you* idiots would pay attention to me!” His body tensed with anger in his last words, and he thought he saw Draco flinch, just a few, fleeting seconds before that anger and betrayal swam through his blood. It boiled. His skin seared and his fringe fluttered with an unnatural breeze. There was a pulse of foreboding magic and then, every single goblet that they were supposed to be practicing charms on shattered simultaneously, into a thousand jagged pieces.

The entire class flinched in their seats as the line of goblets smashed into the surrounding air and flew like daggers to the floor. All eyes were on him now, wide with shock.

“Harry, calm down!” Hermione yelled, only to hear Professor Flitwick’s voice in response.

“What in the *devil’s name* is going on in here?” Called the rather bewildered Professor, who had returned just in time to witness Harry’s brutal outburst.

“Talk about pick your moments, Professor,” Ron added, though he was ignored as no one found his little statement the slightest bit amusing. He shrugged it off as the voice of their angered professor sounded again.

“Well, Mr Potter?” He asked, also staring at Harry, dumbstruck by his actions.

Were they all mad, hadn’t they heard what Harry had said? It wasn’t as if he had no reason for venting. But still, they acted as if it was wholly unexpected for Harry to explode like that so suddenly. If they had the slightest concern for him beyond his *Chosen One* capacity they would have seen the build-up and how *un*-sudden it was.

“Detention I am afraid Potter, you can stay behind for a few hours to help clear this up,” The professor instructed, dismissing the class early.

”Oh yes, so like you Potter, can’t help but make a scene,” Draco finally added. He made the last stab with a glare as he grabbed his books, detached from Harry once more as he had always seemed, maybe more so (at that moment) than before this connection arose.

“You too, Mr Malfoy.”

Draco sighed at that, replacing the book he had just picked up back on the table.

Ron and Hermione shared a look that was unsettling. Harry and Draco cleaning together did not sound particularly...*safe*, even with the teacher present.

Harry just nodded dumbly, not uttering a word as the professor laid down their instructions for tidying up their classroom. No sooner had Flitwick returned to his reading at the desk, Harry turned away, sweeping the shards of glass into his dustpan, determined to avoid Malfoy. It was not to be, however, as the said Blond chose this moment and the place just ahead of him to start sweeping as well. Harry offered him a reproachful glare, before gazing back to his task once more. Half the punishment was to tidy in the muggle manner, which Harry was all-too used to, but which was probably driving Malfoy insane.

Malfoy still seemed to be fidgeting, as if prickled by stinging nettles, while Harry felt only the dull hum they had both become used to. Was the bond doing something to Draco? Harry wondered, glancing up to see those grey eyes trained on him watchfully. Before he could stop himself, the whispered question had shuddered beyond his lips. "You couldn't have stood up for me just once, could you?"

Draco silenced to that question. His chest was racing with an uneasy quiver, almost sickening as Harry worked before him. He started to brush furiously at the shards and dust as Harry watched dumbly – no *expectantly*. "Are you going to continue sweeping, or you going to just sit there?" Draco asked pettily, flicking the pile into the pan. *This is servant's work*, He thought bitterly, giving Harry another glare as he resumed his task.

They were silent for a long time and Harry was sure Draco still looked fidgety and uncomfortable, though was quite sure it was something separate to their connection. He made a point of ignoring the Blond for the next half hour, which no doubt was driving him insane. By the time the shards littering the floor and desks were swept away and they had dusted every single book on Flitwick's shelves, Harry felt sure that the professor's presence was the only thing stopping Draco from snapping.

Good, Harry thought resentfully. He kept repeating the scene in his head, over and over, of what he should have said, what he should have done. How was it that Draco always seemed to do the exact perfect thing to hurt him the most? He sighed at that, tipping some oil onto the desks before beginning to rub it in vigorously. He hadn't lost control of his magic like that since he was young, so much younger than he felt now. Draco was everything, he allowed him to be weak, allowed himself to depend on another for once, allowed him to feel something and everything, all to the extremes. *Yet he only wants to make me feel like an inadequate idiot.*

“Draco?” Harry asked quietly, after much consideration and a glance up to Flitwick to ensure he was lost in the text he was reading. Draco did not look up at him, but Harry knew he was listening. “What am I to you?”

“Don't ask me *ridiculous* questions *Potter*,” Draco snapped with discretion, looking over at the professor who was not paying them any attention before glancing back at Harry with a growl. “I already told you where we stand, *didn't I?*” Draco thought for a moment. He hadn't really said anything directly about where they stood, though he did insinuate that if this continued it was to stay between them and them alone.

At that moment a sudden realisation hit Harry. That the reason Draco has seemed so spiteful was because he had been so open to his friends about it. But surely Draco wasn't petty enough to let such things affect him? Of course he was. But not so much so that *that* was the reason he had reverted to his previous self.

“You can't *pretend* forever, Malfoy,” Harry said coldly, a flicker of hurt shone from the Blond's eyes as he turned to him.

“I'm not pretending,” Draco denied, seeing that light flame in Harry's features once more as his cocky attitude took to the floor.

“Then prove it, let me do to you what I—”

“No,” Draco argued, unwilling to let Harry have his way.

“Why? Admit it you're just scared.”

“I'm not scared,” Draco finalized with a shove as he marched to a different part of the room and then...

“Fine,” he hummed from the distance, not even daring to face Harry. A smug look had overridden Draco's features. *This could actually be pretty fun, laughing at him while he's trying to take me...*

~To Be Continued...

Chapter 11: Chapter Eleven

(Bound By) Clandestine Addiction

[Chapter Eleven]

Harry threw his head back, pressing it into the cold stone of the wall as his mouth opened in a silent groan. His legs tightened around Draco's hips, his arms wrapped around those shoulders as he felt the Blond's oozing prick breach him, stretching his entrance taut. Harry gasped, struggling for breath as Draco's head leant against his chest, fucking him against the wall when they should have been in Charms.

A small smile graced his parted, lustful lips. If his friends could see him now....

Frantic, irregular pulses thumped through his blood, with their bond, with the heat of Draco's body taking him completely. It pounded like a drum in his ears and he surrendered to the delicious friction he had come to desire, need as desperately as the air robbed from his lungs. He brought himself down hard onto Draco's thrusts, the lube making embarrassing, wet noises as it raced down his thighs with each lurch into his body.

Harry groaned. It was too good, as always and they were already late...

"Just imagine if Flitwick came looking for you and caught me fucking their precious Chosen One?" Draco purred brokenly in his ear, thrusting into him renewing his convulsions and capturing his ear in his mouth. Draco's hands slid up his back to steady him against his own body as their climax approached. So close. The Blond was forced to hold him close, like an adored lover, lest their connection break and Harry basked in the feeling, whether it was true or not...

Harry flushed as he sat on the end of his bed, remembering so vividly yesterday's events which had ultimately led to a mixture of good and bad ends. The worst being Ron and Hermione (though mainly Ron's) betrayal in a room full of fickle students, his humiliation at the hands of his *lover* and two hours spent tidying a mouldy old charms class. His chest felt heavy at the betrayal of his best friend, who hadn't spoken nor approached him at all since yesterday. Harry traced the bruising around his throat thoughtfully.

Harry's body quivered as he neared his end and Draco's sinful mouth latched onto his pulse, sucking at his flesh hard until it purpled deliciously...

A small smile flickered over Harry's lips as he remembered the one good thing yesterday had paved the way for. Draco Malfoy had agreed to let him top. Not only did that mean something thrilling and powerful on a physical level, but it also meant that he meant enough for Draco that the Blond would forsake his pride, *despite* all of his other shortcomings.

Suddenly, the door to the otherwise abandoned dormitory swung open and something in Harry was set on it's guard at the sight of his two best friends approaching. Hermione looked sympathetic as ever, whilst Ron looked revolted and a tad sulky. "Err...Hi," Harry said lamely as they came to a halt before him, and he felt an awkwardness similar to the time when Ron and he had begun talking again, after the misunderstanding when Harry had been inducted into the Triwizard Tournament against his will. With them staring down at him, verging on speech, Harry pulled his shirt collar up uncomfortably, not wishing to aggravate the situation further with Draco's claim on his body.

"Hi," Ron replied sarcastically at his friend as Hermione nudged him with a meaningful stare. He shrugged placing his bag down beside the table whilst stripping off his cloak to the floor and loosening his necktie. "What?" He spat back at her as they wandered in and took a seat on the bed beside Harry's.

"Puking pastel?" Hermione offered, attempting to break that familiar tension that kept popping up of late. Ron continued to stare. "We agreed to forget it, didn't we?" Hermione grumbled at him as he began to feel riled. Harry hadn't even said anything and he was already losing it...

"How can you keep going back to him?" Ron asked in a random splutter of so many words. "He treats you no different than when you were enemies – no *worse* !" Ron sneered, his arms crossed like a petulant little child. Hermione sat awkwardly beside him. She did agree with Ron. Draco hadn't exactly improved his image of boyfriend material after there previous charms explosion.

"After everything he said to you, you still defend him?" Ron questioned, his ginger brow's pointing inwards with a frown.

"I didn't defend him," Harry corrected, voice stiff, "I was defending my relationship. Do you know how hard it is for him to tell me *anything* ? To show me any form of consideration? If I had let your mouth carry on running it would have ruined everything!"

Hermione's gaze snapped to her boyfriend imploringly, but Ron was already fuming.

“Ruin *what* ?” The Red-head sneered derisively. “There is no *relationship* , mate...” Harry was taken aback by the amount of venom in the usually kind Boy’s voice. “There’s just you being fucked then fucked over by a *Malfoy* – he broke your nose! He spat in your face and stuck your face under hot water! He’s a monster and you’re–”

“The *Chosen One* ?” Harry spat, leaping to his feet. “Well I’m sorry, someone should have informed me that a psychopath murdering my parents meant that I can’t be with who I want. Sometimes love isn’t logical, Ron,” Harry finished, his final words beseeching, but Ron did not let off.

“Oh so you *love* him now, you're openly admitting that fact *aloud* , are you?!” Ron groaned with hatred.

“Ron! Harry!” Hermione shouted, but neither of them listened, just continued to throw insults back at one and other in haste and disgust.

Ron spat, “You should be ashamed of you're self, *mate* ,” sarcastically as he walked over to the other side of the room and threw his fist down to the table with anger, as if venting his frustration on the object was a ploy for him to not unleash them on Harry. “I really, *really* do not like Malfoy, but I think this whole situation is bloody ridiculous! How can you love someone who clearly *HATES* you?! Someone who wouldn't care if you were to drop dead tomorrow?!”

“You don't know that,” Harry conjured up from the bottom of his throat, somewhere between Ron's rare pauses.

“And you still *defend* him?!”

Hermione stood distantly between the two, she wanted to say something to end this, but she had no idea what.

“YES!!!” Harry screamed and something in his throat tore with his desperation. “I defend him! I’d defend him from you and I’d defend him from *Voldemort* if I had to, because that’s what love is!” *Unconditional, uncontrollable*. “He hurts me but he makes me feel alive, like a human being instead of a *mission* .” He drew in a shaky, furious breath, struggling to keep calm and failing miserably. “If you can’t accept him that’s fine, I don’t expect you to. If you don’t trust him, then watch my back, but don’t tell me I should be ashamed for being *happy* for the first time since I found out magic was real.”

He contemplated that thought a moment. This was exactly what it felt like. He had heard of magic, had dreamt something wonderful and unbelievable would rescue him from the Dursleys. He had heard of love, and no matter how much it hurt, he wasn’t

going to revoke it, or throw it away now he finally had it all for a trifling handful of pains. "Whatever you decide though, it won't make my feelings go away..."

Ron's eyes stung at that statement. "There have been loads of times when you've been happy. Aren't you happy to have your friends beside you?" A jealous Ron perched on a bed that wasn't his, away from Harry, *angry* at Harry for picking Malfoy over him and Hermione.

"Choosing a slytherin over us—"

"Ron shut up!" Hermione finally intervened. "You have no idea how hard this is on Harry, on all of us, but you're not making it any easier!"

"Oh, so now you're taking his side?" Ron sulked, avoiding eye contact with his overtaxed girlfriend and a very frustrated Harry.

"I'm not taking anyone's side!" Hermione shouted quickly, stomping her foot at him as he sat dumbly against the bed post, arms still crossed. "I just think that we need to let Harry do what he needs to do, as long as it doesn't interfere with our mission, that's fine? Isn't it?"

"I'm not choosing him over you – you're choosing your petty school-boy hatred of him over me. Ron just...think. Hermione is everything to you, isn't she?" He watched Ron flush as red as his hair at the rhetorical question. "Could you ever be fully happy without her? I'm not asking for anything, let's just stop fighting over something *neither* of us have control over."

Hermione stared between the two boys carefully for a moment, before seeing Ron's resigned shrug. Harry felt the knot in his chest loosen a little. "Just don't tell me any of the gory details," Ron murmured reproachfully under his breath. "But don't let me be the last to know when it all goes pear-shaped. We're best mates, or we used to be..."

"We still are," Harry assured him. Between them, Hermione rolled her eyes.

"*Boys*," she breathed, shaking her head slightly. It was times such as these that she wished that there trio were a quartet – with another girl! "Good, well now that's all settled, perhaps we could be moving along to Transfiguration?" She suggested, exhausted by the raging testosterone.

"So, mate, not that I want to know – ever but...you and Malfoy," Ron murmured in morbid curiosity, "Who is the girl?"

"Ron!" Hermione exclaimed. "Honestly, you said you didn't want to know!"

"I don't," Ron answered uncomfortably as they descended the Grand Staircase, "But I've got a right to know if my best mate is the—"

"Top or the bottom?" Harry suggested with a smile. Ron cringed.

“It’s just weird that you have gay *lingo* .”

Harry beamed. “If it creeps you out why do you want to know?”

“He is torn between a rock and a hard place, so to speak,” Hermione interjected in a matter-of-fact voice as they paused on one of the landings, waiting for the stairs to move round to them. “He wants to know more than anyone else, I understand boys talk about their latest *conquests* – though on the other hand he doesn’t want to hear about your...same sex activities.”

Beside her, Ron went beet red.

Just as they climbed onto the set of stairs that had finally reached them, Harry felt a low pulse alerting him to a presence to his left on a lower floor. Inclining his head, he spied a familiar head of blond hair and his heart skipped a beat. “I’ll get back to you with that answer, Ron,” Harry said distractedly, before jumping back onto the landing, narrowly missing the gap that had formed and heading after the Slytherin who had not turned to face him. He glanced around quickly; no one was around except for his two friends just across from them, continuing on their way to Transfiguration and so with a smile flickering at his lips and in his chest, Harry leant in to Draco’s ear.

“So when can I have you, Mr Malfoy?” Harry breathed hotly, making Draco jump and spin to face him in surprise. Just ahead of them, Ron made a vomiting sound in the back of his throat, (albeit a half-hearted one, at least Harry was doing the tormenting now). Hermione raised her brows at the scene, a small smirk of triumph on Harry’s behalf reaching her as she and Ron turned away and continued onto their lesson, leaving Harry and Draco quite alone in the halls.

Draco rolled his eyes at Harry's friends as they passed by, then back at Harry with a tense frown. So *degrading* , he thought. But as his friends slipped from sight, a smile twitched at the corner of his lip and he tugged Harry inwards by his shirt collar, breathing hotly back over the top of his ear.

“If you still think you have what it takes to *fuck me*, meet me in the Forbidden Forest,” Draco instructed, sinking his tongue deeply into Harry's ear before pulling away and leaving it to drip with saliva. Harry shuddered at the sensation and brought his hand up to cover his ear without thinking where Malfoy had wet it.

“The forbidden forest, the place you were too *scared* to venture at night, when we were in first year?” Harry asked with a giggle, still flushed.

“I’m not a first year anymore, Potter, I’ll be waiting – if you don’t lose your nerve,” Draco finished, slowly releasing the grip on his collar and walking ahead. His smile widened as he turned the stairs and Harry lost sight of him. The idea had repelled him

at first, but the humiliation he imaged Harry would face would be so worth it.

* * *

Harry's steps were so light he felt like he might fall over from light-headedness. His stomach however, was tied in a tight, anxious knot. The pressure was unnerving. He didn't know how many times Draco had done it before taking him but he'd certainly known what he was doing. The only experience he, Harry had was in receiving.

The descending sun's reflection in the black lake glistened in his eyes as he walked the bank. The barrier of the trees stood just ahead, the forest the students had been forbidden to venture into after the attack on Hogsmeade and yet here he was planning to...lose his *other* virginity, *in* the forest, *with* Draco Malfoy. He shook his head with a small smile. Maybe Ron was right, maybe he was going loopy...

Maybe me and Luna can set up the Quibbler club, he thought with a small laugh as he made his way through the trees and under the cover of the forest. He wondered how far in Draco would venture, even if he wasn't the same little twerp he had been in their first year. The grass was dewy and soft underfoot and there were birds in the trees, which was a good sign, he wasn't far enough in to start worrying about Centaurs, baby Aragoggs or...anything else.

He had reached the clearing where they had been introduced to Buckbeak (in third year) and stopped. The glade was bathed in an ethereal, orange glow from the slowly setting sun, which rested above the canopy overhead. A deep breath caressed his lungs. He was too nervous. Suddenly something crashed into his back, sending him sprawling face first into the tree ahead. He winced as his chest collided with the trunk and the pressure of someone's arm pushed against the back of his neck, keeping him pinned to the tree. Hot breath steamed over the flushed shell of his ear and Harry shuddered, both from panic and from pleasure.

"You are such an arse," Harry gasped, a small nervous smile twitched at his lips. He couldn't see him, but he could feel the electrical tingles and he swore he could *hear* that smirk.

And they were. His devious lips were smiling as he held the *Chosen One* tightly to the tree, bark digging into the boy's hips as Draco thrust his body inwards. Harry was sure he could already feel his hardened prick against his backside as Draco let a breath of words tickle his ear. "And I have *hold* of your ass!" He whispered and licked his tongue over the lobe. He grasped the *Chosen One's* cheeks in his hands and pinched tightly. That bum felt so firm in his hands.

“So you decided to show you’re face, *Potter* ?” He growled, grinning as Harry struggled beneath his grip. Harry attempted to fight against his grip but failed. Draco stood back a few paces, releasing Harry from his sudden hold with a playful glare. “Well? Get to it then,” He snarled with a grin, watching Harry turn to him with a dumb, clueless look to his face. Draco stood smiling, waiting. It amused him to see Harry look at him so clueless.

Harry’s breath quivered as he watched Draco step back from him slightly and he stared at the cocky Blond for a moment, awkward. But then Draco’s lips turned up into that vicious grin and Harry’s expression hardened as he stepped forward. He stepped towards him, his eyes betraying another nervous glance up at that pale face, before his hands dropped to the Blond’s belt.

Draco gave him a derisive smirk as Harry fumbled with the belt and tugged it open after several clumsy moments of struggling. “Come on Potter, if you can’t even get my belt off properly, what will you be like when you get to my cock?” “Shut up!” Harry snapped, tugging the Blond’s trousers open roughly. He ripped them down those toned thighs, bringing the Slytherin’s boxers with them.

The cool, evening air caressed Draco’s legs with a shiver and Harry grinned as he got to his knees, lifting the Boy’s shirt up over his stomach to caress the flesh with his lips. He felt Draco tense and his erection bobbed beneath his chin. His tongue dipped into his navel and he drew it out slowly with a leisurely flick that drew a gasp beyond those lips. He laughed softly against the beautiful, pale flesh, tracing the light trail of blond hair that dipped beneath Draco’s waist until his breath steamed over the pulsing organ in front of his face.

He blew lightly mischievously over the tip, earning a hiss from Draco as the comparatively cool air touched the fluid gathering there. His hands cupped the Boy’s balls, squeezing softly until he wrenched a small groan from the Blond’s lips. A final smirk graced Harry’s features then, before he ran his tongue around the bulging head. He lapped the bittersweet fluid and Draco’s fingers reached up to knot in the hair behind his head. Harry groaned at the feeling of that hand caressing the back of his neck and swallowed the throbbing hardness.

The Slytherin’s hips twitched up against Harry’s mouth as he felt his penis sink deep into warm wet lips, over a slithering tongue to hit far into that mouth. His fingers clenched the dark hair tighter as Harry moved his head along the throbbing length. “This all you got, *Chosen One* ?” Draco asked with a snarl, wickedly smiling with those taunting lips of his. He glared down at Harry who had pulled back away from

his cock with a groan. “Well?” He prompted.

“Just thought I’d be considerate for your first time,” Harry smirked, leaning in to mouth the Boy’s prick hungrily, as his finger inched behind his heavy sac. “No matter how clumsy or hesitant I may be, you’re going to remember this for the rest of your life...” With that, Harry relaxed his throat, drawing Draco’s erection into his throat. He winced, choking on the size of it. He heard Draco chuckle evilly above him and Harry’s determination intensified. He hummed deliciously around the organ tensing in his throat.

He felt saliva trickle from the corner of his mouth and his brow tensed with concentration as he struggled not to choke. Breathing through his nose, he raised his wand without Draco noticing.

Draco tensed suddenly, glaring down at Harry as he felt a wetness splash his insides and his entrance relax. Harry pulled off his cock with a wet noise and smiled up at him. “What, you think I wouldn’t learn the spell?” He asked, before spreading his boyfriend’s cheeks and tracing the leaking hole with his fingertip in teasing, seductive circle. Draco’s mouth opened and closed a few times, looking as if he might say something until Harry blew over his damp prick, pressing his finger through the twitching circle of oversensitive nerves.

“You know what, Draco?” Harry murmured huskily as he stared up at the Blond’s flushed features. Draco stared down at him with intense eyes, shining with lust. “I can feel you twitching around me – it’s almost as if you *like* it...”

Draco flushed at that statement. “I’d like it more if I could actually feel *something* ?” His smile stretched across the entirety of his face as Harry’s determination broadened. He felt Harry’s finger probing him slowly, but he tried not to show his reaction to the sensations. He winced slightly, swearing under his breath as he felt the tip of Harry’s finger stretch through the ring of muscles at his entrance slightly.

“If this is all you have, then I won’t have much of a memory, Potter,” Draco teased further, watching those features flush with annoyance at him. His cock twitched mid-air as Harry’s finger slid deeper inside him. He giggled aloud at his hypersensitive body, catching Harry’s attention.

Wonder what position he will have me in? He is so clueless, Draco thought with a grin.

At the Blond’s tormenting, Harry withdrew his finger before slamming it back inside

spitefully alongside a second. Draco gasped but betrayed no other sign and Harry stared up at him attentively, curling his fingers inwards to excite the tender place he knew felt so good. Shudders shot up Draco's legs and Harry felt his arse clench around him fitfully, while the hand cupping his neck pressed down desperately.

"You can feel that *now*, can't you?" He hissed, knowing the truth even if Draco denied it. Even he could feel the tingling vibrations at the tips of his fingers as they thrust into his clenching entrance. "You're squeezing me like you don't want to let me go..." His voice was light, impassive and he knew that must be irritating the Blond to no end. Draco was quiet and flustered and pressing back into his fingers unwittingly and Harry was addicted to everything.

"That's it; fuck your nice white arse on my fingers..."

Draco growled. "I'll fuck myself onto them until I feel *something*, Potter, surely this can't be the best you have?" His blond hair hung over his flushed expression as Harry fiddled his fingers inside. The sensation was weird, unlike anything he had ever felt. His cock brushed against Harry's lips, the saliva dampening them and sending thrills over his tip.

He bit down on the side of his lip as Harry's hot breath rushed over his legs and around his private area. Frustration pulsed through his veins as he seized hold of Harry's hair with both hands, causing Harry's scalp to burn at the sharp tug when he forced his head over his cock, lust filling his core even as Harry denied.

"Urrggh!" Draco groaned when Harry smiled up at him, half of his prick in one cheek. He released Harry's hair in compliance with the promise that he would allow Harry to take him. But he didn't know just how long he could obey that. He calmed himself and remembered why he had agreed to let Harry to this. Humiliation was the key.

"You're not very good at this you know," Harry murmured with a smirk, "*Lying* to me. Did you forget that I can feel everything you can?" He punctuated his words with a harsh shove into the hole opening to him, and he felt Draco's body surrender, even if the Boy himself had not. He didn't have to gloat over Draco's body, he knew that he felt good, so good that he was struggling to maintain the calm composure of dominance. He knew that he had never surrendered to pleasure as the bottom before and the simple knowledge that he was likely going to be the only one to give him this made his chest swell.

Harry drew his fingers from his lover's backside and stared up at him hungrily, *lovingly* before slapping his arse hard. He met his gaze deviously as he

stripped off his robe, spreading it out on the ground for him and his voice changed to something softer and huskier than before. "Lie on your back and spread your legs," he breathed. Draco stared down at him for a moment, as if stunned by Harry's thoughtfulness, until he snapped from his daze and his expression changed into the usual, derogatory sneer.

"Nice to know the king gets his throne," Draco joked, kneeling down to the Gryffindor robe and fidgeting around to get comfy. *I can't believe he offered me his robe to lie on*, Draco blushed at that slightly as he leant backwards lightly on his palms. Resting most of his boy weight onto his hands he spread his legs far apart seductively, looking Harry up and down carefully. He could see Harry studying him intensely, the boy gulped at how perfect he was, sitting there with such inviting eyes that he *knew* were lying.

"Fine, I'm a liar, but then, so are you," Draco admitted quietly, "You said you were gonna *fuck* my pretty little white arse until I can't walk, and so far, *I'm not* impressed." He punctuated his taunts with a spiteful chuckle. "And you're supposed to be the *Chosen One*? *Pathetic...* "

Harry stared down at him, his eyes wide with surprise. He could have sworn he had seen a flicker of shyness, of humility in those eyes he adored so thoroughly but now... Harry shook his head uncomfortably, determinedly looking down at Draco's still clothed chest as he lowered himself between the Blond's legs. He remained silent for a long time, his fingers weaving through the knot of the Slytherin's tie and tossing it away before bringing his hands to rest on those shoulders. He inhaled for a moment, suddenly nervous again as he pushed the shirt away to slide off pale shoulders and pool on the ground behind them.

It was the first time Draco had ever been more exposed than him during their encounters and it was the first time that Harry looked up into those eyes and saw something unsure there. He, Harry was making him uncomfortable, he realised, with his gestures and sincerity, Draco was unaccustomed to that, was *awkward* with that...

"I don't want to just *fuck* you," Harry murmured, his voice barely above a whisper, and he loathed the meaningfulness in it as he stared into that perfect face, with one hand tracing that perfect body. "This is for me, isn't it? You're letting me have what I want to prove that I am something to you?" Draco only gave the tiniest, hint of a nod, as if he weren't sure he wanted it to be seen, but Harry saw it and he smiled mischievously, his seriousness evaporating. "Just let me have you and shut up, *Malfoy* ," he said, with a flicker of amusement on the Blond's surname.

Harry leant back for a moment, pulling his tie off and opening his shirt and trousers but not removing them (he had a feeling that that would annoy Draco particularly). As he lay back down over the Blond's body, keeping his weight off of him with one hand on the ground at Draco's side he met his gaze for a moment, before bringing their lips together. Caressing the back of those blond locks lovingly, he drew back a hairsbreadth, so that with every breath their lips still touched and he pressed his forehead against Draco's as he recovered his scattered nerves. Everything about Draco drove him past the boundaries of rational thought and sanity.

"You're beautiful," Harry breathed, without thinking and as his own words caressed Draco's lips with the movement, his eyes tensed. Why the *hell* had he said that? *It's not as if you'll hear it back in a thousand years you idiot*, he mentally berated himself. He felt the need to slap himself but that would come later. Right now Draco was staring at him, he was sure of it without even opening his eyes. *He thinks I'm a right pillock...*

Draco laughed hysterically at the top of his voice, seizing Harry's collar by his right hand, all the strength holding him there as he groaned a deep husk over the *Chosen One's* ear. "You didn't really just say what I think you did, *did you* ? Draco glared, pulling his hand tighter against Harry's shirt, causing the friction of the collar to burn at the back of his neck slightly as he yanked against it with fury.

"I said you could top me! I didn't say you could romance me with words or..." His voice heightened sarcastically as he finished the sentence, "or *make love* !" He hurled with distaste at his Harry who's eyes had widened as they surveyed him. "So don't get *any* ideas!"

Harry drew back a little to sit on his heels, hurt present in his eyes as he stared down at him. "Right," he said stiffly, "Right..." He lowered his head, his fringe shielding his emotions as he tugged his trousers off his hips enough to free his diminishing erection. He caressed his length slowly, his mind in a completely different place to where it was dripping in his hand, leaking over Draco's own neglected cock.

Becoming impatient and frustrated, feeling stretched by those fingers and strangely empty whilst his cock throbbed insistently as if trying to steal his attention, Draco arched his body into Harry's, the dark-haired Boy's form tensing at the contact. And then Harry moved, he seized his legs from under the knees and pushed them back tight to his chest. Beneath him, Draco winced as his body was pressed into the tense position.

"Hold your dainty little legs open," Harry sneered, glaring down at him with fury

mixed with hurt and lust, and when Draco's hands replaced Harry's under his knees, Harry let go in favour of directing his wand over his erection. He felt the cool lubrication wash over his turgid flesh, but it did nothing to appease the fire. Pressing his swollen head to the trembling, pink hole, he earned a wince from Draco as the Blond prepared for the inevitable pain.

"Take your *fuck*, Malfoy," Harry growled, jerking past the resisting ring spitefully, his flaring temper relishing in the break in Draco's impassive face, in his cry of pain. He'd drawn no blood, not the way Malfoy had done to him (though the Blond deserved it) but Harry stared down at his face, twisted with agony and could not help but feel the dull ache of bitterness in his chest. It wasn't meant to be like this. He hadn't wanted it this way...

Draco felt Harry's cock sink in past the tight opening and in past the heated walls of his arse. He groaned in anticipation at the flaring inferno that had exploded inside him. "How dare you stick your unprotected cock inside me?!" He groaned. Watching Harry's forced expression tense each time he thrust inside him. Draco licked his bottom lip in haste, in need. Even though Harry's cock was unprotected, Draco gave him no signal to stop. He had never imagined bottoming would feel like this...

His arse burned at the fisting feeling of Harry's throbbing, swollen cock-head that sank into him like a spoon in a pudding. It sank into the tightness and stretched him, and he devoured it with a delightful gasp he felt Harry's hips press flush against his bottom. He moaned a few words that Harry couldn't make out. Hazy, husky expressions of enjoyment fell from his all-too *un*-composed lips. *Don't enjoy this you freak*, he thought as he held in the rest of his groans. *It's Harry Potter fucking you like a girl! Show him up!*

The Slytherin bit back down onto his dry, broken lower lip as his lust-filled eyes gazed up at Harry, legs burning from the friction between the backs of his legs and Harry's torso every time he moved inside. "Come on, Harry!" He panted. "Make me feel your inadequate cock – don't bore me!" Draco yelled in shameless pants as Harry's intensity soared.

"The only thing that's boring me is your vile mouth," Harry snapped, leaning forwards to press Draco's legs cruelly back into his shoulders, so that the Blond winced at the feeling of being split in half. "Shut up and take the *inadequate* cock that's making you squirm and squeal like a little girl!" He threw his hips forwards so that Draco jerked backwards on the robe, taking fistfuls of the fabric in release of the intense build up, the pleasure-pain.

“I didn’t *want* this,” Harry gasped, the pleasure knotting in his stomach despite his disgust, “I didn’t want to take you, I wanted to...” He winced. “I wanted to *love* you but you wanted it this way, so *take* it!” His voice sounded spiteful, serpentine and foreign on his tongue and it burnt his throat. This wasn’t him, he loathed what he was doing but Draco was... *far* from complaining.

Guilt pricked the back of his eyes as he lurched forwards, slamming into Draco’s sweet place so that the Blond groaned from the strength of it. Harry flinched at the Boy’s obvious enjoyment in the forcefulness. Granted, he enjoyed it to when Draco held him down and simply took him, but this time he had wanted something else and had been forced into...this!

The jerks of his prick into the frantically clenching entrance was sending the Blond towards his violent climax but Harry didn’t feel the warmth building in his stomach, he didn’t feel anything but raw, dirty pleasure that made his chest constrict painfully. “You’re enjoying this aren’t you?” Harry spat as he reached between them, pumping Draco’s searing, dripping prick so that he arched forwards deliciously, crying out in a way that should have pleased him, but it was a hollow victory.

“You like that I’m taking you bareback and fucking you raw – with no compassion, no feeling at all, don’t you?” His voice was husky and low, as if he were possessed by Draco’s desire for detachment and he watched as Draco’s stomach tensed at the sound of it, at the feel of his fingers bringing him off. He wished he could enjoy it. *A normal person would*, his mind spat at him.

The Blond’s head sank back into the red hood of the robe behind him as he gasped at the rising pleasure, his cock blooming delightfully with each pounding jerks into him. His eyes were alive with the passion and power of Harry’s force, even though those usually dazzling green orbs now seemed lifeless. The feeling was too good and too quick. He could already feel it building...

Suddenly he felt the ascent slow, almost to a halt as Harry (who’s cock was still inside but not moving) glared down at him with a frown. “You want more?” The *Chosen One* asked blankly, making Draco move uncontrollably beneath him, his backside twitching madly around that organ as he thrust himself up against Harry for more. Actions weren’t going to help him this time as Harry spoke again in a low husky whisper. “Then beg me.”

Draco growled viciously, but he didn’t care anymore, this was more than a practical joke to him to see Harry humiliating himself. The feeling was too good and he *wanted* it, so much so it was driving him into delirium.

“Fuck me!” He pleaded for the first time in his life. Wrapping his legs around Harry’s back with a kick he forced him forward and shuddered at the closeness as Harry’s dick slipped back in. Harry leant forwards, propped by his hands and surveyed those pulsing veins, Draco’s eyes pleading and frustrated when the dark-haired Boy remained otherwise still. In a sudden movement, Draco brought both hands up to Harry’s locks and tugged them backwards, his lips almost touching with Harry’s as he lustfully and lowly husked “*fuck me*” once more.

Those words were so delicious, yet bittersweet. Harry threw himself back into the beautiful body – like a flower with seductive petals and spiteful thorns, that is what Draco was. He squeezed the oozing cock in his hand and just as his fingers pinched the tip, he felt Draco spill himself in his palm. Harry inhaled shakily, jerking his hand over the hot, exploding organ until Draco was spent and gasping beneath him. With a final glance down at his body, he leant in, brushing a kiss over those breathless lips, before drawing away and tucking himself back into his trousers.

Draco stared up at Harry, confused in his post-orgasmic daze. “What are you doing?” He managed out raggedly, as he leant up on his elbow to stare at Harry, who was doing back up his shirt and knotting his tie. His skin was flushed and his chest fluctuated in his lack of breath but he did not meet Draco’s eyes.

Harry postponed the moment when he would have to reply by straightening his clothes and then descending over Draco’s body once more, moving his lips over the confused (and stunned) mouth. His tongue reached out, coaxing Draco’s out to meet his and smoothed over the hot cavern of his mouth. He smiled against the kiss, relieved of some of the fury that had surged through him moments before. Bringing the Blond’s school shirt up, he pulled it up over his shoulders tenderly, staring at the plains of taut, pale stomach thoughtfully, before drawing away.

“What do you think you’re doing?” Draco repeated, slightly frustrated now that Harry was dressing, *finishing* without finishing himself. Didn’t the idiot understand what *topping* meant? He had been angry and strangely intoxicated when Harry had pushed into him without protection, the risk was thrilling but the dark-haired Boy hadn’t even *cum* !

Harry looked back over him with a thoughtful expression crossing his flushed features. “I like it when you take me,” Harry explained quietly, “But I wanted this to be different...” He thought for a moment and then righted his posture. “Listen, if what I wanted wasn’t important then my cumming isn’t either,” he stated simply, as if his hurt meant nothing, just the way Draco thought of it, he supposed. Draco was still

watching him with confusion.

You could have finished, the Slytherin thought with a frown.

Draco leant up from the robe and grabbed hold of Harry's wrist from the floor where he knelt. Looking up at him, for a moment (if only a moment) he caught a glimpse of the hurt from his dim green eyes and a feeling of heartbreak through the bond as he used Harry's hand to help him to his feet. He shook the feeling away slightly as he straightened up. His butt was still twitching as he rubbed his hand against the aching red cleft. He didn't realise just how much bottoming burned. A slight feeling of *regret* flourished in his chest for a millisecond, as he remembered their first time together back at the Shrieking Shack, and how rough he had been...

He felt strangely weak, whether it was from the sensations that were throbbing away at his rear, or the feelings flooding through him with the bond, he didn't know. But suddenly he felt his stomach clench in ways he never knew it could. "What a disappointment. I allowed you to top me and you..." Draco laughed with a forced stumble of words as he lent down and picked up the Gryffindor robe and handed it to back to Harry, hiding his feelings with hateful words as he spoke one last time.

"I gave you the chance to have me and you fuck it up?! Some *Chosen One* !" He spat in disgrace, grabbing his own tie and tightening it to his neck in a fake disgust. "Can't believe I was actually expecting *you* to surprise me."

Harry sighed exasperatedly, ruffling his hair as he pulled his robe back on. "I can't believe I let my hopes run away with me," He retorted, mostly to himself, but Draco's brow crinkled with a frown upon hearing them. Harry surveyed Draco thoughtfully as the Blond pulled his clothes back on and waited for him to knot his tie neatly before stepping towards him.

"Whatever disillusionments we both had, you let me top you – that means I *mean* something to you, doesn't it?" His tone was lighter than a moment before and bore a teasing edge, one that made Draco glare at him with awkwardness, unwilling to voice any further feelings aloud. Harry merely smiled broadly, before tugging his invisibility cloak out of his robe's pockets and throwing it over them.

"It's getting dark," Harry clarified at the Boy's confusion, beginning to tug him back towards the castle, "I'll walk you back to the castle so you don't get caught..." Draco opened his mouth as if to retort, (or more likely refuse) but he said nothing in the end, merely following closely to Harry's side, silent with thought.

It was a fairly swift and quiet trek back up to the castle, neither of them said a word, not even as they slipped in through the courtyard and Harry led them down to an alcove. They stared at each other for a fleeting second. Harry leant up, as if moving to offer a goodbye kiss that would annoy Draco thoroughly, but instead he pressed his forehead to the Blond's. "See you later," he breathed, before pulling the cloak off of them and heading back towards the staircase, away from Draco who stood there, a little surprised by the abrupt departure.

Draco's gut tightened as he watched Harry leave. Harry had claimed what he wanted so what the heck was that? Draco's hand automatically reached for his forehead where Harry had touched him. Half of him felt miffed and the other confused.

The Slytherin gazed skywards at the small, tinkling droplets of rain that fell across his brow, trickling down his magnolia cheeks and over the wrinkled bridge of his nose. He felt so frustrated that this bond was making him want Harry this much, but he refused to give him anything that broke the boundaries of the ' *safety net* '. He couldn't show Harry feelings of love or any of the things he knew he wanted, because if he did, Voldemort could find out and that was too much to risk.

I know that he wants more than this, but I... I don't want to love him! Draco's eye's stung as his mind forced him to relive the agony of sectumsempra and think about the one thing that he had been avoiding since that fateful night.

Harry Potter.

If I love him, I will lose him, it's too much of a risk and I'm...I'm scared to take it! His tears meshed with the rain down his cheeks, but he was glad of that – the excuse for the wetness to his eyes, the feeling of the droplets washing the salty treachery away. He was pathetic for crying over this, he was supposed to be a Death Eater and yet here he was standing in the rain crying.

You're pathetic Draco , a voice sounded in his head, one that had a distinct resemblance to that of Lord Voldemort's. He groaned at that voice as it went on. *You already feel something for him, don't you? You're no Death Eater...*

NO! He argued silently as his body was struck (as if by lightning) with that familiar feeling.

Under twilight skies, Draco's dark mark sent unbearably pulses, laced with seething fire through his entire body, calling all the hairs on the back of his neck to stand on end at the burning chill. Just a little way from him, with one foot on the steps, Harry

turned as the sensations reached him and he watched as Draco fell back against the wall.

Draco looked up at him, as if revolted that Harry was witnessing this. *The Dark Lord is calling me...*

~To Be Continued...

Chapter 12: Chapter Twelve

Notes:

(See the end of the chapter for notes.)

(Bound By) Clandestine Addiction

[Chapter Twelve]

Harry flew over to Draco's side, pulling him up against his body and wrapping his arms around him tightly. "Don't go," he all-but gasped in the Blond's ear. "He's furious, I can feel it..." Harry's head had exploded into agony now, a throbbing, bleeding ache that made him feel like his scar would split open – Voldemort was angry and it was too much of a coincidence that Draco was being summoned so spitefully.

"We'll find a way – just don't go, *please*..." He didn't care how pathetic he sounded; he would endure any embarrassing or demeaning remarks from the Blond as long as he stayed. Draco, however, merely gave him a grieved glance, before slipping free of his embrace and disappearing into the darkness of the courtyard. A stab of fear pricked at Harry's heart, this felt...wrong.

* * *

Long, pallid, *spiderlike* fingers curled in intolerantly as those glaring, snake's eyes surveyed the incomplete circles of fear-stricken figures. The men and women cloaked with black robes shook beneath their Master's gaze. Voldemort's fury was unrivalled, and no one wanted to incur his wrath and yet *someone* had...

CRACK!

The sound tore through the revered silence, and every Death Eater's gaze shot over to the two Malfoys that approached the circle humbly, but Voldemort did not so much as blink. The creature remained still as death, his eyes flaring dangerously and his displeasure throbbing through his servants' marks like a thousand infuriated wasps.

Lucius Malfoy wore his pain with a stone-cold façade, though his gaze flickered to his son anxiously beneath it all, as he fell into rank beside the others, and Draco continued forward, kneeling respectfully at the Dark Lord's feet. They knew what was coming; they only hoped they could escape it somehow...

“You have disappointed me, Draco,” Voldemort hissed, his body rising from his makeshift throne in the dark void of a room. The Dark Lord’s wand raised over the Boy’s body, (frozen in fear) as those grey eyes remained trained to the floor. The monster allowed him to remain there, awaiting his punishment, his end for a few more, agonising moments, his serpentine voice whispering on the cold air, and causing a shudder to run down the Boy’s spine.

“Harry Potter is infatuated with you to the point of insanity,” Voldemort continued dangerously, “When *precisely* were you intending to bring him to me?” He paused again, for the cruelty of allowing the promise of pain in his voice to sink in, but flipped his wand on the Blond the second his lips parted to answer. “*Crucio!*” Voldemort snarled and Draco’s body threw backwards with convulsions, as his vision exploded into a burning, white light.

Lucius stood awkwardly, a wretch to his stomach inciting an unbearable sickness in him as Draco shook fitfully under the spell that caused him to yell out in a sudden pain, but he stood back in fear, unable to keep his eyes on his son as he pleaded with the Dark lord.

“No! *Please...*” Draco begged breathlessly. His body felt like it was burning more fiercely than any other feeling he had ever experienced, the electrifying torture laced every string of veins and snapped at all his bones, tensing them and twisting them until it felt like they were breaking.

“It *hurts*,” He whimpered feebly, the pain of the spell constricting his speech as his eyelids prickled with tears. He struggled to speak as his body shattered in pain, every single part of his skin felt as though it was being stuffed through a wood shredder and left to bleed upon a needle covered floor and it was insufferable.

“I was...waiting...for the...right moment!” Draco struggled out as the curse finally slowed when the Dark Lord drew away and the Blond was still once again upon the floor. He curled pathetically to hold his stomach, which felt like it was collapsing inside him with the aftershocks.

The Dark Lord placed his slimy, inhuman foot upon Draco's pale cheek and lowered his head down upon him, snarling down his nose with disgust. “You were waiting, for the right moment?” He hissed incredulously.

“If I may my Lord,” Lucius daringly interrupted in an attempt to save his son’s life, he stepped forward, bracing himself for his punishment for interfering. “Potter is a love-struck fool when it comes to my son; his friends however, as I understand it are very reluctant to allow them close—”

“*Crucio!*” Voldemort cursed and the elder Malfoy dropped to the floor with convulsions, gritting his teeth against the agony, unwilling to let a cry pass his lips.

“I did *not* give you the privilege of *speech*, *Lucius*,” the Dark Lord droned, his malicious gaze studying the two Malfoys, shuddering in agony on the floor. He looked thoughtfully over his pained servants. He stepped back then, watching them as if bored and flicked his wand leisurely towards them. Their bodies slumped in relief. And they gasped breathlessly, whilst their *Lord’s* voice slithered through the circles of followers, frozen by fear.

“However, you are correct and children can be...so cruel...” His words were mocking as he waited for Draco to rise, somewhat pleased by his dishevelled appearance. “Whatever the problems impeding your success, Draco, you will bring him to me tomorrow night, without fail or face the consequence.” He leaned in, his vile breath misting over Draco’s face. “Are my orders in *any* way unclear?”

“It’s clear...” Draco breathed, pushing himself upright by one hand as the other still clenched his aching torso. He shivered under the Dark Lord’s hiss, spiralling chills overrunning him and he finally got to his knees. He crawled helplessly over to his father who was still lying unmoved a few inches from him. “Father? He gasped worriedly. Lucius turned his head to his son and gave a small smile. He was okay. The air seemed to lighten as the Dark lord departed into a hole of purple, electrifying darkness. Draco sighed in relief to that departure.

His body suddenly became consumed with the absolute worry that was *Harry*. He didn’t want to do this anymore. He fell back against the floor in agony as the bond fiercely stabbed his chest. He could feel Harry’s pain, burning, prickling, building and breaking. And he knew that part of Harry had felt his pain too. There was no more time, and Harry was aware. Everything Draco felt, Harry felt.

* * *

The portrait of the Fat Lady swung open, and Harry crawled inside numbly. He felt quite sick, his legs were like jelly and he had a foreboding ache in his belly as he approached the two on the couch reluctantly. He really wasn’t in the mood to explain his heartache right now...

Something is wrong, he thought with a mix of horror and agony
– *Draco’s* agony. *Merlin, just let him come back alive.*

“Harry!” Hermione’s gasp snapped his attention towards her fretful expression, just in

time to see his two friends bolting to his side. “Harry, it’s Helga Hufflepuff’s *cup*! It’s in the Lestrage Vault at Gringotts!”

Harry stared at her, wide-eyed for a moment, whilst Ron stood there, watching him carefully, as if he knew something was wrong. Still though, Hermione persisted.

“And the final Horcrux – Harry is *must* be that snake familiar of his–”

“Nagini?” He asked quietly, his mind still in a completely different place though it was processing her words. She nodded frantically.

“Yes! Don’t you see? We can go now; we can end this once and for all – and *now*!”

“Right,” he blinked, the true meaning of her words sinking slowly into his shell-shocked mind. “And...how exactly am I meant to get close to Nagini? She’s at Voldemort’s side–”

“Well precisely, Harry,” Hermione said carefully, “First things first, we destroy the cup and then figure out a way to You Know Who, where Ron and I can kill the snake, and you can face him – unhindered by horcruxes.”

Harry nodded slowly. It was all just too much and his vision swayed, the room twisted as Draco’s sheer, unbearable torture raced through his skull. Draco was in pain, Voldemort was rejoicing in it, and he could do nothing. He had never hated anyone so much in his life.

“Mate?” Ron spoke for the first time, approaching Harry and setting a hand on his shoulder to steady his swaying body. “Mate are you feeling alright?”

“We know it’s a lot to take in, Harry,” Hermione said softly, “But let’s take this one step at a time – we’ll fetch the cup first then take it from there...”

“Let the man breathe Hermione,” Ron chided her, before turning back to Harry. “Did something happen?”

Harry just nodded, changing the subject swiftly – he couldn’t talk about Draco right now, he hated feeling so helpless.

“So...So how do we get the cup? Gringotts security is pretty–”

“Impossible to penetrate?” Hermione finished. “Yes, however, we can play that to our benefit – with the Lestrage’s being outside the law now after all, the natural heir would be–”

“Draco...” Harry murmured bleakly, the name inspiring a spiteful pang to his chest.

“Exactly,” she continued, mindless of his plight, “I was thinking you could perhaps...*borrow* a few of his hairs to which we could add to a polyjuice potion.”

“No,” Harry said immediately, raising his head to meet their confused gazes head-on. Ron released his hold on his shoulder slowly, as if suddenly wary of his mood after that one word of negation.

“Harry,” his bushy-haired friend began carefully with a quick, furtive glance to Ron.

“If you’re worried about deceiving him I am *sure* Malfoy wants you to win, despite his flaws I believe he truly—”

“No,” He interrupted, “No, I mean...just now he... I just think that if we’re going, and soon I take it?” His only answer was a suspicious nod from his female friend. “I think I...I want him to come with us – with me.”

“Harry, you're not serious?” Hermione asked quite worriedly. “Do you have any idea of the danger that would put us in?!” She shifted uncomfortably in her seat fiddling with a few strands of stray hair.

“Not to mention he is a vile git!” Ron added with a hiss. It was apparent they really did not approve.

Ron and Hermione looked at each other blankly, unable to quite accept the words that had just stumbled out of their best friend’s mouth. Was he mad? *Really* mad? Malfoy would mean serious trouble!

“Harry, if Lord...Lord Voldemort knew, which he *will* know, he will only be more furious and more determined to find us.” Hermione sighed at her words. She could see from Harry's expression that he was really hurting over this.

“Yeah Harry, it's a bloody stupid idea,” Ron added.

“Well maybe taking *anyone* with me is a stupid idea!” Harry spat and his friends’ protests silenced at his fury. “You don’t *get* it! You think I’m blind to what he is? I *know* what he is – he’s scared, and he’s lost and he’s going to get himself killed by Voldemort simply by refusing to take me to him!” Harry threw himself into his preferred cosy chair by the fire and stared into the flaming grate. Draco’s agony had dulled somewhat, but it was still there, as if his discomfort were now only an echo of his...his inevitable punishment.

“Draco gave me something today,” he began slowly, having no intention of laying down the bare truth of what that had been, that was...private. “It didn’t go how I’d wanted but it was still...it betrayed to anyone watching that I meant something, that I was more than a mission and Voldemort saw it inside my head, when I was angry, I am sure...”

“Harry,” Hermione tried tentatively, “What are you saying—”

“I’m saying that Voldemort summoned him – right after! Draco is going to be killed for not bringing me in, I can’t leave him here for that and I *won’t*.” His tone was final but the other two still looked sceptical and so Harry sighed heavily, softening his defensive expression. “You wouldn’t leave the each other here, would you?” That seemed to have stumped them, the two shared another of those looks, but this time it was almost conceding. “And besides, Hermione, you said it yourself, he’s the natural

heir to the Lestrangle fortune – he can get us in. Maybe I could polyjuice into Lucius Malfoy or something. But he can be useful, you may dislike him but he's *brilliant*! He's important to me; just as important as you two are and he's...he's coming with us."

Hermione and Ron shared a look once more, they were both weary of this entire idea, but Harry seemed set in taking Draco along and they both knew they wouldn't have much choice. "Well... I suppose he will be useful," Hermione's words reluctantly stumbled out. "I suppose we have no choice, do we Harry?"

"Ron?" Harry asked, turning away from Hermione's question, she already knew the answer. He glanced over at Ron, waiting for approval.

"As long as I don't have to see either of you snogging... I guess it's okay," Ron said finally.

"Good," Harry said, finally settling the matter.

Giving a final look to signify that his decision was final, Harry ascended the stairs to the dormitory, hearing the other two follow closely behind. He didn't care, as long as they didn't try and convince him to change his mind.

"So, Harry," Ron prodded gently as he watched Harry perch on his bed, his eyes trained on the Marauder's Map he'd spread across the duvet. "We were er...thinking of heading out at first light – you know, no sense in delay and all..."

Harry nodded absently. "Yeah...yeah that's fine."

"Well then...hadn't you better get packing? Hermione questioned, Harry only shook his head, never once tearing his gaze from the map – why could he *still* not see Draco on it?

"It'll be done before dawn, take my word for it – I need to find Draco first." He swore he heard them both sigh exasperatedly, but could not find the will to care.

"Harry, I have a few minor details sorted out," Hermione continued, propping herself on the bed next to him, no doubt miffed she did not have his full attention. "We will leave a note for Ginny, to take charge of our personal belongings that we cannot take with us, like Hedwig, Crookshanks, our trunks. We will take only what we need..."

The rest of her words fell on deaf ears. The only thing he needed was still nowhere to be seen...

* * *

The blond Slytherin huffed with exhaustion as his body hit the cold floor of the Hogwarts grounds. His father and mother were both safe and Voldemort wasn't to return until tomorrow evening at sundown – when he had to bring Harry to him.

He had no choice. He had just spent the last hour talking to his mother and father about his options, to which he had none. The fact was plain and simple now, and setting in painfully like acid left to brew over his naked body. He didn't want to think about tomorrow as he took his fateful steps back inside the castle, still shaking over from the *crucio* curse.

He didn't want to imagine the tragedies of what the sunset meant. Any of it. He was just blank. He felt hollow, unable to comprehend what tomorrow meant. Even if he wanted to deny it, he had come to care for Harry Potter a lot and...

I don't want him to die, he thought wretchedly, clamping his eyes shut at the sickening thought.

“Draco!” That voice shuddered out of the darkness, so seemingly distant it was almost possible to believe it a mere echo, mere wishful thinking of his distraught mind, but then he swore he heard footsteps, somewhere so very far from the dark place he stood in. But then, a warm soft hand rested on his shoulder and he forced his eyes to open. The archways cast long shadows over him, but his eyes shone like hope in this darkness and he was definitely there. The dark-haired Boy even seemed to smile as he opened his eyes.

“Thank goodness you’re alright,” he said breathlessly, as if he’d been running. Had he come running to him somehow? Maybe it had been the rush of agony from Voldemort’s *crucio*, but he felt a little light-headed. But Harry leant in then, wrapping his arms around him and pressing his cheek ardently into his own. “*Merlin*... I was so scared you wouldn’t come back...”

Unmoved in Harry's arms Draco stood, still somewhat in a haze shuddering against Harry's warmth. “I'm okay,” The Slytherin reassured, forcing a slight smile to the corner of his lips. Harry stood back in relief. But somewhere inside he knew what Draco was about to say before he'd even parted his lips to speak.

“This isn’t some game anymore, Harry. You need to know... I'm...tomorrow, I will be taking you...” He paused, in what started off as a stern sentence and ended as a week one. He couldn't bring himself to say it. He knew it, he had always known it, even before he had developed feelings of any sort for the *Chosen One*, but until now, this very moment it had never really seemed real, even all the times where he stood affronted by the Dark Lord.

“...To him,” He finished. His eyes focused to the side, anywhere that avoided Harry's

face.

“I will be gone before tomorrow, Draco,” Harry replied softly, after a long silence, as if his boyfriend had not even suggested he would be taking him to his death. Harry leant in, his fingers sliding up the pale column of the Blond’s neck and caressing the nape gently as he stared into clouded, grey eyes.

“Voldemort has split his soul into objects called Horcruxes, I have been hunting them and I can destroy the last two soon and ultimately... *Voldemort* – it’ll all be over soon I promise.” It felt odd to be comforting this boy, whom usually made him feel so blissfully helpless. He could still feel the way that pale skin trembled from aftermath of the pain, instead of responding to his touch, he felt a pang of hurt in his chest at that, it felt unnatural somehow, to not have that electrical tingle and although he knew it would return upon Draco’s recovery, it did not appease his fury towards Voldemort any. *If ever I could imagine killing someone, it is certainly him...*

“Draco... I’m going to destroy the Horcruxes, I’m leaving at dawn and I...I want you to come with me.” He watched Draco’s head snap up in shock, eyes wide, lips parted ready to protest, but Harry headed him off. “I know it’s insane but...if I leave you here, you will be killed because of me and I *won’t* let that happen. You can help me, you can stay with me and your parents will be safe.” It made sense, they could stay together, they could keep each other alive and Draco’s parents in the process – if Draco appeared to betray Lucius and Narcissa by leaving then they would be spared. Yet Draco was watching him with sad, exhausted eyes, eyes he knew all too well, because they resembled his in the burden they carried. They had both seen and felt suffering fit for much older, wiser men.

“Come with me,” Harry whispered again, almost pleading and he rested his forehead on Draco’s for a moment, closing his eyes as he breathed him in deeply. The shadows of the courtyard on the moonless night swallowed them whole and Harry felt it all fall away beyond this boy, who was so tightly wound he was beginning to fray. “Please,” Harry murmured, “Let me save you, so you can save me.”

There was indeed no certainty that his parents would be spared. Though Lord Voldemort would be unlikely to kill them based on *his* betrayal, he would probably be furious and maybe torture them. That thought made him hurl a little as he stomachached images of his father from before, wincing in agony alongside him. He was too scared to go with Harry. He just couldn’t. He gulped against the saliva building in his throat. “It’s... It’s too risky Harry,” He finally answered, breathing deeply as he spoke.

Harry considered him for a long while, the shadows playing wistfully across his beautiful, pale face and he saw all of him, every worry and heartache, in a way that he

was sure no one else could. He was a spoiled brat who loved his parents, who had been fed delusionary ideals of a world ruled by the Dark Lord, and now he had seen the horrors of it himself, was terrified – wanted out but was too afraid to run. Draco was afraid, not just for his parents but for himself, he saw no glory or poetry in death and that honesty in his eyes made something in Harry's chest knot with admiration. He wished he could be afraid, wished he had the luxury of being scared for his own life as well as others', but fate had torn that comfort from him.

With a small smile still lingering, he allowed his hand to descend from Draco's neck and his fingers ghosted slowly, appreciatively over the Blond's arm until it could caress those pale fingertips. "Some risks are worth taking," Harry replied coolly.

Those eyes were now looking down at Harry's, who's warmth kindled the life back into his pain-numbed hand. The kindness in his words streamed across his cold visage and warmed him with something he had never felt...

Some risks are worth taking. He sighed deeply at those words. "And it wouldn't be considered cowardly to just run away?" He asked, as if needing reassurance. But before he received an answer, Draco shrugged with a new found, amused smile. "Well if I come along with you and your *merry* group, don't expect me to play nicely," He glared.

"On the contrary I think it would be cowardly to let me run off and get myself killed," Harry replied, his smile broadening with amusement. The shadows seemed to be dissipating. He knew that in Draco's mind, leaving Harry in Hermione and Ron's 'inadequate' hands was laughable. "And as for playing nicely, I was sort of hoping you would say that..."

"Don't get full of yourself, *Potter*. I'm not coming along to protect you, I'm coming along for my own reasons," Draco assured him sternly with a frown.

After a few, stagnant moments, he shrugged Harry off and slipped off his school robes. "I suppose I won't be needing this anymore..."

Harry's smile lessened but did not vanish; he had become swiftly accustomed to the facades of Draco Malfoy in the last few weeks. Still, the sight of Draco, shedding his school robe startled him into the realisation – it was all ending. Harry fell back a few steps and Draco raised a brow at him as he folded the clothing neatly across his arm and pulled off his school tie. It was all ending tonight, by the time the sun rose the next day, they wouldn't be in the same world anymore.

Breath was hard to draw as he turned into the courtyard and stared up at the castle,

overcome by nostalgia. This was the place that had been his home, his sanctuary more than anywhere else. This was the place that had rescued him from years of abuse and neglect, from the decade-long nightmare he had endured at Privet Drive. Harry's head lowered and his gaze wandered across the ancient stones paving the ground beneath his feet, memorising each one. This place had housed nearly every significant event of his life. He had made friends, family here, he had met Sirius not far from the grounds, saved the Philosopher's stone, killed a basilisk, fought off a hundred dementors and faced the horrors of the Triwizard Tournament. He fondly remembered the attacks on the school *Weasley Wizard Wheezes* had launched and the way the students had united around the fallen Albus Dumbledore's body. He had had his first kiss with Cho, his first *everything else* with Draco...

They were not all happy memories, but they were all powerful, and a hurt so deeply engrained he could not begin to describe was throbbing in his chest at the thought of releasing it all. For there was no guarantee he would survive to ever return to this place again...

Draco noticed Harry's saddened expression and a rush of the mixed pain and happiness inside him flooded through Draco like a river, he too, knew the end was near, yet was not ready for it. "Come on," the Slytherin said in a rusty, clogged-up tone, snapping Harry's somewhat hazy attention back to himself. Harry turned to him with a forced smile. "I think we should go and prepare ourselves for this," Draco informed, walking forwards to the castle with unsteady footsteps.

Harry frowned at the Slytherin's back for a moment, before racing after him. The Boy did not slow for him, but Harry was hardly surprised, Draco was more than likely feeling the same nostalgia as he, and was reluctant to show it in front of an audience.

"We're only bringing what we need," Harry explained as he caught up with him, "Everything else we're leaving with someone trustworthy. Do you have someone in mind or do you want to leave it with our things?" He was trying to sound conversational and couldn't help but wonder if it had worked, since Draco was determinedly looking ahead instead of at him.

"I don't have anything that valuable that needs protecting, Harry." The Slytherin slowed, turning to face him. The only valuable thing he had was going to be beside him the entire time, and he could carry *him* himself if it came to it. "When I said *prepare myself*, I was referring to mentally preparation," He finished, giving Harry the best he could of a forced smile.

Harry flushed a little at his stupidity. He would have never figured Malfoy to hold no

precedence for worldly possessions. He supposed it was sentimental of him to hold such treasures for himself, his photo album, his invisibility cloak or the broken mirror Sirius had given him, even though a lot of his possessions were useless, he could not bear to part with them.

“Meet me at the Whomping Willow just before sunrise,” Harry continued, still slightly ashamed of his childish need for possessions, “Just stay in the shadows and... Don’t scream or anything.” He watched Draco frown at the initial statement as well as it’s vagueness. “Can you get out there without being caught?” “Do you think I’m incapable?” He spat, affronted at Harry’s suggestions as he walked back over to him, a hairsbreadth separating their bodies. “I’ll be just fine.”

Harry shuddered with a pleasure unsuitable to their situation and forced his eyes shut in an attempt to block out the other’s closeness, and simply nodded. “If you’re not incapable,” he said, daring the Blond in a way he *knew* guaranteed his cooperation. Malfoy’s did not back down easily nowadays. “I need a few potions from Snape’s supply...” He reached into his robe’s pocket and produced a small roll of parchment, handing it to Draco.

“Pretty standard stuff, healing salve, dreamless sleep draught, polyjuice potion,” Harry saw Draco’s eyes flick up from the list at that last one and offered the Blond a small, mischievous smirk, which was almost returned, of that he was sure. “I’d get it myself but I suppose, with you being so much cleverer and Snape’s favourite student you’d be able to get them easier.” His tone was almost sarcastic, but Draco didn’t seem to care and so Harry handed him the small pouch Hermione had given him for the vials. “Use a spell to shrink them and put them in here – it’s charmed so they won’t break.” Draco took it again, but looked up at him this time and Harry’s chest faltered for breath, for a moment it looked as if the Blond may refuse...

Stern slate eyes stared at Harry angrily. “So I have to do your dirty work, great...” Draco ignored Harry’s following words as he nattered about how it would be to his benefit too. “And what do I get in return for *this*?” Draco asked, with twice the suggestiveness to his tone as usual.

Harry cut his mutterings short, especially as it appeared the Blond hadn’t even been listening and he thought for a moment as he stared at the list, before glancing up beneath his lashes shyly. He knew exactly what Draco’s smug expression meant. “Well I... We’ll be using magically protected tents as a base camp of sorts,” he answered, rambling in his embarrassment, “But I... *Anything*, I’ll let you do anything to me, and I won’t stop you...”

His words were almost a whisper and they slithered from his tongue in such a way that they did not feel like his own. He was saying such embarrassing things. His cheeks flushed furiously, and Harry swore Draco's expression looked triumphant.

I'll let you do anything to me and I won't stop you. Draco's smug expression widened so much, it almost seemed like he was smiling. He cupped Harry's chin with his hand and those eyes shot open.

"Tents?!" The Blond repeated in disgust, "You want me to sleep in a tent?!" He spat again, quickly resuming that smugness when Harry replied.

"Well where else did you think we were going to sleep?" Harry muttered.

"In which case then," Draco leaned back in (ignoring Harry's reply) so his lips were only inches from Harry's when he let a whisper roll out of them. "I will be expecting it daily."

Harry shuddered at the implications, the possibilities and turned his head away, struggling to escape the sudden closeness. His cock twitched at Draco's voice, at the lust shadowing those eyes despite the danger of their situation and he struggled to find his voice in the fog of Draco's breath dusting his cheeks.

"Whomping Willow before sunrise then," Harry all-but gasped and leant up, brushing his mouth over Draco's unexpectedly, before (unwillingly) wrenching himself away and bolting for the entrance to the castle. He had to put as much distance between himself and Draco, and quickly, or no one would be in a fit state to leave in the morning. He cast a quick glance back at Draco and flushed darker at the sight of the arrogant smirk that lingered, before turning away again.

What am I letting myself in for? He wondered, pondering the thought of having to interact with Draco as a lover with his disapproving friends so close by. He felt a little anxious at the prospect, but an electrical tremble in his stomach that only Draco could insight, alerted him to the excitement he felt for it as well...

Something is seriously wrong with me, he thought. *If I survive this maybe I need to seek out mental help.*

Harry soon vanished from his sight into the corridors of the castle. He ruffed his hair slightly, disgusted as he realised he was picking up the Chosen One's bad habits and followed the paved floor to Snape's storage cupboard. Quietly he drew his wand as he neared it, ready to cast it open.

He whispered the spell under his breath and the door clicked open to his relief, he

silently crept inside the room, to which there seemed no light and chanted “*Lumos!*” The small space flickered with a light from his wand as he searched for the potions. His eyes skimmed the many bottles and boxes upon the dust-ridden shelves until he finally found it. He reached far into the shelf and pulled out a small bottle to check it was correct, then searching for the next on the list...

The door creaked from beside him as another wand-light became present and his heart dropped.

“Pray, what it is I have done to deserve the honour of your presence, Draco,” Snape droned, his wand aloft and trained on Draco. Draco turned to him, leisurely dropping the supplies he had gathered into the bag and sealing it carefully, before raising his confident gaze to his Professor. But he remained silent and Snape quirked a brow at that.

“Speak, Mr Malfoy, do not tell me that you have been picking up Potter’s habit of stealing my supplies?” He looked at the shelves Draco had cleared suspiciously. “What on earth could you require of Blood-Replenishing Potion, *Polyjuice* and other such things?” The younger Malfoy’s silence was infuriating him as was his blooming arrogance with refusing to ask for help and Severus Snape lowered his wand, stepping closer to his student. “What, pray tell are you *doing* here, Draco?” “I need this,” Draco took another bottle from the shelf and brought it up to Snape’s eye line. He knew there was no point in hiding the truth, or trying to smother it in lies.

“I can't tell you why, Sir, but it's important for my survival.” With that he lowered the bottle and readied himself for a lecture.

Snape surveyed him critically for a moment, his back rigid. “I can understand your reservations in asking, Draco, however if there is anyone you can trust, it is I.” Without waiting for a response, Snape snatched the list from Draco’s hand and perused it slowly, not missing the way the Blond tensed at the action. “This is enough to supply you for a small battle,” The Professor noted, passing the list back to him. Draco eyed him suspiciously, before taking it slowly from his hand.

“Whatever your plight, Draco, I *am* aware of the mission you are finding it so hard to complete.”

Draco’s eyes widened. Snape nodded slowly.

“Potter has a way of escaping the inexplicable situations and you are well aware that his life is imperative to the cause however...these are not your motives, Draco, are they?” He watched as Draco stared up at him defiantly.

“Sir if you don't mind, it really isn't anything to do with you, besides; my motives have changed slightly,” Draco explained, probably only confusing Professor Snape all the more at that statement. “Now, are you going to allow me these things or not?” The Slytherin asked.

Snape stared at him for a prolonged moment, before nodding and stepping aside graciously. “Remember, Mr Malfoy,” he said as Draco passed, adopting his professor’s tone. “My door is always open to you should you require something that is not in that potion bag – you will find I am rather adept at hiding things, particularly from the Dark Lord.”

Draco merely stared back at him from the doorway, seeming to consider his words for a moment. “Be sure to take care of yourself out there, Mr Malfoy.”

Draco nodded blankly and swiftly made his escape from the potion’s cupboard. Memories of his time at Hogwarts rushed in as he hastened to his destination. He sighed in relief when he finally reached it. Draco sat silently in the Slytherin common room, staring at the familiar surroundings with new eyes, as with every passing minute that pulled him closer to sunrise reminded him of everything he had come to know at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. Even though he had spent endless hours complaining about it, like Harry, it was his home and he knew deep down inside...to here he would never return.

He took in all the scattered memories of his time here and stood to his feet, pondering for a moment how crazy this little escapade was that he was about to journey on. *To swan off with Harry potter and a bunch of gryffindors, it was crazy...* And he wondered if not for this bond...what then?

* * *

Harry explained briefly to the others that Draco would meet them at daybreak with their list of potions. The notion that Draco was willing to help (at least that’s the illusion he’d left them with) seemed to appease Hermione’s doubt some, whereas Ron merely shrugged it off with a grunt. It took a considerably long time for him to pack what he would be taking, especially considering he had so very little possessions in the wide scope of things.

He wrapped the broken mirror up carefully in an old shirt and slid the marauder’s map, his firebolt, invisibility cloak and various pieces of muggle clothing atop his more personal items. Hermione, he was sure would take all the books they could possibly need and no doubt provisions, which left his pouch reasonably light even

with the charm to shrink everything down to fit inside. He'd locked his trunk and sent Hedwig to stay at the Burrow, but still he could not wipe the storm of memories from assaulting his exhausted mind.

Throwing himself back on the bed and drawing the curtains around his bed, for what may be the last time (if fate had any say in it), Harry landed face-first into the pillows and curled up, plagued by his self-abusive trail of thought. It wasn't just the memories, it was the what-ifs, the might have beens, and the possibilities of what now lay ahead when morning came...

It was long after lights out now and the thoughts were thundering through his head, making it throb painfully. His skin ached, like a full-body bruise and when he tried to close his eyes to make his headache dull the memories swirled, blinding him. Ron's snoring from the bed beside him did not help either, it only reminded him of the morning, and the reason why he needed a good night's sleep.

He could stand it no longer. Creeping out of bed and drawing the curtains to give the illusion of sleep, Harry donned his invisibility cloak in the hopes of taking a nightly stroll of Hogwarts (for perhaps the last time) to wear himself down a bit more and hopefully banish any lingering thoughts of the potential darkness.

The stone floors were cold under his feet and he wished he hadn't neglected to put on some shoes or slippers. His pyjama bottoms were long and they hung over his feet clumsily, nearly tripping several times on his navigation of the moving stairs. He hadn't seen the need to bring the map, for he was going nowhere, nowhere in particular at least, his feet seemed to be leading him without any conscious thought. As if it were gravity drawing him down those steps, towards a nameless core of it's thrall.

Deep down, he supposed that he knew where he was going all along. He supposed he should have guessed, because he was not surprised when he found himself descending into the shadowy dungeons. He was not startled when the ache in his skin dulled to a pleasant hum he knew the tune to; in fact he was not much of anything, nothing more than an absent-minded cloud drifting towards Draco Malfoy's presence, that is until he was faced with the Portrait to the Slytherin common rooms.

He paused then, staring at it thoughtfully. He didn't know the password; there was no way he could even begin to guess. Just as he was about to turn back however, two giggly, feminine voices broke the silence of the hall. Harry took advantage of the two silly girls breaking the curfew, for once grateful that slytherins were sneaky gits and sliding in through the portrait after them. He had no idea where Draco's dormitory

was, but he could feel he was close, and closing his eyes to draw breath, he followed the call that had turned his life upside down.

A dark, ash door stood before him and he sucked in a hesitant breath, before nudging it open slowly. It gave a screeching creak as he slipped in and he cursed it silently as it screamed shut, luckily, however, the snoring of the oaf in the bed nearest to the door easily muffled it. Harry smirked at the sleeping Gregory Goyle as he passed, before scanning the beds with his eyes.

A single oil lamp burned at the side of a four-poster bed, cloaked in green. The emerald hangings lay open, exposing the glorious, alabaster flesh slowly revealing itself as Draco Malfoy continued to undress. Harry's breath caught at the sight of Draco's face, uninhibited by the smugness, the arrogance he donned as a mask when others were around. Harry neared the bed quietly, stopping just out of arm's reach of the Blond who was now at his feet, kicking off his trousers. But then, the Slytherin stopped, glancing around him warily and Harry clamped his hand over his mouth, silencing his breathing. Draco could *not* find him here...

He struggled to hold his breath, but his blood was boiling, his heart was hammering and his head was pounding to the beat of a drum no one but he could hear.

Removing his soaks from his feet and chucking them aside, Draco finally plunged into his bed, still sitting. He glanced round for a moment, then glanced back to his pillow and straightened it out. Why did the slytherin dungeons always have an essence about them that made you feel like you were being watched? The Blond glanced over to his fellow Slytherin's who were all out of it and sighed. He was just being paranoid.

Not to mention tonight was going to be a fearful one for him anyway. If Lord Voldemort was able to read his thoughts, he would know that he was leaving tomorrow, he had to work extra hard to keep him out. He placed his head down to the silky green pillow, wearing only his boxers he pulled the quilt over his flesh and closed his eyes. *The last night tonight*, he thought sadly as a small smile breeched those tainted lips in sleep when he slipped into a somewhat pleasant dream.

Harry gasped as he watched Draco's breath tumble over his lips in peaceful sleep, and leant in closer. Daring to press his weight onto the bed, he rested on the very edge, still carefully covered in his cloak. The Blond twitched at the weight next to him, but did not stir and Harry relaxed into the sheets. He curled his feet up into himself to minimise the risk of Draco touching him and (resisting the urge to press into that

body) he closed his eyes, lulled to sleep by the sound of the Boy's light breathing. He just had to be up early and sneak out before Draco awoke...

~To Be Continued...

Notes:

I already have this story completed on the laptop so I will be uploading a few chapters every 3 days or so to this site until it's all here, so you can look forward to frequent updates :)

Chapter 13: Chapter Thirteen

(Bound By) Clandestine Addiction

[Chapter Thirteen]

Sunrise had arrived, *too soon*. Draco shuffled from his bed and yawned, it didn't really feel as though he been asleep at all. He felt motionless as he quietly removed himself from the mattress, to the cold concreted floor below. He tiptoed to his draw, and careful not to wake anyone he grabbed a rucksack and threw some changes of clothes inside, along with his hair gel and toothbrush (though why he thought he was going to need hair gel was beyond the point). He quickly zipped it up and picked up the items of clothing he had thrown on the floor in a hurry beside the bag.

Unfolding one of many black suits he had in his draws, he slipped it on. He always dressed smartly when he was out of his uniform. He also grabbed his slytherin scarf, and added the asset to his suit, it may have appeared a little odd, but it was warm, and it was a reminder of everything that he was leaving behind.

Carefully creeping over to the exit of the dungeons, rucksack on his arm, he took one last, fleeting look at the place that had been his home for the last six years. His heart seemed to skip a few beats, he clenched his eyelids together tightly along with his fists, anxiety shuddering through his limbs and opened the dungeon door. *Goodbye Hogwarts*, he thought, disgusted with his own sentimentality, the door closing quietly behind him.

If felt all to calm, *eerie* as he trekked up the damp hill towards the Whomping Willow. He stood uncomfortably next to the tree – feeling paranoid he flinched and stared wildly around at every little sound. The possibility that the Dark Lord may have realised or somehow *read* his thoughts was making him all too jittery. It chilled his spine and made him shiver at the edge of fear. He didn't want to fall.

Glancing down at the dark, damp grass, his eyes widened at the large shadow stretching forward in front of him, descending from above. He glanced up frantically. With a large thud, his head snapped back on his neck as branches thrashed into him, whipping him spitefully into it's coils. Draco gasped, the wind knocked out of him as he collided with the ground. The tree curled around one of his feet and swung him upside down.

“Let me go!” He winced, bag falling from his shoulder as the tree plucked him up and spun him around, dizzyingly. He screamed for help, as he swung round in circles, but

no one heard him. He felt his empty stomach flip nauseatingly and his vision blurred, the sight of clouds and trees meshed into one.

Drawing his wand clumsily, Draco aimed it towards the hazy knot that bit into his foot. “*Reducto!*” He screamed and the knot holding him snapped. The tree screeched and he plummeted to the floor with a crack as the branches hurried out of his reach. Sighing with relief, Draco pulled his bag back over his shoulder – just in time too, he could see Harry and the other two approaching.

“Draco!” Harry called to the oddly dishevelled looking Blond. He could not help the smile that graced his lips when he saw him, particularly in light of last night (even though the Slytherin knew nothing of it). The anxiety that had swelled in his chest on their way down under the cloak, all-but choking him had dislodged a little as they approached, despite the looks Ron and Hermione were sharing behind his back. He didn’t care.

His steps hastened until he came to a halt in front of Draco, not daring to initiate a kiss or even an embrace under the observant gazes of his friends – he would let Draco decide the boundaries of their relationship whilst being watched. He flushed however, upon recalling exactly *what* Draco’s *condition* of coming along was.

“You came,” he gasped breathlessly, hating the way he was still smiling at the relief just *seeing* him brought. It was as if he could forget he was leaving at all, much less *why* he was leaving. Draco merely gave a derisive look at the relief in Harry’s voice, but said nothing, especially not since he was partially focused on the red-head and the bushy-haired girl watching him warily from just behind Harry. *Just who do they think they’re glaring at?* He wondered, until he realised, their eyes were on *Harry*.

“Draco,” Harry murmured, and his hand reaching towards him snapped Draco from his thoughts. Those fingers smoothed his Blond hair down carefully and he caught the wide-eyed stares from the other two present. “Why is your hair mussed up?”

“Get off!” The Slytherin snapped, knocking Harry’s hand away from his hair as he straightened it and turned the other way. *How embarrassing*, he thought, covering his flush with his reply. “You’re one to talk! When was the last time you combed your hair?!” He asked, and when finally free of that blush he turned back and gazed down at Harry who suddenly appeared awkward.

“Ummm, come on, let’s go,” Hermione insisted, noticing that daylight was almost here. Ron just snarled as he followed Hermione ahead. He didn’t want to walk anywhere near that Malfoy.

“Keep up, Harry,” He groaned hurrying forwards.

Harry took one last look at Draco, who seemed already irritated with him as he walked on ahead and Harry followed.

“So any of you *bright sparks* know where we are actually going?” Draco asked sarcastically in a dull set tone that sounded full of spite.

“We’ll take the passage under the Whomping Willow through to the Shrieking Shack,” Hermione called back to them as she drew her wand and turned it on the tree.

“That will take us beyond the boundaries of Hogwarts, so we can apparate from there.”

Harry looked at Draco from the corner of his eye, hoping not to be caught taking a peek. He was used to Draco’s mood swings, but he hadn’t had to deal with them before in front of Ron and Hermione and this was proving tricky. He didn’t know how to react...

“*Immobulus!*” Hermione’s cry shattered his reverie, and the violent tree mere inches away screeched to a halt, its branches splayed above them, its blow freezing midair. Hermione pocketed her wand and glanced back at the others with a pleased smile.

“Who wants to go first?” She attempted cheery, but Ron merely snorted, pushing in front of her and heading towards the tree.

“I’ll go, show Malfoy how it’s done – and besides I don’t want to be watching them grope each other’s arses all the way through the tunnel...”

Draco chuckled, finding Weasley's irritation amusing as he strolled on ahead in a hugg, and Granger chased after him, leaving Draco and Harry to catch up again. The Blond caught Harry's gaze as they climbed through the black, timbered entrance of the passageway, both of them knew the other was remembering what had happened the last time they were here – on Valentine’s Day...

As they walked side-by-side, Draco reached his hand over and brushed it against Harry's slightly, a smile touching the corner of his lips as he let a few of his fingers tangle with Harry's in promised protection of the darkness. The bond’s thrall pumped through the slight touch with fury, drawing them closer. He held onto those fingers tighter until they reached the end of the passageway, struggling to ignore the guilt of his actions that day.

Harry’s heart danced at the tingles caressing his hand where Draco’s fingers met his. Such potent palpitations from such a simple gesture would have been ridiculous, if it were anyone else but him. A dim brightness broke through the shadows ahead, and

Harry knew they were practically *inside* the Shrieking Shack. The elation he felt sank a little. He almost wished Ron would provoke Draco enough that the Blond would *have* to touch him in front of them, break the ice and make it ok for them to touch, it was hard to be near Draco and remember the rules whilst under the scrutiny of his friends.

The dust-clogged stairs were in sight as they crawled up through the passageway and Harry flushed a little in remembering the situation last time he had *climbed* those stairs. He felt the heated pressure of Draco's gaze on him and was sure he was picturing the exact same scene – before it had plummeted into agony, on Harry's part at least. Ron ducked his head inside the rooms that lead off of the main hall, evidently checking for any *visitors* whilst Hermione pressed herself to the door, murmuring something, an incantation under her breath.

Relishing in taking a back seat for just one more moment, Harry's hold tightened around Draco's fingers as long as possible, knowing that now his friends could turn and see them at any minute, Draco would inevitably release him.

"*Homenum Revelio!*" Hermione muttered, opening her eyes and peering carefully out of the front door's shattered window.

"What the hell does that spell do?" Ron whispered.

"If you had *bothered* in *any* of our lessons, Ronald," Hermione hissed, not tearing her eyes from the darkness outside. "You would know that it reveals all human beings in the nearby vicinity – even if they are invisible."

Ron merely snorted, whereas Harry had to bite his tongue to keep from laughing. It all felt very...*calm*, almost anti-climactic. And Draco was still holding his hand – but for how much longer?

"I listened! Occasionally..." Ron added, shifting slightly to a different corner of the room.

"Well it seems to be only us here, so that's good," Hermione sighed in relief, lowering her wand as she turned to Harry. Draco's fingers instantly broke away, seconds from Hermione's gaze reaching them and the blond stepped sideways, so he and Harry weren't so close.

Were they just...? Her thoughts broke halfway through, of course not...

"There really is no turning back now, is there?" Ron hummed, worriedly.

"Don't be such a coward, *Weasley!*" Draco snapped, though he too, admittedly was feeling very odd about all this too.

"Shut your mouth, Malfoy!" The red-head spat back with disgust, the irritation he felt

just being in the same *room* as the Slytherin was overwhelming. He huffed tetchily at the thought of Malfoy was really going to be tagging along.

“Please!” Hermione intervened. “You can argue later!”

Draco opened his mouth to reply, but was cut short by Harry's gaze and backed down. *Whatever, stupid mission*, he grumbled to himself and walked to another corner of the room. Evidently considerate of Harry's feelings, he tried, for once, not to argue.

“We can't all fit under the cloak,” Harry stated, speaking at last as he approached his friends at the door. “We'll just have to be careful.”

Hermione nodded in agreement.

“I can apparate us,” she answered, staring at all of them in turn. “Since I'm the only one who is of legal age and has passed the test. We'll be camping in a location I've pinpointed – a rural area half way between here and London, since Gringotts will be out next stop after some careful planning.” Her gaze lingered over Draco as her last words passed her lips, before her hand settled on the door. Harry's pressed over hers quickly, stopping her from opening it.

He swore he saw Draco stiffen out of the corner of his eye at the touch, but perhaps he was imagining it...

“We have to be careful, Death Eaters attacked this village before – they could easily be keeping close watch on it for sign of me. It's not exactly a secret that I have a habit of getting myself into trouble...” Hermione raised a brow and Ron snorted, but when Harry's eyes flicked to Draco, he was still and silent. But now was not the time.

“Let's go,” he murmured, before pulling the door open. He crept out into the darkness, sunlight still out of reach – *just*. A quick glance around affirmed that Hermione's spell had been correct, they were alone, for now. “Come on!” He hissed, ushering Hermione and Ron through the doorway and closing it after Draco was beside him.

The breeze picked up, like an eerie sign of the winds of change, and Harry was frozen there for a long moment, staring at Draco's eyes. Somewhere just ahead he heard Ron whispering for him to hurry up, but the gravity of that pale skin in the dimness held him there. It was as if he could not move away from their past, their home until Draco did so first. It was only just hitting him. There was no turning back.

Draco had felt his entire body tense at the brief contact between Harry's hand and Hermione's, and remained rather quiet as they left the shack. With Ron and Hermione walking ahead, there was no one to separate the building, awkward atmosphere that had brewed between them.

“It feels *too* quiet,” Hermione announced in a worried voice. Ron just shrugged, but that did not appease her. “Something doesn't feel right.” She looked around cautiously, even though there was nothing there. It seemed like something was brushing over her, like the air had encased her inside an oxygen cocoon, it was suffocating – stifling!

“I get that feeling too,” Draco hissed, finally breaking the tension with his words.

“That something...doesn't '*seem*' right.”

“What's that supposed to mean?” Harry asked curiously, knowing too well that he wasn't referring to the same thing Hermione was.

“Like the Mud-blood said,” He spat, spiteful words coursing through the scar at his chest and directing his feelings into Harry.

“This isn't the time,” Harry whispered, as he moved after Ron and Hermione, and although Draco followed close behind, Harry could still feel the weight of his glare. He definitely hadn't been imagining the immediate change in Draco's temperament when he had innocently touched Hermione's hand, it seemed.

The village was eerie under the veil of night, and Harry could not repress a shudder as they ducked down at the side of the abandoned building nearest the entrance to Hogsmeade. Their backs pressed flat against the brickwork, as they scanned the ghostly village lane. It *seemed* empty.

“I thought we were apparating!” Ron hissed in his girlfriend's ear, and Hermione looked back at him, her nose wrinkled. “Yes, but I asked Fred and George to pay a *business visit* to the joke shop, so that they could leave us something that we needed—”

“On Valentine's day – when they were at the shop?! They didn't say anything to me!” Ron gasped. Hermione merely raised her brows at him.

“It was secret, Ron,” she intoned, “Besides, we needed to borrow that tent your Dad used at the Triwizard cup and I had no way of leaving Hogwarts to claim it – do you suggest my plan was flawed?”

Ron opened his mouth a moment as if to reply, before he obviously thought better of it and grunted incoherently under his breath.

“So where have they left it for us?” Harry asked, feeling Draco's impatience towards his friends rising as they squabbled – or perhaps it was merely the way that (in their hiding) Hermione was closer to him than Draco, who was bringing up the rear of their group suddenly. He raised his eyes to Draco intently, he couldn't reassure his needless

jealousy right now, he just hoped the Blond could wait until they were safe.

“They buried it in the woodshed next to the joke shop,” Hermione explained quietly, turning her head slightly to see where Harry was looking and flushing a little at the intense gaze of loathing Malfoy was throwing her. She shuffled back from Harry and towards Ron a little more, just as Harry leapt to his feet.

“Harry! No!” Hermione gasped, seizing hold of his arm and wrenching him back down. Harry winced as he collided hard with the ground.

“*Look!*” Ron murmured this time and Harry glanced across the street separating them from the joke shop, just as an all-too familiar shadow walked across, as if patrolling the area. “They have this place covered,” Ron sneered at the Death Eater’s shape. “Nothing’s bloody sacred anymore...”

“I’m going to get the tents,” Harry murmured, straightening himself up. And balancing on the balls of his feet, ready to bolt. “Can you give me a distraction? *Without* revealing yourselves?”

Hermione and Ron looked sceptical, while Draco remained quiet, watching.

“For how long?” Hermione asked.

“Five minutes,” he replied, sliding up the wall onto his feet.

“Wait! Wait, for goodness *sake*, Harry!” Hermione all-but spat, “If you insist on going let one of us come with you...”

For a moment it looked like Ron was about to get up to volunteer his company, but Draco shot up quicker, and glared down at the two companions before meeting Harry’s gaze stiffly. Harry was sure he knew exactly what that look meant. “Draco can come with me,” Harry answered automatically, but Hermione grip on his arm did not relinquish.

“Just remember,” She murmured, “*Aparecium*.”

Harry frowned. “Apare-?”

“*Aparecium*,” She repeated testily and Harry nodded, not really comprehending how that spell would serve them. He moved around the cover of the building, pressing himself flat into the shadows, as he felt Draco follow into them beside him, the Death Eater’s back was turned – for now. Glancing back to his friends, Harry saw Ron wave his wand, when a look of horror crossed Hermione’s face and she threw herself against him, as if to stop him, but too late.

The harmless curse, (that could only have been *stupefy*) shot across the street and struck the Death Eater square-on, but as he crumbled, the most furious wailing filled the village. There was some kind of alarm that Ron had unwittingly triggered. Harry

heard Draco swear beside him, cursing the Weasley name by the sound of it, but Harry did not stop to reprimand him. He darted over to Ron and Hermione, dragging out his invisibility cloak and throwing it over them.

“Stay here,” Harry gasped, “Or we won’t be able to find you again. Keep everything away from us as long as you can but *don’t* reveal yourselves!” He didn’t wait for an answer, he didn’t expect one. Instead he bolted across the street, Draco close behind as he threw himself into the unlocked wood-shed. He gasped for breath, struggling to breathe against the panic as the evidently *not* stupefied Death Eater groaned, gathering himself to his feet mere inches from where they were hiding.

“Shit!” Harry gasped, as the cloaked figure gazed around, before flicking his wand and silencing the alarm. The panic was stifling and Harry backed up a few steps as he watched the figure scan the seemingly abandoned street. He jumped as he backed straight into Draco, whose hand flew over his mouth to stifle the yelp of surprise. The Death Eater outside stiffened, tilting his ear towards the wood-shed. Harry’s eyes widened, and he and Draco retreated slowly, *quietly* as far back as they could go, ducking down amongst the lumber.

The shadow approached the door to the shed and Harry’s back went rigid, pressed so hard into Draco’s chest he was sure he must have been causing him pain.

“*Colloportus!*” Draco whispered suddenly, just against Harry’s ear, making the dark-haired Boy shudder with the heat of his breath, even though his eyes were trained on Draco’s wand as it aimed at the door. He swore he heard the dull sound of the door locking, just as the Death Eater reached it and struggled to yank it open.

Do something! Harry thought, staring at the silhouette of the enemy through the wooden-slotted walls. *You’re **bloody** Harry Potter! Don’t just sit there!*

“*Serpensortia!*” He murmured to the darkness, and though he had cast the spell, could not help but jump as the snake appeared from his wand. It swayed menacingly, eyeing both him and Draco with fiery venom in its mesmerising, yellow eyes. Its jaws opened, fangs glaring in the dimness and Harry’s body bunched with terror, even as he forced the mask of bravery over his paling features.

“*You will listen to me,*” Harry hissed and he felt Draco tense with horror behind him at the slurring, serpentine language that shuddered from his lips. But Harry could not turn to him now, or the snake would lunge. The serpent, its body larger than the one Draco had called in their second year, (during their farce of a duel) it was thick, and powerful, and though he was not afraid of the creatures, even Harry swallowed

nervously.

“*There is a Death Eater outside,*” Harry whispered to the snake, “*Chase him far away from here, and then disappear!*” The snake wavered, glaring at Harry defiantly for a moment, before spitting at him venomously, and slithering towards the door. Harry stepped forward as he watched it slide through the slotted door and gasped, “*You are to harm **no one!***” With that, the snake vanished from the shed, and the cursing fear of the figure outside erupted in the silence.

“Are you trying to get us *killed*, Potter?” The Slytherin hissed, not amused at Harry's way of handling the enemy. “What if the snake hadn't listened, *huh?* What then?” Draco shuddered as Harry's snake-spoken words still echoed in his ears. Parseltongue was not something he enjoyed hearing spew over Harry's lips, especially after his many encounters with Lord Voldemort – it was chilling.

“Come on, we need to get the tents,” Harry reminded him, quickly sneaking ahead on his knees, armed with his wand as he quietly crawled across the floor. “What's going on with you and the Mud-blood girl *anyway?*” Draco spat from behind, realizing this probably wasn't the right time or place to be bringing it up. “Doesn't matter,” He sneered, answering himself before Harry could.

Harry skimmed the dark, creaky shed and noticed a tall, wooden grandfather clock in the corner. He walked over and rubbed his hand over the dusty surface, seeing it was broken. “*Hmm...*”

“Well genius, where are these tents?” Draco snarled, still rather disgusted at the thought of sleeping in a tent, and intensely irritated at Hermione's presence in Harry's life.

Harry surveyed Draco carefully for a moment, blond locks shining gloriously in the dimness. The low sound of the snake's hissing sounded in the distance, along with the Death Eater's curses. There was not much time and this was not the right place and yet, yet he could not bring himself to rush away from this moment, the danger brought them strangely closer, and their bond shuddered under the intensity.

“Hermione is a friend, she's been...she and Ron have been together since first year, whether they realised it or not,” he explained it with a twinge of amusement gracing his lips, at the thought of his friends' naivety. “She and Ron are my family,” he began with a voice so low and steady as he passed Draco. He scanned the woodshed even when he could feel the weight of those grey eyes watching him intently, as if trying to decipher him. “But you're my everything.” The words were quiet. It didn't sound like his voice at all and he was grateful for the darkness so that it hid the humiliating shade

his skin had been coloured with.

He felt the awkwardness of the silence and *knew* that the Blond was coming up with some elaborate topping for his self-inflicted humiliation. Grimacing at the thought of what suggestions were brewing inside Draco's (sometimes spiteful) mind, Harry focused on the surrounding mess. This place, it was full of scrap, of wooden junk likely stacked for firewood – ornaments, tables, chairs and cupboards, but his steps drew him towards the broken grandfather clock in the corner, webbed in dust and debris.

Harry's finger swept through the cobwebs and layers of filth, wiping clear the ochre wood of the clock's body. The face was shattered, hands pointing still towards the twelve, frozen permanently in time. He was vaguely aware of Draco's voice behind him then, drawing him in like that ever-present gravitation towards reality where in fact, they were running out of time. That alarm must have summoned backup – it could not be far behind, he and Draco had but a few minutes to get out.

Draco seemed to blankly ignore Harry's words about Hermione, he felt stupid for even getting uptight in the first place, and just dismissed the comment, that was until...

You're my everything. He genuinely laughed with a smugness to that. "Are you some sort of girl, Potter?" He sniggered, laughing lowly all the more at that statement as if to inflame Harry's humiliation. His laughter was soon cut short by a petty retaliation of the words '*shut up*' from the boy-who-lived, and he watched the boy panic a little when time began to run out.

Draco leant over the surface of the clock and caressed it with his index finger and thumb, holding part of the broken window in his hand. A flick from his wand opened it easily. "What makes you think the tents are in there anyway?" Draco asked in confusion.

Harry raised his eyes to him with the briefest flicker of smugness tingeing his smile, and reached forwards, seizing the shrunken pack from within and sealing it inside his own pouch. When Draco seemed to become impatient for an answer, Harry shut the door of the clock, that Draco's wand had unlocked and gestured to the giant 'X' adorning the front. He saw the confusion swell in those eyes, he knew what they said – that had definitely not been there before.

"*Aparecium*," Harry elaborated, as he moved over towards the door to the shed. "It reveals invisible ink."

"I know that, *Potter*," Draco spat.

“I had a feeling. The clock was the only thing covered in dust, so it has been here longer than the other scrap. And if you’d been listening instead of tormenting me you would have heard me say the incantation.” He heard Draco snigger a little at that and Harry rolled his eyes as he stared through the slotted door, peering outside, just as Draco came to stand behind him – far too close.

Pink and red had begun to paint the horizon and that was bad. They had to move. But Draco’s heat, his breath at his neck, his close proximity was rendering Harry unable to think. He drew in a shaky breath; the Blond probably wasn’t even doing it intentionally yet it was driving him (Harry) insane. “It seems clear,” Harry gasped, *swearing* he heard Draco smile with triumph as he pushed open the door, “Let’s go.”

They crept out into the street, the dawn breaking above. Harry spared a glance back at Draco to ensure he was right behind him and then darted across the street towards where they had left Ron and Hermione.

“*Stupefy!*”

“*Petrificus Totalus!*”

Harry instinctively dropped and rolled as the cry of the enemy rang through the silence, lucky he did so unexpectedly, for Draco who had been right behind, tripped over him and barrelled across the ground, narrowly avoiding the third, non-verbal curse that had flown past his ear. Harry winced as the violent, unnameable light caused a shop-sign nearby to explode – that had nearly been Draco! He leapt to his feet, aiming his wand at the three masked figures. “*Expelliarmus!*” He screamed and one of their wands flew towards him. He snapped it over his knee and tossed it aside, just as Draco rose up beside him, fuming – with *him*.

He’s furious because I’m only disarming them, he realised instantly, turning just as one of the Death Eater’s raised their wands to him.

“*Sectumsempra!*” Draco screamed out the spell, watching as one of the other figures flew backwards into a concrete bash with the floor, his neck snapping at the extreme force of the spells collision. He held his wand firm as the final death eater approached him and Harry, and took swift, furious steps towards him. He knew how dangerous Death Eaters were, after having first hand experience; they just couldn’t afford to go easy.

Harry gazed over at him in shock, unable to decipher whether he was more in shock that he, Draco, had used *that* spell, of the fact that he, Malfoy had *learnt* it. He

suddenly felt weak and shaky, he hadn't heard the words of *that* spell mentioned since *that* day in the bathroom, and his head filled with the images of Draco lying on the floor with blood seeping from his chest, from Harry's attack...

"After you *injured* me, I thought maybe it would be a good idea to learn it," Draco spat, snapping Harry out of his haziness with the reminding factor that one of the enemy was still very much alive and so close that now he was mere inches away.

"Draco Malfoy, isn't it?" The dark, masked man slowly spoke, observing the Blond boy who stood with his wand at the stranger's neck.

"Stay back!" Draco shivered, clenching the wand tighter in his hand as he began to chant, but too late—

The figure merged into the blackness and vanished. He didn't need to attack them now; he could inform the Dark Lord of what he had seen.

Harry choked on thin air, the memory of bringing harm to Draco, to someone who was not evil breaking him all over again. As the final threat faded, he stumbled a little before remaining, rooted in place. He heard Hermione and Ron calling from somewhere nearby, though they were muffled as if by the vagueness of sleep. He heard Draco snarling at the three of them, they had to go. He knew that too but his body wasn't moving. The memory was too vivid, he remembered it all, the guilt and finally the *why*.

Their connection, it was forged with the same emotions Voldemort had possessed in creating his Horcruxes. Fear, but not of dying, of being helpless — Death, but not of his own, of others, of the world he knew. But that last, integral piece was distorted. Instead of the hate that rushed through Voldemort as potent as blood, when Harry had cast that spell on Draco, (unthinkingly, unwittingly nearly *killing* him) he was feeling a hate so profound, but of a very different kind...

Suddenly, an electric shock shook his body so powerfully that his back arched, static shooting through his limbs from the place where Draco gripped his arms, yanking him unceremoniously to his feet and shaking him furiously. Harry came to slowly, his vision blurring back into focus along with the sounds of Ron and Hermione's panic.

When Voldemort had nearly killed him, it had been his mother's love that had protected him, had snatched him from death's greedy claws. All this time that had been the one confusing, unexplainable factor in the incident where he had nearly stolen Draco's life, but now it was as blatantly obvious as a knife through the chest — and just as powerful.

Those grey eyes, darkened with anger (at his vulnerability no doubt) were staring down at him as intensely as he had ever known them, and Harry's mouth parted with the vocal version of his realisation before he could fully reign in his senses. "I've always loved you," he said hazily, righting himself enough to see those eyes flare with a billion emotions, but before the Blond could say anything Hermione was on them, her hands gripping their arms tightly.

"We don't have time for this," she spat, panicked. "Do you have the tents?" And Harry lifted his head just in time to see Draco nod and Ron grip his forearm where Hermione's did, before that familiar, sickening jerk behind his navel tore him up into the air. The world trembled with colour and light and madness, before they landed with a shuddering thump back on their feet, somewhere entirely new. The same warning pink and red brilliance coloured the skies above, beyond the canopy of the trees – they were at the location Hermione had described.

Hermione breathed deeply for a moment, as if to relieve herself of the panic that had shaken every limb in her body, before turning to the others. She reached down, plucking the tent's shrunken case from Harry's bag and throwing it to Ron. "Stay with Harry, won't you?" She asked a quiet, panting Malfoy breathlessly, all of them still quite dishevelled. "I'm not sure what's...we can't be sure we're safe until the anti-discovery charms are up. Ron and I will..." She seemed to be flushed, but whether it was from the previous chaos or *something else* entirely, it could not be certain. "Just watch him," she finished lamely, before turning back to where Ron had began bringing the tents to their full size.

Draco turned to look back at Harry as the boy shook his head, as if shaking free of the hazy cloud that had permeated his common sense. It was all too clear when the dark-haired Boy came back to himself, when he met Draco's still stunned gaze with a mix of horror and confusion. "What did I say?" Harry all-but gasped, partially wishing he never had never had his epiphany.

Ron made a hurling noise in the depths of his throat, intentionally aimed at the words tumbling from his girlfriend's mouth (who ignored him) and the ones Harry had spoken only moments before in panic. He turned the other way and set his attention on the area around himself, gazing warily at the trees in silence of the rural spot Hermione had pinpointed. Anything to keep thoughts of his best friend and Malfoy at bay...

Draco snatched one of the tents from Hermione and walked about five feet away before kneeling down and unravelling it. He clearly didn't know how to take all of this and despite what Hermione had just said to him, and Harry for that fact, he had other

things on his mind. Like the Dark Lord discovering his betrayal...and he was scared. He choked on that thought.

Harry sheepishly followed after Draco, who was making himself clear by purposely pitching his and Harry's tent further away from Ron and Hermione's.

"Come on," Draco grumbled, handing part of the tent to Harry as he began to lay it out.

"I still don't understand how they can be..." Ron began, watching them from a distance.

"Me either, but think, Draco came along with us...that must mean something?" She smiled at that thought. The name Draco Malfoy had brought them nothing but trouble since day one, and even though she didn't approve of the relationship, it didn't matter, because Harry was happy, and in turn, that made her happy. "Come on Ron, help me out with our tent," She giggled, trying to lighten the mood.

Pushing his embarrassing confession to the side, Harry watched Draco lay the tent out and step back. Harry flushed darkly as he looked at him, his own words revolving around his head like a humiliating echo and he cleared his throat, raising his wand. "*Erecto!*" He chanted, and the magical tent assembled itself instantly, standing easily taller than Draco, or even Ron, who were the tallest out of their group.

Harry looked to his side, seeing Hermione and Ron's all-but identical tent explode into life just a scarce metre from theirs, but caught something in Draco's eyes that made him look at the Blond more intently. His embarrassment was only to intensify, however, as Draco's raised his eyebrows suggestively at him – and in front of Ron and Hermione too! He thought he would like the open attention, but it was clear Draco was looking forward to exploiting it with the soul-goal to give him the permanent complexion of a beetroot.

"Don't look at me like that!" He hissed, but it was too late, Ron was already making those damned retching noises again whilst Hermione was politely flicking through a re-sized book she had brought (probably for anti-detection spells). "It's the actual spell!" Harry declared, throwing his bag inside his and Draco's tent and looking to Hermione desperately for a distraction.

Hermione met his eyes, smiling with distinct amusement before consulting her book once more. "I've thought this over more than anything and have worked out an intricate net of spells, a Caterwauling Charm to alert us if anything *should* get too close will top it all, but I seriously doubt we'll be found. It should only take me a few

minutes to wrap-up.” With that though, Harry’s distraction was gone with her chanting, and he was caught in that awkward place where Ron was glaring at him for his ridiculous declaration of love, and no doubt the way that Draco was hovering so close to him. He swallowed hard, not entirely sure what to do.

Suddenly a bemused smug look overran Draco's features, his upside down frown had altered so now he was smiling in a way that was almost sadistic. Ron's expression was fuelling him a little, for he parted his lips and leant inwards to Harry's ear, one arm raised up and circling his shoulder as he breathed deeply over that lobe and smiled. Hot steamy breaths hit that inner, tender flesh of the channel and Malfoy grinned, for the first time showing Ron and Hermione the overwhelming intimacy that he was so intent on hiding before. Draco's grip on Harry's shoulder grew tighter. The bond wasn't helping, dragging him in helplessly.

“What’s the matter, *Weasley*,” Draco's eyes shot over at the red-head quivering with anger, as he leant back into Harry. “You jealous of this?” The Slytherin licked up the shell of that ear, knowing full well the repulsion Ron felt in seeing Harry and him together. Draco fed of that repulsion though, and he chuckled darkly.

“Sick,” Ron grumbled as he turned his eyes away, he couldn't bare to look at the Blond, or Harry, who seemed to be standing very still, almost compliant beneath Malfoy.

“Ronald, making snarky comments and gestures only makes him want to wind you up all the more,” Hermione reprimanded him, also unable to keep her eyes on the smug Malfoy.

Harry’s limbs shivered like jelly and he struggled to stop the bliss from reaching his eyes. It was awkward, having Draco possess him so thoroughly with his best friends watching, when they had never seen them so intimate before. He felt his skin flush with embarrassment but that didn’t stop it feeling so good that his spine quivered with the static. And it certainly didn’t make him push Draco away, he didn’t think he could ever quite manage that strength over this thrall, that he suddenly realised the reason for...

“Draco,” Harry tried, quietly so that only the Blond could hear. “They’re watching.” He struggled, half-heartedly to slide out of Draco’s grasp but did not make much of an effort, nor put much force in his voice. He *swore* he felt those lips smile against the shell of his ear.

Ron continued to retch until he was unable to watch anymore. “I'm going for a

wander,” He choked, briskly walking ahead of them into the trees. His nose wrinkled with disgust. He couldn't understand what it was that repulsed him so much, it just did, even though he was glad for Harry's happiness...it was still...*Malfoy*. And to that thought came those gurgling sounds again.

“What about our tent?!!” Hermione stamped her foot with indignation and quickly hurried after her selfish and irritated boyfriend.

Draco laughed at their departure. “What a *loser*,” He sniggered, releasing Harry from his arms and returning to the tent. Harry shuddered blankly to Draco's release and gazed around, this first night together was going to be a difficult and awkward one, and to think, they hadn't even had dinner yet.

And of course, he had promised him anything. He had a feeling Draco's desires would not be put off just because they would be sleeping in a tent not a few feet from Ron and Hermione. *In fact that will probably only encourage him*, he realised with horror, as he moved over to help Hermione finish with her tent.

“I had originally asked for the tent we used at the Quidditch World Cup,” Hermione explained distantly, evidently trying to keep the subject off of Malfoy. “But it seems Fred and George felt the need to go all out, these are very luxurious.”

“Go after him,” Harry murmured with guilt tinting his voice. He shouldn't have liked it, but he had. “Go give him a bit of time, the tent it set up anyway. We'll eat when you get back.”

“Okay,” she agreed quietly, flicking her eyes back to the other tent, in which Draco had disappeared. “The charms are all set, you'll be perfectly safe. The tents are invisible and you too if you stay in the camp perimeter. It's similar to Grimmauld place if you will.” She smiled a little and Harry returned the gesture. At least she was not bitter at him for being content with Draco, whether she liked him or not.

Watching her disappear after Ron, Harry sighed, approaching his and Draco's... His swallowed a moment as it hit him. They'd be sleeping together – *next* to each other, for the first time with Draco realising. He stared at the open tent flap, realising that he had been standing aimlessly outside for a good few moments, and hoped that Draco had not realised. Pushing aside the material he stepped through, eyes widening. These were definitely...*magical*.

Soft, warm coloured draperies decorated the walls of the tent, knotting with elaborate hangings. It was similarly furnished from the tent he had shared with the Weasleys once before, table, chairs, an enchanted fire that set flame to nothing but radiated a warmth that eased his chilled, tense body. To the right he could see a washroom

whilst at the back, a few steps up must have been the 'bedroom' (he supposed that was where Draco was).

A pale green, voile curtain hung over the archway and he pushed it aside slowly, before freezing on the threshold. "Draco?" he asked carefully, his eyes roving that expanse of porcelain chest that lay before him on the bed. But he could not move, not with the sudden sight of a half-naked Draco Malfoy glaring up at him smugly. *Bastard knows exactly how he makes me feel*, he cursed; remembering the connection they shared transmitted *his* emotions as well as Draco's.

Draco smiled smugly at Harry, who seemed to be flushed in his presence. "Well you did agree you to service me, *didn't you?*" He reminded, stretching up from the place where he had just been propped, he moved nearer to Harry and hooked his arm behind his back, drawing him in so the curtain fell from his fingers and encased them both inside.

A surge of energy coursed through Draco's bare chest that was now in very close contact with Harry's. His arm pulled Harry in closer, and his lip twitched with an informative smile as that arm around Harry's neck loosened and he stood back a few inches with a dark glare, almost *sexy*.

"You know what to do, Potter," He snarled sexily, licking his bottom (slightly chapped) lip with a sting of anticipation as the dark-haired Boy before him regarded him with wide, glistening eyes. Blond strands of hair hung sensuously over the Slytherin's pale nose as he reached his hands down over his curved hips and around down to his belt, slowly tugging at the belt as he beckoned Harry in closer.

"Well?" He breathed.

~To Be Continued...

Chapter 14: Chapter Fourteen

(Bound By) Clandestine Addiction

[Chapter Fourteen]

Harry wet his lips in anticipation as Draco's palm at the back of his neck guiding him towards that body. He knew exactly what Draco wanted, but surely his clumsy attempt at the act last time had put him off? He had to admit, though they had dabbled *plenty* in sexual acts he didn't feel particularly skilled at anything – their encounters were more like battles than sex a great deal of the time.

Slender fingers skittered up the nape of his neck, tugging his hair in encouragement and Harry exhaled shakily, leaning towards the pale region of Draco's torso. His unsteady breaths danced over the flesh and above him and Draco clucked his tongue impatiently, as if urging him to get on with it. Harry smirked, his nervousness dissipating as Draco's irritation reared its head and he inclined his head to suck a dusty nipple into his mouth.

Draco hissed, murmuring words Harry didn't pause to register, pulling spitefully on Harry's hair but he didn't draw back. Drawing lazy circles around the hardening nub with his tongue, Harry braved a glance up into those eyes, eyes that stared down at him, shining with the intense kind of passion only Draco could give, and Harry caught the erect flesh with his teeth teasingly.

A sharper tug at the back of his head reminded him that Draco didn't give him the luxury of the illusions of making love, and Harry released him in favour of dragging his tongue down the lines of his sternum. He wasn't making much noise yet and that calm compose of dominance wouldn't so much as tremble until Harry frustrated him to breaking point. Then, he supposed if there was anything that they were good at it was pushing each other's buttons.

His tongue dipped in, tormenting Draco's belly-button and causing a skip in that steady breathing. Harry smiled, mouthing the trail of fair hair that dipped downward beneath Draco's open trousers, until the heat of his breath was streaming over the Blond's erection through his underwear.

Draco's finger's twitched in anticipation, clutching the silk throw on the bed beneath them tightly into his finger's as he shuddered at every little movement or gesture Harry's tongue offered.

Draco's cock shuddered at the hot breath that steamed in through the flimsy fabric. He arched himself up a little, wanting more, *needing* more whilst his hand loosened from the bed sheets and swung round to grasp the Gryffindor's hair. Grasping those dark, mahogany strands between his digits hastily, he pushed Harry forward against his hardened prick that was aching painfully against the confines of his clothes. He bit down on his lip. He couldn't take it anymore.

"Please!" He begged hazily, looking down at Harry with the eyes of a pouting puppy-dog – eyes Harry had never witnessed before.

Harry blinked. That was definitely new, that look. Even when Draco had let him top he hadn't got that expression of complete and utter need. Something was changing in the balance of their relationship and it would never change back – and he wasn't sure he wanted it to. He couldn't say he exactly *disliked* the way things seemed to be heading...

I still can't believe you said that you loved him in front of Ron and Hermione, his mind tormented and his cheeks flushed at that as he reached forwards, tugging the Blond's trousers and underwear down with one pull. Draco gave a noise of distressed relief as his cock bobbed under Harry's chin and the dark-haired Boy smirked up at him subtly, before mouthing the neglected erection hungrily.

He reached up to cup Draco's balls, rolling them in his palm softly as his lips parted, the swollen, pink tip sliding into his hot mouth. Above him, Draco groaned loudly and Harry hummed in response, the sweet vibrations coursing through the throbbing need in his mouth. His free hand stole down, stroking himself through his trousers despite the picture he must make for the Blond staring down at him.

The Slytherin released Harry's hair carefully and shifted his clinging hands back onto the creases of the sheets, allowing Harry, for once, to completely have control over what he chose to do to him. The Blond's needy body jerked against the wet lips that suckled the tip and swallowed his member eagerly with warmth, saliva and passion. His grip over the linens tightened as Harry's lips moved along his thick hardness.

Little moans escaped him every now and again as Harry dragged the flat of his tongue up the back of his prick, right up to lick tenderly around the tip and driving him mad with the feeling that coursed through the tense organ. "More!" He pleaded. *More!*

With everything that had happened he didn't want to deny this feeling anymore. Harry was right, there was too much to lose in all of this, and he knew now more than ever, the last thing he wanted was to lose Harry. He felt foolish for coming along on this

crazy journey, escapade...betrayal – whatever you called he – *it* was foolish, but it felt right. And there was nothing inside him that felt stronger. He wasn't able to fight the bond anymore. It had completely consumed him and he didn't care.

“Suck it, Harry!” He groaned, smiling deviously and licking his lips. There was no greater feeling then this, and he arched himself up for more.

Draco jerked that time and Harry winced as he struggled to relax his throat, allowing the Blond to plunge into him deeper, hitting the back of his throat and making Harry come off of him spluttering. He heard Draco laughing with no real malice and wiped his mouth before diving down on him again. His own cock pulsed in sympathy, hot and needy in his hand as he squeezed it, whilst swallowing greedily at the one in his mouth. Draco went in easier if he swallowed, and he moaned again at the sensation, before sucking fiercely as Draco's hips lifted faster into his mouth.

That voice humming such dirty things only made his own dick twitch with desperation and he dragged his mouth off Draco with a gasp, a trail of spittle still connecting his lips to the burgeoning erection before him. “Fuck me,” he cried out, his hips practically humping his own hand as it fisted his cock. He raised his glassy eyes to Draco shamelessly; there wasn't anything left to hide anymore. “Do it however you want, but *please*, Fuck me...”

Draco gazed lustfully at the boy before him, begging on his knees with his hand wrapped in ecstasy around his cock. Draco enjoyed the sight for a moment, staring at the *boy who lived*, who was still living, and driving himself insane. Draco too.

He accepted, grasping Harry's shoulders and bringing him up from his knees, he swung the boy over and slammed him down into the sheets. Tumbling on top of him he rushed Harry's own shirt off, until their bare flesh collided. His teeth nibbled at the pink flesh of Harry's neck, worshipping it with a trail of saliva as he laid kisses up and down his collarbone, small licks dividing the nibbling torment of his teeth.

Harry gasped out at the welcomed roughness, wriggling on the sheets, unable to stop his hips from humping them. He needed friction or he'd go mad for it. But when his hand reached down to jerk himself again, Draco slapped it away. He raised his head and glared back over his shoulder at Draco, (whose triumphant grin had yet to falter) only to have a hand press his head down firmly. He swore he heard a demeaning, “*Head down, Potter,*” before those lips worried the ticklish skin at the small of his back.

Harry squirmed again, his legs inching apart unconsciously to expose himself to

whatever was coming – one could never tell when their lover was Draco Malfoy. Those lips descended and those teeth scraped his arse-cheeks teasingly. He didn't know whether he liked the teasing Draco or not. His brow furrowed with frustration after a few moments of this, of torment and pushed his arse back into Draco suggestively.

Draco sneered at Harry's sudden neediness and took this as an opportunity to make him be the one to beg instead. He dropped lazy, hot, steamy breaths down the boy's back, making him wriggle uncontrollably at the sensation as he reached underneath for Harry's nipples, wetting his fingertips just before.

He soon found those erect fleshy nubs and pinched them between his index fingers and thumb, flicking them and twisting them with his previously saliva dampened fingers. He watched as Harry's head flung backwards and forwards uncontrollably. He knew Harry could feel his hardened cock rubbing up at his backside.

“Tell me what you want me to *do*, Potter?” He gasped with a whispering hiss, forcing his prick harder against that backside as he reached over for his wand and swished it. He leant in to Harry's ear and dangled a long, brown object before his flustered face and added sexily, “Ever been tied up?”

Harry shook his head warily, shining eyes focused on Draco as he looked back over his shoulder at him once more. “No... No I haven't...” He murmured, quite unsure about it all, especially when Draco suggested it with such unrestrained excitement and lust crossing his features. He had been bound to the statue over Tom Riddle Senior's grave and the night had plagued him ever since, but he did not think that was the kind of play Draco meant when he suggested tying him up with such a mischievous glint in his suddenly dark eyes.

His body still shook, still tingled from the touches of not a few moments before and he felt the burning desire for more – at any cost. “What are you going to do?” He asked, his voice husky from pleasure but wary from that look Draco carried as he caressed the shape of Harry's jaw with the tip of his wand.

Draco took hold of both Harry's hands and cast his wand suddenly away from Harry's chin to the rope he had conjured, watching as the object flew midair and wrapped itself around both of Harry's wrists, behind his back. Harry's head was the only thing propping up his front as he yanked against the bonds wrapped tightly around his hands. That rope wasn't coming off until Draco's said so now. “*Hmm*,” he hissed lustfully.

The Blond licked his lips deviously and took hold of Harry's hips, playfully slamming himself forward against them to tease. His cock sprang up as he leant back and Harry's jolted somewhat below. His hands wandered to round those hips, still armed with his wand in one of them, he aimed it at Harry's cock and whispered a chant slowly.

Suddenly a thin, red cord exploded from his wand, curling around the tip of Harry's erection with a crushing pressure that caused Harry to jump. He fidgeted warily, when Draco's smug look returned. "I'll fuck you with all these restraint's, and before I'm done, you'll be begging for forgiveness, and you won't even know why."

Harry shook his head and a humiliating sound left his throat but he wasn't sure whether it was in negation or in utter agreement. He didn't have much choice either way. His body swayed in anticipation. He was bound and helpless and Draco was above him, studying his exposed flesh – relishing in that lack of control. And Harry would have never expected it to feel so good to surrender.

This had been the initial reason he had been drawn to Draco outside of the bond, he remembered dimly from the time where this had all began, seemingly so long ago. He liked not having to stand fast and persevere. He liked being able to submit and escape from all the chaos where he was expected to be strong through.

Then long, hot fingers caressed his bound length lightly, not enough, nowhere near enough and yet he cried out and spread his legs wider, his body begging even if his mouth had not managed to. "Fuck me," Harry groaned, *demanded*, earning himself only the release of his neglected cock and Draco's derisive chuckle from somewhere above. The asshole really was going to make him beg for every inch of this, wasn't he?

"Touch me!" Harry insisted in frustration, rubbing his bound cock into the sheets in some form of release and feeling it swell furiously. It was so sensitive he could barely stand it. And Draco still wasn't touching him! Suddenly, a mocking *tsk* came from above and a rough slap was delivered to his arse. Harry yelped but ceased his movements, wincing as the heat built in his body, the presence of Draco inciting bubbles of static under his skin – but all with no source of release.

"Draco!" He gasped out at last, "Touch me! Touch my cock – put your fingers in me, but *touch* me! Please!" He wondered briefly if it were always this intense, this dizzying having sex with someone, or if it was just the bond, but then Draco shifting slightly and his voice accompanied by that infuriating chuckle captured his attention once more.

“Beg me, beg me *more!*” Draco instructed, eyes widening at Harry's frustration, drawn hopelessly to that defined, needy body. Draco stared along the length of Harry's toned hips, right down to his twitching backside. He begged Draco again, pleading until the Blond's hands grasped Harry's bum in a sudden movement and tore the cheeks apart. He licked hastily down Harry's arched spine until he reached that tender, fleshy opening. He heard Harry almost scream out below him when his tongue met the skin, and pressed inward slightly to taste a slither of that hot wetness. The frustration of not being able to move much only made the dark-haired Boy that much more irritant and needy.

Draco drew back and surveyed Harry struggling, pleading below him. He forced him onto his back, arms now underneath him, so that he could study Harry's crimson painted cheeks. That lower-lip seemed to have a slight bruising where Harry had bitten down on it so hard and Draco ran his finger along it with a gentle stroke. He smiled as he placed Harry's legs above his shoulders, positioning himself for entry. “You want me to use lube, condom...or...?” Draco paused. Was he actually considering what Harry wanted?

Harry eyed him carefully, as if assessing his mood before he answered; such suspicion definitely looked out of place on his flush-cheeks and glazed eyes. “Lube,” He answered huskily, never tearing his eyes from Draco's. If he was getting a choice he wasn't going to look a gift-horse in the mouth. That dark grey gaze seemed to waver with some undecided emotion for a moment, before he cast the lubrication spell between them.

Harry wriggled, it felt constricting in the most delicious way with his arms bound behind him and his cock purpling from the pressure, the need to explode. The lube teased his hole, and when he clenched in anticipation a little dribbled out over his pink, puckered opening. He gasped, his legs shuddering against Draco's shoulders. Everything was far, far too hot and perfect and somewhere through the haze he swore he saw Draco smile.

His chest shuddered with anxious breath. “Fuck me,” he murmured, the words rolling off his tongue with a natural sensuousness as if he were *meant* to say them. His backside clenched at the thought of how he must look, bound and complacent beneath Draco Malfoy's ravenous body.

Draco gripped Harry's leg against his shoulders with one hand and used his other to line up his sweltering cock with that shuddering entrance. He bent in carefully, pushing it against the tight ring of flesh slowly until it popped through.

“Argh!” Harry gasped out. Feeling Draco's cock stretch the restricted passageway and slide into his heat. Draco gazed up to check Harry was okay before continuing. Harry nodded for him to go on and he did, with a thrust he forced himself forwards into that arse until he had hit deep inside of it. Mixed groans filled the air with the pleasurable pain that came with the first few movements of his penetration.

Draco gasped hazily as he moved in for a second time, thriving in the slick heat a bit more each time the hotness swallowed his cock. “I want you to say my name when I make you cum?” Draco asked softly, in a voice that sounded more like an instruction than a question. There was no room for refusal in any case.

Harry nodded breathlessly, pushing his lower body back to take his cock deeper and faster. His entrance stung a little at the pressure he added, but he wanted more of him and it was driving him to distraction. Everything was hot; Draco's invasion stretched him deliciously, so that his mouth parted with embarrassing noises only Draco got to hear. Using his legs as leverage he plunged down, taking the Blond's erection all the way.

Draco gave a broken groan and Harry cried out, wriggling in the desperation for some kind of friction on his cock that never came. The dull throb of pain in his arse was fading swiftly into mild discomfort, but the negatives didn't affect him as strongly now and paled like a candle held towards the intensity of the sun. His lips parted with a small laugh this time – never before all this would he have thought of Draco as his *sun*.

“My cock,” he whined, the submissive tone making Draco's cock tense in his backside, “Draco, touch it while you're fucking me?” But those lips quirked into that malicious smile he found himself also in love with and he wasn't entirely sure he would get what he wanted so easily.

Draco smiled viciously at that request with a giggle. “You want me to touch your cock, *hm*?” He murmured huskily, still moving in and out in heated stokes. He heard Harry mummer a “yes” through his lips as he chewed them in frustration, trying to hold his need under control. “Beg me?” Draco requested again, watching Harry's embarrassment deepen. His cock felt like it was *melting* inside that tightness while he continued to penetrate it, whispering again, “Beg me?!”

Harry smiled shakily through his mortification for a fleeting moment, liking this easiness with Draco that hadn't really been there before. But then Draco invaded his body again, brushing over the place that made him see stars and his head threw back,

pressing ardently into the sheets as his mouth parted in a silent groan.

“*Please*,” he managed out, “Squeeze my cock while you’re taking my arse.” A near-punishing, brutal lurch into his body arched him off the bed with the force of it and Harry cried out shamelessly, grinding his hips back into Draco’s thrusts.

“Please, *please*, Draco...”

Draco smiled with a mixture of amusement and lust as he watched the *Chosen One* beg beneath him, needy. His cock only hardened inside Harry's burning backside in response to the pleads tumbling over those bruised and bitten lips. The Blond fisted Harry's cock in his hands finally, shaking it with rhythmic motions in time with each moment into that body. Harry gasped as the hand took his cock and started to rub.

“You like that?” Draco asked. In receiving only a whimper in response, he stopped to tease. “I said, do you like that?”

Harry’s body shook with the sound of his voice, with the tide of electricity sweeping through his blood and setting alight to every sense he possessed. “I like it!” Harry gasped, eyes closed against the intensity of those eyes. “I like it when you’re inside me – when you touch me.” He was humiliating himself more every minute but he couldn’t stop. When Draco touched him, it felt like the worldly troubles shuddered free of his shoulders, like he was the centre of someone’s world for no other reason than that he was *himself*. Draco didn’t give a shit if he was the *Chosen One*, in fact it seemed to annoy him almost as much as it did Harry...

“More,” he whined low in his throat, his hands tensing inside their bonds in a struggle to break free and grab every inch of Draco he could reach. “Draco, I like it,” he repeated, the Blond’s name rolling off his flushed, lips. He wanted to ask Draco to kiss him but he wasn’t sure he would and he couldn’t force his lips down to his mouth with his hands bound. He wriggled again, tilting his head into the sheets, eyes still closed. “More.”

With that, Draco pounded forwards into him, his prick a dark, throbbing pink from the crescendo of rapture and the tension of the muscles tightening around it (seeming only to deepen in colour and intensity each time he hit inside). The feeling that was coursing through his organ conjured a hazy dribble of pre-emission from the slit, oozing inside Harry, and he swore Harry jerked with passion as the hot substance trickled out inside him – the bond forcing him to quiver with a sensation he would never feel so strongly otherwise. The walls of that backside clenched and twitched every now and again, clinging to that swollen hardness greedily, nearly tugging inside out each time Draco withdrew to thrust back in.

His hand stoked Harry's flushed, erect cock in small strokes, and the Boy groaned out all sorts of wonderful noises to those strokes. Draco couldn't help but smile at them with amusement. *God Harry is hot.*

“Who is it that's fucking you, Potter?” Draco demanded of Harry, pounding harder with breathless words, his blond strands slick with sweat. “Come on, Potter, say who it is that is fucking you!”

“D-Dra-co Mal-foy!” He struggled out, his body thrown back into the bed with each furious thrust into his backside, which clamped around the hardness taking him in delicious spasms. Draco was bent low over him, all-but folding him in half with their position, spreading him wider for each dominating push into him. He tilted his head back, the long column of his through taut as he cried out. He felt Draco's hot breath dust over his neck, his sweat-slicked hair tormenting Harry's perspiring skin. Every tiny touch was electrifying.

“Draco Malfoy!” He cried out again louder, more desperately, as if pushing through the fog of incoherent arousal would help him any. He felt younger and stronger than he had ever felt before, as his body trembled in a telltale manner under the abuse it was taking. The tendons in his legs felt like they would snap like elastic under too much pressure and there didn't seem to be any feeling at all in his toes.

“Draco Malfoy is fucking my tight little arse,” Harry breathed, “Stretch me, *fuck* me!” He couldn't believe the things that were coming out of his mouth.

Rushed strokes accentuated Draco's hips, forwards, faster and faster to each time Harry spilled out his name. His hands clutched at Harry's shoulders and pressed him even deeper against the duvet with a fierce grip. “That's it, I'm Draco, aren't I? Draco Malfoy.”

Draco seemed to like Harry saying his name a bit too much as he asked for more, unable to control himself at the pleasing words of Harry Potter begging him. He moved faster and became more breathless, but he couldn't stop, something inside his body was rushing, rising, *needing* something only this boy could give... Wasn't too much longer now.

“Say it again,” He groaned, behind clogged, lust-filled stutters. Something inside Draco was burning, his darkness illuminated by the feeling of their joint flesh. “Ahh!” Draco moaned, he was close, too close. He suddenly slowed, if only to prolong the feeling for mere seconds as he paid a little more attention to Harry's dick, stroking it

furiously.

“Draco,” Harry groaned, wishing more than anything he could wrench his arms free and wrap them around the Blond’s sweaty shoulders. His knees were bent back to his chest, his backside was spread and stretched wide by the cock pummelling his insides. He was pinned between Draco’s thrusting body and the bed. His cock twitched, hot and dripping in that tight grip and he felt his end knot in his stomach.

“Draco, cum inside me, *please*,” He was fully aware of the whimpering request, and of the way he felt his balls tense up to his body, about to explode. “Uhh, shoot your load in my arse while you’re tugging at my cock!”

Draco groaned dizzily in his ear at that and Harry gasped, something in his cock swelled to painful proportions and he remembered the tie around his dribbling prick.

“Uhh Draco, let me cum, please...!”

“Hmmm, *Potter!*” Draco groaned, his cock punching as far inside as it could. He stroked quicker at Harry's cock and fiddled with the rope around Harry's dick. "I'm *cumming*, Harry, I'm..."

His explosion erupted in Harry's arse as Draco came, hard and thick inside him. Hot steamy juices filled the inside of that convulsing crevice and Draco finally unknotted the rope around Harry's cock and tossed it aside. He stroked it faster with breathless pants as his own cocked remained throbbing and dripping deep inside.

“Come for me, Harry!” Draco pleaded, unable to keep himself propped up much longer. “And say...my...name...when you burst!” He panted in reminder.

Harry tensed. Everything inside his body stiffened until he was arched up, his backside still clenching greedily around the prick throbbing, pulsing hot loads of Draco’s cream into his arse. “Ahhh,” he gasped, Draco’s dirty words dusting over his damp skin. He tilted his head, smashing his lips to Draco’s mouth as it hung over him temptingly. Groaning wantonly into him, he allowed his mouth to be plundered, that hot tongue to trace his own until those fingers gave a sharp twist over his prick and his climax swept over him.

“Oh...Draco – cumming!” His body arched again like before, and he felt his battered, sloppy entrance clench around Draco as he throbbed in his hand, splattering his essence over his and Draco’s chest. He managed out another, wheezy, “Draco,” before he collapsed back into the sheets, crying out in negation when he felt the Blond pull

out and throw him over onto his knees. His body slumped into the sheets still and his legs trembled with the pressure of holding his hips up, but then he felt Draco probing at his gaping hole teasingly and shuddered.

“Draco? What are you doing?” He asked, inclining his head to look over his shoulder weakly. But all the sight of Draco’s flushed body (painted with sweat and his, Harry’s semen) did was send a shiver down his sweaty back. His entrance clenched, as if struggling to keep Draco’s juices inside him as that finger teased him. “What are you doing?” Harry breathed again, quite embarrassed at having Draco staring into his stretched hole.

“*Heh!*” The Slytherin gasped, pressing two fingers into the bruised opening to release the creamy cum from Harry’s hole. It sloped out slowly to the bed-sheets below and filled Draco with a sadistic giggle. Dabbing at Harry’s ass with his tongue, the Blond tasted the substance, his own boiling fluids and swept the opening clean. Still leaving tingles to the flesh he leant up and planted a kiss on Harry lips, feeding the dribbles of his own cum into that mouth with a grin.

“How does it feel, having my cum sliver from you’re arse and then fed back into you’re mouth?” Draco asked, climbing back over him and gazing into his eyes.

“Amazing,” Harry breathed, dirty and sated at the same moment, but as he leant up to lick more from Draco’s mouth, a gasp and the sound of two bodies stumbling through the semi-translucent curtain tore him away from Draco’s mouth, if only an inch. He could still feel those lips dangerously close, that breath dusting his furiously flushing cheeks as he stared with horror at Ron and Hermione framed in the doorway.

“What the hell are you two doing?” Ron growled, his skin as red as his hair while Hermione stared at them vacantly for a long moment, from the ropes still binding Harry’s arms to the stains splashed across Draco’s naked body.

“Oh my!” She gasped, turning her gaze away, though Harry swore he caught her peeking and it made him shift under Draco a little more to hide his cock, which had awakened a little at the taste of Draco in his mouth.

“We just...” Harry shook his head, his eyes focused on a stain on the sheets, but he heard Draco tut, evidently impatient with the lot of them. “Can you just untie me?” He whispered to Draco, but evidently Ron had heard.

“I can’t believe you let him bind and gag you like some slave – you do realise he’s probably actually done that for real with Voldemort’s prisoners?!” Ron sneered.

“He didn’t *gag* me,” Harry corrected in an indignant but very small voice, still waiting for Draco to untie him. “And the only thing he was going to do for Voldemort was kill

Dumbledore and bring him me – he’s done neither, as far as I’m concerned he’s as clean as I am!”

“You don’t look too clean to me,” Ron griped, wrinkling his nose. Harry tensed, turning to look at Draco as the Blond pulled a sheet over them, about to insist he untie him when he caught the furious look on his face. He swallowed nervously, not really fancying a fight between his best friend and his boyfriend whilst he was naked and tied up to boot. To top it all, Hermione continued to shift whilst determinedly ‘not-looking’ in her corner.

Draco angrily untied the rope around Harry's wrists, finally, before looking in the opposite direction to Ron and Hermione. He didn't particularly want them to see his face.

“Well? Are you going to answer me, now that you finally have some control back?” Ron spat again, sickened by what he had just walked in on.

“Harry, this is a little...” Hermione couldn't even bring herself to finish her horrified sentence. She never thought she would have to witness something like that, or that Draco would be *talking* like that to one of her best friends. In a way that she had never even imagined he *could* talk. So...vile...

She choked on her thoughts in repulsion and focused on Ron, who seemed redder than a beetroot, but not with embarrassment, with frustration.

“Harry you're seriously fucked in the head! It...this is so...!” He made that disgusted sound in his throat again. unable to manage words.

Draco sat awkwardly, listening to the conversation for a long while, anticipating what would be the best way to deal with this...*situation*. After all they couldn't afford to fall out with everything resting on all of their shoulders. The young Malfoy put on a smile and leant in to Harry, wrapping his bare arms (almost lovingly) around Harry's chest as his lips prised open. “Look, *Weasley*...” He began. “...It was just a mere fuck, that’s all, not worth getting on your high horse over,” He finished, standing up, confidently. Naked and exposed, he leant down and pulled over his pants and trousers, well aware that all eyes were probably on him.

A mere fuck, Harry thought sadly, turning to watch him redress.

“Harry?” Hermione’s voice reached him and he blinked furiously realising that his misery had reached his face, that the wetness had reached his eyes and he shook his head but they did not disappear. He was well aware of Draco and Ron staring at him now and pulled the sheets with him as a shield for what tattered remains of his dignity

he still possessed and walked passed Ron through the door, trying desperately to ignore the red abrasions that marked his arms from where he had been bound, bound by passion and by affection that Draco Malfoy seemed to find impossible to return.

“Harry?” Ron asked, but Harry just smiled.

“Yeah, err...going for a walk,” he murmured distantly.

“But you’re – you’re naked!” Hermione called out to him, before rounding on Malfoy.

“You know you could *pretend* to be human. He really...he really loves you, you idiot! You don’t have to love him back but you can treat him with a little decency if you’re going to force him into such...*debauched* things!” She stilled for a moment, shaking her head with disdain before adding, “Dinner is in ten minutes,” and then disappearing, leaving a silent Ron and Draco alone with each other.

Malfoy sat blankly as Harry made an exit – *naked*, and turned away from Hermione who seemed to be attempting to lecture him. He already knew Harry *loved* him; he didn't need to hear that from her. He clutched the sheets with irritated fingers. It wasn't like he thought of Harry as just some fuck like before, (even though that's what he had just said) it wasn't the way he felt. He...he *cared* about him now. Just saying those things aloud, amongst it all, it shouldn't counteract what had just... He blocked those thoughts out. He just couldn't... He didn't!

“Well done Malfoy, once again you've ruined everything!” Ron spat resentfully.

Draco raced forwards angrily, smashing his fist into Ron's face. The red-head flew backwards into the tent. “Shut up!” Draco yelled.

“Stop it!” Hermione screamed as she flew back into the tent, throwing herself in between the two (grateful that Malfoy had put his trousers on) and yanking Ron to his feet. “Enough! Ron this is between Draco and–”

“Don’t you fucking touch me, DEATH EATER!” Ron sneered, lunging for Draco, stopped only by Hermione’s grasp. “I’m not Harry, I’m not so besotted with you that I’ll lie there and let you smack me about!”

“Stop saying that!” Harry’s voice cut across Ron’s shouting, stilling both of his best friends and the seething Blond who was watching them all like a furious beast deciding on his best time to strike. Harry moved back across the tent, standing at Draco’s side and quite aware of his nakedness now that his coherency had returned. “He isn’t a Death Eater, not as far as I am concerned, and he hasn’t hit me for a while–”

“Mate, that doesn’t make it okay,” Ron began, but Harry cut across him again.

“No it doesn’t, but he’s here isn’t he? He could’ve taken me to Voldemort and he didn’t! He doesn’t have to prove a thing to you!”

Ron winced as if he had been struck.

“He called you a *fuck*, Harry,” the Red-head answered, quieter than before. “I’m looking out for you.”

Harry flinched at the reminder and its initial hurt, but could not help but repeat the facts that proved otherwise. “I know I’m more than that,” he said quietly and looked up to Draco to see if he would say anything, anything at all now that the anger of the situation had abated somewhat, to see if he would even move.

He blindly ignored Harry's words with frustration. Draco's fury only rose as he darted forward to hit Ron again, (and almost did) but was stopped by Harry and Hermione who had both intervened between them. He shook with adrenaline in Harry's arms. Ron too wriggled in Hermione's.

Draco spat at Ron, saliva spurting into his face as Harry gave him a shove backwards. Ron was fuming.

“Stop it – just stop it!” Hermione yelled. Pleading with them to stop fighting. “We have enough on our hands fighting Lord Voldemort without you two needlessly fighting each other, now stop!” Draco shrugged Harry off and walked into another corner of the tent, anger raging through his fingertips as his fists clenched.

“Dinner is in *five* minutes,” she stated firmly, dragging her boyfriend determinedly from the tent, but only after offering Harry an apologetic look and growling at the red-head menacingly under her breath. As he watched them leave, the curtain falling back into place around them, Harry emitted a low sigh, reaching slowly for his briefs and jeans. It wasn’t until he had his shoes and socks on and was left with but his chest bare that he raised his eyes to where Draco sat on the corner of the bed, eyes diverted to the floor.

“I’m sorry he was an arse, don’t think about Ron’s spitefulness too much,” Harry murmured, getting up and standing before him slowly, “You should have heard the things he spat at me before – he could’ve given you a run for your money.” He reached forwards, smoothing the pads of his fingers into damp blond hair and massaging it slowly, easing the tension from his skull as he slicked back his mussed up hair.

Draco sighed in frustration and flicked Harry's hand away. “Leave me alone!” He gasped half-heartedly, looking down at his bruised knuckles. He didn't realize just how hard he had punched Ron until now, when they began to ache.

“This is a nightmare,” he struggled out. The dim lights of the tent flickered with

sadness, as if magically filling the atmosphere with the feelings inside of both Harry and Draco. “Maybe I should have gone with Lord—” His words were cut short with a sharp slap across his face. He gazed round at Harry angrily, half-shocked at the sudden attack. “What was that for?!” He yelled angrily as Harry stood shakily before him.

“Don’t say that,” he growled out, “Hit me or something! Tell me I’m unsightly and fuck me in the most degrading way you can think of, but don’t say that – don’t ever say that.” He growled out loud in frustration, taking a few steps back from Draco to gather himself, his arms trembled. “Am I really...really so *vile* – am I so ugly and unbearable that you would rather see me dead while you lick Voldemort’s *boots* than be with me?!” There was a definite hurt burning alongside his anger and he didn’t care if Draco heard it, it wouldn’t change his answer in any case.

Grey eyes watched painfully as the dishevelled boy stumbled two steps back with tears stinging those eyes, *hurting*. He could feel Harry’s sadness flooding into him through the bond, overwhelming him with burdened thoughts. *He probably shouldn’t have said that*. He shifted in his place, his gaze remained fixed to the floor.

“I’m...Sorry...”

Harry stood stunned for a moment, the wetness seeming to cling to his eyelashes with the frozen moment. Draco had...said he was sorry? He stared at him in confusion, before dropping fluidly to the ground at the Blond’s feet. His hands slid along the path of Draco’s knees, massaging his thighs as he ducked his head to catch those stormy eyes. They didn’t shine with tears like his did, but they were brimming with guilt and Harry smiled a little up at him, before pressing his lips up against that mouth.

The kiss fluttered there for a moment, fragile in the tense moment and he drew back a little to consider Draco’s unchanged face and then pressed another, more ardent kiss to his lips. “I don’t ever want you to feel the need to change,” Harry breathed out, between kisses, swift and swimming with passion as he seized the Blond’s cheeks, licking that tongue with his own. “If it’s all or nothing, I’ll take you as you come and I don’t care what anyone else says.”

That was what love was, he had realised in the last few weeks. It was meant to be unconditional and if Draco never told him he loved him, if he never held his hand or held him after they had sex, if he never made love to him he’d take it as it came, rather than lose him entirely. His lips mouthed Draco’s determinedly at the thought and he moaned into his mouth as he circled the tip of his tongue. After this, he thought he might have to have his entire life washed clean before he could live a life without

Draco again...

Draco tensed at that kiss and pulled out of it. For the first time the blush dusted his cheeks, and not Harry's. He turned away from the shining emerald eyes that watched him reddening, so carefully. Dismissing Harry's words, he walked ahead of him (even if only to get Harry's attention away from his rosy face) and moved towards the tent exit before coming to a halt with his back to him. "Well, are you coming? To eat?"

~To Be Continued...

Chapter 15: Chapter Fifteen

(Bound By) Clandestine Addiction

[Chapter Fifteen]

Dinner was an awkward affair to say the least. They gathered in the makeshift ‘living room’ of Ron and Hermione’s tent. Hermione dished up the food while Ron glared daggers at Draco, who had quite casually seated himself next to Harry. Harry kept his eyes down. Perhaps it was a childhood with the Dursleys and the memory of enduring countless dinners at a table with a family who had cursed his every breath (for the most part), but he found it quite easy to focus on the meal rather than the tension between them all.

“I hope it’s alright,” Hermione breathed exhaustedly as she finally took her seat at the table. “Fairly average with the cooking but it’s better than starving.”

“We should have brought Dobby along,” Harry mused as he skewered a baby carrot on his fork, “He would have been more than happy to help.” He could not help but smirk at Hermione’s frown (the suggestion of using house elves even in jest evidently not amusing her).

“House elves are—”

“Alright, alright, Hermione,” Ron griped, shoveling potato into his mouth and earning a grimace from Draco who was cutting his own carefully. “He was only joking,” Ron mumbled, his mood lifting a little with the relaxed teasing. Harry looked to Draco who seemed to be unstirred by their banter and so Harry nudged him under the table to get his attention, before pressing the carrot between his lips suggestively. Draco’s eyes widened and Harry smirked, swallowing the vegetable but not before the others caught sight of what he was doing.

Hermione spluttered on her glass of water at the suggestiveness of the vegetable, whilst Ron stabbed his potatoes, making sure to hold the fork in them angrily before finally biting down into them. All eyes were on Harry as he swallowed the carrot. Draco turned away, a slight smile of amusement dusting his cheeks, to the once again risen tension at the table.

“On the subject of Dobby,” Draco paused for a few exaggerated moments. “He wasn’t exactly the best house elf if I remember rightly anyway... Never did as I told him.” Draco let out a huff when he finished that sentence, perhaps at Harry for suggesting such a stupid idea, even in jest, though Dobby was rumoured to be different in the hands of Harry than he was in the hands of a Malfoy.

“I am sure if you and your family had treated him more fairly,” Hermione began reasonably, but was cut off by a groan of despair from Ron.

“Oh *Merlin*, don’t get her started,” the red-head griped, “Harry, control your *wife* would you, let him know the *do*’s and *don*’ts.”

Beside Harry, Draco stiffened and the dark-haired Boy bristled a little as Draco’s anger came off in waves.

“Ron!” Hermione hissed, nudging him sharply.

“If anything,” Harry began, eyes still on his food awkwardly, “I suppose I’m the girl...”

Draco chewed quickly on his vegetables at that statement. Not really sure what to make of it, he continued to eat. Finally he swallowed and looked around at all the eye's that were staring at him. “Don't you know it's rude to talk at the dinner table, at home we sit in silence,” He hissed, setting on an attempt at finishing his dinner without another word.

“I'm sure that’s pleasant for you,” Ron added spitefully and found himself getting nudged again. “What?!” He grumbled mouth full of food.

Draco just watched the red-head in utter disgust, *what a pig*. “I think I've had enough, thanks,” Draco finally said, standing up and removing himself from the table.

“But you haven't eaten hardly anything?!” Hermione queried, watching the somewhat skinny Blond carry his plate over to the side counter. She had never noticed before, *just* how skinny he was.

“Draco?” Harry called to him as the Blond stood, not daring to reach for his arm and pull him back but implying the action with his voice. “We have to talk about how we’re going to get this next Horcrux – I need you for that, so you may as well shovel down a few more mouthfuls.” Harry flinched inwardly, never hearing his voice so soft, not since before the days of Sirius’s death.

When Draco remained still, simply staring down at him, Harry inhaled deeply, inclining his head so that Ron and Hermione had less chance of hearing his following, whispered words. “If you don’t come and eat I won’t be able to.” But when that didn’t move him, he turned fully to face him, so that Draco’s eyes drew inexplicably to the dark bruises of passion that painted Harry’s throat. “You like me owing you favours don’t you?” He asked, leaving no room for doubt to what kind of favours he was referring to.

When did I become such a seductress? He wondered with a nervous, inner laugh. He knew he should be worried that he had to buy Draco's cooperation with his body, but the Blond's stubbornness was something he could relate to (being rather pig-headed himself) and sex that he *also* enjoyed wasn't much of a sacrifice. He was even beginning to enjoy the humiliation...

Draco remained, standing with a new look of smugness; they all knew what *favours* Harry meant, so by smiling, the irritation in Ron and Hermione would only intensify until they imploded. And Draco loved knowing that, loved *provoking* that. "Yeah, I do like your *favours*," He replied huskily, watching both of Harry's friends blanch and choke on disgust. He just laughed, leaning back against the counter and stretching his arms backwards languidly.

"Well? Talk then," He prompted.

Hermione struggled a moment to compose herself, appalled that Draco's odd sense of humour was becoming less and less startling with every moment. "Obviously the Polyjuice I added to the list of potions you acquired will be used to fetch the cup from the Lestrage vault," she began, eyes lingering over Malfoy for a moment longer than the others. "You can go in as yourself I suppose, since You Know Who isn't aware of our hunting for his Horcruxes – isn't aware that we know of them, so I shouldn't imagine he'd spare a thought for the vault just yet – especially since it's in *Gringotts*, the safest place aside from Hogwarts."

She sorted through the contents of the potion bag Draco had brought her, a look of close-knit concentration furrowing her brows. "Of course, as the blood-heir, Draco you will be the natural to go in, but you can't go alone and invisibility cloaks are probably not going to help us much with their security. So your *accomplice*," her eyes darted to Harry, "Will have to Polyjuice into a likely companion for you."

Harry watched as Draco raised a brow.

"Draco," Hermione continued, "How opposed are you to Harry playing your father for an hour?"

"Are you serious?!" Draco gasped in disbelief, not quite sure what to make of that idea. Though he knew that it was probably the only idea they had, and certainly the only one that would be *remotely* possible to pull off given Gringott's security. His head fell shamefully into his left hand and he held his forehead for a moment, before answering.

“I don't suppose I have much choice, do I?” He groaned, staring irritably at the muggleborn before him, who seemed to be *smiling* at his question.

Hermione smirked broadly. “Harry will pose as Lucius Malfoy and the two of you will be lead by one of the goblins to the vault as if you own it. You close the door to the vault while you search, put the cup in the pouch – *without* touching it with your bare hands and get out of there as fast and as quietly as you can. The cup may react to it's removal and Ron and I will be as nearby as possible to help out if we can. We will use the invisibility cloak and stay in the lobby of Gringotts. If all else goes awry, meet outside the front doors and I'll apparate us out.”

Harry nodded, the pressure of it all boiling in his gut. They weren't in Hogwarts anymore. He, Ron and Hermione had discovered the other horcruxes during their summer and Christmas holidays, but this was different. That time seemed like a dream, a fanciful imagining of them *playing* war heroes. They weren't school children. This wasn't a game. He was a man and there would be no second attempts.

He swallowed hard, realising that the audible sound drew Draco's eyes to him and he could not bear to raise his gaze to meet them. He hated being afraid almost as much as he hated being the damned *Chosen One*...

“When?” He asked quietly, unemotionally.

“Tomorrow,” Hermione answered carefully, “The longer we wait the more innocents go missing...” Her voice continued, but Harry couldn't make sense of them. He felt oddly suffocated, trapped and more so than he had ever felt in his cupboard under the stairs or tied up whilst Draco took him. His eyes closed on the too warm, too comforting room. He was suffocating! He was drowning! Why wasn't anyone noticing that he was drowning!

Draco felt a sudden rush of fear flood though him, Harry was *afraid*. Shock and confusion rippled through the Blond's soul, Harry had always been so brave in his eyes (not that he took the time to notice at the beginning, considering his jealousy found him always turning a blind eye on purpose most of his time during their first few years). But to feel Harry's fear coursing through his body like acid in his blood, it startled him to the point where he couldn't concentrate on what Hermione was saying.

The Slytherin trudged over to Harry and grabbed his forearm suddenly, dragging him with an insistant tug over and out of the tent. Hermione and Ron watched in silent confusion as Draco informed them he wanted a word alone with Harry and disappeared.

The flap to their own tent fluttered shut as the two boys stumbled inside. Harry stood staring carefully before him in bewilderment for a moment, quiet and anxious as Draco crumbled. The Blond leapt forwards, jerking Harry close into his chest, his tense arms and held him. It was as though the final pieces of a puzzle he had nearly forgotten, had been found the moment their bodies collided into such closeness.

“Don't be afraid...” He whispered calmly, his hand caressing the nape of Harry's neck. The dark-haired Boy stood in shock beneath that embrace as they held around him like a shield, like a force of protection that washed away all his doubt.

Even if Draco was resolute in admitting his feelings for Harry (which were, now beyond his control) he knew the goals they had to reach, and he knew they couldn't fall behind – for anything! If what Harry needed was to be shown some kindness then that's what he would give. If *only* giving kindness, if only forsaking his pride (he told himself) for the destruction of Lord Voldemort.

Harry tucked his head under Draco's chin to hide his face and gave a dry sob the Blond had more chance of *feeling* that hearing. But then those arms tightened around him sympathetically and he could only see how pitiful he must look in those eyes – he didn't want to cry about this. He could cry about anything but not about what he was *destined* to do. This was his lot in life. He *had* to kill Voldemort; he had no right to be afraid.

“Get off me,” Harry mumbled miserably into that warm chest, wishing that it had been in any other circumstances the embrace was offered. Draco didn't budge. Harry felt his temper at his helplessness – at his *fate* flare. “Get off me!!!” He screamed as he threw Draco from him, sending his own body flying back, legs slamming into the table from the force. Ragged breaths shuddered from his lips, and he stared at the stunned Blond with emerald fury burning in his eyes.

“Y-You don't... You don't get to pity me!” He spat, shaking from a torrent of emotions he couldn't separate into one nameable force. “You *hate* me! You laugh in my face when I tell you I love you! You *spit* in my face when we have sex and you mock me when I try to make love to you!” The bitterness, the fear, the anger, (to name but a few) they crackled in the air around him, a brilliant, raw magic snapping like a taunted snake at Draco's still gradual approach.

“You came with me so you didn't have to live with the *guilt*, so that I can die tomorrow and you won't feel a thing! Admit it!” His voice grated at his throat with his screams but the crack in the damn had inevitably burst and there was no patching it

back up, no repairs to be made until it was empty.

“Admit it! You want to watch me burn – the *Chosen One*, right! Well I don’t want to *be* the Chosen One! I want to be *anyone else*! I want to be at Hogwarts studying for my stupid NEWTs! I want the worst concern I have to be my grades or if the girl sitting next to me in Potions *likes* me! I want my parents and Sirius – I want Dumbledore to be alive again and I want this weight off *my shoulders!!!*”

His body was trembling, his knees were buckling, but he could not fall. As ever, he could not waver under the weight of the world.

“I want to stand back in the final battle and cower in fear whilst *praying* for the hero to save the day! I don’t want to be the *hero*! I don’t want to face Voldemort and I don’t want to die!” He shook his head, infuriated even further at the wetness stinging his eyes. He rubbed them under his glasses, aware that Draco was still too close, still watching his cracks shatter under the pressure.

I want it to be alright to be afraid, he mentally gasped, unable to admit it aloud, *I want it to be ok to melt and crumble all at once in a crisis*. “I want to scream!” The last of his thoughts came out so abruptly, so loudly that it made Draco jump and Harry snarled with bitter satisfaction.

“Tell me how pathetic I am!” He growled furiously, “Tell me you’re leaving me! Tell me you can’t STAND me!!!” His final scream broke something in his throat as he lunged swatting the nearest chair aside and watching it smash into the fireplace. It did not break and that only angered him more as if the chair were the source of his rage and he made a dash for it. Seizing the splintering wood with his bare hands he tore at it, smashing it into pieces against the heath and the ground – *anything*, mindless of the blood the vicious pieces gouged from his palms.

And he never stopped screaming.

Draco darted immediately for Harry, and shook him, the wood fell from the *Chosen One*’s hands to the floor, as if startled by the hands at his arms. “You’re not... That’s not...” The Blond paused in his struggle, eyelids tightening with frustration. His head fell on his shoulders, stumped for words – the *right* words! Quickly he froze, fingers tightening around Harry’s shoulders as he allowed a moment’s pause, before intentionally tumbling into the boy before him. Lips clashed - *melded* with Harry’s, and suddenly everything around them seemed to melt away as they met. But it was momentary, as he drew away in an instant, furious.

“If yelling helps, then *fine*, scream as loud as you want,” He started in a deep, suffocated growl. Harry's hurt rushed through him like a million daggers to the chest, the pain was numbing, paining him more than his self-inflicted wounds in the bathroom that night. “If that’s what you want to do, so *be it!* But don't *ever* tell me my reasons for coming along! How much of an *idiot* are you?!” Draco screamed, frustrated and continuously shaking Harry's shoulders with rage, his eyes still fixed to the magically carpeted floor – he could not meet that gaze. Silencing for a moment, his hands slid down to that chest and shoved that body hard so that it tumbled backwards. Harry gasped, colliding with a tall, corner-table that caught his fall, thankfully. He struggled to right himself against it, glaring at Malfoy.

Draco remained in place enraged and shaking with adrenaline, he was so *frustrated*, and he felt *helpless* at the same time – to do anything, to say anything. To just console Harry?! He didn't even know *how* to console someone; he had never had to before! And saying he cared for Harry in any way was a personal struggle for him.

“You should know by now *exactly* why I came along, but you...you just...” Draco growled furiously, fuming with aggravation. Could Harry seriously be that blind to his feelings? Surely Harry must now be aware of something, even if only from the feelings transferred to him via the bond. He didn't want Harry to die, and that suggestion, that *thought*...it made him feel sick! Didn't he know this?!

Harry...

Draco had never seen him so reckless, so broken. All this time, Harry had been feeling like this, had been feeling this...*hurt*. But it had never really sunk in. In Draco's mind he knew, he had always known the tragedies his rival had encountered, but he never really...took it in. His fury subsided as the realisation surged like an unconquerable wave in his chest.

“I...I care about you,” the Blond said quietly, finally, close to tears as he walked closer and pulled Harry back into his protection.

Harry’s eyes didn’t close; they felt prised open with shock. Tears spilled over his lashes, the liquid and air combined biting his eyes spitefully, but he could not blink or the moment would disappear as if it had never been. “You don’t care about me,” he murmured into the Blond’s chest, voice hoarse from screaming. He was stiff, not daring to return the embrace, but he didn’t pull away either.

“Y-You don’t...you *can*’t...” Perhaps it was good that he was so close, for he swore that Draco would never have made out his trembling whisper if his lips were not

inches beneath his chin. He was vaguely aware of shaking his head in disbelief, of thinking he should pull away and of the burning self-loathing that clawed at his chest. But he was also aware of the suddenly soothing (as opposed to arousing) hum that smoothed over his now chilled flesh and his hands reached up, knotting in the fabric of Draco's shirt, nails digging into his shoulder blades.

"I'm supposed to be better than this," He settled on at last, mostly to himself, but a comforting noise of comprehension from those lips against his hair let him know that the Blond had heard. "I'm supposed to be stronger. If I'm not more people I love will die..."

There he had said it, the haunting truth he had never admitted to anyone else alive. Sirius had died from his reckless emotions and Dumbledore had fallen before his very pathetic, helpless eyes – he couldn't afford anymore slip-ups.

"You don't seriously believe that all of this is your fault?" Draco asked in disgust. Loosening his hold on Harry's waist slightly, he caught a glimpse of that teary face, before their gazes locked. "All you can do is try. No one else will expect anything more than that from you," Draco assured him. *Had he actually just managed out that sentence?*

Harry seemed unmoved beneath him, that, or stunned for words. The latter certainly applied to Draco, who began to feel particularly awkward at how easily the comforting words were now tumbling from his lips.

"Just don't think on it so much," He said, his voice fading a little mid-sentence. "Look... Go to sleep, I'm going to sleep on the floor tonight and you can have the entire bed, you need the sleep."

At that, Harry's nose crinkled and his vacant expression turned to one of disappointment. He flushed when Draco raised a brow at him, realising that the Blond must have seen this rapid change. "It's a big bed," Harry said, edging around what he truly wanted. "And we're...nearly adults – we can sleep on it at the same time can't we?"

'Won't you hold me' was far too maudlin and romantic – *and pathetic*, his mind supplied. Draco would laugh in his face if he asked that way. But when Draco didn't oblige or deny him, Harry frowned, stumbling towards the bed and pulling his shirt off exhaustedly. Why had this one day felt like a month already?

"It's not as if I can rape the Pure-blood Prince, is it?" His tone was teasing and he

wondered if Draco would catch it or become defensive.

As it was, the Blond shot a glare over at him for that remark, before walking closer and allowing the curtain separating the bedroom from the living room, to fall from his grasp. Those lips tipped up into a smug smile. “No, you probably couldn't take me. After all, you didn't really impress me the first time,” he laughed, and Harry's playful expression faded to a irritant one. He hadn't been expecting Draco to just agree so callously.

“In any case, hadn't you better tell your friends we will not be re-joining them?” He reminded Harry, stripping off his trousers. He had in fact offered Harry the entire bed as an act of *kindness*, or perhaps to appease the strange sense of guilt that had ignited in his chest since he had seen Harry crumble. But these were feelings that Draco barely understood.

Carefully unbuttoning his shirt, he was fully aware Harry was watching him, and exposed his pureblood skin to the open air regardless. It glowed hazily, like crystals through a thin veil of opalescent flesh, and his scar glimmered softly above it all against the artificial light provided in the tent. He lifted up the duvet with a single tug and looked over at Harry before climbing under it. Harry stared at him, quite pleased that they would be both *knowingly* sharing a bed, but Draco just sneered.

“Don't think this means were some sort of *couple* now...because it *doesn't*!” He reassured him, unable (still) to admit any of the things his body was telling him that he wanted. He wanted to sleep next to Harry as much as Harry wanted it, but still, he had dismissed the tingling thrills that had caressed his skin in the moment he'd finally stripped to his boxers and climbed in.

He laid back into the pillow, using his arms as a headrest as Harry remained fixated on him. “Maybe you should sleep on the floor!” Draco spat, turning away from his gaze and rolling to his side, determinedly facing away from Harry.

Harry bit back the response on the tip of his tongue. He had learnt not to rise to Draco's bait and merely cast a final, fond glance at his back before heading out the tent to bid goodnight to Ron and Hermione. That only took him a few moments, however and he soon found himself back outside again, still unsettled and not quite ready to go back to Draco yet.

Taking up a seat on the dewy grass outside his tent, within the boundaries of Hermione's ingenious wards, Harry stared up at the dull, lilac sky that was only just falling away to darkness. Tomorrow he had to travel into the heart of London under

the guise of a known Death Eater. He cringed at that, at the thought that the Wizarding World was so far under Voldemort's reign now that someone like Lucius Malfoy could walk free into Gringotts and not be arrested! It was certainly better that they act fast, before Voldemort overthrew Scrimgeour and the ministry completely.

The very thought elicited a shudder along his bare chest that had nothing to do with the cold. If the ministry fell, then the aurors and the protections of Hogwarts would also and the students – the people he had grown up with would be in danger. His fingers clenched into fists so tightly that his knuckles went white. Determination replaced fear and helplessness.

He had been lucky in most of his '*triumphs*' but Hermione was the brightest witch he knew, Draco didn't lack for power and Ron had saved his neck countless times as it was. If all he had to do was get lucky to save the wizarding world then who was he not to try? *I've got this far*, he thought, *and for Draco of all people to follow me, it must mean that I stand a good chance of winning...*

But then suddenly, suspicious noises came from the other tent. Harry frowned a moment, before the expression faded into a light flush and he gathered himself to his feet, hurrying away from the sounds of passion. *Serves me right for letting them walk in on us while Draco was licking cum out of my arse*, he thought. Rushing quietly inside his own tent, he set thoughts of Voldemort to the back of his mind (Snape would be proud at how practiced at it he was becoming) and concentrating on a way to sneak his arms around Draco without him noticing while he slept.

* * *

A foul, lingering scent of fear lingered on the air. Snake-like eyes narrowed to slits as they surveyed those circled before him and the two, quivering figures bent at his feet like the worms that they were. His tongue flickered between his teeth, as if tasting the terror and basking in it. He raised his wand. "Time runs short for your precious son, Lucius," Voldemort hissed, watching the man's body tense at the floor and his wife beside him gave a desperate whimper. "He was to bring *Him* to me, now pray tell, *Lucius*, where are they?"

Lucius stood beside his wife, Narcissa, clutching her hand tightly in fear. The both of them were extremely worried, Draco hadn't shown, and neither of them had an idea why. Lucius perhaps had held his suspicions secret, had thought that Draco had decided he wasn't going to bring Harry, but he wouldn't dare voice those doubts aloud. He knew his son, and he knew despite all the talk, not even he could take someone, especially *Potter* to death's doorstep.

“My Lord, if I may–” Lucius began with a low bow, graciously bending in half to the floor. Voldemort floated over quite suddenly as the elder Malfoy began, cutting the blond-haired man's words off swiftly.

“No, you may not. Now...do tell me, where is your precious boy?” The Dark Lord sneered, holding his wand directly under Lucius Malfoy’s chin and pressing upwards until it dented his skin. Narcissa clutched at her husband once more, tense shackles of fear shuddered down her spine through to the ends of her fingertips. Lord Voldemort’s presence was chilling to the core, the fear he incited almost sickening.

“Your bloodline is proving a failure to me, my Lucius,” he sneered, his face inches from Lucius Malfoy’s pale perfection. “Perhaps I would do well to end it with you two and your precious son if you continue with this weakness for Harry Potter?” There was the tiniest movement to the side and Voldemort glanced to where Severus Snape stood, cloaked, dark eyes surveying the two Malfoys in the centre of the circle. Lucius remained still, a perfect picture of calm composure and Voldemort’s lips twisted with a sneer as he pressed his wand-tip spitefully into the Blond’s throat.

“*Crucio!*” The Dark Lord hissed and the elder Malfoy dropped to his knees with spasms of agony. Lucius’s teeth ground together, not daring to cry out and invite more pain. And then suddenly, the curse ended, leaving only the dull, throbbing memory of it in his bones and he straightened up, watching his Master’s wand waver over his wife. He stiffened with fear that went *beyond* his own life...

“Perhaps you and Young Draco need a reminder of just *whom* you serve,” Voldemort sneered, guiding Narcissa to her trembling feet with his wand beneath her chin. “Whom do you serve?”

Narcissa blinked once, twice, not daring to glance to her husband for reassurance that he would save her – she was not sure that he would...

“You, my Lord,” she breathed shakily, avoiding that serpentine glare. “Only you – *always* you...”

“Yessssss,” he answered with a long hiss, his sour breath steaming over her face.

“*Me* – not your petty whims and desires, not your blackened hearts and rotting souls – *Me!* Lord Voldemort!” With that he threw her to the ground (Lucius not moving from his spot beside him) and brought his wand back in a telltale arch. “*Avada–*”

Light flashed across his eyes and a vision as clear as if they were happening right before the Dark Lord’s presence. He realised swiftly, that it was happening right now,

but not before him – somewhere far away, nameless, somewhere he could not reach nor see. But he could see Harry Potter. He could see him raging, lashing out at his obscure surroundings. He could feel his fury, his fear, his *love*...

Voldemort sneered at the burning, passion of the fire in that emotion. This was why he had cut himself off from the Boy's feeble mind – his emotions were tiresome, *sickening* and besides which the nosy child may see something he wasn't supposed to. But this outburst, it was strong, stronger than he had ever felt and the magic was something he had not felt since – his face twisted with disgust – since Lily Potter's sacrifice at Godric's Hollow.

The love he felt there flared to an impossible high, suffocated the flames of fury as warm arms enveloped Harry Potter's body. Draco Malfoy's face swam across his vision – no *Harry's* vision and filled the Boy's view of the world with a calming light.

"Don't be afraid..." The sound of Draco Malfoy's voice was like a chiming bell in the vision of Potter's. *"I...I care about you."*

And then, with a *whoosh* of magic he was hurtled back into his own body again and swayed slightly, staring around at his followers vacantly, before realising what had happened. He glared down at the cowering Narcissa Malfoy, at her pathetic husband and the Dark Lord lowered his wand, throwing his head back with a maniacal laugh that's shrillness made even his Death Eaters shudder.

"It seems your son has betrayed us all – even *you, Lucius*," Voldemort chuckled darkly, stepping back from his once intended victim. "It appears he has abandoned his parents for the arms of Harry Potter."

Narcissa felt her heart almost burst to a stuttering stop inside her chest at the Dark Lord's words. So that was what Draco had chosen. Inside she was smiling, for she was happy that Draco was finally following his heart. Even if she did not agree that it would be the best way to go about it, she was glad and he was safe...

Lucius quivered feebly beneath that snake-eyed stare. "I see," He managed out, in a small pant, not really sure how to react to that information, least of all when it slithered through the Dark Lord's lips. Lord Voldemort leant down to Malfoy's level, eyeing him critically with distaste.

"So now, I want you to bring that traitorous boy of yours to me, and if you cannot do this... I will *kill you*..."

* * *

Far away from the darkness of Voldemort's inner circle, across the trees and the veil of night that had not yet been lifted by dawn, a boy bolted upright on the bed, screams still tearing from his mouth. Harry dully noted the jerk of Draco's body as he wrenched his arms away from the embrace he had encircled him with in slumber, he felt the Blond stir beside him slowly but the darkness of Voldemort's gathering had not receded from his vision and he had not stopped screaming.

Sweat drenched his skin, the droplets chasing each other across his paled flesh as he panted for breath. He brought his hand to his eyes, struggling to gather himself before seeing the light of the side lamp filtering through his fingers – Draco having turned it on. He heard a dull, sleepy murmur from beside him but couldn't answer right away and he shook his head, reaching blindly for his spectacles off of the side-table.

He had had nightmares plague him for so long he was almost accustomed to them, but he hadn't *felt* that darkness since...since Sirius was...

I wasn't in his mind tonight, he realised with horror as he finally opened his eyes, allowing them to adjust to the soft light from the lamp and felt Draco sit up a little straighter in bed beside him. *He was in my head!*

"What happened?!" Draco asked abruptly as he shifted upwards against the headboard, so he was sitting upright. Harry was covered in a blanket of sweat, and Draco panicked at Harry's stillness, the boy wasn't looking at him at all.

"Harry, answer me! What did you see?" Draco asked once more, this time becoming more alarmed at Harry's stubborn silence. He watched as the dark-haired Boy remained clutching the bed sheets with a tight fist. Emerald eyes fixated on one speck on the covers, and they did not falter. No movement. And by this time, Draco was begging to feel extremely tense with the unknown.

"Harry?" He yelled, this time; with more force, fear and passion in his plead. Something felt very wrong here.

"I used to have dreams about Voldemort," Harry murmured, feeling almost separate from his body as he relived the horror Narcissa Malfoy had felt as Voldemort held the Killing Curse over her – he felt her tremble, felt her thoughts flee to her only son, (the boy he was in love with) as she waited for death. He felt quite sick. He might *be* sick...

“I used to see what he was planning, felt his anger rush through me... Then after...after Sirius died it was like he cut off the connection. I could still...*feel* but I never saw. But just then I – he saw me – *us!*” He stopped then for a moment, finding his throat constricting around the next words that wished to pass. He shook his head; Draco drew closer but did not reach out to touch him at all – as if he was unsure that would do any good.

“Your father and mother were...” Harry’s tongue swept out to wet his suddenly dry lips, feeling bile rise up to foul his mouth with its rancid taste. His scar was throbbing as if it was about to break open and the agony was dizzying. He swayed where he sat and reached out swiftly to steady himself, his hand grasping Draco’s on the sheets unthinkingly. Draco stiffened but did not pull away.

“He was going to kill your mother in front of your father,” Harry breathed, wincing with his next words. “I felt her. Her fear – her thoughts of you when she...she thought she would never see you again.”

Draco’s fingers suddenly went limp under his own and Harry’s eyes flew to him at last. An unhealthy, *dead-white* had overcome that complexion and Harry hastened to elaborate before Draco did something drastic in the thought that his mother had been killed. “Then Voldemort saw us,” he amended quickly, “He saw you with me and he believes that you betrayed your parents too – so they’re safe! Voldemort, he said that – that they had to find you and bring you in. But they’re safe now, Draco!”

He turned fully to face the Blond, watching his lips move soundlessly in confusion for a few moments and Harry tried to force a smile through his wooziness. “We’re taking the horcrux tomorrow,” he attempted in the strongest voice he could muster. “Then after that it’s Nagini and Voldemort – your parents have a while before they are in any danger again and...and I...” He set his jaw against his fear, swatting it aside the way Draco needed him to now. He couldn’t be the whimpering submissive he liked to surrender to, not when other people could be harmed if he dallied – other people Draco loved....

“I’m a piss-poor Hero,” Harry finalised, “But I was born to kill Voldemort – it was predicted before my mother even *had* me. “*The one with the power to vanquish the Dark Lord will be born as the seventh month dies*” – and if I never live to see seventeen I’ll see it done! I won’t let your parents get killed, or you.”

Everything suddenly seemed to blur at Harry’s words, and a sudden pain sliced through Draco’s forehead, putting a strain on his tired eyes. He went hazy, faint almost, at the sickening thought and reality of what he had *done!* Choosing to come

along with Harry without thinking on the safety of his parents – why the *hell* had he done that?

He couldn't understand what had possessed him to be so...so reckless, act so foolish and the pale skin he wore so well, only blanched at the irrefutable realisation that if his parents died...it was his fault. *He* was responsible.

Finally managing words through his stuttering self-loathing, he groaned at his thoughtlessness. “The sooner we destroy the horcruxes, the better!” He turned his head the other way at those simple but meaningful words. Harry had fed him too much information at one time, he just couldn't take it in. No, more like he didn't want to let it in. They were his parents....

“I don't want to know, Harry, whatever you see, please don't...don't tell me...” He struggled out, but he was not finished there.

“If the worst happens to my parents, tell me then, otherwise... I just don't want to know.” The pain was too much to bear and Draco would rather be in the dark, than up all night torturing himself with worry, considering there was *nothing*, he could do to get to them – to help them. There was no point in knowing when he was so helpless. And unless it was death, something he would *have* to face, he was happy being in that blissful darkness. Harry gave him a rather sad smile at that request and Draco hoped he would agree.

~To Be Continued...

Chapter 16: Chapter Sixteen

(Bound By) Clandestine Addiction

[Chapter Sixteen]

To say he was nervous was the least of it. The quiet shuffling of Hermione and Ron's careful footsteps died away and Harry knew that they were now stopped by their post, but did not look back – he did not need to, they were under his invisibility cloak after all. Beside him, Draco straightened a little, his complacent mask rendered away by the most contemptuous, arrogant sneer Harry had ever seen him wear. His skin prickled with irritation, but he supposed Draco was going to have to play his part well in order for this to work – there were too many ways this could go wrong.

Harry – or rather Lucius Malfoy wrung his hands along the magical replica of the Elder Malfoy's cane, his head snapping to Draco when the boy gave him a frustrated tut.

“My Father does not trail behind *anyone*,” the Blond sneered up at him without looking, not wanting to draw any further attention probably. Harry nodded, swallowing hard. It was still so weird looking *down* at Draco, weird feeling hair over his shoulders and he kept fidgeting with it. He was sure he was irritating Draco to no end by dilapidating his beloved Father's proud image. *It's hardly my fault though*, Harry winced as he nearly tripped over his expensive shoes. *Like I know how his poncy, stuck-up pureblood-fanatic Father walks...*

“My Father commands respect with his very presence. He is proud and he is strong and he behaves thus.”

Not when he is licking Voldemort's boots, Harry thought bitterly, but knew better than to say such a thing aloud. He merely nodded again, straightening his suddenly far too tall posture the way Draco did, so that his shoulders and back were perfectly straight. He felt stupid, still imagining his own scrawny body in the rich attire, strutting through Gringotts. Deciding at last on holding the cane in the way Lucius Malfoy had in their encounter when he had released Dobby the house elf, Harry swallowed again, as if downing his anxiety with his spittle.

“Much better,” Draco commented as they approached the head Goblin's desk. Harry didn't tell him that this was only achievable by imagining a barge pole up his arse. He smirked and they had reached the desk. The goblin looked down his nose at them, unimpressed even by the Malfoy wealth it seemed, and Harry cleared his throat as

commandingly as Draco and Hermione had *insisted* he had to be. It was bad enough he did not have Lucius Malfoy's wand to prove their authenticity – if they suspected anything else was a miss they would be done for...

"My son, Draco wishes to inspect his inheritance of the Lestrage vault," Harry stated in the most haughty expression he could manage and the goblin made a grumbling sound of understanding.

"I will have your wand for inspection," the creature growled, "Standard procedure as you are aware, Mr Malfoy." The head goblin was looking at him, at *Harry*. He was Lucius Malfoy, he was in charge and he had to act like it. He tilted his head politely and glanced down to Draco, feeling ridiculous for having to address Draco so formally. Purebloods were strange to be sure...

"Come, Draco, present your wand so we can be on our way." He stared into those grey eyes, hoping he had sounded *Lucius Malfoy* enough. The goblin was watching him carefully and Harry hoped that they would not demand Lucius's wand also – they should not, by standard procedure, since Draco was the heir and the one making the withdrawal.

Draco reached inside his expensive black suit for his wand, pulling it out carefully and bringing it up to the Goblin's eye line, the creature surveying him and it with distaste. (*Goblins always did hate wizards*). Graciously he placed it down on the high desk so the goblin could observe it.

A moment's panic swept over him and his heart went still in his chest. The green slimmed creature stared carefully at the wand. No expression foretold what would happen in the next chilling instant of their lives and it was all too pressuring. Heavy breaths exhaled from his nostrils when the goblin finally handed it back with a nod.

"Hmm... Very well," The Goblin croaked, lifting up a lantern and handing it over to Draco, along with a set of keys that he reluctantly handed the Slytherin boy, with a gnarled sneer.

As the light of the lantern led them through the maze of dark, complex corridors of Gringotts, Draco couldn't help but wear a smile "So *Father*, what awaits me in this vault?" He toyed with his lover, giggling quietly as Harry blushed beneath Lucius Malfoy's complexion.

"I can't even believe you just said that so suggestively while I look like your father," Harry shuddered, fully aware of how his voice still sounded like his own just then and watching Draco's grin broaden. Harry held the lantern up, walking along the dank,

underground path and casting his embarrassed glance up to the vault numbers, searching for the Lestrangle one. The air was heavy, wet and clung to his throat as if unwilling to draw life into his lungs with every breath.

“Stop looking at me like that, Draco,” he warned, but even he could not deny the amusement in his voice. The severity of the danger had evidently not caught up to him yet, or maybe the Blond was trying to ease his nerves with his teasing but he was not sure. It was more than likely Draco was just being Draco, being afraid of messing this up but even more so of admitting to that fear, and so the inappropriate torment continued.

Draco's smile grew. His eyes closed, and he skimmed his hand out in the pitch darkness, pressing the flat of his palm against his *'Father's'* back. With a short stroke, his hand wandered down beneath that royal emerald coat to his buttock and grasped it tightly.

“Not bad for an old man,” he chuckled quietly, realizing that if Harry had in fact been his actual father, he would be getting that cane sharply across his head right about now (as well as a sickness in his stomach). Luckily for him, he wasn't, and Draco would never even attempt to grab his real father's arse. He was sickened at that thought...

Harry seemed to be unmoved by his banter and took the lantern from Draco to hold it up to the figures engraved on the vault before them. Grey eyes followed the light's path, finally noticing the vault of Lestrangle.

“If you're done groping your Dad's arse, Draco,” Harry began delving into his robe's pocket (not wishing to imagine what kind of rare creature's fur was lining the Elder Malfoy's pockets) and seizing the key. “We're at the vault.”

Draco stared at him, unaffected for a moment, before he visibly blanched. Perhaps the reality of it all was hitting him – this would be the hard bit, because they didn't know what traps were laid around the horcrux...

Harry offered the lantern back to Draco, who took it readily (probably anything to fill his hands to stop them shaking with nerves) and the dark-haired Boy slid the ornate key into the lock. The reaction was instant. The maze of locks unlocked with a tide of never-ending clicks, the noise was almost a buzz and Harry winced at the way it echoed through the deserted tunnels. They weren't doing anything illegal to the visible eye – yet.

At last, the last *click* died with a dull echo that ricocheted off the walls and the great iron door swung open with a foreboding creak. Harry turned his head to Draco who had frozen with fear beside him and gently took the lantern from him. He held it up to the ominous cavern that had been revealed and the treasures within glimmered menacingly, like beasts' eyes in the night, beckoning them into the darkness.

“Close the door behind you,” Harry murmured, as he stepped in, eyes scanning the mountains of gold that lay beneath the dark artefacts, trying hard not to touch or disturb anything. But when no sound came from behind him, he turned, seeing that Draco had not moved. He sometimes forgot that most others had not spent the best part of their lives in a cupboard, in the darkness, he forgot that as horrid as that had been, it had left him with an unnatural advantage – he was not afraid of the dark, of spiders or of being locked in tight places. He did not care for any of them but his brain could focus quite clearly under each of those strains. It seemed that Draco could not.

A single bead of sweat swept across the Blond's pale forehead and Harry stepped towards him, tugging him gently over the threshold and into the vault. He was quite aware of how close he was, how his lips would brush against Draco's when he spoke, but Draco didn't seem to be realising any of that right now. *He doesn't want to be shut in here*, Harry thought, *he's scared something will go wrong – he's scared we'll be locked in.*

Draco's fear ran as clear as his blood run now and Harry leant forward to press his forehead against Draco's clammy brow. “Just pull it to then,” he said, careful not to allow an ounce of pity to seep into his words. “If anyone passes I don't want them to see what I'm doing...”

The Slytherin clutched the crystal handle with a gulp and pulled the rusted, insurmountable door towards them, less than an inch before away from it actually being closed. But that didn't diminish his fear any. The surrounding walls felt like they were closing in with paranoia and terror upon Draco. He shivered, the trembles drawing the rivulets of sweat down his body in small waves at the thought of being trapped in. He had never really been what anyone considered *brave*, and the thought of being in a single, dark space with no escape panicked him.

His almost claustrophobic body shifted closer to Harry, who had already walked further inside. He pulled out his wand and clutched it for protection. *Just in case...*

“Can we hurry up?!” Draco pleaded, his manner a far cry from the teasing persona of only a few minutes ago. He turned in small, unnerved circles, gaze darting dizzily through the darkness around him, *devouring* him. Fear rose up like a fist in his throat

and throttled him. In a sudden fearful rush, Draco's body trembled and he moved to lean against the nearest wall and the pile of golden treasures that laced it. He was but inches away before he found himself being smacked away by Harry's hand.

“What was that for?” Draco gasped in a alarm, holding his hand where Harry had just struck him. Harry stood tall and really did sound like Luscious when he replied.
“Don't touch anything...”

Harry went back to scanning the treasury – or more accurately the rubble. It was a decaying cavern, it's floors all-but paved with galleons and yet atop the mounds of gold, cracked, broken, some *rotting* objects were scattered. Some glowed with a dark aura that Harry could not see but *feel*, and he moved from each one of those slowly, sure that the horcrux would not radiate such obvious energy – energy meant to warn them from the place.

There was a near-wall of books at the far side, all torn and gilded with a dark magic Harry didn't even want to *breathe* near. But he could see the cup. It sat perched on an unstable looking pedestal of books, amongst the rubble that pulsed forebodingly, but he had to approach. He could hear Draco muttering to himself somewhere near the door, steadily losing his nerve no doubt and Harry was not entirely sure that Draco would be able to see this through if he delayed any longer.

The Galleons that formed a subtle slant up to the plinth of books seemed solid enough and only shifted slightly as he placed a foot on the pile to gain leverage enough to reach Hufflepuff's chalice. Harry reached into his pocket, tugging on the small blanket that was hidden there. He cast a swift glance back to Draco, who was staring at the vault door warily, as if it might slam shut on them at any moment and Harry inhaled deeply, before throwing the blanket over the cup. The shape of the cup through the material looked menacing somehow and he felt his hands shake as he reached forwards to take it from the pedestal.

No sooner had he pulled the cup into his arms, than the ground *moved*. Harry gave a cry of surprise and tumbled back onto his arse, the wall of books groaning above. He scrambled back frantically, tripping over himself in his haste but he did not even manage to get to his feet, and the wall of books was tumbling down on him. He grit his teeth, rolling onto his belly and pulling out his wand and desperately throwing a silencing charm at the door – his danger was not as perilous as the risk of being caught, especially this deep into the task.

He heard Draco screaming but could not see him for the danger descending – all around him. Those heavy tomes tumbling to the ground at such speed, if one of

them *hit* him...

But then one did.

Harry screamed in agony as a thick black book, split at the seams by gnashing teeth crashed down on his shin, snapping the bone clean through. Blood pooled around his body and he groaned, grinding his teeth as he kicked the vile thing away with his good leg and dragged himself back, but he was not fast enough – and there were more. He heard Draco cry out again, this time in warning and Harry's gaze shot up, seeing the hundreds of volumes bolting straight for his head.

They would kill him if they hit him and there was no time to move.

Harry threw himself backwards, flat to the floor and held his wand high. "*Avifors!*" He cried, resisting the urge to close his eyes with terror. Suddenly, with the flourish of his wand the rain of tomes exploded with a brilliant, blinding whiteness into hundreds upon hundreds of dazzling white birds. They screeched with a deafening trill as they shot towards him, never slowing, but twisting up at the last moment, turning from his body with a grace that would have stunned him were they not so deathly close to his body – they could still do him some damage!

Harry gasped for breath, scrambling onto his feet as the birds circled the vault, landing on the scattered dark objects. Harry leapt for his wand again, realising the danger in their innocent perching. "*Evanescio!*" He chanted and the birds vanished into thin air, but the damage was done. The objects groaned, glowing with a dark aura Harry *knew* couldn't be good, especially when they started to move!

Draco panicked as he witnessed the blood seep from Harry's leg and he rushed over – there was not much time. He helped Harry limp forwards with the support of his own body and they stumbled towards the exit (which seemed at million miles away with the objects tumbling in on them) but they had the cup now.

"Come on!" Draco's hurried words pleaded, but realised that Harry could only go so fast in his immense suffering, even with the help of Draco supporting him. Draco's foot caught one of the shiny objects as he struggled past blindly and suddenly, it sent a spiralling, ear-splitting screech through the walls of Gringotts.

"SHIT!" He exhaled loudly. The objects hurtling towards them seared through any flesh they caught, scorching the skin with an unbearable agony. Draco brought his wand to the air, brandishing his only weapon of defence as Harry sank under his wavering hold.

“*Reducto!*” He shouted, watched the objects fly backwards, but it wasn't enough for all of them and he panicked. He chanted again, but the enchanted items were coming in at too many directions, and at too fast a speed.

“*Reducto!*” Harry cried out, copying Draco's assault, but it was failing. He screamed, grinding his teeth against the pain of his broken leg twisting in the opposite direction of his body, spiking agonisingly out of his trouser-leg and staining the expensive fabric with crimson blood. Draco's arm around his waist hauled him onwards, but he wasn't fast enough to keep up. The artefacts launching towards them did not waver under such a simple spell – they were dark objects after all.

An iron, hippogriff statuette no bigger than Hedwig slammed into Harry's chest, the wind was knocked from his lungs as the bruising collision sent him hurtling to the floor, and Draco with him. The statue screeched with a mechanic glee and Harry looked up at the shriek that spat from Draco's lips, a thick line of blood oozing down the size of the Blond's cheek just beneath his right eye, where the statue's beak had ripped into him. Harry scrambled back, dragging Draco with him (the Blond cursing about his face all the while).

“Keep them back all you can!” Harry shouted above the tempest of sounds encircling them like an attack of rabid hyenas rather than cursed objects. The Blond gave a stiff nod, turning his wand to the fray. Harry fumbled in his pouch for the shrunken sword of Godric Gryffindor. Before he had even touched it with his fingers, however, the statue struck again, descending over his body with a deafening cry before its metal wings slammed into Harry's wrist – the one holding the bound cup.

“No!” Harry screamed, watching the horcrux knocked from his hand and sent hurtling across the room. It was beyond reach. Draco looked back over his shoulder at him, betraying a sad acceptance of it. Harry flinched. They would fail – they would die here or be caught and then die anyway. He shook his head rapidly; he wouldn't accept it so easily. His brain was racing; his thoughts were struggling over each other on their rush to the surface, their rush to inspire him with some *great* idea to save them. But only a really, *really bad* one came to mind...

Harry shuddered at the mere thought of it; he had remembered searching with Hermione in their quest to find a way to destroy horcruxes. He remembered the distinct terror in her eyes, the severity of her warning when he had found it in one of the tomes they had searched through. “*It's one of the substances that destroy Horcruxes, but I would never, ever dare use it, it's so dangerous...*”*

Harry steadied himself against Draco's body, struggling towards the vault door as he fumbled his wand – the cursed objects never ceasing, circling for the final swoop. They would not have much time to get out once he cast the spell. "Draco?" Harry asked as he held his wand out before him, aiming for the fallen cup, though never taking his eyes from the enchanted articles above. "We're only going to have one chance – I'll cast the spell and we bolt for the door. Don't wait for me, don't look back – if I don't get to the door quick enough then seal me in here, but don't look back." His voice was unwavering; confident in a way he could only ever be in the face of death. He didn't wait for Draco to answer.

"*Fiendfyre!*" He screamed, and violent, scorching blaze leapt from his wand, swallowing the horcrux whole. Harry stared at it for a moment, he and Draco frozen with awe as the inferno reared forming dozens of fierce, flaming creatures in the fire. Harry balked and thumped Draco hard, shoving him towards the door.

"Run!" Harry cried out, eyes still on the fire as he scrambled backwards, but he wasn't going to be quick enough – he winced at the thought, giving Draco another hard push. "Get to the door! *Go!!!*"

Lucius Malfoy's visage crumbled back down to Harry's as the polyjuice potion suddenly began to vanish amidst the chaos. Blond hair turned to brown, and he pulled out his glasses as he stumbled, his vision blurring as he returned to himself.

"Don't be ridiculous Potter, you're the only one who can destroy him! Don't just throw your life away so easily, when everyone has fought for you!" Draco yelled, bending down and offering his back to Harry.

"Come on, get up!" Draco commanded on crouched legs as Harry took a moment, a moment they didn't have! "We haven't got time for this, stop thinking about it and move!" The Slytherin screamed again, urging Harry to climb onto his back. Finally Harry accepted and climbed up. It was probably just as well the polyjuice potion had faded, there was no way Draco was horsing his father on his back (just the image of that send a ripple of revulsion to his stomach). But now wasn't the time, the door was closing...

Draco rushed forward (Harry on his back) belting towards the door as the fiery flames of the vault attempted to engulf them, almost catching them in the web of madness, shrieks of the burning objects filling their ears. Draco groaned heavily as they moved closer and closer, pressure and anxiety overloading him all at once until finally he caught hold the door and stumbled out into the welcoming dark. His back foot kicked the door shut when they finally broke free.

Harry fidgeted on Draco's back, aiming his wand arm towards the door before the force of the fire flung it open once more. "*Colloportus!*" The locks on the door clicked manically, just as the metal door gave a deafening groan with the collision of the magical flames. But it held fast. His mind ticking over frantically, Harry gestured swiftly to all the vaults within sight.

"*Evanesco!*" He managed, before Draco hefted him higher on his back, grumbling something irritatingly like "*you're bloody heavy*" and gasping for breath, (the same as Harry) but did not drop him straight on his arse like Harry thought he would. *Maybe he's just grateful to be out of there alive*, he thought, remaining quiet, his hands knotted firmly in the front of Draco's shirt as they moved through the suffocating caverns, praying no one would raise the alarm until they had long gone – and that they didn't encounter anyone along the way...

"What are we going to do now?" Harry asked quietly in Draco's ear, with the warming (though oddly foreboding) light of the Gringotts main lobby lingering just ahead. He pressed his cheek lightly into Draco's hair, liking the closeness *far* too much considering the circumstances. "You can't just walk me out there looking like – well *me!* And Hermione and Ron have my cloak. We need to get to the door somehow, before they find out one of their vaults has spontaneously combusted!"

Draco looked over at the exit warily from beyond a shadowed corner "Drat! He exhaled, even as Harry spoke a solution.

"We could use the Disillusionment charm?" The dark-haired Boy suggested.

"Are you stupid?! Like that will work!" Draco fought, watching Harry's eyebrows twist inwards. Reluctantly loosening the arms still wrapped around that neck, Draco shifted Harry down carefully. Whatever solution they took, Harry would need to make it to the exit on his own feet, it would be obvious that Draco's arms were carrying him with Harry's idea...

"Well then you think of a plan, smart arse!" Harry retorted. Inevitably, Draco didn't have one. He groaned "*Fine*" in surrender and watched Harry whip out his wand. A cold, trickling, liquid sensation rippled down his neck, raising the hairs there with the aid of the surrounding chill. His body faded to an indiscernible outline, until it was camouflaged to the surrounding area, and watched Draco stroll on ahead.

Draco felt an immense amount of fear – of apprehension weighing on his body, more and more with each step he took towards the exit. He dared not look back at Harry who was stumbling along close behind. He focused forwards until finally his step lead him to the exit. He had never been so relieved to see the *frizz-ball* and the red-head,

both of them peeking from beneath the invisibility cloak, carefully pressed into a small alcove beside him.

“Let’s get out of here,” Hermione breathed, edging towards Draco, preparing to apparate, but looking up to check Harry’s location, she felt her heart stop. Harry himself wasn’t visible, not really, but the chaos that followed *was*. A woman staggered as if slammed into from the side and paused to stare wide-eyed about her, backing into the endless line of people waiting to be served. Another man glared at her seeming clumsiness, only to bowl forwards, hurtling across the ground in a roll – as if he had tripped over something!

“*Harry!*” Hermione hissed, her hand locking around Ron’s wrist and dragging him over to the place where the man had tripped. She stooped, (thankfully still invisible) her hands groping the air frantically. Suddenly her fingers encountered something hot, wet and sticky and in drawing her hand away, she saw it stained with blood. “*Draco, get over here!*” She whispered to the nearby Blond, who barged through several confused people, and dropped to his knees as inconspicuously as he could in the crowds, taking hold of Hermione’s invisible arm.

He had but a moment to register the crimson blood slowly fading into sight, pooling on the floor near Hermione’s hand, and then there was a loud *CRACK*, lost in the din of the busy hall and they were gone.

Harry winced as they landed in the perimeter of their tents, his leg bent at an awkward angle from the broken splint of bone. Outside of the now dizzying agony, he felt hot, liquid magic trickle down his neck and then when he looked down again, he could see the bone jutting through his skin – *see* the blood. He had suffered many injuries before but trying to walk on it, being stumbled over and kicked accidentally had only aggravated the wound. He’d lost a lot of blood. He felt quite faint.

A vile whiff of something sour jutted under his nose swiftly and Harry startled back to consciousness, only to see Draco smiling smugly down at him, a tiny vial of smelling salts in his hand.

“You enjoyed that far too much,” Harry hissed at his lover, glancing around to see Ron supporting his back and Hermione next to his mangled limb, rummaging frantically through their potions supplies.

Draco's teasing smile inverted quicker than lightning, as his eyes focussed suddenly on Harry's crimson-stained limb. The sight of blood only turned that complexion of

his even paler (if that were possible) as he wielded his wand. *I'll fix it.*

“*Amendo!*” He chanted hastily.

A sudden click sounded and an agonizing rush of pain gathered at once in the broken spot. Harry groaned at the top of his voice when the bone snapped back in place, the *Chosen One* pushing back splintered tears at the agony. Mending bones always was excruciating – but at least they had not vanished entirely like in his second year...

“There,” Draco said, with a sound of achievement, in his usual smug tone as he got to his feet.

“I didn't know you could fix bones?!” Hermione gasped in awe – not many their age were accomplished enough to make such a clean job of such a nasty break. Removing her hands from Harry's back, her eyes surveyed the limb Harry still clutched. It was healed, there was no doubt, and with but a bruising ache left behind...

Draco gave a little smile as the once broken leg straightened out stiffly, and reached a hand down to help Harry up. “Get up,” he said softly.

Ron surveyed him vacantly. “Malfoy, you just fixed that, he needs to rest on it, he can't go walking around...” Draco dismissed Ron's words as though he hadn't even spoken, his hand still extended to Harry for the taking. Ron groaned and exaggerated his sentence further, even with the slight murmur of “*I'm fine Ron*”, from a dazed Harry below him.

“That also means not of that–” He started but was cut short by Draco's words.

“Fucking? Draco retaliated at last to a disgusted Ron who just shrugged bashfully. Malfoy pulled out his wand and strode directed it at Weasley's throat warningly, his eyes flaring with silver-fury. “Who I choose to fuck, and when I choose to *fuck* them, is none of your business *Weasley*. If Harry wants me to take his tight little arsehole while he has broken arms and legs, then I will,” He finished furiously, sheathing his wand. There were times when teasing Ron, with his utter distaste in the homosexual acts he and Harry committed was amusing, but tonight, Ron's childishness, and selfishness for what he and Harry did together was an outrageous. And quite frankly, he wasn't the one who has just almost died – their alleged best friend was. He shoved back past Harry (who had managed to get himself up) and into the tent, before he exploded.

“Just how did you destroy the horcrux?” Hermione asked sceptically, eyeing Harry as he wobbled on his shaky, newly fixed leg, testing it. Harry distinctly kept his eyes to his limb, making a show of stroking the bone through his skin carefully. *Draco could*

be a Healer if he weren't such an arse, Harry mused, until he was brought back to the now by a terse, "*Harry!*" from Hermione.

"There was a trap in the vault," Harry said quietly – *guiltily*. "Everything was happening too fast and I just..." He explained carefully about the wall of books, about the cursed objects, their assault, his injuries and how the cup had been knocked out of his hand. He stopped there, finally raising his eyes to his two friends, who were watching him carefully. They knew there was more.

"Your own body's natural magic didn't even reduce the blood loss – it's shaking, Harry – you must have used a really powerful spell." How was it that she knew everything, Harry wondered? And not for the first time...

"We were trapped – there was a good risk we would die even with my plan and so I took the risk, a risk that would have eliminated the horcrux either way, and it paid off. I used *fiendfyre*." She observed him for a moment with stern eyes, breathing furiously through her nose before daring speech, her voice low with venom.

"You idiot!" She hissed. "You could have *died*! Harry that magic could have killed you just by channelling it through your body so recklessly! No wonder you can't *stand*!"

"I'm fine, Hermione I'm–"

"An *idiot*! A reckless idiot!"

"Mate, honestly–"

"I've already had the guilt trip, the responsibility scream from Draco so let's not, I did what had to be done. The horcrux is gone, it's not the first time I've risked my life and it won't be the last either so let's just drop it please – like you said, my body is exhausted."

Hermione snorted. "So *now* I'm right? When it gets you out of well-deserved scolding?" Harry offered her a hopeful, tired smile, but her unyielding face (her best Mrs Weasley impression) did not falter.

"How did you escape the fiendfyre with that leg?" She asked slowly, and beside her Ron looked almost calculating. "You would have had mere *moments* to get out – you wouldn't have been able to move that fast."

Harry nodded, setting his hand against Hermione and Ron's tent post to steady himself as his weak limbs shook forebodingly. He definitely needed to keep off his feet where possible – and it definitely wasn't possible when there was still another *living* horcrux and Voldemort to destroy. *And only a short time to do it in*, his mind supplied.

"Draco carried me out," he murmured, almost inaudibly. He saw Ron do a double-

take.

“He... He *what*?” Ron gasped, clearly not believing him, “Malfoy would have left you there!”

“He should have,” Harry replied stiffly, slightly irritated with their inability to accept this. “I told him to, but he didn’t.”

“Oh so the selfish git does know decency, what a surprise,” Ron began, with intent to go on no doubt, but was cut short by a glare and a few stern words from his girlfriend. “Shut up Ronald, just leave it alone.” Her lips were set as she watched his mouth open to protest, but in the end he remained silent, his expression distinctly *sulking*.

“Well,” Hermione said at last, “The important thing is, we know he really *is* on our side, and wants to help us, otherwise, he would have left you there for certain and saved himself. So...I trust him.” She was smiling and Harry’s exhausted face managed to grin gratefully back at her. Ron just snorted. He obviously didn’t feel any different. *They’re both arrogant twits*, Harry thought fondly of his Ron and Draco, *that’s why they can hate each other so much...*

Hermione yawned and pulled Harry’s arm over her shoulder, guiding him over to his tent until they reached the opening, even though it was only footsteps away, it was painful, and required the last ounce of strength Harry had.

“You will be alright?” Hermione checked, removing him from her hold. Ron stood distant in the background and waited for Hermione to return. “Ron and I will stay out and make us some food,” She informed, offering another smile. “I’ll bring it in to you when it’s done, until then, go lie down – *rest*.”

“I will,” he sighed, feeling quite dizzy. His leg was mended but it was tender, like a twisted ankle and it smarted when pressure was put on it.

“Oh, and Harry?” Hermione called back from the tent flap, just as Harry moved inwards to lean on the edge of the table, gathering himself. Draco was nowhere to be seen.

“What if the Lestranges tell Voldemort that the vault was destroyed? He’ll know the horcrux was the aim, won’t he?” She worried her lip between her teeth as she surveyed him. “He’ll know what we’re after.”

“I vanished the vault numbers to all the vaults on that level,” Harry said with a triumphant smirk that he didn’t quite have the energy for. That spell had taken a lot out of him. “It will take days, maybe over a week to find out whose vault it was that was set ablaze – and by then we’ll have already killed Voldemort.”

Hermione nodded slowly.

“When do you–”

“A few days,” he interrupted, having given a lot of thought to it last night, in struggling to sleep after that ‘nightmare’. “I need to recover my magic and we need to plan this right. But we can’t wait too long.”

“Of course,” she agreed, studying him carefully for a few long moments, before disappearing from the tent.

Harry sighed heavily, leaning heavily on the table as he divested himself of Lucius Malfoy’s blood-stained clothing. *Hope they weren’t too expensive*, he thought without an ounce of guilt as he stepped out of them in only his briefs, clinging to the table to steady himself.

“You have no idea how peculiar it looks to see you stepping out of my father’s clothing,” Came a low voice from the threshold of the bedroom. Harry looked up to see the Blond framed there, the voile curtain cast behind him.

“Would you rather you watched *him* step out of them?” Harry teased, using the table as a prop as he circled it to get to where Draco stood. He smiled as the Blond’s face wrinkled with disgust and Harry stumbled a little, instinctively reaching out for something, anything to catch himself. He was surprised when he caught himself on Draco’s chest, more so when he was not thrown back to the ground with distaste.

Harry looked up at him warily, unsure if he could handle being knocked back to the ground right now – physically or emotionally. “Thanks, by the way,” He murmured softly, not making any effort to stand without support of the Blond before him. His fingers curled in his shirt unwittingly, enjoying the heat on his cold body. “For not letting me throw my life away, for saving me...and err, my leg as well.” He added the last bit sheepishly, as he realised how heavy with devotion the first part had been and stepped back from Draco’s personal space respectfully. But a startlingly gentle hand on the small of his back held him quite still. An odd look *glistened* in those eyes.

“What are you doing?” He asked huskily, shuddering from the subtle tingles elicited by the pads of those fingers caressing his naked spine.

“Just relax,” The Blond whispered calmly, his fingertips caressing that spine to the tip of the tailbone. His hand tickled over Harry's arse cheeks, in a few gentle circles as he backed the boy slowly with light footstep's towards the bed.

Harry accepted, carefully falling to a sitting position on the bed as Draco stood back and began to strip his clothes down. Slowly he unbuttoned his jacket, trying not to catch the scorched flesh (that still felt a little tender) as he slipped the garment off. He chucked it aside and began on his shirt, stripping down with the same care and poise until his naked torso *glowed* under the pale, dying light that flickered in over his

alabaster skin.

The sun was fading, the moon rising over whatever was occurring between them. The importance of it kept Harry rigid and breathless where he sat, as an admiring audience to the show of lunar-kissed flesh revealing itself. Harry licked his dry lips apprehensively, the gentle brush of moonlight touching this person before him, who had changed so rapidly amongst the madness.

Finally Draco reached for his lower items, well aware that Harry was watching him with widened eyes as he pulled the zip down on his trousers. Something was different this time, He wasn't wearing a smug look of any sort, his facial expression seemed calm and relaxed. Certainly *not* something Harry had ever expected to see from him.

His silvery-grey eyes shone like miniature firelights when he reached for the final button holding his trousers up. He flicked it open and the garment fell to the floor, muscles of his slender legs visibly working as he slowly stepped out of them and tossed them aside with his foot. A final gasp shuddered past his lips before he pulled at the elastic of his boxers (that were constricting his organ) and his hardened penis sprung forwards in the mid-air, bouncing a few times before it stilled when the tight material was removed. *At last.*

He was on show, naked and bare, for Harry to see – and not merely his body. He was a picture of absolute, pure beauty, of white flesh that seemed paler and purer than a sea of angelic clouds. The body he had seen, but never like this, never so amazing and never with that expression so gentle and those eyes shining that way. Harry swallowed nervously.

“I'll give you tonight,” Draco said huskily. Tiptoeing over to Harry, he carefully leant over him, their naked chest's colliding with such magical friction as he pressed the boy back on the bed and kissed him.

~To Be Continued...

Chapter 17: Chapter Seventeen

(Bound By) Clandestine Addiction

[Chapter Seventeen]

That mouth took him over from the moment it touched him. Soft lips slid over his own, pliant and careful unlike before. His lashes fluttered against his cheeks and he leant up, wrapping his arms around Draco's neck to drag them both flat to the bed. One hand supported the pale, godly body above him while the other slid up to hesitantly stroke Harry's flushing cheek. Harry made a humiliating, gasping whimper into that mouth at the tenderness of it, grateful that Draco didn't seem to be in the mood for tormenting him for his reactions, merely taking advantage of his noises – the Blond's tongue stealing inside his moist cavern and teasing the tip of his tongue.

Harry's eyes clenched hard. It was all so overwhelming, he opened his mouth more, welcoming the slick muscle that now caressed the length of his tongue and pushed up into the kiss hungrily, mindless of the shameful noises he was making. His fingers knotted in blond locks, clinging to possibly the single best moment of his life and swore he felt Draco smirk slightly against his mouth before drawing back a hairsbreadth to survey him carefully. Harry avoided his eyes; suddenly shy, lying panting with passion under that gaze that glistened with such...tenderness.

Draco brought his hands up slowly to Harry's peachy cheeks, holding him close as he brushed his lips lovingly over Harry's. He was being rather...*Romantic?!*

Wet yet controlled slithers of Harry's tongue crashed with his own in attempt to force the kiss deeper. He fought against Harry's own muscle with tentative, tender strokes as they tasted each others sweet mouths.

Finally the kiss broke, and both Draco and Harry were left with panting breaths, immobilized in a frantic moment that neither of them could quite understand. Draco looked down, his cock felt like it hardened every time it brushed against Harry's, even with the material of Harry's pants separating their flesh. Draco smiled and leant in to breath husky words over Harry's dainty ear, the steamy syllables spiralling down the skin of Harry's neck.

“Are you sure it's okay? I mean...with your leg?” With that, the Slytherin nibbled at the lobe and licked up the curve with a trail of spit, leaving Harry to shudder beneath him at any and *all* contact Draco gave, whist whispering such tender and

uncharacteristic questions into his ear.

“Don’t stop,” Harry gasped out with a breathless smile, spreading his legs carefully and bringing Draco closer into the cradle of his thighs. His teeth caught his lip as he arched up, grinding his clothed erection wantonly into Draco’s, the fabric creating such delicious friction between them it felt like it’d set them on fire. He felt the groan rise up his throat and spill from his lips as that heat only Draco inspired pooled in his stomach.

He shuddered as he felt Draco lay open-mouthed kisses on the side of his throat, the bruises from before having faded, but he had a suspicion they would be quickly replaced. And he wouldn’t have to hide them this time. That mouth caressed his adam’s apple and he cried out, his fingers sliding gently into blond hair, massaging the Boy’s skull until he moaned against his skin with subtle pleasure.

White-blond strands brushed against Harry’s chest as Draco trailed kisses along it lovingly, careful not to catch any over sensitive places as of yet while he travelled down, licking the ticklish flesh beyond Harry’s belly button. His hands slid down those hips tenderly (Harry had such glorious curves) until they reached the last remaining garment that clung to them. He slid his fingers under the elastic and pulled them down, (careful of Harry’s injuries) holding his emerald gaze while he removed them.

Harry’s erect penis leapt forward when the material barrier came away, and Draco swore he heard Harry emit a little, embarrassed moan. He gave a giggle to that reaction when he finally threw the boxers to the floor, gently lifting Harry’s bruised leg aside. Tender words trembled over his lips. He felt...*Nervous*.

“You’re sure you’ll be alright, Harry?”

Harry stared up down him with owlsh eyes, lost as if in dream and nodded slowly, watching with no small amount of awkwardness as Draco’s breath drifted over his erection, causing it to twitch under his chin. The Blond straightened a little over him, never tearing his eyes from his face as his slender fingers traced the path up his legs, an almost healing hum stretching across the expanse of flesh where they touched. That gaze, it was heavy with something he had caught mere glimpses of before – and it unnerved him.

But I wouldn’t trade it for the world, Harry thought, as Draco’s hot palms braced the backs of his thighs, carefully spreading them around his hips. Something about Draco had changed down in the vault, something very important...

“Keep going,” he insisted quietly, finding himself unable to breath, or think clearly much less speak. “Please,” he managed out, something tensing in his chest furiously at the sight of the smile at those lips.

Draco's tongue slowly edged in between Harry's parted legs (that he was holding carefully above) and sank inwards, a deep, torturous lick pressing against the throbbing ring of muscles, that wanted to tighten around it as it touched. He drew back after a single lick to see the expression on Harry's face (which was beet red) before smiling and leaning back in for more.

“Harry?” He asked quietly, placing a fluttering tease of a kiss along his perineum. “Can I take you bareback?”

Even though he and Harry had been unprotected before, something in Draco made him feel as if he needed to ask.

Harry nodded again, his eyes squeezing shut determinedly at the forbidden sight and *feel* of the Blond between his thighs, but then he remembered that Draco couldn't see the action. Licking his lips slowly, he struggled to speak through the lump that had swelled in his throat with the myriad of emotions swimming through him. “Yes,” he gasped, eyelids clenching tighter at the husky intonation of his voice. “Take me...”

He couldn't believe he'd just said that, it was all the more inappropriate and embarrassing than the first time, because it almost seemed as if...Draco genuinely cared. He looked down hesitantly, not really daring to let himself believe it. His fingers knotted in the sheets, whilst the other hands slid over Draco's shoulder, anything to touch him, to affirm the unlikelihood that he was there. He'd thought he could do without this, had tried to brush off the hurt when Draco had denied him it, but now he was getting a glimpse of it...

I want it more than ever. I want him more than ever!

Draco carefully raised Harry's legs as far back as they would go and pulled out his wand. With a swish and a flick he chanted the lube spell (though it was odd, how the lube always came out a different colour, this time a vibrant shade of hot pink) that quickly drizzled down his hand and spilled over the sheets.

“Just relax,” He informed Harry, feeling his tense legs rest against upon shoulders.

With a careful pressure, Draco pushed the tip of his wand against Harry's erection and

dragged it downwards to the twitching opening. Harry gasped. The feeling of the lube felt cold against his most sensitive areas (but it wasn't a bad feeling). As Draco reached the entrance, he prodded the tip of his wand slightly against the trembling, peachy ring until it had slid into the hungry hole.

Harry was so needy – Draco smiled at that.

A loud groan tore from Harry's lips at the probing while Draco's wand spurted out a gush of pink jelly inside him, readying him for what was to come next. "You still feel okay?"

"Perfect," Harry replied dazedly, the jelly teasing him with cold, then hot tingles around his twitching opening. Harry wriggled beneath that burning gaze, pressing his cock up in desperate search for friction but finding nothing to grind into to release his building thrill. He reached down, vaguely aware, somewhere in the back of his mind, that Draco was watching intently and ran a finger over his wet pucker. It clenched at his touch and he let out a little puff of air, forcing himself to relax as his finger slipped through the tight ring – and Draco was still watching.

His face didn't so much as twist in discomfort, not even when his second finger slid in, stretching his trembling, over-eager muscles. His cheeks coloured at the sound of wet, sloshy noises of the lube in his slick channel and he saw Draco's cock jerk impatiently. It arced up towards his pale stomach and Harry felt the knot in his stomach tighten at the sight, at the feel of too-hot hands smoothing over his legs in an easing caress and at the feel of those eyes burning into him.

He curled his fingers in determinedly, massaging the dimple inside until his prick flooded with pleasure. He groaned despite his captive audience, despite the humiliation caused by Draco leaning down a little more to observe him and it felt like his skin was glowing with the electricity between them.

"Oh god..." He breathed, pressing his head back into the sheets while his hips arched up towards Draco's (still out of reach) body. "Y-You can't – you can't *watch me!*"

A smile shot across those Slytherin lips, at the pure bliss of the image before him. Harry was *hot*. His tongue darted down for Harry's dusty nipples in a sudden movement. *Everything about Harry was too hot*. He *needed* contact. His own penis pressed into Harry's, grinding upwards with each thrust, his hips colliding with Harry's when his lips finally met the tip of his nipple, and he nibbled carefully on it, teething it then sucking, back to nibbling again before circling round with his pink, wet nub. His hand reached downwards and he slowly worked a finger in, along with

Harry's two, past that stretching opening. Harry gasped loudly when he moved, in delicious pleasure, and slight pain. It was driving him mad, to the point where he was almost delirious.

That was enough. Draco removed Harry's hand slowly from himself and slid the thick head of his cock at the now empty opening.

"I can't take it anymore. I *need* this..." Draco groaned, speaking his need as though he was asking for Harry's consent before he continued. His eyes sparkled in the dimness like stars in a twilight sky, shining with glassy pleasure.

"I need you," Harry agreed, his hands fisting into the sheets as he pushed back subtly onto Draco's erection as it pressed against his needy entrance.

Draco pushed his cock against the twitching flesh slowly, making sure to hold Harry's leg far enough so he wasn't hurting him. He pushed forwards with a sudden jolt, and he groaned with bliss, his hot cock breaching the heated, stretched ring of muscles and striking deep inside Harry's body.

Draco's lips crashed forwards into Harry's, entwined in such a blissful trap as he began to move inside him. "Does it feel alright?" The Blond asked, ensuring that his eyes remained on Harry at all moments.

A small gasp escaped him at the twinge of discomfort and he struggled for each laboured breath as he acclimatised to the fullness. And Draco was above him, still except for his sweat-slicked chest that rose and fell rapidly with his breathing.

"It's amazing," He assured him, his heart still fluttering madly with the thought of the Blond stopping or slowing for his benefit. *How can one person change so much?* He wondered, pushing his throbbing arse back onto Draco's pulsing, desperate need – testing the adjustment of his body. "Kiss me," He managed out, tilting his head slightly to look up at Draco with hazy, passion-drenched eyes.

When the Blond seemed nervous of his request, Harry leant up, wrapping an arm around Draco's neck and dragging him down to meet his mouth with a kiss. He cried out into his lover's mouth, the movements of the kiss shifting Draco's erection inside his slick, clenching entrance and he twitched around the thick, hot cock, until Draco broke the kiss with his own moan.

"I like it," Harry murmured, in that embarrassing, husky drawl. "I'm ready – fuck me, *please*..."

Draco's entire body trembled at Harry's pleading words. His cock thumped and throbbed inside the tight ring of muscles that clenched down around his hardness, hungrily and greedily.

With a sudden thrust, Draco moved forwards, hips meeting the back's of Harry's thighs when he hit inside. Slowly he pulled out, and moved in again in such tender, fluid movements, leisured, and careful, but at the same time, hot and lustful. There were no words that described the way he was moving. It was just...*magical*. And it brought a whole new meaning to the word wizard.

The Slytherin threw his head back as he went in for another careful stroke. His entire cock felt full of radiating heat, a buzzing sensation tingling through his submerged member, passed his balls and down to his thighs. It was just...too good. Bringing his hand up, he caressed Harry's cheek lovingly, leaning in for another ardent kiss.

“Ohh,” Harry gasped into those lips, snaking his eager tongue out to lap devilishly at the length of Draco’s tongue – at every crevice of his mouth. “That feels so good...!” His hands reached beneath him, fingers biting into the Blond’s thighs as Draco took slow, deep dives into his body – gentle pleasure that opened his mouth with silent bliss.

Draco leant down to his body, dropping the occasional kiss to his sun-dusted skin, Blond hair hanging into scalding, stormy eyes as they surveyed him, as if committing his every scar or freckle to memory. Harry’s fingers smoothed through the silky curtain of hair and he worried his lip between his teeth in a moment of hesitance. “You’re...beautiful...” He murmured daringly, hesitantly, remembering the reaction he’d got last time. *Emotional idiot*, he reprimanded himself, never ceasing to embarrass himself at new heights with his runaway mouth.

From beyond the curtain of golden locks, Draco's silver-grey eyes sparkled. He flushed a little at Harry's statement with a sure, but familiar smug smile. “I know,” He answered, still moving all the time inside that sweltering heat.

“*I know*,” smug git. Harry thought. But, he was grateful, that statement proved that this new person inside him was still the same Draco, the same person he’d inadvertently fallen for, and that it *was* real.

Draco felt Harry's fingers brush softly up over his chest, against his *scar* (the one he had caused) with a tender caress, holding his hand there to feel the heartbeat that pounded beyond that iridescent flesh. It was almost electrifying to feel that hand

touching that place so tenderly, and the pleasure startled him, particularly since it was forged from something between the lines of fear and hate (and perhaps naivety).

The static that sparked from his fingers, from the pulsing hardness in his arse made him arc softly and he grinded his hips upwards, rubbing his neglected cock into Draco's stomach – growling with frustration when it wasn't enough. But it was so delicious!

“Why...why does my body – respond to you like this?” He gasped out, turning his cheek into the sheets. He dimly heard Draco's reply but could not make sense of it, not when he was gyrating his hips up into those leisured, deep thrusts, pressing his leaking prick into that taut stomach in desperate release. “You m-make me feel like...I can't...*breathe*...!”

Draco responded in sudden pants. “It's because...a death eater...is fucking *you*, the *Chosen One*,” He joked, smiling deviously as he grabbed Harry's hands lightly and intertwined his fingers into them. Each finger fitting perfectly between Harry's, so they were holding hands.

“I-I'm *melting*...!” Draco moaned out, his cock was on fire inside that arse, so engulfed by the inferno that he felt as though he almost couldn't breathe either. Harry's moans and groans only made the rise feel that much more powerful. His hips jerked forwards with a thrust at a steady pace.

He pressed his weight down into his hands, that were still clutching Harry's and tactically moved his cock forwards into that arched arse with a throbbing rhythm. His nose was rested upon the tip of Harry's when he felt that hard cock rub into his belly beneath him. A small line of pre-cum slid up as past his belly button. *Harry was so fucking hot*. And he didn't know how much he could take. He bit down on his lip to savour the feeling, flavoured by too many images of the boy below him. His mind went hazy for a moment and he lost control of his words. “Harry I...I...!”

“God – you're – amazing!” Harry cried out, shaken by the plunges into his body, losing himself with wanton abandon at the friction over his cock, the mouth-watering burning, stretching of his arse. He was sure he wasn't making much sense.

“Feel...really...*full*!” His fingers tightened desperately around Draco's, his spine twisting with trembles at the Blond's wicked, husky words.

The cravings, the unquenchable thirst for this boy above and within him made him squirm and arch and keen on the bed. His arse clenched greedily around the fullness, tensing at the dirty, delectable wet noises of Draco taking his body. Every place where

their skin touched – every *nerve ending* exploded with shuddering pleasure. His cock ached and he was making more embarrassing noises than Draco would *ever* let him forget he was sure.

This Boy was a fire, an eternal flame in his heart, all-burning, all-consuming.

“Ahhh...mhh!” Draco moaned, swinging his head uncontrollably aside. His cock felt prickly at as it burnt through that divine ring of ignited flesh. He was losing himself. Sweat trickled down over his forehead and splashed into Harry's when he leant in for another sudden kiss. Lips tangled with Harry's with more wetness than they had ever released on one and other. His pink muscle slithered deliciously into that mouth, his chest and belly squishing Harry's own straining cock back against his stomach. His hands only tightened around the *Chosen One's* when the pace became more needy, and something tense inside started to rise up and seize them *both*.

Drawing back from Harry's tender lips he shuddered, eyes hazy, but staring directly into emerald pools, a thin trail of saliva joining their mouths as they gasped hot breath into one and other.

“D-Draco! T-Touch mine...touch my cock!”

From those muffled words, Draco heard Harry plead him to touch him – only just, with that tingling of their bond buzzing loudly in his ears. He tugged one of his hands from Harry's grasp and quickly brought it down between them, grasping that neglected cock lovingly, stroking it. And Harry's moans grew louder.

“Harry...it...it's...!” He murmured from between husky pants.

“Oh *God!*” Harry groaned, his body jerking back and forth with the Blond's hips, squirming beneath him to press his weeping cock into him eagerly. He felt like his skin was alive with flames dancing across it; it felt like it was *moving!* He felt the sweat sizzle like oil on the fire and it seared him with such ferocity that he swore it would brand him, driving him beyond any conscious thought eternally.

“I-I'm – going to cum!” His spine went rigid, he attacked Draco's throat ravenously each time a thrust brought him down within reach of his mouth. “Let me – let me cum – *please!*”

Draco fastened the pace of his fist over Harry's penis, the rush inside it was too close now and Harry was throwing his head side-to-side with no control, clutching the sheets ever-tightly in his tensed hands. “Ahh! Harry! I-I'm...!”

Suddenly Harry let out an enormous moan that faded out the sound of the Slytherin's and Draco felt his stomach and chest burn all over when the white substance from Harry's orgasm splashed up over him in thick, hot spurts. Draco was not far behind and he felt Harry's cock continue to spurt out more and more white liquid every time he buried himself deep inside.

"I'm...ahh! I...!" He gasped out again, that familiar, maddening buzzing swamping his cock. "Harry I...!" He swung his head back as something inside his cock tingled and rushed through, bursting from his swollen tip.

"I-I...Love...you...!" He gasped out at last when his pleasure erupted in that tight ring of muscle, deep into Harry's bare hole. He fell down to Harry's body with a crash and leant in to hold the boy below him, both of their bodies still shivering with the unconquerable bliss of the after-glow. Draco breathed hot, jerky moans into Harry's ear as he felt both his heart and Harry's thumping hard beneath their breathless chests. It was as if all the electricity in the vicinity had been drained and sent shooting between them in a single moment. And it was gravity defying.

Harry's fingers, his toes felt numb and his legs trembled from the aftermath, even as he tumbled back from the perfect, white oblivion into Draco's perfect embrace. His chest felt tight, constricting as if he could not breathe and Draco was starting to feel heavy above him. Tilting his head, Harry laid a weak kiss on Draco's cheek – still marred by the thin gash from earlier (in the vault). He swore he felt Draco smile against his neck before making a quiet noise of negation and rolling off him rather unceremoniously.

Harry struggled to keep the frown from reaching his face at Draco's departure from his body and turned over (with great difficulty when it concerned his still stiff, sore leg). Pulling his glasses off he laid them on the side table, and the tent plunged into darkness, illuminated only by a dull, veiled escape of the light from the 'living area' into their bedroom.

Warm arms slid gingerly around Harry's middle, as if afraid the touch might burn and Harry relaxed into the sheets with an unrestrained sigh, when the heat of Draco's body spooned against him, his steadying breath panting against the nape of his neck. "I love you too," Harry whispered to the darkness, his fingers settling on the arms wrapped around him. He felt Draco press into his neck more, felt himself place with a firm kiss there as the Blond pulled the sheets up over their bodies.

The soft light dusted Draco's pale skin and made it glow like moonlight. Harry stared

down at the arms around him, studying the furious blemish, the dark mark that sat against his otherwise flawless, alabaster flesh. Tracing the scar with feather-light touches, he felt Draco stiffen a little behind him, but he offered no other complaint – and Harry could hazard a guess at why...

“It’s always hurt hasn’t it?” He asked quietly, tracing the gentle curves of Draco’s curled fingers for a moment before bringing them up to rest with his own by his face. “Ever since you’ve betrayed him, it’s hurt you?” He knew the agony his own scar inflicted when Voldemort was angry, or even happy – he could only imagine how it must burn when the evil creature *intentionally* made someone who had ‘betrayed’ him suffer. But Draco hadn’t said anything – ever.

And he was worried about my stupid leg, he thought, nestling his mouth and nose into their interlocked hands.

Draco shifted his gaze with no answer, but his thoughts didn't stop there. Yes, it had always been hurting him. The last few days it had been burning furiously beneath his skin. Like someone was ripping the flesh away bit by bit. But for both their sakes, he had to be stronger than that. Finally, he met Harry's eyes, sighing. “It's nothing.... *Really!*”

That incident in the vault had shaken Draco and reminded him, too much, of the severity of what he and Harry could have suffered. Harry was right, it was now or never. And he *did* love Harry, despite the odds. He smiled at that thought. He was in love with bloody Harry Potter!

“I... I really hate that I feel like this for you,” He admitted at last, in a somewhat playful manner, with a devious grin gracing his lips. His eyes glowed like fireflies when he brought his hand up and ruffled Harry's hair backwards lovingly.

“It used to terrify me – how little control I had,” Harry replied truthfully, but with no regret or bitterness tainting his contented tone. He turned in the Blond’s embrace to stare into those eyes, glinting in the dimness with a kind of sincerity that left him oddly *warm*.

“Think of your reputation – Draco Malfoy smitten with the *Chosen One*,” He teased in light of that devious smirk on his lover’s lips. “You’ll have to give up your Slytherin title of course – I’d suggest Ravenclaw but Cho Chang might make an attempt on your life, she certainly didn’t like me snubbing her for you...” He noted the surprise in Draco’s eyes then and feigned thoughtfulness before continuing. “Maybe Hufflepuff would suit you.”

He felt so bizarrely...*light*. As if the weight of the world had been lifted, and now his body floated, feather-light without his worries towards the sky. He laughed unrestrainedly when Draco pinched him in mock punishment and Harry dipped his head to rest underneath the Blond's chin as he heard him speak.

"Tsk, you think I'd dirty my hands further by downgrading to a different house, even when I am fucking your little tight arse? I'm still a Slytherin, so shut-up!" He snapped with a glare and another pinch to Harry's arm, (who flinched suddenly with a moan of the word 'ouch'). A little irritated at Harry's attempt at playfulness, he rolled over onto his other side, so he was no longer facing Harry when he spoke again.

"Just because I...I..." He couldn't bring himself to say he loved Harry Potter *again*. He had barely managed to get it out the *first time*, and even then it was said through a hazy daze which he had no control over. He still couldn't believe he had said it at all! Shame overcame him as the words echoes through his head, which sank heavily into the pillows, his eyelids closed tight.

"...Doesn't... It doesn't give you any reason to start getting cocky with me!"

Harry laughed quietly, leaning in to wrap his arms around Draco's body. "I think the fact that Draco Malfoy is bumming me is reason enough," he teased. "He only wants your tight little arse," Draco grunted.

Smiling despite the darkness hanging overhead, Harry pressed his forehead gently between the Blond's shoulder-blades. Sleep was tugging hard at his senses and he felt his eyes droop despite himself. "You know...all of the happiest moments in my life have happened in the middle of chaos... I guess this is no exception," he murmured drowsily, before following the pull of his exhausted body into slumber.

Despite the already traumatic events of the day, despite the dead-weight of his limbs, Draco couldn't follow him into sleep. He listened to the *Chosen One's* breathing thoughtfully, unwittingly tracing the honey-hued flesh that surrounded him as he stared up into the canopy of the tent roof. He dimly heard the soft patter of rain from outside – and then something else.

His skin bristled, prickled with the sensation of being watched – glancing over his shoulder without moving he saw that Harry remained undisturbed, but then something moved out of the corner of his eye and he seized his wand from the side table, aiming it at the doorway. His heart pounded frantically in his chest at the sight of Severus Snape standing in the doorway to their bedroom.

“Good evening, Mr Malfoy,” Snape greeted in a deep drone, his dark, calculating eyes scanning the sight of a sleeping Harry Potter wrapped around Draco Malfoy’s body carefully. “Draco, have no fear for Mr Potter’s safety just now—” He tone was almost mocking. “—Miss Granger’s wards are impeccable, I cannot locate you or indeed even *see* your surroundings – I am but an incorporeal image. An astral projection – this was the only way I could reach you.” The astral Snape watched him carefully, a menacing shadow in the corner of the room just waiting for him to speak. And Draco’s wand arm twitched indecisively, as if he could not decide whether to lower it or not.

Draco shifted in Harry’s arms, struggling out of them until they fell limply on the mattress, and he was standing on his feet. He reached down and pulled a small blanket from the bed, eye’s still focused on the holographic Snape as he wrapped it quickly around his waist. Directing his wand unwaveringly towards the semi-translucent image before him, with a sudden grunt he asked, “What-what is going on? My father is he...?”

“I think I should be asking you that question, Mr Malfoy,” Snape answered in reply, peering intentionally over that shoulder to a naked Harry who was grinning in his sleep, on that velvety, cum-stained bed.

“It’s not what it—” He found his words cut short by the Professor’s apt tongue.

“Oh come now Draco, we’re all adults here. Who you chose to flaunt yourself with is your decision, though I must say, Harry Potter of *all* people...”

Upon seeing the Blond stiffen at his words, Snape approached the bed, his eyes lingering distastefully over the still sleeping boy on the sheets for a moment longer before looking upon Draco. “Your parents are fine, Draco,” he revealed quietly, “They have some time left before they must ‘capture’ you – and by the time their deadline arrives I suspect young Mr Potter will have reached the Dark Lord himself.” His eyes flickered with knowledge that Draco knew he wasn’t privy to and yet somehow, Snape knew – everything.

“I believe Lucius is too dedicated a follower in *His* eyes to get rid of over so small a trifle – your mother, on the other hand, is dispensable to him. But I have ways of removing her from harm’s way without revealing myself. You can be sure that you are all safe.” The semi-translucent figure of Severus Snape flickered for a moment and he looked over his shoulder, startled. By something where his corporeal body resided?

“There isn’t much time,” Snape stated quickly, delving into his pocket and presenting Draco with a small scrap of parchment – some irrelevant numbers scrawled untidily across it. Draco reached for it, surprised when his hand merely passed through. “Take a note of these co-ordinates, Draco,” His teacher instructed, “Miss Granger must possess a map in her possession – to find the place these co-ordinates mark is to find Voldemort’s current location.”

When the Slytherin stared up at him with wide eyes, Severus merely smirked subtly. “As secret keeper I am at liberty to grant you entry by reading this.” He studied the blond boy for a long moment, considering ever hair out of place before adding (in a low, warm tone), “Your mother wishes me to tell you that she is...*very* proud of you.” Draco could not help but notice the way Snape’s eyes flickered to Harry slightly, as if the Boy had something to do with his mother’s message.

After making a mental note of those co-ordinates, Draco watched as the hazy, translucent figure shimmied over towards the text exit with a final glance towards him, before nodding and vanishing. The Slytherin sighed with relief and a small smile had spread across his face. He felt bliss at knowing his family's safely (even when Harry told him he found it hard to believe) but he had always trusted Professor Snape, trusted him to tell him the truth before considering his feelings and so his word meant that much more. Not to mention the message from his mother...

Gazing down at a sleeping Harry, who seemed unmoved and peaceful, Draco’s blond locks hung heavily into his eyes and flickered against his lids in the sudden breeze that had filled the tent from outside. He felt that familiar strain, the same prickling under his skin, tearing at the marked flesh and filling him with unsettling fear. His dark mark burnt with fury and frustration of his betrayal.

The time was close.

Just seeing Harry sprawled across the duvet, so relaxed and carefree made him feel all the more wary about everything. This boy, this stupid, sexy and reckless idiot boy... He was going to either die, or die trying to defeat the most powerful wizard alive.

Draco suddenly felt his throat burn – it was too much! Someone who he had come to ‘love’ could possibly die and it hurt, physically pained his stomach with uneasiness and undesirable sickness until he couldn't hold it anymore. He rushed from the bedside and pelted outside of the tent, overcome with rushes of hazy, terrified gurgling inside his belly.

With a sudden frightful hurl, his guts retched and he found himself, nose dripping and

watery eyed when he vomited on the grass.

“Malfoy?” Came a voice off to the side and he raised his head to see Ron coming towards him slowly. “Malfoy, are you alright?” When Draco did not reply, he sighed heavily, raising his wand and vanishing the vomit discreetly. A heavy, knot of pity, of *empathy* twisted in his gut at the sight of a proud Malfoy on his knees in the dirt, shivering from the reverberations of throwing the contents of his stomach up on the ground.

Leaning down, Ron extended a hand to help him up, only to have his aid swatted away. He frowned a little, but did not argue the matter as the Blond stumbled to his feet. Watching him waver for a moment, his alabaster flesh (revealed by the blanket wrapped around him) pale and clammy, Ron smiled sadly. He knew that expression, that look those eyes betrayed because he had felt it – was *feeling* it!

“It’s bloody mental,” He said quietly, turning his gaze out across the boundary of their camp to give the Blond a moment to compose himself with dignity. The empathy felt like bile rising in his throat. “All of this is just... It’s mad that it has to be us and I’m glad it’s not anyone else – on the one hand, since then I can make sure first hand nobody I love gets hurt but...” He realised he was rambling, but he was *sure* Malfoy was listening...

“It’s terrifying; to see the full force of the danger the one you love most is in.” He could never admit that to Hermione or even Harry without feeling pathetic, but Malfoy was in the same boat as him. His voice was quiet and he risked a glance over at where Malfoy stood, now more steady on his feet as the colour returned to his face slowly.

Draco looked blankly at the red-head, not smiling, but not turning away either. He nodded only once in agreement to what Ron was saying. He felt far too muddled to talk or even say anything back at him while the colour filtered back into his cheeks. “I-I need to sit down,” He managed out, walking over to the logs that were still placed outside from the campfire and perching there ineptly. The fresh air smoothed over his skin, and he was well aware that Ron had followed him and was now standing before him.

He felt disgusted with himself for having Weasley see him so humiliated on the floor, throwing his guts up, but that was only a momentary feeling when his stomach grumbled back at his thoughts with spite. He was thinking too much...

Glaring up at the red head again, Draco thought it seemed like he was waiting for

Draco to snap – but he never did. He just calmly sat with his head fixated on the ground, holding his bruised and sore stomach with one hand. While staring thoughtfully at the muddy grass, he whispered out a few more words (albeit reluctantly). “Please don’t... Don’t tell Harry about this.”

Ron took up a seat beside him, considering the Blond’s words carefully as he watched him. “You know I’ll admit you’re a piece of work,” he grumbled, “You’ve got a toxic tongue and you treated Harry *rotten* at the beginning – a lot of it was sick.” He watched the defeated Slytherin bristle a little at his words. “I don’t understand this...this *bond* or your feelings at all – or Harry’s but you can’t help but notice it, you know. You can mask it with your superiority complex, your hurtful comments but I’d have to be *blind* not to see it.”

Draco’s gaze rose to him, dark with suspicion and the distinctly clear glare that Ron knew to mean “*What Weasley?*”

“You’re...you know...” He fumbled for words within his embarrassment, his ears burning red. “You love my best friend – more than I think you’ve ever...loved anything before. And it overwhelms you; it scares the shit out of you... I suppose I can relate to that – and that it accounts for your arsey behaviour.”

Draco shot a glare at Ron. It felt degrading when Harry spoke about it so openly (maybe because Draco had always been the reserved type), so it only felt worse when Weasley acknowledged it aloud too. Draco spluttered in a few attempts for sentences, his throat raw with humiliation. “Why is it...that all Gryffindors think they know...*everything*! You three are all the same,” He finalized, stumbling to his feet.

“Well it’s true isn’t it? You must feel something since you’ve been...*well*...” Ron trailed off with a flush. He still couldn’t manage to use the word ‘*fucking*’ in the same sentence as ‘*Draco*’ and ‘*Harry*’.

Draco gave a pensive smile alongside his response. “I understand your concern and you care about Harry, but don’t tell me how I feel...or think, you understand? I’ll admit... I feel something.”

Ron knew well enough by now that coming from Draco, that it was a flipping miracle to admit he felt *something*. Of course he wasn’t going to outright say ‘*I love him*’ – it simply wasn’t in his nature to do so.

Ron smiled, staring out across the perimeter once more. “I used to think you were a wussy little coward,” the red-head mused, “But...it – it must’ve been scary down in

the vault and you could've left Harry there – you could've left him and got out on your own much quicker... But you stayed with him and I...I reckon, you can see him through this and...and I...I reckon I *want* you to see him through this.”

He swore he *heard* Draco's neck snap up to look at him with shock and Ron's awkward smile didn't falter as he turned to offer the Blond a small shrug. “He's my best mate and I know that he – he needs to catch a break from being the hero once and a while or he'll go barmy. You don't let him play hero with you and that's...” He ground his teeth with frustration, casting his glance back to the tent in which Harry was still sleeping in.

“Listen he...he *loves* you,” He grimaced at the sound of it – Harry, Malfoy and *love* together in a sentence. “You're what he needs; you can protect him so... Urgh, I guess you – you and Harry are sort of...alright by me...”

Draco smiled with a slither of slight bewilderment flickering there. “Well even if it wasn't okay with you, I'd still be screwing his arse, but...” He paused slightly and sighed. “Thanks anyway,” He struggled out, walking back over into the tent (still holding his stomach) and not really saying much more to Ron's acceptance speech. He crawled under the curtain and jumped in surprise at the sight of Harry, perched on the bed shivering.

“What's wrong...?” He gasped out, bolting to his side in panic.

Harry shook his head slowly with a forced smile, grinding the heel of his palm into his inflamed forehead. He winced as his scar gave a menacing throb. “It's nothing,” he insisted as the Blond drew closer, stooping before him at the end of the bed and surveying him critically. “M-My scar,” he ground out, his skull feeling like it would crack open at any moment with Voldemort's fury. But this time, he *knew* what exactly had infuriated him.

“Voldemort put some sort of distance between us after Sirius died – when he realised that my seeing into his mind could backfire, but lately he...” He shook his head again, curling his legs a little tighter to his chest and palming his scar in pained frustration. “He can *feel* me – he feels when I am happy or angry, the way I used to with him. It's not like he can see me but he...he felt how I felt tonight and it's – it's infuriated him. He's never been able to handle my emotions...” He trailed off thoughtfully, wincing again as his scar pulsed spitefully, but then he felt Draco lean in closer and looked up at him from behind his hand pressing his head uselessly.

The Blond's pale complexion only whitened at Harry's words (but that was

momentary) and he took a seat on the bed beside him, his hand, strangely resting behind Harry's back, in an tentative attempt to comfort him. What had happened to Draco Malfoy? The one who would kick him in *the head* if he started to speak of his suffering with such dramatic tones? Draco really was changing. More then he knew.

Hesitantly taking Harry's hand down from his scar with a soft pressure of the dark-haired Boy's wrist, Draco laid a kiss upon it. "It's worth the pain though, *isn't it?* I mean... He's driving fear into you, into...into *me* and even though it frustrates him to see it, maybe that's not such a bad thing."

Harry look at him blankly and Draco knew he had no idea of what he was saying, so he elaborated. "What I mean is, he is going to cause pain no matter what you do, and he is going to attempt to get to you anyway he can, so why not give it back? Make *him* suffer for the things he causes you to feel. If fucking me makes *him hurt*, then maybe we should fuck more often?!" He declared finally with a devious grin. And Harry's pained and sorrowful expression changed. Had Draco Malfoy really just suggested winding up the Dark Lord?

"You're a diabolical enemy Draco Malfoy," He teased, falling to the side a little to press his enflamed forehead onto Draco's soothingly cold shoulder. Sighing slightly, Harry closed his eyes. "It must drive him mad that through all the madness he's enforcing on my world, I'm the happiest I've ever been..." He was dimly aware of how mushy that sounded, but didn't think on it too long as he allowed his mind to drift. The soft crackle of the connection between them abated the pain somewhat – and he'd never had someone hold him through the ache inflicted by his scar before...

"We'll kill him with sex in a minute," he yawned, his words slurred with sleep and his eyes too heavy to open. "J-Just let me...have five...minutes..." He was vaguely aware of sliding off of Draco's shoulder, of being caught before he slammed into the Blond's lap and he grumbled incoherently about being more than ready when Draco laid his dead-beat body back into the sheets. And then sleep took him, into a sleep that Voldemort could not reach...

~To Be Continued...

Chapter 18: Chapter Eighteen

(Bound By) Clandestine Addiction

[Chapter Eighteen]

The morning's sun lingered behind a row of dark and menacing clouds, a few scarce rays of light escaping into the Charms classroom. Things at Hogwarts over the last few days had become uneasy. Obviously the students knew of the disappearances of the three Gryffindors and the single Slytherin. Rumors had circulated quicker than you could say '*quidditch*' throughout the student body, and not even the teachers were able to answer their tumult of questions.

"Are they true, Professor? The rumours about Harry Potter?"

Professor McGonagall shifted uncomfortably at their inquisitiveness.

"Don't forget about Draco Malfoy, I hear he has gone missing too?" Another student called from beyond the classroom.

"I cannot tell you anything, because I honestly have no idea. All that I know for sure is..." Her words were cut short. Not all of these students were without their Death Eater parents' influence...

"What about the rumour that Hogwarts is closing, because *You Know Who* is on the move and is bound to check Hogwarts first for the Potter boy?" Called out another student.

"Where are you hearing this?" The Professor asked in terse reply, horrified at the extent of the knowledge these children possessed.

"My parents say I'll be coming home shortly."

The entire room erupted into restless conversation, while the anxious Professor was all-but brought to her knees. She hurried for the exit, leaving the class to their overwhelming hum of mumbled suspicions and whispers at her departure.

Whatever Severus meant by reaching Mr Malfoy last night I can only hope it hastens their battle to destroy Him...

McGonagall visibly flinched at her thought, berating herself for relying on children – children she was supposed to protect, to save her. *It shouldn't have to fall on his shoulders*, she thought desolately, disgusted with her helplessness. All she could do

was keep the school open and safe against whatever *He* might throw at them.

* * *

Harry smiled warmly down at his lover sleeping soundly by his side. He had awoken a few hours ago, quite refreshed with the early sun's rays filtered by the tent walls, to find the Blond wrapped around his body – the sheets having fallen away from them some time in the night. He had been content to watch him for a moment, basking in the memory of the night before but then, when Draco grumbled something incoherent in his sleep, he felt his mischievousness surface.

Draco remained still, silent and sleeping as Harry surveyed him, brushing the very tip of the hippogriff feather he had found in his bag of precious possessions (the feather of Buckbeak that Sirius had once sent him) along the curve of Draco's jaw. It felt nice, almost poetic, worshipping Draco's body with something so precious, but it didn't seem he was ticklish. After tracing the soft outline of his lips with it and earning no more than an unconscious sigh, Harry dragged the feather down the column of Draco's throat, dipping into the shape of his collarbone before trailing it down the centre of his sternum.

The feather bristled slightly with his own, hastening breaths and Harry could not tear his insatiable gaze from the perfect plains of alabaster flesh as he brought the very tip of the plume to flick over a pink nipple. Suddenly that chest shuddered with irregular breath and Draco's sleepy expression twitched slightly, his lips emitting a hazy gasp. Harry smirked devilishly – Draco was still asleep.

Dragging the feather painfully slow down the taut muscles of Draco's stomach, he circled his navel teasingly, relishing in the second gasp of unconscious pleasure he had drawn from his now flushed lover's mouth. Tormenting the heat of the Blond's inner thighs for a long, drawn out moment, he brought the feather finally to caress the length of the semi-erect member that was hardening under his touch.

Focusing on the growing heat rising up to Draco's stomach, Harry tormented him to full hardness before a small groan shuddered into his ear and a sharp grip seized his wrist, stalling his movements. Harry blinked with wide, hazy eyes up at Malfoy, who was studying him carefully, sleepiness still fogging up his distrustful gaze.

"Morning," Harry breathed, straining against the vice-like hold on his wrist to lay a fleeting kiss on those lips, before drawing back a tad to wait for Draco's reaction to his 'awakening' – which could go either way...

Draco's hazy expression mildly cleared and his heart felt as though it had halted inside his (somewhat tingling) chest.

“W-What do you think you're doing?” He asked in a husky (but slightly irritated) tone, lifting his head from the pillow and propping his arm up so that he was now leaning. He gazed down through sleep-crusted lashes and flushed when he noticed the shape of his cock pressing against his sticky boxers. He hadn't seriously just cum from that *slight touch*... He had.

Bringing his hand to his forehead in slight embarrassment and annoyance, he pressed his palm to his flesh, hard – the feeling did not fade. But he supposed that he was feeling more confident this morning after last night's evacuating of his stomach, so much more at ease and so the irritation did not fester as it may have done. And with that he sighed.

Suddenly, Harry found himself pinned, both hands either side of his head. He swallowed hard, glancing up at the Blond overshadowing him from above, a forebodingly, smug smile, twitching at his lips. “*No one* makes me dirty my boxers without being punished...!”

Harry grinned devilishly up at his flustered boyfriend, dropping the hippogriff feather carefully on the side table beside his wand before glaring back up at him, a smile still lacing his lips. “You know you get it up awful quick for a guy who is just after my *tight little arse*,” Harry teased, lifting his hips to brush his cock against Draco's in torment. “I think you gave it quite enough punishing last night – I don't believe you've earned another round just yet.” He watched as Draco's seductive glare faded into one of disbelief. Was Harry saying *no*?!

He dismissed that first statement with an underlying sense of frustration, but what he couldn't ignore, was Harry saying *no*?! “You can't refuse me?!” Draco snapped in complete irritation.

“Then don't think of it as a refusal,” Harry all-but purred, leaning up to graze his teeth over Draco's throat. “Think of it as a reschedule.” He breathed hotly in Draco's ear, nipping the lobe playfully before wriggling out from under the Blond's hard, ready body. Yanking on his briefs, he stared back over his shoulder at the ravenous Slytherin, who was glaring at him as if deciding whether to pounce or not.

“Draco, please don't tell me you're *pouting* for sex?” He was *fully* aware of how bizarrely coquettish his voice sounded and loved the way it sent a prickle up Draco's spine and a twitch through his still throbbing erection.

Draco's entire body trembled with shivers as Harry's breath met the skin on his neckline and the sudden grip around Harry's wrists tightened. "I might not be in the mood to be rescheduled!" He declared. *He was pouting...*

He sighed with heavy frustration and darted forwards, his hand seized the boy's shoulder. "That's right, put you're pretty little *briefs* back on, but..." His sentence was cut short when the playful tone faded into a menacing one. "...I'll bloody have you for this," He warned. Harry really was the one wearing the kickers in their relationship after all, Draco reminded himself, walking into the kitchen area of the tent and starting on breakfast.

By the time Harry had himself washed and dressed and ventured out into the living area of the tent (set on teasing Draco some more) he was startled to see Hermione and Ron at the table, pawing over a map spread the width of it while Draco struggled with the kitchenette in the corner. "Smells good, *Hunny*," Harry tormented, watching the Blond's back go up at the teasing endearment – especially since Ron had choked on his orange juice at the statement.

"I thought you were the wife, mate," Ron snorted into his juice – anything to occupy him, yet again. Harry merely beamed through his blush, leaning over Draco's shoulder to watch his lover prodding (suddenly rather viciously) at some scrambled eggs.

"I never knew you were so domesticated, Dear," Harry breathed in the shell of Draco's ear, earning himself a rough elbow in his ribs.

"That's enough!" Draco snapped, there was only so much mockery he could take, and he had reached his limit, slamming the tea towel on the floor and storming back into the bedroom like a moody teenager.

"You can cook!" He yelled back to Harry, making not attempt to cover the frustration in his voice when he took a seat on the bed. This was all too much for him to take in and his headache wasn't helping. Harry was *really* pushing his luck.

After he finally composed himself (and his patience had worn thin at the banter streaming in from the living area) he ventured back out and over to the table with the intent of his own amusement, a smirk finding his lips. "So, *love-muffin*, since we're playing this game, would you like to reiterate the embarrassing things you plead me to do while I'm taking your tight arse, or should I?" Draco snarled, his voice menacing, almost *cruel*, especially in the words to follow...

"How you literally *beg* me to stretch you open and how you want nothing more than

me to bugger—" Before he could finish, Draco's word's were cut short by Harry's hand rushing over his lips. The dark-haired Boy swore he felt a smile against his palm.

A stunned (and slightly disgusted) Hermione and Ron sat there awkwardly, faces turned to opposite ends of the room. Even with Draco's expression focused on them the entire time, (as if using them to get to Harry) but it had worked and he felt victorious!

"You win! *You win!*" Harry hissed quickly, his hand still clamped tightly over Draco's mouth.

"I quite understand what Harry did to deserve that," Hermione murmured, returning her embarrassed gaze to the map once more, tracing something carefully with her fingertip. "But I am not quite sure what *we* did to earn that punishment." Her tone was light and teasing and Harry smirked despite his humiliation before withdrawing his hand from Draco's mouth, yelping when the blond pinched his arse roughly.

"I said you win!" Harry growled out, rubbing his sore buttock, "I surrender!"

"I know," Draco said innocently with a smirk, sliding into his place at the table. Harry grumbled under his breath as he moved over to serve the breakfast up onto the plates.

"These co-ordinates – they lead to the Malfoy Manor," Hermione explained, causing Draco to lean over and look at where her finger marked the position of the co-ordinates. "I wouldn't have thought they'd select somewhere so—"

"Obvious?" Harry suggested as he levitated Hermione and Ron's dishes over to land before them, grabbing his and Draco's plates and carrying them over.

"Well this is...*brilliant!*" Ron gasped, lifting his gaze to Draco. "It's your house! Any Fidelius charm – *any* charm they place on it can't keep the direct heir out. No matter what they do, you can just apparate us in!"

Hermione smiled brilliantly. "That was clever, Ron," she chimed sincerely, "It will erase the trouble of having to remove wards and traps..."

Hermione's voice trailed off slightly into all-but incoherent mumblings and Harry set his own plate on the table before pressing his body unnecessarily close to Draco's back as he placed Draco's breakfast before him. "Here are your eggs, *Sweetheart*," He murmured stiffly, and across the table Ron chuckled.

"I think Malfoy prefers sausages," Ron snorted, tucking into his breakfast carefully to avoid the pair's embarrassed shock.

"Only big sausages I'm afraid *Weasel-bee*, which means you're out of luck," Draco informed haughtily with a demonic smile, flicking Harry's arse again subtly as he took the plate. He pulled out the salt and shook it over his yoke slightly, before placing it

down and gazing up at a blushing Ron. Hermione too, flushed at that statement. "I'll have you know Ron's sausages are very satisfactory thank you, he always cooks them well!" The table suddenly burst into laughter for the first time and Harry felt strangely relieved at the scenario. It was nice that they were all smiling, together. Even Draco.

"You know that's the only complement you've ever given me," Harry laughed, sliding his hand across Draco's thigh under the table – surprised when he wasn't swatted away.

"Yes, well," Hermione cut across them, "I suggest two more days – to refresh, then I will lead the apparition (with Draco's help of course) to Malfoy manor. I suggest that Ron and I handle Nagini, whilst you two head for... *You Know Who*."

Harry immediately bristled at that, dropping the fork-load of egg he was about to put in his mouth. "I'm not taking Draco anywhere near Voldemort," Harry stated plainly. "You won't be *taking* him anywhere," Hermione argued defensively, "Have you any idea how *immense* Malfoy Manor is? He has the Dark Mark, he can *feel* Voldemort – it's how the Death Eaters can apparate to him without co-ordinates when they are summoned. Whether you want to endanger him or not, you need him."

Harry opened his mouth to argue again but Ron headed him off.

"Shut up, mate – let Hermione do the planning and you eat the bloody eggs your boyfriend spent so long making you."

Harry blinked, stunned a little by Ron's...*defence* – for Draco! *What did they sneak out and make a truce in the middle of the night while I slept?!* He wondered, not knowing how far from the truth that was.

"For once I am in agreement with the mud- *Granger*, I mean. Don't be bloody stupid Harry, what did you have in mind? Going alone? You can't *always* be the damn hero." An exasperated *tut* left his mouth. Was Harry really that stupid? After everything...

"There's no way you're dying without me there to watch," He spat with thoughtless teasing, realising, that perhaps that remark was overdoing it – but he didn't care. The point was Harry did need him. And not just as some tag-along for getting into the Manor. "If you really think I'm sitting on the sidelines when I have come all this way, then you are even more delirious than I thought, my parents and all the people who mean something are involved in this," Draco admitted at last, to Harry's surprise. He suddenly gazed over at Ron and finished his little outburst with, "And Weasley, Harry is not my boyfriend!"

Ron raised his brows teasingly a few times while he chewed through his mouthful,

waving his fork emphatically as he ventured speech. “Yes you are,” he sang with glee, spearing his bacon with a knowing smirk.

“Are you two very drunk this morning?” Harry asked Ron and Draco suspiciously, “Or have you got a stash of magic mushrooms?”

“Oh very witty, Harry,” Hermione said with a roll of her eyes at the mushroom comment, “Suffice to say Ronald and Draco made up their differences – for the most part. Now, back to the plan – *please*.”

Harry snorted, flicking his gaze up to catch Draco smirking at him when he started cutting his sausage and smiled broadly as he avoided his gaze. “Alright then,” he said to Hermione, “How will Draco and I know you’ve killed Nagini – I can’t kill Voldemort until she’s dead.”

“These,” Hermione stated with a triumphant smirk, tossing him a large galleon across the table. Draco caught it, holding it up for his and Harry’s inspection. He looked confused, but Harry grinned at his friend’s brilliance.

“The coins we used for Dumbledore’s Army!” He declared. “Hermione that’s brilliant!”

“Naturally,” she smiled, but then elaborating for Draco’s sake. “Ron and I will have some too – when we kill Nagini, one of us will rub the coin, and it will immediately make the coin you and Harry hold grow hot. We will rush to give you back-up as soon as we’re done with Nagini – but it may have to be you and Draco that destroy him on your own.”

Harry nodded slowly, a bad feeling churning his stomach at the thought of taking Draco with him. He realised his fingers were digging into Draco’s leg a little harder than he intended with the thought of it and that his friends were all suddenly looking at him. “What?” He asked.

“You’ve had that mouthful poised for eating at your mouth for five minutes, Harry,” Hermione explained and Harry looked at his food, dropping it to the plate again as he remembered how tuned in to his emotions Draco was thanks to their connection. He peered up and the Blond was watching him with deep eyes – he knew everything he was concerned for, Harry was sure of it and he cleared his throat distractedly as he tried his food again.

Even though Draco refused to admit it, Hermione was brilliant. Pureblood or not. But then Draco felt those fingers clutch harder into his leg and he winced slightly, feeding his own fingers down under the table as Harry made his feeble excuses and breaking Harry’s firm grip by interlocking those fingers with his own, their hands locked together like magnets.

He’s holding my hand, Harry flushed almost immediately at that thought and

continued to attempt his food. Even though Draco was unable to comfort Harry in his mind, at least he knew that he wouldn't be alone, even if that lurking, nauseating fear surfaced again from discussing their plans.

"I think you have it well covered," Draco said to Hermione, trying to bring a little normality back into the atmosphere, and distract Ron and Hermione from Harry's unease.

Harry stuttered for words as Draco's fingers caressed his own under the table – almost *lovingly*! His eyes flicked up to the Blond's dark orbs for a drawn out moment, before he turned his attention back to Hermione and Ron, basking in the thought that Draco still hadn't let go of him. *He's coming with you*, he thought. *To face Voldemort*. Whilst that initial thought was scary the idea of having this warm, shielding presence around him when he walked right into his nightmare was reassuring...

"What if something goes wrong?" Harry asked, quite quiet – as if he could not bear to hear the doubt in his voice.

"I have prepared for it," Hermione said slowly, glancing to each of them in turn before gesturing to the coins, handing an extra one to Harry. "We have one each – they aren't only to communicate Nagini's death, they're our *Panic Buttons*."

"Panic Buttons?" Ron asked suspiciously. He should have known better than to doubt his girlfriend after all these years though, he supposed.

"If we panic and have cold-feet – we just have to *think* one word and we'll be transported directly into The Room of Requirement at Hogwarts. It's a loophole – I placed the 'receptor' if you will in that room, I *required* a way to come back here if trouble brewed, somewhere safe and with months of planning...the room provided." She looked to Draco with a smile. "I got the idea from you actually – using the Vanishing cabinet, it was yet another loophole—"

"And what if..." Harry cut across her, but seemed to lose his nerve before he could finish. Draco's hand squeezed his softly.

"If we finish our task, it will transport one, or all of us to the same place, so that we can summon aurors to help with any rebelling Death Eaters..."

Harry flinched at the thought of Bellatrix Lestrange, hurtling towards him to avenge her fallen beloved master. Her manic laughter still filled his head; it had haunted him every night since Sirius had fallen... He realised Draco was still watching him carefully. The Blond really did betray his feelings with what he *did* as opposed to what he *said*.

“And if...if one of us *falls*,” Hermione began shakily, “If one of us dies, they will be transported automatically to the same place.” She stared between them, a heavy pressure having fallen over them for that moment. “The word is *beloved*. Don’t forget it.”

“How could I?” Harry murmured, but more to himself than any of them. The possibility of...of *any* of these people here *dying* was... He shook his head. It would not happen. The three people he loved more than anything were all heading into that battle with him – because of him! He’d be damned if he let one of them fall without a fight. *And Draco*, he thought. *I promised him I would get him and his parents out of this...*

“That being said, I want a shower, I stink!” Ron announced, sniffing his armpit to lighten the stifling mood and the sudden sadness that had consumed Harry's face. Draco merely clucked his tongue with disgust and looked away from him as he got to his feet, beginning to clear the table. Hermione rose a brow at Draco's sudden departure and kind gesture that was cleaning *all* of their plates. “You certainly have him well trained,” She said as she too got to her feet and carried the salt and other jars from breakfast into the kitchen with Malfoy.

That left Ron and Harry alone at the table. Harry frowned as his body yearned ridiculously for Draco’s touch, but recovered quickly and offered his best friend a small smile. “Thanks, mate,” Harry said quietly, and Ron nodded, knowing exactly that the dark-haired Boy was thanking him for the distraction.

“Listen...Ron...” He cast a glance over his shoulder, seeing that his lover and Hermione were out of earshot at the sink. “Things have been...been a bit mad ever since Draco... We’ve both been – well *dicks* and... Mate, you know the prophecy. I may well–” He lowered his voice even more, having not warned Draco he suspected he may have to *die* in order to defeat Voldemort. It was just a feeling he could not shake off. “–I may not be able to come out of this alive and if I don’t I... Ron I don’t want you to think I – I chose him over you. You’re all important to me, *equally*. I’d... I don’t know what I’m going to do if something happens to any of you...”

Ron smiled and leant forward, patting his hand upon Harry's shoulder. “I never thought that for a moment anyway, Mate. And you won't die, I won't let you,” The red head assured him, relieving Harry of his doubts with that optimism. Yes, there was a chance, a very big chance that Harry might die, but Ron knew with Draco beside him, it wouldn't happen.

“I know *he* will look after you... Though I still think he's a ferret,” Ron said, watching

Harry's smile widen. Even with all the irritation Ron felt towards Draco, one thing was clear, one thing he didn't like to admit. That was that Draco and Harry in the same sentence, (however wrong it has always sounded) it worked. And it worked in such a way he couldn't deny the strange affection, the sparks he saw between them, even with how proud, how very much in *denial* Draco remained.

The unbearable tightness in Harry's chest loosened a little with relief. Hope flared in the pit of his stomach and he felt his smile broaden. "Yeah," Harry agreed, not willing to go into the fact that his worried concerned *them* getting out alive – not him. He didn't want to die but he wanted to live without them even less. "Arsehole would probably find a way to bring me back anyway – he's stubborn that way..."

Rising to his feet, Harry gave a quick glance back to ensure Draco was watching him, then circled the table to head towards the tent flap. "I'm just going for a walk, guys," He called back to them, "Stretch my legs now I'm fully healed – can't afford to slack right now." He ducked out of tent and breathed in heavily, the cold, morning air fresh in his lungs.

He hadn't walked very far – in fact if he strained and stood in the right position in the dense thicket he could still vaguely make out their invisible perimeter. A stream ran clearly before the dewy bank. He dropped down unceremoniously at the water's edge, collapsing onto his back and closing his eyes against the oddly warm sunlight beaming down from overhead. He needed to just...*exist* without thinking for a little while.

When Harry departed from the tent, Hermione and Ron looked at each other with a smile and then back towards Draco, who stood awkwardly under their gaze. "Think that meant he wants you to follow after him," Hermione informed him. Draco's eyes pierced her, he wasn't some *lap dog*. But when Draco saw the pair of them looking at him so intensely, he sighed and stormed towards the exit of the tent. "Fine!" He called back to them.

Walking onwards towards the neighbouring riverbank, he saw Harry in the distance and dropped down in the long grass to watch him silently from behind for a bit. He looked peaceful and that made Draco feel very...serene, very easy and untroubled inside.

Last night...he made love to me! Harry's cheeks coloured. *He said that he loved me*, Harry thought with a giddy smile, grateful that no one was there to see his expression. Draco had shared a civilised conversation with his friends, had

even *joked* with them, if something like this could work out then surely... *Surely we will all get through this*, he thought.

Rolling over onto his stomach, he felt the sun warm his now slightly damp back and rummaged through his pouch, bringing out his precious photo album and flicking through leisurely. It was one of the few times he could look upon his memories, his parents and Ron and Hermione as children beside him, without being overcome with sadness. Instead he felt an odd, almost *out of body* hope flicker in chest with all the softness of the feather he had woken Draco with.

A soft fluttering at his side drew him from his daze and he glanced up to see a small bird on the rock nearby. He smiled slightly at it, as it tilted its head at him curiously. There was a soft patter of footsteps behind him, but Harry did not look up, that prickle along his spine told him who it was, without having to look. A shadow cast over him and the bird twittered madly before soaring away.

"I really miss Hedwig," Harry murmured in a thoughtful voice without looking up at Draco. "I hope she doesn't think I've abandoned her..." He glanced down at the page in the album he had left it on – his parents smiling broadly at him while his baby-self was rocked gently in their joint embrace. "We don't have any pictures of us in here, we should take some at some point," Harry mused aloud, hearing Draco offer a snort as he lowered himself to the grass beside him. "Don't worry I won't make you smile or anything," he teased Draco gently, finally raising his eyes to offer the Blond a gleaming smile. "Don't want your pretty face to crack." He could've sworn he saw Draco smirk at the light-hearted teasing, but could not be sure.

"She's just a bird Harry," Draco said carelessly only to receive a glare from the dark-haired boy beside him. Sitting down next to him, he leant back on his elbows in the soft grass. It tickled his arms and the back of his neck (sending shivers along his spine) as he laid his back fully into the cool embrace of the ground and shifted his hands behind his head as a prop. He gazed up into the sky, endlessly staring at the sun, without squinting once. The Blond's head slowly turned to Harry, who he noticed was gazing at him, flushed.

"As far as smiling goes...I won't give you the satisfaction," Draco added with a *would-be* glare. But he was smiling, even if not in the way he had meant, a smug proud smile cornered both sides of his lips and Harry melted beside him at that expression. Slowly, he leant over to Harry and whispered over his ear tenderly in humid steamy breaths. "You owe me," He said huskily, punctuating his words with a single lick.

Harry shuddered at the saliva flickered in his ear and drew back slightly to stow the album back inside his pouch before the thrall of Draco's body could overcome his senses. But as he slipped the treasured object back inside, the cool, precious metal somewhere inside the bag reminded him...

"Draco?" He murmured quietly, not really wanting the Blond to hear his dreaded confession. "I have something to...to confess to." He rolled over onto his side, close enough to easily touch Draco's body to his own – if he had the courage, which right now, he did not. He fingered the small silver object in his hand carefully for a moment, before raising his gaze to those unfathomable, grey eyes.

"I took this...back when we first...in the Shrieking shack when we..." He winced in swelling frustration at his inability to form words, and dropped the object into Draco's palm. The Blond considered the silver ring in his hand carefully, watching the way the sun danced over it's surface for a moment, until Harry's following words drew his gaze back to his face.

"I – I thought that there would only ever be...that one time so I..." He gestured to the ring awkwardly, "I wanted to remember... But now I suppose, we'll have plenty more times together, won't we?" He felt something in his chest sink when Draco remained silent and Harry slithered back to lie flat in the grass once more, staring up at the clouds whisking briefly across the sun in an attempt to avoid Draco's eyes. It seemed silly now, looking back – and he didn't know what to say...

"And people say that the *Chosen One* is some hero...more like thief!" Draco *tsked*, sliding the ring back on his own finger, his eyebrows drawn inwards. "I have been looking for this!" Draco glared down at the silvery object, rather shocked that Harry had taken it as some momentum, some prize? It looked cleaner then he last remembered. *He was probably sad enough to shine it*, Draco thought, letting out a sigh and a smug laugh at that probability as he moved closer to Harry.

"Now *Potter*, I'm going to *punish* you and you will..." He pressed his lips as far into Harry's ear as he could when he finished the sentence, and he felt Harry shudder against the words that spilled out in hot pants, "...*heed* to your master's wishes...won't you?" His dirty words sent shivers over Harry's spine and he grinned into that lobe when he heard Harry wince at them.

"If you won't admit you're my boyfriend why should I say that you're my *master*?" Harry murmured, even as the Blond lowered himself over his body, caressing his over-eager nipple through the fabric of his shirt. He flicked his head to the side to hide his face, his teeth chewing his lip in an attempt to stick to his obstinacy. He had a

feeling that it wasn't going to work – not with Draco's eyes scanning him hungrily, not with those fingers tormenting him and that hot breath steaming up his ear.

The Blond snatched Harry's hand in an instant, squeezing that wrist in firm reminder. "I told you to do as I say," He groaned as he shoved Harry, full-force into the grassy riverbank. Harry fidgeted and fought under his tight grip when Draco leant in and nibbled down his collarbone and back up towards his ear, whispering into it again. "Besides, you...owe...me," He murmured, pulling back out and relinquishing his hold, he sat back in his previous position.

Draco pulled out his wand and gestured in the air, conjuring up a golden crown, which he placed smugly upon his head. Leaning back into the grass, he spread his legs wide, propped up like some kind of king on his thrown. "Your master told you to service him...now do it!"

Harry stared at him sheepishly for a moment before crawling forwards between his lover's legs, a devilishly teasing smile playing along the delicate line of his lips. Last night had definitely changed things – this was almost *playful*...

Harry leant forwards onto his arms, his breath ghosting over the shape of Draco's body, tracing downwards without physically touching. He felt Draco shudder and his grin broadened as he dipped to lie between his legs, his mouth brushing over the hard heat between the Blond's legs, visible even through his trousers. "Make me service you, *Malfoy*," Harry growled out huskily, palming his own growing arousal through his jeans gently.

The heat filtered through the material over Draco's suddenly stiffening area, tearing a gasp from him. He tilted his crown slightly, whilst Harry continued to breath over the thin layers of cotton that separating him from his pulsing member. Draco glared down at Harry, who seemed to be growling slightly, offering up a look of death. He tugged Harry's head into his crotch and gasped, "Service me, *Potter*! Do as I tell you!"

Harry's body sang under the pressure of Draco's hand at the back of his neck, forcing him into action. The force didn't feel so bad with this light mood in place; in fact it felt almost...

"I don't want to," Harry played along, even as he rubbed his cheek over the outline of Draco's erection, before undoing his trousers leisurely – with the hand not caressing his own stiffness. Draco's cock bulged out under Harry's gaze, large and hot and twitching slightly despite the chill on the air – hungry for Harry's mouth that lingered just out of reach. Harry smirked, allowing his breath to slide tantalising over the pink

head peaking from the foreskin and gripped his own cock so hard that he groaned over Draco's body.

"Hmm...I don't want to," he insisted, unconvincingly – embarrassed by the tone of his voice, but Draco's cock hardened even more at the sound of it.

Draco let out an exasperated sigh when Harry *accidentally* breathed over his pulsing cock, he couldn't help but twitch madly against that heat. He grinned down at him, with glittering eyes and a perfect smile that insinuated...there was more coming. "Harry, stand back a second," He ordered, and Harry listened, hastening to move as Draco had directed.

The Slytherin quickly drew his wand and swished it through the air. "*Tranverto Clothes!*" He chanted, with a husky tint to his tone.

Harry's clothes suddenly dropped to the floor and from nowhere he found himself being quickly re-dressed by the magical air. He shivered in sudden shock at the fleeting spell...

Harry knelt before Draco in a skimpy little girl's outfit, blue, pleated skirt and white shirt with a red bow, a pink flower entangled in his hair. The pair of frilly knickers completing the look made Draco most amused, from this view, he could see Harry's cock shuddering the outline of the tight fabric. Chills rushed over Draco's spine at such an image...

Harry stood there flushed, his arms crossed in embarrassment and irritation when Draco said, "So come on, *girl*, service your master!" He chuckled, almost sadistically, Harry simply appearing awkward and unmoved.

"You prick," Harry cursed, struggling to cover himself. He couldn't believe the nerve of him! And without even asking!!! It felt so dirty and...*wrong*! But his skin was flushing treacherously and his cock oozed pre-cum along the front of the knickers that were pulled tight over it. "Whatever you did, undo it!" He demanded, but he knew it was hopeless, knew it was a half-hearted request and he felt the fire in his belly descend over his twitching erection as Draco's seductive smile beckoned him back to his lap.

Harry groaned, open mouthed as he slid into place over one of Draco's thigh, his leaking cock grinding nicely over the tensed flesh. "Y-You're...a dirty...bastard...Malfoy!" Harry gasped out, his hands unwittingly finding their place on Draco's shoulders in support of his hips as they shuddered with violent spasms.

“U-Undo it! R-Right n-now!”

But then, those hot, hungry hands slid up the backs of his bared thighs, petting the warm skin that erupted with tingles – tingles that raced up to where his cock was rubbing frantically into Draco’s leg. “Hmm...” Harry murmured quietly, his head tipping forwards slightly to hide his flustered, pleased expression when Draco’s hand swept up inside his underwear to knead his arse cheeks roughly.

“I-I’m not...*servicing* your *anything*!” Harry managed out, even as Draco’s palms spread him open deliciously, tugging the fabric up into his cock hard. It was all too good. Harry groaned again, his mouth falling against Draco’s ear. “Make me,” he whispered.

As the words 'you're a dirty bastard' spilled over Harry's stuttering lips, Draco smiled intensely, licking his own lips with his seductive and playful tongue. He was grinning like an idiot, almost proud of the embarrassment he was causing Harry Potter. It was as if he got off seeing the *Chosen One* so humiliated.

Draco's hands slid up those smooth thighs and along Harry's hips tenderly, slithering beneath the blouse until they reached his chest. Draco groped Harry's abs, fondling them as though they were breasts. His fingers moulded to those nipples and tweaked them, twisting them and pulling them. Harry yelped, the feelings were so...different. He wasn't some dirty little girl!

Harry crushed his cock down into Draco's leg uncontrollably as the shivers spread all over. And Draco winced; his own member hardening at the feeling of Harry's on him, intensified by the images of the blushing and humiliated *Chosen One* flushed and straddling him. The embarrassment only added to his dirty little fantasy when he instructed Harry to kiss his crown. Harry looked blankly at him when he asked that. But was soon distracted by his next line of speech, which he really couldn't ignore.

“I said, service me...” Draco took hold of Harry's hair (and part of the flower) and yanked him forwards so his lips pressed to that ear to finish his sentence huskily. “...You little whore.”

“Oh *Merlin*, Draco,” Harry hissed, fucking his lover’s leg deliriously as he raised his head to obey and kiss the conjured crown on Draco’s head. Just as his lips touched the cool object, he felt a sharp, stinging pain across his arse and bucked in towards the crest of Draco’s hips in reflex. Their cocks brushed together and Harry fell back onto Draco’s hands, that were caressing his now reddening cheeks almost *lovingly*.

I so did not just lose it over being called a whore, Harry flushed, whining low in his throat when Draco pulled at his nipples mercilessly with his free hand. “More...” He moaned, embarrassment burning his ears. “Say more...” He *felt* the bastard grin at his words.

Draco's hot breath skittered over Harry's neck, as he hummed lowly, “So the little slut likes it when her master talks to dirty, does she?” He licked across the veins in Harry's neck until he reached his collar bone, nibbling the pimpled flesh with lustful bites and moist suckles until Harry swung his head sideways and backwards out of control. The skin started to bruise from his deep kisses and the love-bites began to show.

“Does little Miss Potter like that I'm leaving my mark all over her, hmm? Come on tell me how much you *like* it?”

“Yes! Yes! Yes, mark me, *bite* me! Fuck!” Harry gasped out with a nervous, heated laugh, his body shaking and lunging in every direction. He humped Draco's clothed cock, the friction sparking lusciously. “You're – *so* – hot!” Harry mumbled, shoving Draco's shirt off roughly so that he could feel the hot, sweat-slicked skin against him. *I can't believe I'm getting off to being dressed up and fondled like a girl*, he thought, before all coherency shuddered away under the tide of ecstasy.

“Talk... Talk dirty to me more...” He chewed his lip as he deliberated on the following word. “*Master...!*”

The smile on Draco's lips could have cracked the side of his lips when it widened as far as it could to Harry's words, finally acknowledging him as *Master*. “That's right, beg your master!” Draco hummed, instantly sensing the reaction he incited in Harry when the boy humped his leg further. Draco fed his fingers under the silk knickers once more to grasp Harry's cock.

“You're dripping you slut, I can feel it all over my fingers,” Draco purred, the pre-cum drizzling from the end of Harry's cock and sliding greasily over his digits when he whispered headily into that quivering ear that automatically pressed against Draco's hot lips for more. Draco delighted in the pleasurable shudders when he incited when he spoke...

“Lay down on the floor bitch!” Shoving Harry at last from his moist leg and onto the grassy riverbank beside him, Draco gasped, seeing Harry like this made him nearly able to cum hard in his trousers, without even the need to touch...it was all *too hot!* Quickly climbing over him, Draco pinned those hands to the muddy ground, their

cocks colliding blissfully and both of them groaned in harmony.

“Tell me again, Potter, tell me what it is you love about your master. Come on, you dirty, disgusting little slut,” Draco chuckled, involuntarily thrusting his hips forward against Harry when that body grinded up at him from below.

“Tell me how much you want my big, hard cock inside your tight little hole?”

Harry’s head flew backwards into the dirt with abandon. His hips rose with maddening thrusts up into Draco’s cock and he struggled to wrench his hands free so that he could jerk himself to completion – but Draco’s grip held fast. “Uhh...I want it! I want it...in...in my slutty arse – *please!!!*” The skirt he had on lay flicked up over his stomach, and the wetness drizzling from his prick had dampened the silky knickers enough to make them nearly see-through. The sight of its shape twitching up against Draco’s hardness made him want to cum – so badly that the heat in his loins started to hurt....

“You’re a bloody slut! Look at you begging for me, your little undies are soaked, don’t you think you’re a whore, twitching so much under your master’s control...?” Draco leant back to that ear and whispered deep, “Whores ought to be punished...” He grinned against that lobe and Harry knew the smug bastard was loving this, *this...humiliation*. But part of him couldn’t help but love it too (it was too hot to deny), even though he knew once it was over Draco would use it as blackmail at every possible opportunity.

The Slytherin’s index finger crept over the pulsing organ that was shuddering under the silk and ran the digit down the moist material in a torturously slow stroke. Harry gasped at the contact and arched upwards instantly, only causing Draco to giggle smugly when he touched it again. But this time, firmer and with a second finger.

“So what does the slut want her master to do? Tell me what you want?” Draco realised just how embarrassed this was making Harry and deviously licked his lips at the thought.

“Oh,” Harry murmured as he fought his hardest against Draco’s hold. “Fuck me, *please...*” Everything was so tight. It was so hot and he was going to scream if Draco didn’t let him cum soon. “Pound my tight, dirty arse. Punish me – stretch me, break me – *please!*”

Oh god, he thought, the static caressing his damp prick unbearable – as if he’d had an electric probe slipped inside. *How can this be driving me so crazy?!* “God! Draco, I

don't care what you put in me – *anything*, just let me cum, *please!*” He was nearly salivating – this was ridiculous!

“You're a dirty little bitch aren't you?” Draco toyed with him, licking along Harry's bruised and flustered neck, over his cheek and finally to his dry mouth where he forced his tongue past those startled lips. His tongue shoved inside that pink and wet place, feeding through the teeth until it entangled with Harry's. The muscles clashed together in a wet collision of saliva and Draco hummed deeply at how sweet the *Chosen One* tasted. He pulled out from the sloppy kiss and whispered, “A sweeter taste than even a girl, Potter?”

Running his fingers over those hips he stripped the drenched, silk underwear down quickly from Harry's pulsing cock and a rush of relief ran up it when it sprung up towards Draco's belly. That contact was heated and close, their flesh almost steamed as Draco's hands flew to his own trousers to unzip them. Pulling them half-way down with his pants (so that they were around his legs) he leant over Harry closely, their bare erections pressed together with a surge of burning, delicious friction.

As Draco took off his mock-crown, he placed it on ground and reached for his wand (still laying flush against Harry). Bringing it up into the air, a single *swish* transformed it into a golden little elliptical object that Harry could barely see through the glaze across his vision.

“Open your legs, you cunt,” Draco demanded darkly, and waited while Harry's legs parted for him. He took the object and placed it against Harry's twitching entrance, allowing only a moment of apprehension, before pressing it in with a sudden jolt and Harry's hole swallowed it hungrily, like it had been starved for weeks.

Beyond the humid mist of lust, Draco heard Harry murmur something that sounded like '*what is that*' but he couldn't be sure so he didn't answer. Holding his wand in one hand, Draco flicked it suddenly and Harry's body lurched into an intense seizure, wriggling wildly when the 'thing' inside him began to vibrate.

“Oh! Oh...w-what is...what *is* that?!” Harry near-screamed, his arse swallowing the object hungrily down, still wanting more and clenching around it frantically as the vibrations shot through his heated body until he arched clean off the grassy bank and into Draco's stomach. “T-That's so...” His eyes clenched tightly to hide their glassy state of passion from Draco's gaze. “My arse feels really...” He couldn't form a coherent sentence and he heard a knowing, dark chuckle from above.

The Slytherin cackled as he watched Harry's little body shudder with each vibration

that coursed through him from the object. He leant down to Harry's ear once more and whispered, "Push it out, go on, push the bullet out of your arse..."

Harry certainly was acting like the girl he was dressed like when he raised his arm up to cover his eyes. *This is so embarrassing...*

Harry strained, with a struggle the first time he tried to push it out, (reluctantly) and panted with a frustrated whine when it remained inside him. He must have looked so pathetic. But Draco still seemed to be *relishing* the sight. He tried again and the little vibrating object's tip peeped out of the entrance of his crack slightly when he didn't let up. It finally popped out and rolled onto the grass. Draco flicked it aside carelessly and bent Harry's legs back into his chest.

"How much do you want me inside you, whore?" He sneered, waiting patiently with his cock in place for the *slut* to answer his *master*.

Harry's spine arched with unbearable, desperate tremors and he wriggled maddeningly, grinding his cock in to every part of Draco he could reach. "So bad," he gasped, not daring to open his eyes. "I need you – in me, so bad, *Master...*" His fingers found Draco's shoulders and he growled out in frustration when he felt his body clench with need. "Fuck me! Please! I'm such a...*dirty...whore* – Fuck me!!!"

Draco's teeth glistened in the sunlight at Harry's pleas when he offered that *smile* of his, and he felt his entire body tremble under the images of Harry's dirty and slutty act. It was just *too hot* for words and he found himself dribbling a little with his mouth open. He lined his penis up quickly with that needy backside and pressed forwards, tingles rushed through the blistering tip when it touched, more intense than the static from the casual brush of his hand. Harry yelped under his breath and threw his head back in ecstasy when the head pushed past that tight, convulsing ring of muscles. But as soon as the head slid inside, Draco stopped.

"Beg me – beg me to fuck you, bend you, *break you...* Tell me how much you want me!" Draco hissed with passion, both hands resting besides the boy's hips as he towered over him from above.

"F-Fuck me! *Break me* – ruin me – oh god, *please...*!" Harry was fully aware of the high-pitched whine his pleas had risen to then, as he reached down and fisted his oozing cock underneath his skirt. His arse clenched tightly, greedily around the stiffness Draco slid into him and he pushed himself onto it in the mad desire for more.

"I'll – do – *anything*," he panted, chest rising and falling breathlessly, sweaty skin

sticking to the thin material of the 'school-girl' shirt and clinging to his tight nipples as he begged.

"Anything...?" The Slytherin sneered, still restraining his cock from pressing any further inside (almost as if to tease cruelly) when his eyes closed and he leant in to those sensitive lobes and whispered deeply, "I want you to shout out how you long for my cock to fill you up, how you *need* my cock to fill your slutty little body, and how you love it when I fuck you raw – until you can't take it anymore..." The words brushed tenderly over Harry's ear, and he swore he was going mad.

Draco reached under the shirt and pulled Harry's nipples as far from his body as he could, and Harry winced, squealing at the sensitive nips being tugged uncomfortably away from his chest.

"Come on, you bloody whore, shout!"

"Oh!" Harry hummed deliriously, his fist jerking his prick roughly. "Stuff...my slutty little asshole!" He screamed carelessly, "Fill me until it *hurts*! Please just fuck me now! Anything – *anything*!!!"

Draco grasped Harry's buttocks and ripped them apart, the wrinkled skin at his opening pulled taut (almost to the point of pain) and slowly he pushed himself deeper inside – at last! "Ahh..." Draco groaned as he felt his dick slide inwards deliciously, the quivering walls hot, and tight, clenching around his tingling prick. The soft, wet flesh gripped him desperately when he pulled back out, the swollen head tugging at the greedy ring.

"T-Tell your master how big...how big h-his cock is...!" Draco panted.

"Fucking huge!" Harry groaned deliriously, but Draco bent further over him, pressing his legs almost spitefully back to his shoulders and a hard slap crashed into his stretched arse cheek. He realised his error and wriggled at the stinging pain across his buttock coupled with the burning, swelling fire in his taut opening. "*Master*," he amended, "I-It's – so – *huge* its stretching me!"

Draco's cock slid in him deep and slow and it drove the most humiliating noises from him. Reaching out with his free-hand, Harry sucked on one of his fingers suggestively before smearing the spittle over the object Draco had made him expel from his body earlier and sliding the bullet into Draco's tight hole.

"Fuck!" Draco yelled as he felt the buzzing object pushed roughly into him, (his flesh

shocked by the unusual feeling). He shuddered at the sensations assaulting him and licked his lips impatiently and deliriously (it wasn't often his bottom was attended to and his body shivered around the toy) – it felt like he was losing himself. “You... You're a naughty little girl...Potter,” He whispered huskily, jerking his hips deeper into that arse.

“I...I'm going to make you cum so bloody hard,” He ground out through clenched teeth and a hazy blur of lust. His hips fastened, slamming against Harry harder, and faster. He held onto Harry's bum cheeks tightly as he panted with need. His cock felt like it was on fire from the friction which only made his dick move with intensified fury at the feeling rising in his loins.

“Take this...you slut...fucking take it...!” Draco growled and leant into Harry's chest, nipping at his nipples provocatively.

“Hmm!” Harry groaned, the vibrations in Draco's arse travelling along his cock and into Harry deliciously. “Hmm...mmmm...give it to me...” He panted, exhausted and desperate. “All of it...make me cum...Master...” With that he threw his head back, falling prey to the vibrating pleasure that stemmed from Draco's every *touch* and surrendering all-too willingly, waiting for the moment when Draco would release him.

“*Draco!*” He whined, “You're – so–” But he couldn't finish. His words spiralled off into a cry of manic passion as he squeezed his wet dick hard, that delicious heat pooling in his belly. “Going to cum!”

The overhanging tree shook with the sudden breeze, countering the sound of Harry's screams with the whistles of the wind carrying through the branches above. Draco's hips and backside strained, but he couldn't stop.

“Cum for me! Cock-sucking little prick, over me, over...over you... Cum as hard as you can!” Draco swung his head backwards, sweat streaking across his forehead as he let out an exasperated, breathless gasp, but he didn't care, he was almost there. “I'm getting close!” He trembled, slamming himself forwards with wet slaps, his balls clapping against the back of Harry's arse roughly each time he rammed inside. And the sheer thought made Harry's cock harden inside his own, strained fist.

“When...when you cum...I want you to lick it – clean it all with your tongue...you dirty bitch...” All the profanity that spewed from Draco's lips only fuelled that rise inside Harry's heated cock. When the both of them caught the gaze of the other, something was happening...something...amazing...

Something inside Harry exploded. His balls pulled up tight to his body and he tensed hard around Draco's thrusts as his climax erupted from his purple prick, painting his and Draco's torsos with his creamy finish. He was panting and writhing with his blinding, *quivering* aftermath of sublime pleasure. He milked Draco's prick unwittingly, murmuring incoherently for the Blond to follow him into his finish.

"Ahhh...fuck...I...I...!" Draco yelled from the top of his lungs, it seemed Harry's little display had only made his end build that much faster, and he was rushing, moving as fast as his hips would allow inside of Harry. "You...you girly prick...I..." Draco sighed heavily when his cock exploded inside Harry's arse. "Cumming!"

A dazed, dizzy hum shuddered beyond Harry's lips like the shiver that took his sweat-slicked body as his skin cooled on the dewy bank. He groaned as he felt Draco's burning seed erupt in his arse, and wriggled at the sensation until Draco panted, sliding down on top of him – spent.

Harry smirked, wrapping his arms around Draco's shoulders and pressing his face into the Blond's neck as he struggled to regain control over his breathing. "Every time with you feels like...it dazzles me," he admitted quietly in his lover's flustered ear.

"Stop being romantic and take this bullet out of my arse already," Draco groaned, his breath still heavy from the explosion. Harry reached around and pulled it out by the wire attached to the end of it. Draco shivered, biting down on his lip – he winced, eyes clenched when the object slipped out through the twitching ring of muscle. Harry had never seen such a flustered and satisfied expression on his face before and he couldn't help but stare. Draco fell forwards to Harry's body and felt the sticky mess between their chests and bellies slide between them, his softening cock pressing against Harry's lightly as he caught his breath.

"We're...we're going to be alright," Harry breathed softly, his lashes fluttering with relaxation – comfort. "And after this is all over I get to wear the crown and *you* can wear the dress," he laughed, and Draco snorted derisively.

~To Be Continued...

Chapter 19: Chapter Nineteen

(Bound By) Clandestine Addiction

[Chapter Nineteen]

Harry rolled his shoulders as he stood at the stove in his and Draco's tent. Hermione and Ron had not yet surfaced and Draco hadn't so much as *twitched* when he, Harry had gotten up, so he decided to make himself useful. A slither of a chill crept over his naked back from the cool morning – perhaps cooking in only his underwear wasn't such a clever idea. He pulled the breakfast tray towards him and dropped the bacon, sausage and eggs onto the plate beside the toast, staring at it with awkward apprehension of Draco's reaction before picking the tray up carefully and heading back into the bedroom.

The Blond must have been stirring already because as the smell of the breakfast Harry was carrying swept through the bedroom area, Draco's eyes cracked open. Harry smiled, his happiness tinted with embarrassment as he set the breakfast tray down next to Draco on the bed. "Made you breakfast in bed," he announced needlessly, watching Draco sit up slowly, staring between him and the tray in sleepy surprise.

Draco clenched his fingers around his golden locks in dismay when he suddenly felt a headache arising behind his eyes. "What am I, your husband?" He bit out sarcastically. To which Harry only felt the need to playfully reply...

"Why are you the husband?!"

Draco looked at him irately and rolled over onto his other side (so his back was now purposely facing Harry). He wasn't in the mood for this, and he still felt tired, perplexed almost. "I don't want your bloody food," he grumbled, stuffing the pillow back over his head to block out whatever reply Harry would give him. Truth was he

didn't feel up to eating anything, when all he couldn't think about was what tomorrow held. Harry seemed (somehow) to be keeping it together by distracting himself with making breakfast and running around like a little housewife. However Draco saw through that disguise and it only made him feel more uneasy, that Harry was going out of his way to escape the unavoidable subject that was Voldemort.

“I made it for you,” Harry insisted, staring at the pillow over Draco’s head irritably. But when he only got a grumbling insult in return, Harry seized a piece of toast off the top of the pile, cast the spell to keep the food hot for when (and if) Draco decided to eat it and seized his jeans off the floor. *I know he’s scared about tomorrow*, Harry thought as he chewed his toast and struggled into his clothes. *I can feel that he is but I wish he felt he could tell me!*

Draco was sure his feelings were flooding into Harry faster than a river through this bond, every damn movement he made reflected in the Gryffindor like they were two pieces of the same puzzle.

There had been many times when the bond had confused him, but this was the first time he wished (despite it being that gateway to loving Harry) that it wasn't there. He hated how Harry was always inside his head. And even when he said nothing, he *knew* Harry sensed his words. He knew Harry could feel his fear. And he was ashamed. He wanted to be the one to remain strong for Harry, (when he couldn't remain strong for himself) because he knew just how much Harry needed that right now. He felt pretty pathetic as he lay with his head buried deep into the pillow, sinking somewhere through that fearful abyss, the cushion swallowing his every heavy thought.

Harry paused by the curtain separating the bedroom from the rest of the tent and cast his emerald gaze back over the lump in the bed. He had a feeling, had a suspicion that he, Harry would not return tomorrow – it was as if he was *destined* to die bringing Voldemort down and perhaps it was that feeling, that *knowledge* he had possessed for so long that had him so easily pushing it aside for the last few days.

I've always known I had to face him, Harry thought, I've always known that it would come to this, and since I heard the prophecy I have felt that I might have to die to see it done. But Draco has only been involved in this for just over a year and a half, he's never thought he would be part of the force that brought him down. He's never had to face his fear...

A soft, sad smile graced his lips and he dropped the hand holding up the curtain to move back to the bed and run his hand down Draco's naked back. The skin hummed with delight at his touch, as always, but Draco remained silent. "I love you," Harry said matter-of-factly. *I think I did even when I cast that spell on you and that's why this bond was formed*, his mind added as he rose back to his feet, approaching the curtain once more to give his lover some peace.

His neck stiffened as those fingers skittered over his skin, it sent shivers down his spine from the subtle touches and he felt some sort of soothing bliss he had never experienced shimmer over him when Harry said those three words.

"You will be okay, Harry," He said quietly, briskly, like there was a little light in such an abyss after all and his voice was that light. *They would be okay...they had to be!*

Harry paused in his steps again to look back at him. "We will be," he replied easily, returning to Draco's side to slowly prise the pillow from his head. A small, flickering smile met his lips as he slid his fingers through Draco's soft, mussed up hair and remained kneeling on the floor in that position for a while, his head resting slightly on his outstretched arm. He watched Draco determinedly *not* reacting to his soothing touch and his smile widened.

"You're like my superman, you know," Harry laughed, especially when Draco just looked confused. He forgot some wizards didn't get his *muggle*

entertainment references – particularly television ones! “Someone really strong who lets his lover act the total, pathetic *girl* and swoon and melt all over him.” He watched Draco return his smile at Harry referring to himself as the damsel in distress. “You let me be weak; you let me be *Harry* instead of the *Chosen One*.” At that he reached over, seizing another slice of toast and offering it up to his boyfriend’s mouth. “And you let me gush out like a lovestruck puppy,” he joked, “I don’t think you realise how much I appreciate the way you let me live when I’m with you.”

Draco finally opened his mouth to food and allowed Harry (surprisingly) to feed him. With a sad smile he swallowed and realised he was blushing a little while struggling to force out his reply. “I wouldn’t...wouldn’t want you to be anyone other than who you are...Harry,” He said at last as he leant up and took the breakfast tray from his lover.

“Give me that!” He snatched the plate from the tray and started to fork the bacon. His stomach started to ease pleasantly when the food slid down.

Harry watched him for a few minutes, that treacherous warmth swelling in his stomach at Draco’s words and the look in his eyes. “When you say my name like that it’s like it’s the best name in the world,” he laughed, getting to his feet and running a comb through his hair thoughtfully.

The last few days had probably been the best of his life, although admitting that to Draco would probably result in some of that bacon being lobbed at his head! He smirked at that. And besides which, this emotional bond worked both ways – without words, Draco felt the warmth in his stomach when he said he loved him, when his skin was *glowing* with bliss. He knew Harry had never felt this complete before...

“So, what do you want to do today?” He asked the Blond carefully, when he had made his hair as flat as it would lay.

Draco's eyebrows rose at that question, the way Harry asked it kind of deteriorated the whole situation they were in and made him feel as though it was simply a normal day. It was quite a nostalgic feeling considering he hadn't really arranged to do things, or just relax with his slytherin friends for a long while, not since they were children. He had distanced himself from everyone and everything when Lord Voldemort had started poking his nose in. So to say he was a little lost for words was an understatement.

Draco Malfoy lost for words, sat silently after Harry's question and shrugged. He had no idea what they could do. And he didn't really want to plan it out considering he didn't want this day in particular to be over.

Harry swallowed, nervous again for a moment – he never knew how Draco was going to react. “I was wondering if you...that is...” He shut his eyes tight for a moment, mentally flinching at what was about to ask. “Would you... I mean, I asked you to come with me on Valentine’s Day but we didn’t exactly... So I... Would you go out, with me? On a date-kind-a-thing?” He watched Draco’s eyes widen impossibly, and leapt in before he could protest. “We could cast a glamour so that no one will recognise us! And we could...just relax, like...” He realised he was rambling, and prayed to *anyone* that was listening that Draco would stop him soon. “Stupid idea, I suppose, sorry I just–”

Malfoy’s voice cut across him then. “Yes...” The Blond answered simply, while Harry remained frozen, eyes wide with bewilderment at the answer he had never expected. “No need to stare, Potter, I said yes... Where do you want to go exactly?”

Harry remained stunned to silence for a good few moments, watching Draco survey him carefully as he finished his breakfast. He considered his answer carefully, partially because he didn’t want it to seem like he’d been over-thinking it (even though he had) and partially because Draco might actually *agree*! “Well...” He began, sliding onto the bed in front of Draco when the Blond set the now empty breakfast

tray aside. “Hermione and Ron went and did...*couple* things during the holidays and I – I don’t know, I’ve never done any of it before, but maybe... Maybe we could go and do some of those things?”

Harry’s brow furrowed when Draco said nothing, realising that the Blond wanted to hear *actual* suggestions before he agreed to anything.

“*Things?*” Draco prompted, suspicion lacing his unusually soft voice. Harry flushed a little.

“Well... I don’t know... Things like dinner and... I don’t know.” He sounded frustrated with his own embarrassment – and he was! Harry turned to lie on his back on the bed, staring curiously up into Draco’s face, that watched him thoughtfully in return. “Haven’t you ever gone on a date, or anything like it?” Harry asked, never having heard much about Draco’s love-life before him except for the suggestion that he’d slept with other people...

“Harry, we are in the middle of a forest, where do you expect us to go for dinner?” Draco asked sarcastically (and supposedly forgetting about the fact they were wizards for a brief moment). Not to mention the fact that, no, he hadn't done 'date' things before.

“Dating...isn't my style,” Draco groaned as he saw Harry's expression fade to something near to heartbreak. “But I suppose, I can make an exception this once.”

“Hermione will apparate us if I ask her,” Harry said brightly, though not daring to smile yet, even if his chest was *aching* with his inner smile. “She can drop us off somewhere that she’s been before – somewhere she knows is good and come pick us up after.” He flipped over onto his stomach then, kneeling slightly as he considered the Blond’s face. “I like...I like that I’m an exception,” he said nervously, before grinning, “If you’re nice to me, I’ll let you have a good-luck fuck before we set off tomorrow.”

He watched Malfoy offer a small smile and finally released his own. Why did the idiot have to make him feel like he was *glowing*?! “I haven’t had any dates either – I don’t have any expectations just...just you, and dinner would be more than enough.” He felt awkward saying such things, but from the grin on Malfoy’s face he guessed that the Blond’s mind was still on the ‘good luck fuck’ promise.

Draco raised his eyebrows; amused by the offer of a 'good luck fuck' and the way that entire sentence sounded so unscrupulous, so unlike Harry. His amused smile turned into an almost sexual dark glare, “How nice is nice?” He breathed huskily through the broadening grin. “Fine, whatever you like... As long as you're sure its going to be safe enough to just wonder around with no protection whatsoever,” The Slytherin joked, although the point had accuracy to it.

“We will use a glamour – no one will know its us but to each other we’ll still look – well, like each other,” He explained, his smile fixing so that it was starting to hurt. He laughed slightly. “If anyone had ever told me I’d end up head over heels for Draco bloody Malfoy I think I’d tell them they’d been confunded,” Harry teased airily. “But...I’m glad that I did – end up with you, I mean. It was hard at the start but the best things in life always are.” He paused then, his smile faltering a little. Suddenly his voice sounded very...heavy with emotion. “It’s not been a fairytale the whole way through but whatever happens, I... I don’t regret any of it; I wouldn’t take any of it back, even the bad stuff.”

Seeing Malfoy looking awkward with this sudden reassurance that sounded frighteningly like the prelude to a potential goodbye, Harry pecked him on the cheek and leapt to his feet. “Better go and ask Hermione for that lift in for later then,” he said as he pulled on a shirt and aimed for the door, his voice lighter and optimistic once again. But as his hand reached for the curtain, Draco’s voice stopped him.

Draco brought his hand immediately to his cheek at that kiss with a flushed expression. *What was that?!* He huffed under his breath, purposefully directing his

attention sideways. “Wait...” He gasped, halting Harry in his steps.

Harry spun on his heel and looked at him, almost cheekily with that smile, and Draco’s eyes were pricked with a familiar moisture. Slowly he clenched them shut, and the Slytherin leant forward across the bed and pulled Harry in by his collar, into his arms, into a warm embrace. Drowning himself in that warmth instead of losing himself to the never-ending nightmare, where all he wanted to do was protect Harry.

Draco's emotions flooded through Harry like electricity through a wire, coarse and painful for that fleeting moment, where all the feelings he had been keeping inside pulsed in through Harry's chest, as they collided. “You dare die on me tomorrow...and I'll...I'll bring you back just to kill you myself,” Draco warned him, his voice a croaky, tearful murmur, deep in the back of his throat.

Harry surveyed him carefully, before leaning into the arms surrounding him slowly, like melting. “Love you, too,” he laughed, pressing his cheek into Draco’s neck for a moment, before drawing reluctantly from his warmth. Looking the Blond up and down suggestively, Harry stepped back towards the door. “Put on something less comfortable – I’m just going to Hermione to ask for a lift.” And with that he was gone, a strangely, elate feeling brewing in his chest.

* * *

Harry felt intensely awkward as Hermione gave him that final, *knowing* look before disappearing with a *crack*! How was it that she just *knew* everything! He shook his head, inhaling deeply before turning to face Draco. It seemed different, even though he’d seen Draco like this before, his hair slicked back and the black suit. He felt very overshadowed and very underdressed with his untameable hair and jeans and jacket.

Ruffling his perpetually messy hair subconsciously, he followed as they walked slowly from the alley Hermione had apparated them into (since their *date* was in a muggle village). He glanced over at Draco frequently, not really sure how to behave. No one else could see who they were, thanks to the glamour but he still wasn't sure how Draco marked public affection. They stepped into the street, still busy even at dusk and he jumped as someone bumped into him carelessly, so that he stumbled into Draco. He jumped back awkwardly, and the way that those eyes stayed on him suggested that the Blond had noticed his ridiculous behaviour.

“Potter, it is just a *dinner date*... Stop falling over your feet,” Draco teased, with a devilish smile that suggested he knew exactly why Harry was so clumsy; it didn't take a *wizard* to see he was nervous from his expression. But Draco also had no intention of letting Harry get away with *not* feeling foolish for his actions, at least once or twice on this date. He laughed to himself at the suggestion of Harry Potter nervous on a date, yet facing Lord Voldemort so readily.

“You are really...*peculiar*, Harry,” Draco said in amusement, though he was sure Harry went blank at that statement. “Come on,” the Blond said, leading Harry over to the cute little restaurant on the side of 'Aberconwy road'. The cosy muggle restaurant wasn't anything extravagant or *magical* like those in the wizarding world, but the peacefulness of a comfortable, relaxing tavern seemed somewhat more appealing right now. It was more...intimate...

Harry stared about, his attempt at masking his awe quite pitiful. “This is really nice,” he said distantly, as Draco spoke to the waitress that approached them as soon as they entered. He supposed Hermione suggested it also because it was fairly empty, so would be more likely to take them last minute. A hard lump had risen in his throat as the waitress gestured for him to sit down just across from Draco on the small table near the back of the restaurant. He couldn't quite find the confidence to look up just yet, especially since the derisive look the waitress gave him made him feel even smaller...

“Catch your eye, did she?” Harry asked airily, pretending to be looking through the

menu. He could see Draco making out he didn't know what he was talking about – maybe he didn't, or maybe he was so used to attention he just didn't notice, Harry wasn't sure. He dropped his menu a little so he could look at Draco fleetingly. “She was glaring at me like I should be thrown into Azkaban for turning you into an arse-muncher.”

Draco choked at the '*arse muncher*' statement with a cough and flushed slightly. His voice lowered to a hiss when he replied, “For your information, I'm not an *arse* muncher! And I don't appreciate the suggestion of being one.” Despite everything Draco still found it hard to admit he was fucking a man. Or maybe it was just because it was Harry Potter... Either way he *was* an arse muncher and no pretty waitress would change his mind otherwise.

Draco couldn't help of it; part of him always had to jump into *defensive mode*, even when it was true. It was alright when he admitted it, but when someone else put it clear as day he turned his nose up. That was just the way Draco was. “You're so much like a woman I forget you're a man sometimes anyway,” Draco retorted.

Harry flinched at that statement, and at the flicker of amusement that danced across Draco's face under the soft, warm lighting, and cast another glance back to the waitress who was approaching slowly. He supposed she was good looking, and the short skirt and tight blouse could be appealing – if he had looked at another girl in the last two years in that way at all.

“She's pretty,” Harry griped to Draco as he glared back at his menu, struggling to control the violent flare of jealousy he *knew* the Blond could see. “Don't hold back on my account, you must miss girls,” he grumbled sarcastically – and Draco was *still* smiling, sincerely, like it was *funny*?! “Ask her for a ride back to the straight world, her arse is big enough to take you both–”

“How may I help you this evening?” The girl chimed pleasantly to Draco, ignoring

Harry completely except for the occasional glance. She made a point of flicking her dirty-blond hair over her shoulder as she looked down at him. Harry rolled his eyes at the *not* so subtle way of giving Draco a view of her cleavage. “Have you decided what you want to order, sweetheart?”

He could feel that jealousy from Harry rushing through him. Vengefully he decided to play on it, considering that last statement of Harry's wasn't particularly one he was fond of and this was the perfect way to get at him.

The smile on the Blond's lips broadened when he looked up at the waitress with shining silver eyes and smiled (in a way Harry had *never* seen). “Yes thank you, Darling, what a pleasant lady you are. I would like many things on this menu, I wonder if you could tell me what you like best, if it is perfection for you, then I am sure it will be good enough for me...” He gazed dreamily into the now flushing waitress's face as she leant over him, purposefully allowing her cleavage to be in line with his eyes when she shared a look at his menu.

Draco grinned when he saw Harry stiffen (sickeningly satisfied he was making him so uptight), Harry probably had no idea of what a charmer he was with women, and just how polite he could be, since he had never seen that side and had been lumbered with the rough side of his love.

“Just make sure you don't offer him anything with too much salt in,” Harry offered the waitress with a smile, “He's already too bitter... *Probably from all the semen...*” He hid behind his menu again. He was jealous, he couldn't hide it from Draco but he wasn't going to pout like a scorned schoolgirl – not without a fight in any case. In truth he supposed he was the bitter one at the moment, fuming with jealousy at how...*charming* Draco was being, how much of an effort he put into his manners for her. Draco never did that for him...

The waitress looked at him with disgust and Harry rolled his eyes, despite the hurt

prickling a little in his chest. He supposed now the *muggle* world had something to gossip about when they saw him – in light of what they had to face tomorrow, a homophobic waitress didn't bother him, not too much anyway.

He handed her the menu with a forced, pleasant smile. "I'll have whatever your *darling* has," he said evenly, shooting a glare at Draco. Okay, maybe he *was* pouting and sulking like a girl, at this point he didn't really care. Just when he thought everything was alright with him and Draco, he caught a glimpse of what he was missing. He hadn't especially wanted that, he wanted Draco just as he was, but the fact that he offered that charm to someone else made him seethe in his seat.

Draco smiled at the waitress as she departed with their order in hand, and he took a long look at her behind, long enough so Harry would notice him staring. "What a wonderful waitress... Pretty fit, too, don't you think?" Draco's eyes gleamed playfully as his attention finally turned back at Harry, who sat bolt upright and *anything* but amused.

Draco laughed as he placed his hand over his napkin and laid it upon his lap. "She's definitely my type..."

"I wouldn't know, *obviously*," Harry griped sarcastically, drinking his complementary water that had been at the table. "I would have thought your type would have been the one you fucked last night but I am naïve in most things," He downed the glass, glaring at Draco for a moment before turning his head away. He didn't like this kind of teasing. "Go after her if you want, I'm sure she's up for a quickie in the backroom..."

"Hmmm, maybe I will go after her, and perhaps I should buy you a woman for an hour or two at some point, not that you would know what you were doing of course?" Draco tormented him as he circled his finger around the mouth of his glass. The waitress returned soon with a small starter for both of them, unable to tear her ravenous gaze from Draco the entire time.

“Maybe you should,” Harry smirked, “I’ve only ever had your cock after all, maybe if I had a girl I’d see the light.” Harry turned his smile to the waitress and she gave a startled smile back – Harry knew he wasn’t as charming as Draco was but he watched her blush a little.

“No!” The sudden outburst tore from Draco's lip's and he wasn't really sure why or what he said no for, he just didn't feel comfortable with Harry suggesting that. If Harry did have a girl, maybe he really would prefer them... Draco batted that thought away and knocked Harry's foot with his own under the table.

“Well I meant... I don't think she, in particular is right for you.”

Harry smirked victoriously, enjoying the spark of jealousy just a little. He rubbed the foot Draco had kicked him with gently, bringing the soft tip of his trainer up along Draco’s leg soothingly. “No?” Harry asked innocently, looking back up at the waitress briefly before meeting Draco’s eyes. “Who do you think *is* right for me then?” He breathed, brushing the soft heat in the front of Draco’s trousers discreetly under the table. He watched Draco’s cheeks colour with arousal.

“Thank you,” Draco turned his attention at the waitress when she handed him the plate. He leant up and kissed her on the cheek and handing her some muggle money he whispered ‘*treat yourself*’ into her ear. And he felt Harry press his foot hard into his limp cock. He jumped, wincing slightly, before answering Harry's question. “Someone...someone like me.”

“I thought so,” Harry said huskily, leaning back slightly to eat his dinner. He kept his foot moving slowly over Draco’s foot, however and glanced up after only a few mouthfuls when the waitress had moved out of earshot. “What’s with the *charming*

act?” He asked, “You don’t call me *darling* or anything – and I’m – you’re supposed to be...” He flushed furiously as he realised what he had just said and stuck his fork in to curl some of the Bolognese round it distractedly. “...mine.”

Draco smiled smugly. “You are so pathetic Harry,” Draco hummed as he bit into one of the meatballs. He licked over them seductively and swirled his tongue around their shape, ensuring Harry caught a glimpse of what he was doing when he took it deep into his throat and swallowed. “How about that *good luck fuck* you promised?”

“Mind always in the gutter,” Harry laughed, reaching out with his tongue to capture the line of spaghetti that tried to escape from the curl around his fork. He knew Draco was watching the movement and smirked fleetingly before glancing back down at his food. “So can I call *you* ‘darling’ then?” He joked, and Draco raised a brow in disbelief at that statement, saying nothing as he continued his meal.

“You know,” Harry continued, “You didn’t even hold my hand when we walked here, then you pull this stunt with the waitress... You’re not being a very good first date,” He teased, a suggestive look shining in his green eyes when he glance back up to his boyfriend’s face. “If you’re not careful you won’t get a second one.” He ate as much of his dinner as he could before lacing his fingers together on the table, mere inches from Draco’s. Draco just seemed a little confused.

Catching the waitress glaring at him jealously from where she stood across the room, Harry leant forwards a little more. “Kiss me, now,” he demanded simply, huskily, startling Draco a little. The *Chosen One* quirked a suggestive eyebrow at him. “If you want your *good luck fuck* you have to give me some foreplay. Kiss me, here.”

Draco immediately brought his foot up and kicked Harry in the balls under the table, hard enough to make the stars of pained tears to shoot across those green eyes. Harry’s hands shot in to cup himself where Draco had just punished him.

“Less of that,” Draco growled warningly, and watching Harry’s expression fall to a sad and somewhat pained grimace, he leant over the table. “Don't you dare call me a rubbish date,” He murmured, reaching in and pulling the escaping line of spaghetti hanging from Harry's mouth with his teeth and sucking it noisily through his lips, well aware everyone was watching. His eyes stuck to Harry's for a fleeting moment before he edged back into the chair.

“Now, fuck or be fucked...your choice, but unless you want me to kick you in the nuts again, I suggest we go to the bathroom right now,” The Slytherin hissed quietly, so that all of the people watching could not hear.

“You – just – *kicked* my fucking *balls!*” Harry snarled under his breath, “I’m wouldn’t let you near my arse if you *begged* me!” He flinched as Draco reached out with his thumb to wipe the sauce that stained the corner of his mouth away, sucking it off his thumb slowly – in what *would* have been arousing in any other situation. And people were still watching...

Harry rubbed his abused area for a moment, blinking as his eyes watered and yanking his head back when Draco continued to look at him meaningfully. Staggering to his feet, Harry glared at him. “I’m going to the loo to make sure my bollocks still function,” Harry whispered harshly to him, before spinning on his heel and barging into the toilet.

It was deserted, thank god – a simple, bright, white washroom that *looked* clean. Moving into the nearest cubicle, Harry kicked the door shut, his temper flaring dangerously as he pulled his jeans and underwear down to his ankles and examined himself carefully. He hissed in pain, he was definitely bruised. *Arsehole*, he thought as he reached into his back pocket for his wand, bringing the tip over his abused flesh.

“*Episkey!*” The ache, the throbbing pain was instantly ebbing away and he shoved his wand impatiently back into his pocket. He couldn’t *believe* Malfoy could really do such rapid turns in mood and personality in just an *hour*. He could’ve sworn Malfoy *would* have kissed him just then – that was the only time he ever asked, when he thought he might get it. The door to the main bathroom opened with a clean squeak and Harry sneered as the tingle of their bond alerted him to Draco’s presence in the room, long before he felt him slip inside behind him and bolt the cubicle door shut.

“I *really* don’t think so, Malfoy,” Harry growled, reaching down to pull his jeans back up. A sharp slap across his arse sent him sprawling forward, so that his hands slammed into the wall to steady himself. “What the fuck are you doing?” He raged, supported against the wall by his hands and unable to move back with Draco pressing in so close. “If asking you to kiss me when you told me you loved me and ruined everything by flirting with a tarty waitress was unsuitable, then I think *fucking* me after you kicked be in the balls *definitely* is!”

“You owe me,” Draco hissed edging Harry further into the cubical wall. He was sure Harry could feel the heat through his trousers on his backside and it ignited his previously dormant pleasure. Draco fought Harry’s pants back down and reached his hand over the tender balls. “Look I’m...I’m *sorry*...” Draco moved his hand further up along that cock, but Harry instantly shoved his hand away and it irritated Draco.

“Fine.” Draco seized hold of Harry’s hair and yanked him backwards, then forwards again sharply, his body colliding with the cubical walls, and the toilet door creaked menacingly as the main door opened, someone else entering the room. Draco grinned as he ran his fingers with tickling tenderness over Harry’s slender hips. “You...Owe...Me...” He tenderly whispered once again over those tender earlobes.

Harry could not help the shudder that licked down his spine, he chewed his lip in a struggle for silence when they heard the person that had stepped into the loo move into the cubicle a few doors away. He bowed his head, still a little hurt from the rejection, but unable to push Draco away when his body was so warm and gentle –and he had actually said *sorry*!

“I only asked to kiss you,” Harry whispered, still confused why it had infuriated him so thoroughly. “It was no more unreasonable than what you were doing...”

“Look, you don't understand. It's easy for you to flaunt yourself around like it's no one's business, but in case you have forgotten, I didn't set out to be a queer...” Draco sighed. He did feel rather ashamed of what and who he had become. “I'm a *slytherin*, Harry...”

“Not all slytherins are *bad*, I'm sure, Draco,” Harry whispered, wincing when Draco grabbed his wrist tighter.

“You weren't the one who had to *change* to be with the person who drove you crazy every night! This bond drives me insane... Since the beginning you've wanted me, and it took a lot for me to finally let you know I wanted you too. You've said you will have me however I am...but even now you want more?”

Draco pressured Harry firmly so he couldn't look round at him – not while he was holding back his tears. Maybe it was the thoughts of the Dark Lord ascending that drove him into a state of realisation, he couldn't hide his awkward ways from Harry any longer, not when they were both so close to death.

“I can't be all the things you want me to be. What you saw in there, was a jealous display to make you want me more... Are you so thick that you couldn't see that? Were you seriously stupid enough to think I *wanted* her?”

Harry's eyes widened in surprise at that admission muffled into the back of his neck. He worried his lips for a moment, hearing the other occupant of the toilet leave and he pressed his head to the cubicle wall. “I don't want you to be anything but...mine,”

Harry admitted nervously, "I want to be with you – you as you are..." He wanted to turn and face him but Draco wouldn't let up and the heartache he felt swelling through their connection made him realise why. He remained still.

"I'm yours, there was never a doubt about that when we walked in here and that's...that's all I wanted, from you." He cleared his throat awkwardly, "I'm an idiot I realise, I...I'm happy, and the last couple of days have been the – the best of my life. You've been...been everything I wanted and more I just... I've never had anyone like you, ever and I'm... I wasn't comfortable sharing you like that, with her, for even a second..."

"That's exactly what I wanted to hear," Draco whispered huskily leaning into his ear from behind. "Now bend over..." Draco didn't particularly feel like lingering on the subject, if there was anything he detested it was trying to open up. "What are you waiting for? Spread your legs, Potter," Draco hissed again.

"You're such a ferret," Harry breathed, but his tone was lighter than before, teasing as he kicked his shoes off to get rid of his jeans and underwear completely. He glanced back over his shoulder at Malfoy, supporting himself at the wall again as he spread his legs, jutting his arse back under Draco's gaze. He felt those warm hands skim his cold backside slowly, gripping at his cheeks and spreading him open.

Harry hissed lowly as he felt Draco blow teasingly over his hole. "D-Do you... Shall I prepare myself for you – while you watch?" Harry suggested hazily.

"Can't I...take you dry? With...no lube?" Draco all-but pleaded. Watching Harry's shoulders stiffen at the idea, he elaborated. "Well it's just, after it heats up the moisture will come naturally anyway..." His attempts at romance never did seem to register with Harry, though Draco hoped he understood this request.

Harry tensed slightly at the suggestion – he remembered the pain of his first time still, when Draco had taken him so hastily. It didn't sound particularly fun, but if Draco wanted it...

“Okay,” Harry agreed hesitantly, spreading himself a little wider as Draco leant flush over his back for a moment. “Like...like the first time, right?” He asked carefully, not sure if Draco could tell from his voice how much he *didn't* want the chaos and the agony of the first time. It hadn't exactly been every virgin's fantasy of how they would lose it...

“Is there... What's the appeal?” He laughed nervously.

Draco was grateful that Harry couldn't see his expression, he hid his flushed cheeks in Harry's back and just whispered, “Shut up,” in an uncharacteristically husky purr. He slammed his hand roughly into Harry's back and Harry's cheek was flattened into the wall, Draco's fingers tickling down over his hips and towards that uninhibited backside.

He grinned as Harry flinched against the slight tickles, clenching when he felt Draco's finger run under his legs and caress his testicles. The Blond ran his finger along that tight area between Harry's balls and entrance, until his finger began to probe slightly at the twitching hole.

Harry shuddered, unreserved, his anger falling away with each tremble and his body melting under those sensuous hands. One fingertip circled his quivering entrance, while the other warm palm slid up the back of his cool thigh. He groaned in delight, feeling Draco smile against the nape of his neck (the way he loved) and turned his head to the side, inviting those delicious lips to the column of his throat.

A small chuckle slid from the mouth that trekked across his shoulder blade to the side of his throat and the vibrations made Harry cry out again, jerking his arse back into that prying finger so that it slipped into the resisting muscle. It grated entry, it was dry but he was a little more loose with the regular sex they'd been adventuring into in their last few days of freedom.

Draco's tongue worried the racing pulse beneath his skin, teeth interjecting gently every now and then while Draco prised him open with two fingers, the dew of sweat at their tips the only lubrication. It felt raw but somehow intoxicating and his cock jerked up against his stomach as he pushed back for more. "Draco!" He hissed, "More, more! That feels..." He cut off as the door to the bathroom opened and the sound of around three men talking light-heartedly barely covered the sounds of Harry, who sank his teeth into his lip in a desperate attempt to silence his arousal. But Draco chuckled against his throat again and Harry *knew* he was going to be getting his first experience in exhibitionism.

"Wait!" Harry whispered, even as his cock and arse twitch as a matter to say '*no, hurry up!*' "They'll hear us!" Harry insisted, his head jerking back with a silent cry as Draco prised him open with a third finger.

"Shussh!" Draco hushed him hotly in his ear, three fingers now stretching his raw hole open, while he licked ferociously at Harry's earlobe and around the back down his neck line. Draco felt Harry quivering at his touch, and slight groans fell from his lips every time the Blond pushed his finger's further inwards. He knew Harry biting down on his lip to stifle the cries, but that only aroused Draco's perverted interest further.

Draco leant back to that ear and murmured hotly, something along the lines of, "How is the '*Chosen One*' liking the raw feeling of my fingers between his thighs, hmm?"

“A-A lot!” Harry gasped out shamelessly, his eyes tightly shut from his struggles for silence. “He’s liking it a lot!” The dark-haired Boy brought his hand to his mouth and licked it heavily before reaching between his spread legs and grasping Draco’s erection. A sharp intake of breath from the Blond was his answer, as his wet fingers slid over that thick shaft. He tugged it a little, brushing the head over his eager opening.

“Come on, *please!*” Harry hissed, “Put it in me!” He pushed back impatiently, hearing Draco’s husky amusement at his enthusiasm.

“For someone who seemed so proud, and so against me getting my fuck only five minutes ago, you really can't resist me, can you?” Draco snarled with amusement, particularly smug to discover he was irresistible, even with the boys.

His hand's slid back over those thighs when Harry accepted, and he thrust his cock up through the tight, burning eagerness of Harry's backside. The skin stretched apart, willingly, despite those first few sharp pains as he slid his dick slowly through the searing ring of muscle slowly. The raw feeling of ignited flesh upon flesh, with only the juices from their bodies helping him in, made Draco's hardness swell somewhat, and he knew Harry could feel how much bigger he was growing when he moved deeper inside. He leant forward and nibbled the top of Harry's ear, steamy breath carrying the words “*You like that?*” deep into the canal of his earlobe.

“Well?” He demanded, only louder and with a sharper kiss (with teeth) on that ear when he halted movement for an answer.

“Overconfident – egotistical *arse!*” Harry gasped out with a small laugh between jerks into his stretching hole. It burned, but didn’t tear or bleed in the way it had that first time. The burn, it sent it’s fire through his blood, coursing through his body and settling in the places his blood gathered. Eyes closing, he groaned when Malfoy licked his ear in response to his answer, pulling his cock back from Harry’s body a little.

“Oh God!” Harry panted. He felt his insides clinging tightly over Draco’s prick, like they didn’t want him to leave. It was humiliating and it was driving him into ecstasy. “Okay! I like it! Don’t...” His teeth sank into his bottom lip, defiantly chewing back the words that wanted to escape. But it was like trying to hold water in a sieve...

“D-Don’t...tease me!”

Draco remained still inside that body that kept clenching down around his member and he was unrelenting in his teasing, drizzling wet licks of saliva over the boy’s neck and around his ears. Harry shuddered against the touch and Draco knew it was too much. But he smiled, and continued to remain still while Harry wriggled against him for the slightest relieving of movement.

Then that rush came, the one that confused him so much at first flooded up inside his stomach and gushed through his prick. Uncontrollably Draco jolted inwards, like a magnetic force suddenly yanking him, and Harry keened in bliss when the thrusts deepened.

Draco hissed, trying to pull back, but his body wouldn’t let him, faster and faster he moved inside. It was the beginning of an amazing ride.

Harry’s body was screaming. His forearm propping him against the cold, tiled wall shook from the effort of holding it there while his other reached down to jerk on his own neglected length. His head bowed and pressed into the wall as he struggled to remain silent – he could still hear other people in the toilet and he was *sure* he could hear every shuddering gasp and groan echo through their cubicle.

“Hnn... Someone is – going to – hear us!” He managed out, throwing his head back when Draco breathed teasingly over his neck.

Draco reached down into his pocket and pulled out a clean hanky. Screwing it into a ball, he tore Harry's jaw apart and wedged it inside. “Not now they won't,” He grinned, hands sliding all over Harry's tender body and back down to his arse-cheeks, which he tore apart hungrily.

“I'm going to make you feel, Harry,” Draco gasped, quietly. But he wasn't really fazed by the other people, it was like he went into a trance, and tuned them out, and if they were caught, so be it. The risk was exciting, and every prickle of excitement rushed through his hardening cock, intensifying the pleasure of every move inside.

Harry groaned in *appreciation* as the wad of material was shoved into his mouth, it had been something he'd wondered at when Ron had accused Draco of binding and gagging him. More than anything, the prospect of being caught delighted the pervert Malfoy had awoken in him and those delicious tingles his touch incited, tormented his skin as that voice washed over him.

Unable to speak he groaned into the material a little and pushed his arse back into Draco's thrusting hips. His hole clenched around the wonderful, burning bliss and his body stiffened in anticipation as Draco petted his cheek slightly, before he brought his palm down across it, leaving a raw, red hand print.

Harry bent his body forward, near in half and spread his legs eagerly, fisting his dripping organ faster. The ‘gag’ was working alright; he flushed at the thought of what noises would be falling from his mouth without it.

The muscles in Draco's buttocks tightened when he pushed himself forwards again into Harry's steamy hole. Running his tongue slowly over Harry's smooth spine, as far as he could reach down the back of his neck, Draco hurried his hand around to Harry's and held tightly around that fist while Harry rubbed himself. Draco forced their fingers to entwine and rubbed that member furiously with Harry's hand in his.

This was a little bit romantic...

Harry moaned quietly into his restraint and pushed his hips back into each raw, dominating thrust into his body, torn between that and humping his and Draco's interlocked fingers. It was all too good, and Draco was breathing against his back, in his ear. He tried to turn to catch those lips but the tightening of their hands over his cock made his back arch.

More, more, oh it's so...so good! His eyes slammed shut, wanting to pant those things in Draco's ear but unable to do so. Everything about him, everything of Draco's was so close – *he* was so close and everything was so very hot. All he managed was a muffled “*Mmmph!*” into the material as that intoxicating, static pleasure seized his body.

“Ahhh!” Draco moaned loudly, sure that everyone else using the cubicles heard, but he didn't care, he was too close and the faster he rammed into those welcoming muscles the more his and Harry's bodies bashed loudly into the walls. Thumps filled the bathroom and Draco's groans heightened, he felt like he would explode any minute. The rise had built too quickly, it was almost divine, and he halted to try and postpone the explosion.

“Harry, Harry, Harry...” He repeated in breathless pants over his back.

Harry's body jerked, signalling his approaching climax at the sound of Draco chanting his name. Mumbling senselessly into the fabric, he felt every string of muscle tighten and his hole clenched tightly, greedily around Draco's throbbing erection. His balls tensed and he pressed back into the hot body behind him as the liquid heat exploded from his cock and coated his and Draco's hands.

He thought he heard the Blond mumble something, but couldn't make his brain process it as he slumped a little, struggling to stay up with his body twitching wildly.

The sticky substance trickled down over Draco's hand, and he too knew he was about to climax, the feeling of Harry's liquids coating his hand only made him groan and salivate more. He was so close. Almost lifelessly he slumped forward against Harry's body, his climaxing rising and his panting breaths carrying him to the end when the searing, white substance clashed into Harry's unprotected backside.

"Fuckkk!" He yelled. But he didn't care, so what if everyone heard (probably everyone in the restaurant heard that) but he was just so immobilized by lust and love at the moment, he couldn't help it.

A knock on the cubicle door made Harry jump a bit, shattering his reverie. "Hey?! What's going on in there?!" A stranger called, mumbling voices coming from outside their cubicle. Harry reached up with his soiled hand and tugged the cloth from his now dry mouth.

"Sorry," Harry laughed slightly, "Give my boyfriend a moment to get his cock out of my arse and we'll be right with you!" If they had expected shame and badly concealed lies they were in for disappointment, Harry felt too dizzy with post-orgasmic bliss to deny it. *Oh, Merlin*, Harry cursed as his body quivered in negation at his attempt to stand up straight. *I think Draco is rubbing off on me*, he thought, remembering how Draco had tormented Ron with their '*activities*' when they had first left Hogwarts.

Draco's cock slipped from his arse wetly and Harry gasped at the sudden emptiness, turning to face his flushed lover and smiling a little at their predicament. "You, Draco Malfoy, are disgusting," he murmured, gesturing to the sweat and cum staining their bodies, running his finger along the Blond's diminishing erection so that he hissed deliciously. It was strange how he could be so forward with him one moment and so withdrawn the next...

Draco smiled, almost shyly at Harry's confidence and pulled up his trousers. "Come on," He laughed, "We need to fix this mess." When the pair of them were dressed, Draco planted a small kiss on Harry's forehead and reached for the handle. Opening the door to the small crowd of people who were huddled outside he smiled. "Well, what are you all staring at?"

Harry smirked at Draco's words as the Blond ushered him over to the sinks to wash their hands. He could see the men watching them in the mirror, and his reflection merely smiled back at them broadly, his cheeks flushed and his hair damp from sex. He didn't know whether Draco taking his hand and leading him from the room by it was a show to annoy the men or just a comforting gesture, but he relished in it nonetheless, especially when the waitress from earlier caught sight of them making their way out of the bathroom like it. Harry smiled but Draco hadn't seemed to notice her.

"Draco?" Harry asked thoughtfully – *carefully*, he wasn't sure Draco was going to say yes...but if what had happened just now was any indication...

"After the battle – afterwards can I... Can I top you, again?" He watched Draco consider him thoughtfully as they resumed their table, and braced himself for whatever answer the Blond might give.

"I'll think about it," The Blond carefully replied. That was the most he had ever given Harry, and he knew that meant yes. Or close enough to a yes as he would get anyway.

“I said I'd think about it, Potter, stop blushing,” Draco spat, but it was more playful then cold and spiteful like he used to be. He had changed so much in such a short period of time. It was like a lost, newborn phoenix finding it's fire once more - simply beautiful. And Harry was blessed with witnessing it all.

“Anything for dessert?” The waitress asked stiffly as she approached their table once more, seeming perturbed by their sex-ruffled appearances and the fresh glow to their skin, but even more-so, by their interlocked fingers plainly on the tabletop.

“We’ve already had dessert,” Harry assured her with an uncharacteristically wicked grin, eyes staring fiercely into Draco. “Tasty...”

Draco chuckled thoughtfully, smiling at Harry, and not taking his eyes away as he said, “Just the bill, please.”

The waitress whirled on her heels, affronted as she left them. “I change my mind,” Harry began, “You’re a pretty good date, you may even get a second one if you’re lucky.” Draco snorted but the smile never faded from his face, nor the enlightened glint from his stunning eyes.

~To Be Continued...

Chapter 20: Chapter Twenty

(Bound By) Clandestine Addiction

[Chapter Twenty]

A cold, dead grey painted the sky above and all that lay before them. Harry glanced up at Malfoy from where they crouched, just inside the gates of Malfoy Manor. The *Chosen One* swallowed hard, his hand sliding across to squeeze Draco's reassuringly, he understood, there was no way that house-proud, stuck-up Lucius Malfoy had planned this originally for his estate. He pictured beautiful shrubberies and healthy trees and grass where now the dead stalks and corpses of trees stood. The ground was like ash, and the manor was a black, bleak figure beyond it all. It looked like Draco's childhood home had died and Harry knew there was nothing he could say to appease the hurt he *felt* throbbing in Draco's chest.

"You're sure that since it is *you* that got us in, they cannot sense our arrival?" Hermione whispered as she and Ron leant in. Draco merely nodded. The wards on the Manor were complex, ancient blood magic, so engrained in the grounds and very mortar that Lucius Malfoy could not change them even if he wished to, Draco had explained. Though Harry was sure that Lucius and Narcissa would be helping them anyway they could without endangering themselves...

"You and Draco take the cloak, Harry," Hermione insisted, even as Harry handed it to her. She shoved it back to him. "As much as you want to protect us, you're the only one to defeat *Him*, you need to be kept the safest, and besides, you need to stay hidden until we kill Nagini."

"Just keep the cloak mate, or Draco will probably get you caught by demanding a quickie in his old room!" Ron insisted, the use of Draco's first name negating any real malice or force to his teasing.

Hermione smiled when Harry finally nodded and removed the cloak from her hand.

Draco remained silent; he couldn't believe he was home again. It seemed odd being here under these circumstances. He couldn't really explain.

“What exactly is the plan here Hermione?” Ron asked, even though she had mentioned it before. He was a bit blank suddenly; maybe the fear had warped his mind. But whatever it was, he wanted to be sure of what he was doing.

“We go inside together, we'll use Disillusionment charms to give us more stealth, Harry and Draco will find *You Know Who* and stay hidden until the coins we each have show them that we have killed Nagini and are on our way to help or—”

“Or if one of us dies,” Harry added when she cut off, “or is mortally wounded, one of us need only say the code word and the coins will transport all of us back to the Room of Requirement at Hogwarts.”

“The Code word is ‘*Beloved*’, right?” Ron asked shakily, paling visibly and Harry and Hermione nodded in unison, Draco could not force even that slight movement.

“Draco will try and keep the Death Eaters off my back, while I head for Voldemort, and finish this once and for all.” Harry's voice was grave. A ripple of fear chilled his blood, but when he felt Draco's hand clench in his, he smothered the doubt and the uneasiness. He was *made* to do this, to save the people he cared about, and he would *not* fail them because he was too afraid. He rose up slowly, flourishing his wand to cast the disillusionment charm on Ron and Hermione, then pocketing his wand to throw the cloak over himself and Draco.

“Draco needs to open the front door first, and be the one to close it, but as soon as your inside don't talk, just go,” Harry instructed, reminding himself painfully of their *Dumbledore's Army* days. It felt odd talking to his practically invisible friends but he waved it off, and turned under the cloak to look at Draco carefully. “Ready?” he asked quietly, so that the others, who were already setting off up the path, could not hear. He could *feel* Draco's fear creeping through him like vomit crawling up his throat.

I feel sick, my entire body won't stop shaking... What's...what's wrong with me? Draco's eyes clenched shut. He allowed himself five short seconds of blindness before reopening them and leading the way to the door, which lead to *God only knew* where. Death, darkness, or maybe the beginning of something fantastic – the end of the dark Lord once and for all.

Draco breathed heavily and he struggled to control it when his hand touched the door handle, slowly turning it. But it didn't budge, and so he drew his wand out and used the family charm, only known to the Malfoys for opening locked doors in the manor. He wasn't surprised, actually he should have known his father would use this spell on the doors whilst playing host to Lord Voldemort.

Harry and Draco stepped aside for a moment, and only after Harry felt a soft nudge from Hermione, signalling they were in and gone, did Harry nod his head for Draco to close the door. Quickly, but quietly it shut and they were in. There was no getting out of this now – they weren't leaving until Voldemort was dead or they were, perhaps both...

He let Draco lean against the door for a moment, gathering himself. There was evil in this house. All was silent, not a *soul* crept across the deserted, grand expanse of an entrance hall, and the only light was the sparse amount that slithered in through the windows from the cold world outside. After a while had passed and Draco's breathing had slowed, Harry took his hand, keeping close together so their cloak did not slip to reveal them, as they made their way across the hall.

"Let's find him and finish this," Harry murmured softly, leaning in to brush a kiss against Draco's cheek. Draco startled at the gentle touch, as if he hadn't been paying attention up until that point and Harry surveyed him carefully. He wished there was a way to get Draco *not* involved in this...

Draco knew Harry could feel his fear via the bond and his face straightened; he braved an expression Harry had never seen. “Don't worry about me... I'm fine,” He assured with a smile, soothing Harry's own concerned frown.

Through the darkened corridors they wandered. The manor was so enormous in scale that each and every turn would reveal another section of doors like a labyrinth of tunnels and caverns. “Which way?” Draco heard Harry murmur quietly. Draco did not answer, but moved to the part of the mansion, where he thought they may be.

Death Eaters were dotted throughout the main corridor, so their footsteps slowed, Harry even murmured a version of the silencing charm Hermione had taught him, so that they could whisper to each other without being heard. They passed the door to the kitchen, which stood ajar, Voldemort's servants lurking there, swigging back wine like they were starving for it and laughing obscenely. Harry felt Draco's fury at this *filth* invading his family home and using it like a pub.

“They'll pay,” Harry assured him, squeezing the boy's hand gently and pulling him onwards. There was a grand, ornate set of double doors at the end of the corridor that lead away from the kitchen, yes, Voldemort would fancy himself there, Harry could *see* it...

Panic, fear, anticipation of this all finally coming to an end swelled in his chest and he inhaled shakily, clearing his mind in a way that he had only been able to do with Draco touching him. He couldn't pull Voldemort into his head by mistake and give them away, not now, they were too close.

They came to a stop by the doors, as they were closed, and the great, wooden structure swinging open by themselves just *may* give them away. So they waited. And waited. Harry stroked the coin that linked them to Ron and Hermione thoughtfully. It

remained the same as ever – the deed had not been done yet. Despite the time not being right for *their* part of the plan, it still sent a tremor of impatience, of dread through him that they could not get in without being noticed. What if they couldn't get in? What if the door never opened? What if Voldemort wasn't even *in* there?!

No, Harry thought. His scar burned ominously, he could hear the echo of the creature's voice hissing in his head. Voldemort was in there, he was sure of it. No sooner had he thought that, however, the door swung open. Harry jumped, nearly tumbling into the person coming through. Draco gasped, seizing Harry round the shoulders and dragging him back against his body hard. Harry felt his chest shudder with the rampant breaths, as he stared, through the protective veil of invisibility, right into the eyes of Severus Snape.

I'm invisible, Harry tried to tell himself. *He can't see us!* But those eyes were smouldering, deep with thought, he knew something. They watched as their once potion's master stooped, picking something up off the floor. Harry's frantic heart leapt into his throat – the coin! It glistened from Snape's fingertips, and Snape was on their side, (and least he thought he was) so perhaps that would not have been so bad, had company not slithered out from the hall behind him.

“Dawdling, Severus?” MacNair snarled in what Death Eater's might consider endearment as he and a few others (including Lucius Malfoy passed). *Good*, Harry thought for more than one reason. Lucius was out of the way, he wouldn't be able to get hurt, but even better, there would be less Death Eaters to contend with in addition to Voldemort.

“What have you got there? Snape?” Another Death Eater growled. Snape cast the man a derisive look.

“Nothing, Dawlish,” The Potion's Master replied quickly, his tongue brushing the others off, and sending them along the corridor and out of sight. There was a moment, where Snape's eyes locked with Harry again, a moment where Harry could not have guessed what he would do. Snape considered the invisible shape of them it seemed,

before dropping the coin to the ground once more and nudging it under the cover of the cloak with his foot.

“In with you two,” Snape hissed quietly, “I will be waiting, should the worst occur.” And with that, he turned, following his *comrades* up the corridor. Harry, in that instant, felt Malfoy stiffen, felt him *long* to call Snape back for aid in what they must do, but they both knew they couldn’t. *We can’t involve any one else*, Harry reminded himself, stooping only to pick up the coin before he and Malfoy slid through the closing door.

He didn’t know what room this had been in Draco’s past, but now it was bright, blindingly so, a long table sat against the side, chairs along it, and at the end, in what the bastard no doubt fancied his *throne*, was Voldemort. He sat in a high-backed, ornate chair, talking quietly with the few remaining death eaters.

“Six, by my count,” Harry whispered to Draco, as they moved to the corner, waiting for their chance. “Can you handle them by yourself until Ron and Hermione get here?” He cast a careful look at the outline of Fenrir Greyback, wondering if he could smell them – evidently not if he had not scented them yet, perhaps the invisibility cloak protected them from that detection also? He was not sure...

He turned to look fully at Draco, examining every inch of his face, every tendril of hair as if he might never get to do so again. “I’ll cast a spell to slow them down, but it won’t affect Greyback, he’s immune to all but the strongest of spells. Will you...will you be...alright?”

Draco nodded at Harry, quivering, but controlling his fear from underneath the cloak, he gripped Harry's hand without really thinking and sighed in resignation. “Be careful...” He looked determinedly at the coin in Harry’s grasp. Neither of them knew what was happening, they could only hope that Hermione and Ron were succeeding.

Harry glanced down at his coin again, rubbing it hopefully. He hoped the other two would be alright...

“Once I stun them, get Greyback down first, he’s the most...the most dangerous...” Harry’s voice trailed off, trying hard to shove the dreaded images of Fenrir Greyback lunging for Draco with fangs and claws that could tear him to shreds. He shrugged it off, he couldn’t be thinking about that right now. “Promise me...promise you’ll stay alive?” Harry said, his lips tipping up in a smile as he leant in against Draco’s shoulder, basking in the feel of the Blond’s arm coming up to wrap around him hesitantly.

“Let’s not make it two of us with the martyr complex,” he laughed softly, “Don’t be a hero, just get out alive, alright?” When Draco didn’t answer, he frowned at the veil of invisibility (and silence) protecting them, before tipping his head up, startled to find those grey eyes staring at him pensively. “What’s the matter?” Harry asked, his heart thudding madly in his chest. Draco was so warm; it was hard to believe they were really...*where* they were, but a few feet from potential death.

What’s the matter?! Draco thought with disdain. *Perhaps the fact that I’m terrified in my own home, that I’m worried about my parents, that I’m but a few steps away from...death!* He knew the fault of this situation wasn’t Harry’s – or anyone’s, but asking him something so obvious...

He smiled distantly at his thoughts, trying to hold back his tears when he realised how naïve Harry could sometimes be.

“I’m fine, Harry, just anxious,” Draco whispered quietly, whilst his eyes travelled down to Harry’s hand and the coin. One of the Death Eaters rose to his feet and moved closer towards Lord Voldemort, bowing almost to the floor he handed his

master a glass of wine. That cruel, venomous tongue slithered over the tip of the crystal glass and curved when the liquid trickled from the cup into the depths of his decrepit throat.

Harry jumped then, a sudden heat swelling between his fingertips. He stared down at where the coin flickered a warning red, before the serpent engraved around the edge disappeared. They'd killed Nagini. Harry glanced up frantically. Voldemort had not so much as twitched – his hunch had been correct, he couldn't *sense* when his Horcruxes were destroyed. And even if he *could* somehow feel it, he couldn't create another, couldn't separate his soul again with the others gone...

Green eyes flickered up to Draco and the Blond looked between him and the coin knowingly, inhaling carefully. This was it then.

Harry tucked the coin away, seizing his wand and throwing the cloak off of them. The Death Eaters leapt back in surprise, but Voldemort merely stiffened, staring at the two that had suddenly appeared, as if it were simply impossible, and he was stunned by it. To their advantage.

“*Impedimenta!*” Harry screamed, shoving his cloak safely back in his pouch as he did so – they may need it. With the flourish of his wand, the Death Eaters bolting towards them slowed, as if in slow-motion, all except Greyback, who was immune to it. The Werewolf roared and shot towards them, Harry, pressing his pouch into Draco's arms, gave the Blond a single, fleeting look of reassurance, and then released his hand, heading for Voldemort.

Draco jumped aside quickly and avoided the werewolf shooting towards him. Stumbling to the floor, he rolled sideways, quickly scrambling back up to his feet. He whipped his wand out quickly and waved it at the Death Eater, *just* missing him with the first blow. “Shit!” Draco yelled.

His neat hair was dishevelled and out of place when he struck again, the blue light from his wand colliding into the beast's shoulder when it rushed towards him again. "You ugly brute die!"

Across the hall, Voldemort rose to his feet and pulled out his bone-like wand, raising it.

"Look out!" Draco shouted to Harry.

Harry's head snapped back from where he was watching Draco as he moved, just in time to see Voldemort rise from his *throne*. Voldemort's eyes flared with a dangerous light. "*Crucio!*" He snarled. Harry flew to the side at Draco's voice, bolting out of the way, narrowly missing the spell.

"*Expelliarmus!*" Harry cried, but Voldemort waved it off with a cruel smile.

"You will have to try harder than *that*, Harry Potter," The Dark Lord sneered, "*Crucio!*"

That one hit.

Harry cried out as he flew backwards, his shoulder crashing painfully into the marble floor. His body shook with agony, his back arching off the ground. He ground his teeth together furiously, clenching around his screams to deny Voldemort the pleasure of crying out. Then the spell left and his body slumped.

"Foolish little Harry Potter," Voldemort sneered, leaning over Harry's prone, gasping body. It was then, that a furious, blood-curdling howl filled the air, and Harry turned his shaky head to where Draco was scrambling out from under Fenrir Greyback's

werewolf form.

“Draco!” Harry screamed, “Use the sword! Godric Gryffindor’s sword!” It was in the pouch Draco was carrying, the blade was dipped in silver, and he hoped Draco realised that.

A sudden, crushing pressure on his chest snapped his gaze back to Voldemort, and the vile, warped foot that was pressing into his chest. “Keep your eyes focused on the more *pressing* problem, *Harry*,” the Dark Lord hissed.

Draco quivered, panicking in the chaos. Taking Harry’s advice he revealed the sword from the pouch and swung it up at Greyback. He sorely missed and waved it again, this time catching him on the side of his face with the sharp blade. The werewolf screeched out and Draco wriggled free. His focus shot to Harry.

“*Expelliarmus!*” Draco cried, but failed when Lord Voldemort waved his wand in an effortless defence. Blue and green lights clashed. Both he and Harry looked over at the Blond, who had suddenly been seized by another Death Eater, who now had him by the throat.

“Get off me!” Draco yelled, fighting to bite down on the arm that restrained him. The Death Eater laughed and an injured Fenrir staggered over (still clutching his arm) and took hold of Draco’s chin roughly, forcing his wand deep into it. Draco spluttered, choked by the brutal pressure on his windpipe.

“Apologise, you stupid little boy...” The menacing figure hissed. But Draco wouldn’t and he suddenly felt his stubborn body stiffen in anticipation of the *Cruciatus* curse. “*Crucio!*” The figure shouted out, his wand firing electrical jolts of agony through Malfoy’s body, his limbs hurling into shock and shaking with spasms of static pain.

“Beg me to stop, you pathetic boy!” The Werewolf demanded. Draco grunted. He heard Harry cry beyond a muffled buzzing (after-effects of the unforgivable curse), but he couldn’t make out what was being said. No matter what, he wouldn’t plead; he could not beg them to stop, could not show weakness. But he knew Harry could feel his pain through the bond and that stumped him.

“Okay! Just...just...stop!” He finally pleaded. If only to stop the rush of smouldering pain he was feeling from flowing back into Harry.

Fenrir Greyback leant in, his foul, blood-soiled breath skimming Draco’s features. “No,” The werewolf snarled, his massive jaws opening, canines extending towards the vulnerable skin of his throat.

“NO!” Harry screamed, throwing his wand up towards Voldemort. “*Conjunctivitis!*” Harry gasped, not pausing to watch Voldemort’s hands fly over his eyes, not waiting to relish in the cry of agony. He rolled over onto his stomach, and staggered over to Draco.

Suddenly, something slammed into his side. Harry winced as his body crashed to the ground, fighting with the two Death Eaters that had tackled him to the ground. “No!” Harry cried out, wriggling wildly beneath them, he could feel Draco’s fear throbbing through his veins! His fingers clenched around his wand and he kicked the body on top of him *hard* in the groin, watching him tumble off his body in agony.

“*Stupefy!*” Harry cried out, “*Stupefy!*” The two attackers dropped to the ground and he bolted towards Draco.

“*Incarcerous!*”

Harry's body jerked to a stop, froze mid-step as ropes exploded over his body, crushing his arms to his body and sending him hurtling face-first into the marble floor once more. His chin smashed into the ground and he screamed at the throbbing pain that shot over his lip, blood dripping down his chin while he stared, with tear-stained eyes up at the monsters that held Draco.

"He's so important to you?" Greyback snarled with sadistic pleasure. Harry winced as he clenched his jaw, fighting his bonds uselessly.

"Yes – *Yes!*" He insisted, "Let him go! I'll do anything, *anything* – don't hurt him!"

A cruel, chilling laugh slid from the werewolf's mouth. "Would you treasure him so...if he was like me?" The wolf sneered with glee, as he turned back to Draco, his claws slicing into alabaster flesh, fangs descending once more.

Suddenly the doors flew open. "*Petrificus Totalus!*" That first cry described the spell that hit the *human* brute holding Draco down, but the second, startlingly green light that struck Greyback square between the shoulders was non verbal and Harry could not help but wonder as he toppled backwards, howling furiously.

Ron and Hermione marched through the doors, Hermione pausing only to lock the door behind them as they shot forwards. "*Relashio!*" Ron chanted and the bindings holding Harry broke and shuddered away like dying serpents. Harry leapt to his feet, making to head towards Draco, but Hermione held him back.

"We'll keep him safe," Hermione insisted, her eyes flicking back to Voldemort, who was ending the blinding curse Harry had inflicted on his vision. "Kill Voldemort or our lives are forfeit anyway." Staring between her and his lover briefly, Harry nodded.

"Greyback can only be killed with the sword," he told the Blond quickly, before grasping his wand, turning back to his recovering enemy.

Draco shivered, the marble floor on which he had fallen sending chills through his terrified body (he now hated the fact that his family barely had *any* carpet in this house). His mind went blank, and his vision blurred from where he lay as he caught a glimpse of Hermione reaching for him while Ron swung the sword clumsily at Greyback. Hermione wasn't in much better shape, her neck was covered in blood (that must have been Nagini) but still, she held out her hand to Draco and helped him back to his feet.

But too late.

“Let...Let go of me!” Hermione screamed when another of the Death Eaters seized hold of her hair and almost ripped it from the roots, dragging her backwards. Draco held his arm and stumbled slightly as he held out his wand. For an instant he and Ron caught eye contact and swapped adversaries. Ron handed Draco the sword and leapt for Hermione, who could barely breathe in the enemy's grasp, while Draco held the sword up against Greyback.

“Come on you great hairy bastard, show me what you’ve got!” Draco tormented him in a façade of false bravery - most foolishly, as the oversized werewolf pelted towards him.

Everything was happening in slow-motion. He saw Draco lunge, towards a werewolf of all things, saw Ron turn his wand on the Death Eater holding Hermione all in the instant before his head turned slowly to Voldemort. The Dark Lord watched him, seething but with a stillness that showed nothing but calm. The quiet before the storm, Harry realised and held his wand aloft – ready.

“One last chance,” he offered, with a courage that was not his own, “Surrender –

break your wand in two and throw it to me, or you will die.” Voldemort’s lips tipped up in amusement, but so did Harry’s. “A death that you will most certainly *not* be coming back from, with the aid of *any* magic. No lingering, just gone, for good.”

Dark, dangerous eyes flared then, knowing what Harry meant, and no doubt startled by the fact that four *children* had managed to find and destroy them. There was the possibility that they were bluffing and Harry saw that idea flicker behind those eyes too, but he didn’t wait to see which conclusion the creature came to.

“*Expelliarmus!*” He cried. His eyes widened, his heart leapt into his throat as his fingers clenched tightly – around Voldemort’s wand. All this time he had used it religiously, he had even been warned that it was becoming his signature spell, but in that brief hesitation, it had worked. Voldemort seemed more surprised than he. “You killed my parents!” Harry hissed with venom, as those eyes watched him, calculating. “But I don’t want to become a killer, not for you, if I can help it...”

“And that, Harry Potter,” Voldemort sneered, “Is why, you shall fail...” His oily, pale palm shot out then, towards Harry. “*Accio wand!*”

“*Reducto!*” Harry countered, pulling the bone wand close to his chest. His spell hit first, blasting the throne directly behind Voldemort into pieces, raining debris and shattering the Dark Lord’s concentration. Wandless magic required precision, and Harry wouldn’t allow him the time to concentrate. *You got an O for Defence Against the Dark Arts*, he thought as he ducked out of the way of another, wandless light, *stop being a pansy and do something?!*

A scream from the side tore his gaze to his friends. He watched as Malfoy cried out, Greyback’s talons biting spitefully into his arms, but the Blond didn’t pull back, he remained still, forcing the silver, blood-stained sword spitefully into the wolf’s chest. Greyback snarled, screeched, filled the air with blood and agony, scratching at Malfoy to make him pull away.

“*Stupefy!*” The red head snarled at the man holding Hermione. “Get off of her!” Harry watched as the Death Eater was flung backwards and released an injured Hermione.

“Take that you bastard...!” Draco gasped out exhaustedly, twisting the sword with all the might he had left inside the beast. The Werewolf cried, and Greyback slowly fell to the floor, sliding off the sword like a sickening slab of meat on a skewer. Panting Draco also fell, and crashing to his knees the sword tumbled from his hand. He looked over at Harry and Voldemort, the only two people still standing, then back round at the fallen Death Eaters and Greyback.

The Blond glanced down at his arm then, and ripped his shirt with his teeth, the material split and he quickly wrapped it around his bicep to stop the blood. He crawled over to Hermione and Ron to check they were okay, the danger of death still hanging overhead like a shroud of despair. “I-Is everyone alright?” He asked breathlessly.

“We’re okay,” Hermione insisted, even as Ron fussed over her wound. “Your arm, he didn’t–” Her worry was that Greyback had bitten him, but a small shake of Draco’s head showed her that he had not.

“You should kill me now, *Harry*,” Voldemort chanted with false pleasantries. “But you are still the foolish boy who could not even cast the *cruciatius* after you’d seen your godfather killed.” His voice trailed off slowly, again with that feigned softness as he moved towards Harry, who was frozen.

“He needs to kill him!” Hermione insisted as Ron helped her stand, she looked to Draco imploringly, “Do something! He can’t kill anyone, *make* him!”

“Kill him, you idiot!” Draco spat, and Harry glanced briefly to him, his outstretched wand arm shaking. He grit his teeth, staring hard at the advancing murderer, backing slightly to where Draco was also approaching him. He couldn’t do it! He winced. He just *couldn’t* do it!

“*Accio!*” Hermione chanted, and Harry jumped as the bone wand was ripped from his grasp, flying neatly into her hand. She stared at Harry sympathetically, before snapping the wand over her knee. Voldemort howled with fury, flying towards them. Harry stiffened, a shocking static pricking his spine to signal Draco was right behind him and he raised his wand again – but not quickly enough.

“*Avada Kedavra!*” Harry jumped at the sound of that voice, at the sound of Hermione’s “*No Ron!*” He watched the glaring, emerald light flash before his eyes, and in that one horrible instant, his life did too, the horrible instant where everything changed...

Voldemort caught the light as easily as if it were a beach ball, and the magic crackled in his fingers. “Such a pathetic attempt at the *killing* curse,” the man hissed, his face curling into a hideous snarl. “More hate than young Harry could muster, but not enough to even *sting* me!” The ball of light grew in his hands and Harry pressed back into Draco’s chest, frozen in place. Ron’s spell would probably be nothing, but under Voldemort’s power it would be catastrophic.

He should have known, he thought, in the last moment he looked to Ron and Hermione. Only *he* could kill him. And now he saw him, cackling madly before apparating. He was gone, they had failed.

The ground shuddered, the very air around them trembled as the fiery, emerald magic shot towards them like a bullet but bigger, and inescapable. A shrill cry sounded as

Hermione was knocked down. Ron was right beside her and Harry glanced to him fleetingly, he saw him fly backwards, crashing into the wall, heard the sickening snap of his body meeting the stone before that tingle of Draco's presence caressed him again. He turned on his heel, the heat of the spell brushing against his back in the instant that he threw himself over a shocked Draco's body, his horrified expression the last thing he saw before the spell smashed hard into his back. His eyes slammed shut and he screamed at the crushing explosion inside his head. His scar *burned* but his fingers clung to Draco's skin, covering him, saving him from the spell. At his cost.

The startling glow of the light died. Hermione wavered on her feet as she glanced around. Her vision swayed menacingly but she just made out Draco's shape. She frowned as she saw him crawl out from under Harry's limp, unconscious body and pull him up to his chest despite the pain of his arm. Was Harry alright? Her mind was dizzy, thoughts jumbled. And where was Ron, exactly?

Draco cradled Harry's body shakily, the shock overwhelming his limbs. The realisation of what had just happened had yet to truly sink in. Everything seemed blank as he glared down at Harry, who lay unconscious and still in his arms, the appearance of death's silence blanketing him. Draco's heart skipped, and for a moment, he swore he couldn't breathe. The air stiffened around them and the dust settled, Draco briefly heard Hermione calling for Ron; it seemed almost muffled by...*something*, though she was actually shouting quite loudly. It was all tuned out, like turning up the radio – it was all only drowned by everything else that was happening inside of his petrified mind.

Draco's wide eyes stung, but Harry was breathing, still alive. Draco buried his head into Harry's chest and looked over to Hermione, his husky voice rating and reluctant to leave his lips when he spoke. "We should get out of here, now," He reminded her while she frantically looked around for Ron.

And then she found him, lying by the far wall, blood crying through his head of red hair, forming a thick, crimson pool about his body. She felt the bottom of her stomach give out, felt her fingers tremble as she reached forwards, sliding his eyelids closed

gently over his eyes. “Have you got Harry?” She asked, her frail, cold voice barely making it across the empty, lifeless hall. She thought she saw Draco nod, but didn’t have even the will to turn her head to better improve her view of the action. “*Beloved*,” she whispered.

A blinding, *stirring* light engulfed them. A tug behind her navel, much like that of apparation jolted her already uneasy stomach all before it threw all *four* of them down. Hermione yelped as she and the body she embraced collided into a pile of objects. The world clattered noisily as they landed, but she could not move. Dropping her heavy head down onto Ron’s unmoving chest, she lay there, listening to the sounds of the world around her without really caring, the emptiness in Ron’s chest, the lack of breath and a heartbeat was the loudest silence that had ever haunted her...

“I have been expecting you,” came a cool, steady voice and Draco Malfoy raised his head from Harry’s chest to see his once Potion’s Master standing across from him in the dimly lit room. The Room of Requirement seemed to possess an eerie, *blue* glow; it felt dark and suffocating all of a sudden.

Professor Snape’s brows descended into a frown as he surveyed the young Malfoy and the limp body of Harry Potter in his arms, before flying to their side. “Is he breathing?” He asked, impassive but with a beat of anxiety in his voice. He seized of the hands Malfoy was clutching to so desperately and tested the pulse at his wrist, his relief in feeling the dull beat startled from him somewhat when Draco swatted him away protectively.

Snape surveyed the glassiness to those grey eyes carefully, before daring speech. “What happened to you?”

“Look, can we just get Harry to the hospital wing?” Draco murmured, not completely in sync with what was going on around him. Snape nodded slowly and helped Draco to his feet, calling in the other staff members they rushed over and began to help him

and Harry. Snape progressed over to Hermione, who was crumpled over Ron's broken and unmoved body.

“You must come away,” He insisted, and lifted his hand to her shoulder. She quickly struggled free.

“No... I won't...I won't leave...!” She cried, from the back of her broken throat. She couldn't breath, she couldn't even scream. It was as though everything inside her was trying to claw itself out. And it hurt.

Draco knew, as he helped carry Harry to safety, he knew from the cries that Ron had not made it, and he couldn't even bring himself to look. He was such a coward, and a selfish one at that, but all he cared about right now, was Harry. There wasn't room for anything else...there just wasn't.

Hermione stroked her hand along Ron's cold face, her warmth stolen by the cold with the touch. Professor McGonagall was beside her, and shedding tears with her. She knelt down and pulled Hermione into her arms, slowly she wept, they both did, while the red head's body remained unmoved. Hermione finally screamed, as hard as she could into the robes of her teacher, they were muffled but there, the pain of a million daggers piercing into every artery, every inch of her heart. She clung to any warmth she felt, just wishing, just hoping...that someday, she would wake up and this would all be a bad dream. It had to be, this couldn't be real...

Snape kept glancing frequently to Draco as they made their way through the deserted corridors of Hogwarts. Their footsteps echoed in the silence, shadows flickering in the corners. He frowned as he watched Potter's head loll against Draco's shoulder. “I suspect you feel you must shoulder some burden for having survived,” Snape said, “But you can't possibly carry him down to the hospital wing, allow me to levitate him down there, he is far too heavy.”

Hermione's broken, choking sobs were a little way behind them, accompanied by McGonagall's soft words as they brought Ron's lifeless body behind. Snape frowned more intensely. "Potter is alive, you foolish boy, and you are injured – we do not know what effect has come over him, we need to get him there quickly." That seemed to do it as the Blond relented without a word and Snape levitated Harry's body carefully down to the hospital wing. Draco left his side only to open the double doors to let them all through.

McGonagall laid Ron's body carefully to the nearest bed, drawing the screens magically before leading Hermione away to a different bed. "Come dear," she cooed like a doting grandmother, "Rest, you have a grave wound there, it must be seen too and you must rest..."

"My word!" Madam Pomfrey cried, rushing out to meet them in her nightgown as she ushered them to place Harry on the bed furthest from the doors. "What in Heaven's name – Professor Snape what is going on?"

"He is Harry Potter, what do you *think* is going on?" Snape replied stoically, clucking his tongue with impatience as he saw to it that Harry was placed carefully on the bed. Draco lingered at his side, watching his unconscious face carefully.

"He is...*You Know Who* is gone?" Pomfrey asked, bewildered and hopeful.

"No, I am afraid that though they dented his arsenal, Voldemort bested them – this time. But Miss Granger broke his wand, I have been told..." Draco's eyes didn't rise to him but he knew that the boy would understand, would *recognise* the feel of his ex-professor sifting through his memories of the 'battle'. The Blond didn't even flinch.

After healing the *Chosen One's* wounded jaw, Madam Pomfrey raised her wand over Harry's body, pressing the back of her hand to his forehead, then his pulse every few moments, sighing and muttering under her breath. "He seems... He seems healthy,

Severus,” She said quietly, though her gaze flickered between the unconscious boy and the Slytherin watching him carefully. The graveness of her expression did not change any, either.

“He should be awake; there is nothing wrong with him that I can see except for a few bruises and scrapes.” Her kind, worried eyes settled on Draco completely now and she circled the bed to hand him a potion. When he did not move to take it, she merely pressed it into his hand. “Take the potion dear, how would he feel if you allowed yourself to bleed to death before he had the chance to wake up to you?” She prompted with a smile.

Draco looked at her blindly, he saw his hand move up to take the potion, but he didn't feel it, everything was numb, even now, as he sat beside Harry and stared. No tears, nothing, he couldn't even speak. He was just...empty. Everything inside seemed shattered. And all in an instant it faded to nothingness.

He looked over at Madam Pomfrey with eyes she *knew* were asking, ‘*would he be alright?*’ She frowned and forced a smile over her anxiety. “I cannot say for sure if he will be perfectly alright, but he is alive, and he won't be dyeing on us,” She informed carefully.

That was enough, as long as he was alive, Draco didn't care about anything else, that's all he needed to hear. He would wake up. *And when he does wake up I have to let him know...let him know how totally and utterly in love with the bastard I am...*

He smiled against the tears prickling the backs of his eyes, tears that were barely held at bay with that fluttering feeling of loving him coursing through his bond. *If only Harry could be fed this feeling*, he thought. He would be surprised at just how strong it had become. But he, Draco Malfoy, wouldn't cry. Harry was going to be alright. Besides... Half of the things he was feeling didn't even begin to compare to how Hermione must be feeling.

“H-He’s...he’s...” Hermione choked on the words, unable to force them out. Her face and hair were stained with tears, her misery strangling her until her words were broken with intermittent hiccups. “He *can’t* – be – dead!” She shook her head, collapsing into McGonagall. “We didn’t – we *promised!*”

The very real pain from Nagini’s bite was fading under the thrall of the potion McGonagall forced on her and she writhed in inner agony. The physical pain was the only reminder, the only tangible thing she could cling to. It had been there, throbbing unbearably when they had grasped each other’s hands for the last time, when they had clung to each other in desperate relief when the snake had fallen dead...

She had winced at the pain of it when they had approached where Harry was fighting Voldemort, when Ron had drawn her into an embrace and kissed her mouth more fiercely than he had ever dared to before. For courage, he had said and she smiled sadly at the memory. They would never have that again...

“Draco,” Snape said, regarding him as gently as ever he had before. “At least take a bed if you insist on waiting here, Potter will wake in good time...” But he saw the rigidity, the unmoveable determination in those grey, glassy eyes and prompted no more. The young Malfoy was healed, after all, and that was the immediate problem. He opened his mouth to speak again, to explain that Voldemort had been weakened by the scattering of his followers, by the breaking of his wand, but the words stuck in his throat as a low, incomprehensible murmur came from the bed...

The voices came first. Harry winced, eyes still tightly shut as he tried his own voice. No words came, just a prolonged, groaning sound. He felt movement beside him, felt his right hand grasped firmly between two shaking ones. The palms were hot and warming on his cold skin, but it did not comfort him in the state he was in. Little could.

He tried to regain his senses for a moment, long enough to hear the voices converse about someone's waking – *his* waking?

“Harry?” That voice, so much huskier and closer than the others was the last thing he heard, before he forced his eyes open. His thoughts couldn't process at first. It was as though his brain was struggling to remember how to make him function again. His vision was a blurry, fuzzy haze of white at first. He blinked a few times, and then it all bled into focus.

The light was a soft, cool blue and his gaze darted around at all of the faces gathered around, in the distance he could make out a continuous sobbing, and a soothing voice, closer, there was a dark figure and a woman wearing a night gown and cap. They each watched him carefully, whilst conversing between them, he struggled to hear, but before he could try his words again, that softer voice called to him. He turned towards it, a head of blond hair smothering his vision as those warm hands squeezed his earnestly.

Draco's insides near-enough *leapt* from his chest when Harry awoke, he knew he had sworn he wouldn't cry, but his eyes were still watery. Why was he feeling so happy after everything? He glared down at Harry's moving face, and fluttering eyelashes, waiting patiently as he came around.

Harry stared at the Blond for a long while, his gaze switching between that face and the hands holding him. He frowned for a moment then, sitting up a little straighter in the bed. “You...” He began to the Blond, his voice a little husky. “Where am I?” He asked carefully, and those grey eyes seemed to be confused, yet relieved, and completely, *utterly* focused on him. “W-Who...are you?” He asked, tugging his hand politely from the grip of those tender, warm palms. “And...” He looked to the two figures at the bottom of the bed then, as if hoping he would recognise them, recognise *anything*. He blinked a few moments, waiting for it all to come flooding back to him. Nothing did.

“W-Who...who am I?” His voice broke then and he pressed back as far into the head of the bed as he could go, watching them all warily. What was going on? He felt panic shake his limbs, crush his lungs. He couldn’t breath and he couldn’t *remember*!

Draco's eyes widened with horror when Harry flinched away, the teachers surrounding him and whispering amongst themselves. “He doesn't remember who he is...?” The Slytherin gasped, his voice nearly lost.

Professor McGonagall slowly leant in towards Harry and spoke. “You're Harry Potter, dear boy, Harry!”

Draco felt something inside him freeze when Harry looked blindly back at him in confusion. There was none of the soul-shattering devotion shining there in those green eyes, none of the adoration he had become so accustomed to.

“Harry...Harry Potter?” He asked, looking between them warily, “Is that...is that, good?” His eyes lingered on the blond boy, who looked more shattered each time he spoke. “Please,” he began, to the broken boy, “Am I... Am I upsetting you?” Those eyes looked startled as they observed him, tears clinging to those lashes. “Please...tell me, what am I...?” He sighed in frustration at himself, at not understanding – at hurting someone and not knowing why.

“You... You honestly can't remember, anything? Not even who you are?” Professor McGonagall asked from her fair distance away.

Why is this happening? He doesn't remember anything?! “Is this permanent? Will he

even remember me, us, *everyone*?” Draco asked hastily, he couldn't help but feel the panic rear it's ugly head in his chest, crushing his breathless lungs and constricting his throat. “Harry, *please*...” Draco pleaded, gazing at him with hopeful eyes, begging him to remember him.

Harry looked at the mention of his *apparent* name, seeing those eyes again, the ones that broke his heart before he even knew why. He looked down at the hands that had fallen to the bedspread when he had tugged his away, his fingers touching the smooth shape of the Blond's knuckles. A sudden, static tremor shot through his arm, making his stomach flip and his heart jolt, and he jumped slightly, staring at the Blond in shock.

“That was – what was that?!” He gasped, “What did...did you do to me? That feeling was...” He blushed darkly at the pleasantness of it, as well as the shock. “You...you were...” He scanned the pale, hopeful face carefully, searching for something, anything. “You were...important to me... I can see it, you were holding me – am I...what was I...what *am* I, to you?”

Those eyes, they were ones of love he was sure, but they were both men. Was that alright where they were – wherever they were? Or did they simply not care? Did his parents, or family care – whoever they may be? Did he love this boy back? Just across the room, he saw a bushy-haired girl, with tears streaking silently down her cheeks as she watched him in confusion.

His head throbbed menacingly with the chaos that was his empty mind. He knew he was a boy, apparently his name was Harry Potter, and this boy beside him, whoever he was, was in love with him? Why could he remember nothing else? Was he ill? He looked like he was in a hospital after all...

“*What am I to you...*” Draco replayed that question over and over in his head. *This can't be happening to me!* He mentally screamed. “I...I'm...” Draco's stuttered speech

was ended when Hermione rushed over and pulled him aside.

“I don't think you should say too much, I think you should leave and get some rest, we need to start from the beginning with everything that's happened,” She advised.

“No!” Draco argued, though he was extremely tired, though his body was aching with pain and exhaustion. He rushed passed her and back to Harry. He just couldn't accept it.

“Don't tell me you don't know who I am – *please!*” Draco pleaded. Close to tears

Harry felt distress and panic and heartache rise in his chest, choking him with their intensity. But more than that, it wasn't all his own feelings, swelling inside him like a rising tide. That only made his distress soar and then the Blond made to touch him again. “I... No, I don't remember, please...! I don't know you!” He shouted, insisting it as that boy looked like he had shattered. Harry's eyes were wide as he watched the boy stumble back, flinching as if he had been hit.

Draco's heart froze; he looked at Harry for a fleeting moment then ran. He didn't know why he was running, but his legs carried him away. As he fled, he brought his hand up to wipe away the falling tears, the liquid misery that he had tried so hard to hide.

“Draco, wait!” Hermione called after him, but he was already gone.

~To Be Continued...

Chapter 21: Chapter Twenty-One

(Bound By) Clandestine Addiction

[Chapter Twenty-One]

“I will...prepare a pensieve of the most basic of information for you, compiled of a few memories of your friends, that will take time, however,” the dark figure at the base of the bed informed a confused, distraught Harry – though he didn’t know what a pensieve was...

“That will take some time, I urge you to rest.” Snape looked to Pomfrey, silently allowing her to assure him that Potter and Granger would both remain here for now. “I will return to...check on you tomorrow,” he added, before turning and hastening from the hospital wing.

The doors ricocheted off the walls, magically shutting silently despite his throwing them open, darting out into the hall. His dark eyes scanned the world – evening had fallen, the students were in bed (thankfully) but it was his former favourite he was concerned for...

A gut-wrenching scream echoed through the stone and he shot towards it. Snape didn’t pause to repair the gargoye statue, not the suit of armour that had been shattered to pieces; he did not stop, not until the sight of Draco Malfoy, moonlight streaking his halo of blond hair, stopped him in his tracks. The screams tearing from his mouth made him flinch.

“Why, why?! *Why?!?*” Draco's voice bellowed, as he turned his wand on the castle ahead of him while he walked. His breathless pants overwhelmed him in his madness and he stumbled against that broken corridor wall. He started to bash his head into the concrete. Repeating the word ‘*why*’ over and over, each time he smashed himself into the agony with more fury. His throaty, broken cries tarnished his voice, the tears

slurring his words as they blurred his vision. His heart shattered inside his body and the dark-mark that had seemed to have faded recently burned with more fury than he had ever felt. It was inescapable; Lord Voldemort would feel his pain.

Blood leaked from his head onto the concrete beside it, a hazy feeling overcoming him in his wretchedness and slowly, he tumbled to his knees. Above him, Professor Snape stood. "I don't...I don't *want this*, any of it," Draco insisted desolately, "I didn't choose to be *this*...this *death eater*, and I never wanted to feel like this over *him* – feel so weak around him. Why...*why* is this even happening? If he forgets me, if he has really forgotten everything, then all we built was...was all for *NOTHING!*" Draco's head met the side of the wall again, but this time, he felt Snape stop him.

"Cease this, *now*, Draco," Snape hissed, his long fingers curling into Malfoy's shoulders and pulling him away from the wall he was so determined to hurt himself on, but the boy struggled to be free, to hurt himself again. "Potter loved you, did he not?" Snape asked the word *loved* sticking in his throat. "Do not harm yourself, his memories... I can make him remember who he was but it must be done *slowly*, once he grasps the basis of what he once was, you can convince him of what he means to you."

Turning Draco roughly to face him, he shook him roughly. "Foolish child! Fight! Do not give in at the slightest hurdle...!"

Malfoy froze under those fingers, he knew Snape was right, but right now, he just felt too numb to even think. Everything inside his tortured mind was working overload, he never wanted to feel this way, but he did, and he felt regret over the fact he hadn't seized it while he could before. He had been, so *cruel* to Harry on many occasions, and all of it came flooding back in an instant. The things he had done...

"I was so..." Harry would hate him if those things came back without the feelings to accompany them. "He..." Draco's tears stung as they fell without mercy over his

alabaster flesh and onto the dusty floor below. “How can this be happening to me?” He asked. Though he knew there was no answer. He was mentally torturing himself with *why’s* and *if’s* – so many possible outcomes that he could do nothing but simply wish death on himself, rather than this, so Harry didn't have to be the one to suffer – so that he, Draco did not have to face this unbearable, empty loneliness...

“I'd rather die than *this!* Get *OFF* me!” He yelled, the magic from inside pulsing through his shoulders and forcing Snape’s hands away with a hissing burn. His magic was uncontrollable, and was building inside him with the misery. “I need too... I just...I can't!” His breathing pattern escalated into ragged pants. It was as if his heart had been ripped from his chest by razor blades and fed to the Dark Lord as a meal. It wasn't right...

“It hurts... Why does it...*feel*...like this...”

“Nobody asks for love, nor its sting,” Snape replied knowingly between the boy’s sobs, though stepped back to allow him the space he desired. He watched the broken boy carefully for a moment, before speaking. “*Amor vincit omnia*,” he recited as if it were a poem, “A sentimental fool like your Mister Potter would agree I am sure. *Love conquers all*, perhaps it will prevail, Mister Malfoy, but you must live and strive to see it done.” He turned then, intent on leaving Draco alone, but then he paused, looking over his shoulder at the shuddering form.

“Professor McGonagall will- re-enrol you in the school, that way its wards, its protections against whatever the Dark Lord may try when he has recovered will protect you three once more. In time you should attend lessons (you may as well finish your NEWTS while you are here). There will be a separate room set up for each of you; I believe...it would be best to keep you away from the other students without teachers to guard you, currently.” Draco didn’t show any sign of having heard him, nor was he likely to, so Snape finished curtly. “Visit me in my office when you are...finished.”

Draco shifted his face away as his Professor spoke, he didn't much want him to see his broken face right now. Covered in tears, tears unfitting of a Malfoy, he felt strangely ashamed. Staggering to his feet, he managed speech – barely. “So I will be back in the Slytherin dungeons for tonight, yes? Snape looked up at him and down slowly, as if assessing his stability.

“Somewhat. You may have the Head Boy’s room since it is vacant this year. It will be...secure enough.” Snape answered, before turning back to him. His hand delved into his vast obsidian cloak, returning to offer a small, translucent vial to the young Slytherin. “Your possessions will be there for you. This is Dreamless Sleep, drink it, you will need it I daresay,” Snape murmured. Draco just nodded lifelessly. “You can come to me, if ever you have the need, Draco,” the Professor promised, he would see Draco quickly to his rooms before returning to head back to the Hospital Wing. Granger and Potter would need to be settled as well, and judging by Draco’s rigid, determined demeanour, he would prefer to be alone for now...

“Hmm,” Draco softly replied. Snape had snuck him to his quarters without notice and then departed without another word. The Slytherin common room was something that caused Draco to shudder oddly when he entered. So much had happened, so much had flashed through his mind in this very dungeon over the past year, and he felt nostalgic. It wasn't right, being here didn't feel right. Everything had been a massive build up to defeating and conquering the Dark Lord, but they had failed, and had anyone stopped to think about after that, and what was to come next? No, they hadn't. Except Harry, who had spoken of taking photographs together and *dates*...

Draco had raced quickly into the Head Boy’s room, which was empty with only the single bed, and his belongings waiting for him. Looking around, he still didn't feel right. There was an aching, heavy emptiness weighing in his chest and he was sure that it was *crushing* him.

* * *

No sun broke the clouds the next morning. Grey cloaked the heavens and the entire school it seemed. Naturally, everyone had heard what had happened, naturally, the secrets, even the darkest and most personal of them were known. Harry Potter, however, was unaware of the significance of any of it. He was kept strictly in the hospital wing until Snape could find appropriate pensieve memories at the very *least* to inform him of who he was and the wizarding world.

Hermione had not allowed herself to be moved. She sat on the edge of her designated bed, (two empty places away from Harry) regarding the dark-haired Boy thoughtfully in silence. He hadn't wanted to talk to anyone last night, and when Hermione had tried to come to him after being awoken by his dry sobs, he had ignored her. Now, however, he was staring vacantly ahead, as if hoping the bare wall would give him all his answers.

"Harry," the girl tried, but his head did not move. "Harry... I know you don't remember me—"

"I don't remember *anyone*," The boy corrected bitterly, but nevertheless, she continued, her throat raw from crying herself to sleep the night before, her head pounding with misery.

"But I was one of your best friends," she explained, "I know that means little to you now but... It must be terrifying, not knowing who you are, what is happening...you can talk to me, if nothing else – I won't push but you can't be alone in this."

A heavy sigh tumbled through Harry's lips and he tipped his head back against the pillows, closing his eyes, but seeing no memories there. "I am alone," he whispered, "You, that Professor Snape, and that Boy last night...you all want me to remember who I am, no – who *you* are but what if I can't? Not ever?!"

"Don't say that, Harry!" She pleaded, her eyes stinging. She couldn't cry anymore,

and she just didn't have the strength to survive losing both of her best friends right now. "You *will* remember, I'm sure you will. You're a strong boy, *Merlin* I've known you for six years, Harry, I know you will remember," She reassured him with a forced smile. The castle felt cold against her arms and she shivered, pulling the duvet from one of the other beds and wrapping it around herself. "Don't rush it, Harry, it will come back to you... I'm sure."

Harry turned his gaze away from her and to the window, staring out across the dull, grey world. What kind of life had he forgotten? Tears pricked his eyes but he was determined not to let them fall, so they clung uselessly to his lashes. More than the lost world, more than his distress at knowing nothing, there was a throbbing, gaping emptiness in his chest, one that felt...*different*, heavier than his own torment. It reminded him of the spark that had shocked him when he'd touched that blond boy's hand...

"I feel like someone has hollowed me out," he said, to no one in particular, though he saw the girl tense out of the corner of his eyes. "And I don't mean my memories, I mean my..."

"Heart?" She suggested and he just nodded, still unsure.

"I'm Harry Potter?" He asked then, for what felt like the hundredth time. The bushy-haired girl nodded patiently. Turning his head to look at her properly, he considered the few scraps he had been told. "And you're Hermione?" Again, all he got was a nod. He chewed his lip then, finding it had obviously been somewhat of a *habit* of – whoever he had been before.

"Do you remember...that boy that was holding my hand yesterday? The blond one?" He tried, for some reason embarrassed by the recollection. "He seemed... He got upset when I didn't know him." Guilt swept over him, pouring into the gaping whole that *something* he could not recall had left behind. He hadn't wanted to hurt anyone, but that boy seemed to want more than he could give. "He seemed very intense," Harry continued, his frown increasing. "Who...who is he?"

Hermione sighed, she didn't want to be the one to tell Harry he had been fucking a man, been in love with this man, who was once his enemy, who had done vile and disgusting things to him. Whom had only just recently, begun to relax and admit his love. "That was Draco Malfoy... You and he were enemies once...and..." She stopped there, she didn't have the Heart to say. She *couldn't* say.

"He was probably just worried about you, I mean, you're friends now..." Why did this feel so awkward? Hermione's entire body clenched as she bitterly thought without control... If it hadn't been for Draco Malfoy, things might be different, Ron might still be... Harry wouldn't have so focused on saving that *ferret* instead of Ron and...maybe... Her thoughts stopped there. "He is bad for you," She stated simply.

Harry looked at her, not knowing whether to believe her or not. She seemed honest and in so, honestly heartbroken. He worried his lip for a prolonged moment, before chancing a reply. "He... Is he bad for me, because he likes me?" He asked, humiliated by his childish words. He looked down at himself then. How *old* was he even? Was he even still a child? "Do my...my parents not approve of him? Did you – my other friends not like it?" He felt the panic soar again and struggled to control his breathing.

"Did I not like it? I mean..." He swore his lip would burst from the way he was gnawing at it. "How old am I?" He saw pity flicker in her eyes. And something else, something that signalled she, perhaps was suffering outside of his forgetting her.

"That's not it, Harry... Your parents are dead," She stated plainly, an important fact that Harry needed to know. "I can tell you what you want to know, but as for Draco, I think it's best you just drop that part for now. There are so many other, more important things you need to worry about," She smiled comfortingly with that. "You're seventeen, and you're a very good person. You have done a lot of good things and a lot of people look up to you. Me and Ron..." She paused at that.

He shrugged, it seemed plausible enough. One boy couldn't be *that* important if his alleged best friend (no, even the adults had assured him Hermione *was* his closest friend) did not deem him necessary? "Who is Ron?" he asked, and her eyes glistened with treacherous tears. Her mouth opened soundlessly for a few moments, but before she found any speech, the doors to the Hospital Wing flew open, and Professor Snape (whom he didn't think liked him very much) strode towards him, a most peculiar dome-shaped object floating behind him.

"I require but a little of your time, Mr Potter," Snape stated brusquely, drawing the hospital trolley towards him and setting the bowl down on it. Harry frowned down at the ornate bowl of water, then back up to the dark professor. His lips parted with speech, but Snape beat him to it, shoving a silver goblet under his nose, the contents sloshing clumsily. "Drink this, Potter."

"What is it?" Harry asked warily, as he took the goblet, though swigged it back without argument – he had to trust these people, there was nothing else for it...

"Something to make what you are about to learn easier to take," the Professor explained dryly, gesturing to the bowl. "This method is a standard one in the world you were a part of, but without your knowledge of that world beforehand you may...panic without *that*."

Harry set the empty goblet aside, relaxation spreading through his body like a soft, vibrating tingle. "Was that whisky or something?" He asked, earning a derisive sneer from the Professor.

"A relaxation draught, now..." Snape flicked his hand towards the bowl between them, Hermione watching tenuously from where she sat. "I have extracted a few memories from people who knew – *know* you, to give you the gist of who you are, to make you safe, the rest you must learn on your own, or I fear we may overload you – your mind is fragile enough after such a blast as it is..."

Harry frowned, sitting up a little straighter to stare down into the hoary liquid swirling

within. Ripples shuddered across the surface, disturbing the reflection of himself, which he studied as he brought his slender fingers to touch his face. Obsidian hair atop his head sat in permanent disarray, his eyes were green, (and he already knew he wore glasses) but then his rough fingertip traced the curious, lightning bolt scar atop his forehead and he frowned, his gaze darting up to the Professor for answers.

“Place your face in the bowl, Potter,” Snape answered, even before Harry could ask the question, “And all will become clear...” Harry remained still, poised over the pensieve and so Snape set a reluctant hand to the boy’s back, forcing him face-first into the bowl.

A shriek from Hermione was the last thing Harry heard before he was plunged into the madness, the organised chaos of thoughts that bombarded his mind...

His parents dead, killed by a dark wizard, Voldemort – a wizard he and his friends (some having died in the process) were fighting against, even now. Dark magic, Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. Yes, he was a wizard, a powerful one. He saw the faces of some of those who had provided the memories. A giant named Hagrid, images of a family who’d hated him, Hermione, and her fleeting thoughts of friendships and Horcruxes – of a red-head that made her recollections bleed with tears.

Harry gasped, choking as he tried to draw back, but the hand pressed firmly between his shoulders pinned him down. He struggled, he spluttered but he could not escape the memories assaulting him. Magic, his wand, he remembered specific battles, deaths, he saw a man falling from a tower, he saw snake-like eyes in a pallid face and he screamed. Surely these were not glimpses of his life; surely this was not his reality? This seemed like glimpses from a nightmare!

Countless other images sped across his mind, ingrained there now as if they were truly his, but like a broken puzzle, there were so many pieces missing, and the hollow,

heavy emptiness in his chest was not gone. Then screams filled his mind, a girl's then two boys...

"STOP!" Harry tried to call out but no sound left him, he saw a bright ball of light, he saw the same red-head – *Ron* crash into the wall, saw Hermione fall. He spun then, the horrified face of that Blond – *Draco Malfoy* flashing before his eyes before the pressure holding him down seized him by the scruff of his neck, yanking him back into the real world, gasping for air.

"That – *no!*" He panted, shoving back away from Snape so that the torturous bowl rolled (without breaking) to the floor. "That – that wasn't my life! I don't believe it! So much pain and...that wasn't even all of it, was it?"

Snape stared down that long nose at him with disdain.

"No," he said simply, "As I said, they were the basics that you *needed* to know, to keep you alive and safe from those who wish you harm. You saw everyone you can trust, everyone you can't. You saw glimpses of your suffering, of the people you lost. I could give you no details, however, nothing solid of love and friendship or family, to do so would have overloaded your mind and done more damage than good."

Harry nodded, waving his hand to silence the Professor before planting the heel of his palm on his aching forehead. It throbbed with the storm of thoughts and he closed his eyes. Yes, Snape had told him he would have to find out the rest on his own. But those memories, he knew they were not lies, he could *feel* it as he felt them settle in his mind where they had been before that blast – yes, the thing that had torn them away.

"There was...so much...*death*," he murmured, not looking up from the soothing dark of his palm.

“And without these facts, this knowledge, there will only be more...*death*,” Snape stated curtly.

“Professor, that's enough!” Hermione insisted. “Don't you think we have all been through enough, just please, stop talking and let him rest?” She urged, as the taller and much darker man stood coldly above her.

“He cannot rest forever,” The Professor reminded her, his robes swirling about him as he hastily departed.

With the insensitive Potion's Master gone, Hermione turned to Harry once more. “Are you...are you okay?” She asked carefully.

Harry just nodded, his palm moving to where that empty agony was pulsing so hard in his chest he thought it would smother his heart. *What is this?* He wondered desperately.

“I just... I know who I am, and... There are no feelings there, nothing to go with those deaths, that torment, that *loss*. I can't remember ever feeling happy, or sad, or...” He shook his head, stumbling to his feet hastily. “How will I even know what I'm feeling, if I *ever* feel them again?” His eyes scanned the hospital wing he had failed to fall asleep in last night. Yes, Hogwarts, this was his home, he remembered that much, but he didn't remember what home *felt* like...

“I don't remember how I felt about you, or my godfather, or my parents, about Ron or *any* of the people in those memories,” he paused then, unsure whether to voice the last part. “All I know is that those eyes, Voldemort, he scared me, that's...that's all I can feel...”

Her eyes were heavy with pity and he winced at the sight of it as he brushed past her, heading for the door. “I need to walk, to...*to get away*,” he panted, as the abyss within

his chest expanded, in an attempt to swallow him whole. Who's misery could he feel there? Was it the Harry he had once been? Something else? He was so unsure...

Hermione's voice called out to him but he bolted away from it, slamming the doors wildly behind him as he fled through the halls. They were empty, but echoing sounds of voices filled the deserted place. Staring above, he saw the ghosts he had been shown in the pensieve and backed slowly to the nearest door. Panic led him through it out into the shade of the arches around a sundrenched courtyard.

That stopped him.

Emerald eyes scanned the scene, lush grass paving the ground just beyond the arches, a fountain, ornate gargoyle statues, a tree...

Breath catching in his chest, Harry fell into a self-induced trance, his feet drawing him towards the light. He reached his hand out, a lump rising in his throat as the warmth of the sunlight spread over his fingers. He could not remember feeling the sun on his skin, all those memories, they were filled or edged with darkness, not this, not this...*warmth*. Inhaling shakily, he allowed his feet to draw him on, until his body was bathed in that light. He closed his eyes, feeling the brightness sting his lids with a pleasant pain as he moved forwards. Had he appreciated it so before now? He wondered, perching on the side of the stone fountain, beside one of the gargoyles decorating it, and dipped his fingers into the cool water.

It rippled, disturbing his awkward looking reflection as he touched it, one of the golden fish within nipping at the digits. A small, sad smile flickered over his face as he watched the way his face changed with expressions. It didn't even feel like it was him staring back, he couldn't recognise his own reflection even, thanks to that spell, whatever it had been.

Suddenly, a tingling warmth shot up his spine, spreading through his every limb and pooling in that emptiness, warming the void inside his chest. He stiffened at the abrupt, tingling sensations that caressed his skin and turned just as a shadow fell over him. His eyes widened and he jumped in surprise as he lifted his gaze to stare up at the Blond boy from the night before, and those pained, grey eyes that melted when they looked over him.

“Hello,” Harry said, feeling ridiculous for saying so, but he couldn’t remember how to react to this boy.

Draco's heart jump, startled by the all so abrupt greeting. His silver eyes were shadowed with dark bags beneath them; *he had not slept last night*. “Harry?” Draco softly spoke, his eye's widening at the beautiful dark-haired boy before him. He really was desirable, though Draco had just taken the time to notice how much so. He found his cheeks heating and he knew he was probably blushing with a rose stain. He bit nervously down onto the side of his lip, his left arm holding his right bicep when he stood like an awkward girl before him.

“I'm... Yesterday...you...don't...you really don't remember me?”

“Professor Snape showed me some of my memories, just glimpses – just enough to let me know about...magic and who I am – I saw faces, deaths and I saw you, I saw your face, but I don’t remember what you were to me.” His voice was impassive, unwavering and he watched that face knot with misery. He peered up beneath thick lashes to stare at him, the warmth in the gaping hole in his chest confusing him endlessly.

“Your name is Draco Malfoy, isn’t it?” He asked, not missing the way Draco seemed to shudder at the way his name slid from his lips. Harry stiffened, not sure how to react, or talk to these people he was supposed to know. “Hermione told me that we

were enemies, then friends,” he said, and Malfoy didn’t say anything so it seemed he agreed with that. “But when I asked again, she said you weren’t important,” Harry said simply, tipping his head to regard the Blond curiously.

“The bright light that took my memories, you were there when it hit me – I think...I think it looked like I stopped it from hitting you?” He asked. Those grey, sad eyes widened.

Draco shivered in Harry's presence. *Please let this nightmare end*, he thought. “I...I'm not...” He was lost for words; he didn't know what to say. “I...I suppose I'm not good for you, I mean, this is all...none of this would have even...” Draco halted in speech. He couldn't blame himself, he had to fight for Harry and this was no one's fault. Snape was right. He couldn't just give up like this.

“You were my everything, Harry...” He started, echoing something Harry had said to him often (before) – but too late, for at that moment, Hermione bolted out from the shadowed archways.

“Harry?! She exclaimed, rushing to his side. “What has he been saying to you?” She demanded. But he said nothing, merely watching as a gush of wind blew the leaves between them up into the black sky.

“Draco?” She insisted, her head still aching, hazy from crying over Ron. She shot him a glare. *This is his fault; it's his fault Ron is...* “Harry, you need to keep away from him. He is trouble!”

What's going on here? Why is Granger acting like this? Draco wondered.

“What?” He asked, stunned to silence, lacking in the words he so desperately needed

to find.

Harry scrambled to his feet, his gaze shooting between them with pained confusion. What was he to believe? “I was your everything?” Harry asked the hurt Blond suddenly, even as Hermione tried to drag him away. “What were you to me? I saved you didn’t I? From that ball of light? What was that static – that electricity when I touched you yesterday?”

“Harry come away from him, he’s done nothing but cause you pain,” Hermione insisted, the grief of losing one of them still so fresh in her mind that the thought of losing Harry, the thought of watching him die because of something Malfoy had done, the way Ron had done for her, was preposterous, inconceivable!

“Answer me!” Harry demanded of Draco, tearing away from Hermione’s restraining hands and flying forwards to seize Draco’s arm. He gasped, jumping and tearing his hand away from the shock he received when their skin touched. His eyes were wide, searching at he stared at him. *Why is this happening to me?*

The buzz tingled over Draco's torso, the mark of *Sectumsempra*, the beginning of the bond furiously burning, and the knowledge of Harry forgetting rushing into him like needles. It hurt and it felt uncomfortable, the static had never felt this way before and it unnerved his tense body, so much so he almost *literally* felt numb. “I...we have a *connection*. The *bond*, don't – don't you remember it? You must *feel* it? That static electricity, rushing through you?” He encouraged.

“Harry don't listen to him, he’s probably placed a spell on you so you would feel something similar to what he is describing. *Please*, don't fall for his act!” *I don't want lose you when I've just lost Ron*, she thought, almost *pleading*.

Harry looked at her unsurely, what Draco was saying, it certainly didn't sound real, nowhere near as plausible as what Hermione was saying. But the warmth in his chest, it dissipated as he stepped back, and he flinched at the return of the emptiness. What was happening to him? He felt that panic soar to his throat again and his skin trembled weakly from the loss of that precious tingling.

"Are you doing this to me?" Harry asked the Blond, his eyes glazing with lost tears.

"NO!!!" Draco screamed in despair. "I've done some *nasty* things to you in the past, and I'll admit to those, but I'm *not* doing this to you...!"

"Cruel and vile and vulgar things!" Hermione corrected. Draco was so tempted to tell her to just shut up, but with the loss of Weasley hanging over his head, he could barely look at her. "Harry, I'm telling you the truth, I...I love..."

"*Stupefy!*" She shouted, cutting his sentence short, and Harry's eyes widened. Not having remembered the extent of his magical abilities, it was as if he had been stunned along with Draco. "Come on, before he gets up," Hermione prompted, taking hold of his arm and pulling.

Harry looked – *felt* horrified, his eyes remained fixed on Draco's body as Hermione dragged him away, he didn't know what was happening anymore. He simply felt torn in so many directions, and none of them seemed particularly pleasant. Everything was hateful, and *painful* and dark, so dark it was suffocating. His best friend led him back into the safety of the hospital wing, but his eyes longed for the light and he stared, emptily at the enchanted windows and the fake sunlight.

"Was he...? He seemed really hurt," Harry stated simply, he couldn't be afraid of hurting others' feelings when he didn't know what those feelings felt like, when he

didn't know who was lying, or who was telling the truth. Hermione was silent, calculating. "He was with us when I lost my memories?" Harry prompted, "If I protected him, surely he was... Was he really so bad?"

She remained quiet for a long time, before carefully answering him. "Yes. He turned you into something you weren't, you...changed...a lot because of him and not for the better." He had changed, but deep down, Hermione knew she was wrong. He may have been an under-indulged loved-up kitten, but all of the choices he made remained, and never changed just because of Draco. He'd had the same clear head even when Draco was there – all of the same things would have happened the same way, and Ron would still be...

"You have to stay away from him," She said again sharply, her mind clouded beyond reason. Ron was gone, and there was nothing she could do, nor hold onto, she had to keep the one thing she had left safe, and away from the hands of a slytherin who had never earned her trust.

Harry considered her a moment, her words revolving round his mind like a slow, penetrating echo. Approaching her tentatively, his gaze flicked over to the pensieve that had been replaced neatly on the hospital table. "Can you...can you show me? Show me memories of...him?" He murmured, unsure if that was what he really wanted. But that boy, he seemed so intense and yet this girl, his friend was saying it was dangerous to fall into that trap? He needed to see...

Hermione shifted uncomfortably, not really sure what to do about that request. Carding her fingers through her greasy and unwashed hair, (her mind was elsewhere, and she hadn't bathed, no surprise after the loss of Ron) she walked to the end up Harry's bed and sat tentatively upon it.

"I'll give you one of the few memories I have of you both, together..." She whispered, and brought her wand to her temple.

Watching as her wand pressed to her head, Harry found himself in awe as the tip drew away, bringing with it a wispy, tendril of silver mist. It quivered in the air as she brought it to the bowl, wavered as if it might disappear, before settling along the surface of the liquid in the pensieve. Harry swallowed hard, approaching the bowl with unease as he recalled the overwhelming, barrage of thoughts that had attacked him last he had been there.

A glance up at Hermione told him she was uneasy, as if she was unsure this was the right thing to do, and then Harry plunged his face into the bowl.

That same, whirling mist swallowed him and then he blinked, finding himself staring across a grand, magical staircase, directly at an image of himself. He watched as his past self approached the familiar blond, (who hadn't noticed his presence) and leant intimately close to him. Present Harry startled slightly at the glittering emotion in his green eyes, he couldn't remember that emotion, and it hurt. *Like a hollow, rotten, empty shell*, he thought, tears pricking his eyes as the past Draco turned to face past Harry, rolling his eyes at a fake vomiting sound that came from the red-head at the observing Harry's side.

From even here he could see the past Harry's emotions, heart worn openly for all to see. From here he saw Draco's arm shoot out and snatch at Harry's collar roughly, dragging him into himself. The memory went hazy, it flickered into brief, shadowy images that he couldn't make out, and then a few startling gauche scenes darted through his mind. The sight of his naked body, soiled and bound with Draco hovering over him stuck in his flustered mind. His mind drew back from the memory then, and he stumbled backwards, glancing up at Hermione once more. She seemed hesitant, *anxious*...

"I...You... He wanted me...but he...bullied me?" He asked, not sure how to phrase it.

Hermione sighed. "Well, it was rather forceful, things between you." That wasn't a complete lie. Things were always intense with them. "There was even a time where..." She began, not sure whether she should continue or not, but when Harry's eyes widened in morbid hunger for that information she did anyway. "You came up to us after one of your little rendezvous, he had burnt your face with hot water from the sinks in the bathroom..." Her last few words slowed as she opened her eyes to see him, Harry was sitting there stunned, probably not having expected such extremes. "Look, I am sorry, I didn't mean to—" She started.

Just like before, with the Potion's Master, Harry waved his hand at her to silence her, stumbling back a little with shock. Those eyes he had seen in the courtyard today, with such lost heartache...had those eyes lied to him? Hermione still fidgeted awkwardly, and Harry didn't know what to say and most of all, he didn't know what to *feel*! Past Harry, he had pressed into that boy with such honest, open adoration; with a love he couldn't remember feeling. He couldn't feel anything except for the throbbing emptiness in his chest, nothing but a misery that was not completely his own...

"Please, Hermione, I want to be alone for a while," he insisted, rolling over into his bed so that his back faced her, so that she could not see his eyes clouding with tears.

Hermione felt her heart suddenly sink. Perhaps she was being unfair on what had happened between Harry and Draco, but she simply couldn't bear to see him hurt anymore, and with Draco around, he would undoubtedly continue to hurt. She shook her head a few times and reminded herself she was doing the right thing here, by keeping him away.

"Okay, Harry, get some sleep," She whispered, taking her cloak from the other bed she pulled it on, and slowly left the hospital wing, looking back over her shoulder a few of times to see Harry's back at her.

* * *

The next few days did little to dissuade the emptiness he felt, threatening to swallow him whole. After seeing that he was 'stable,' Madam Pomfrey had moved him into a private suite near the Hospital wing – well away from the noise and mayhem of the rest of the school. Harry had asked where Hermione was when they had left him in the warmly dressed room, that was close to Hermione's make-shift bedroom. She and Draco had been resuming their old classes; Snape had told him when he'd stopped in to visit (or to check he hadn't done anything reckless, most likely). He didn't have to explain why he, Harry hadn't been able to resume classes, because he already knew the reasoning behind it – he didn't remember enough to pick up where he left off. He barely knew who he was; much less what charms and potions did what.

Will I ever be the person they want me to be? He wondered frequently, miserably. The room he now resided in was filled with red and orange, and gold – was warm and yet he felt so cold. A trunk with his name on sat at the bottom of the bed, and he had flicked through to check for personal affects but there were none, nothing that meant anything to him intimately. There wasn't even a photograph...

Hermione checked in frequently – always hopefully bringing copies of her homework so that he might remember something, but he never did. She even sat with him of an evening, doing nothing but watching him awkwardly, carefully, as if she were afraid he may break. Most of his alone time was spent pouring over the spell books in his trunk or staring up at the ceiling and spiralling into despair at the unknown. Was this how his life would be from now on? Shut away in this room, never knowing the feelings, the sensations the emptiness inside him ached for – yearned with the passion of the fires of hell...?

When darkness came the second night he had been in his new room, he rolled onto his belly for the umpteenth time, growling in frustration as his mind clung to reality. He

hadn't been able to sleep since... *since I woke up with no memories*, his mind supplied. What little sleep he ensnared was plagued with vibrant balls of light and any warmth snatched away. Plagued with screams and snake-like eyes.

But more than that...

The emptiness in his chest throbbed menacingly with every breath and his skin felt tight, almost painful, as if it were trying to pull away from his body to – *somewhere*, somewhere particular, but he didn't know where.

* * *

The lifeless stone wasn't the only thing that had lost its vibrancy in the castle over such a small amount of time (well, not that it *felt* like a small amount). The castle walls just didn't look the same anymore, his silver eyes scanned the never-ending corridors under the sleepless light of the stars and moonlight that filtered in through the arched windows. Draco shivered at the emptiness inside him, around him as he stalked the halls, vaguely aware he was moving back to his room, but not really caring if he never got there.

My...My parents...I hope that they're alright, he thought, sighing in the frustration of knowing nothing, and simply struggling not to think about it. Even though he was worried, he managed to keep out the thoughts of his parents with the sheer hope they were okay, but when it came to Harry, it was the total opposite, he couldn't stop thinking about it. About him.

What if he – what if he never remembers me? If I am never anything to him again? I just...I finally was able to tell him. No. I should have told him how I felt sooner, instead of...

Draco sighed loudly as a tear fell from his face, enlightened by the intense orb of moonlight that was shining on these emotions, and the water falling seemed to glow somehow in its brilliance. But he didn't feel so brilliant right now. A last, desperate spark before the light died out, that is what he felt like. Pausing in his steps, he tilted his head back against the concrete wall and closed his eyes; just wishing it would all – if only for a moment – wash away.

* * *

The castle was eerie at night. The torches were the only source of light. The Ghosts were nowhere to be seen but Harry could hear their creepy, incoherent chatter somewhere in the walls around him, like a low, reverberating whisper. The sound and the chill of the icy cold stone floor on his feet made him shudder. He wished he had had the foresight to don some shoes, instead of wandering round the deserted castle at night in his bottoms and loose shirt. But his feet had followed the call that had kept him awake the last few nights, was drawing him onward without any thought from his mind. And with every step the ache in his chest lessened, so he continued.

The coldness of the night danced over his skin with bitter steps, bringing the hairs on his arms up with gooseflesh. He shuddered again, rubbing his arms as his feet tugged him down the dark, foreboding flight of stairs through the dungeons. Cobwebs and suits of armour caught the sparse firelight and he jumped slightly as one of the portraits started snoring.

His feet led him through a portrait which grumbled something about “The Potion’s Master granting him special passage through just because he didn’t know what day it was” – Harry was certain she meant *him*, but he couldn’t find the will to question her. He was silent and at the mercy of wherever his feet were taking him. The Slytherin common room lay before him. Many students jumped up at the sight of him, others glared and snarled for him to remove himself, but he continued to be pulled, as if by

gravity downwards, down a spiralling flight of stairs. He felt footsteps and voices following him, saying he shouldn't be here, but he kept going, right until the last landing.

There was a distinct ringing in his ears now, a distinct, hopeful hum to his skin and he paused to draw in a hesitant, unsure breath then, before throwing the small, dark door open. The voices echoed behind him, the larger students stampeding after him but they fell on deaf ears as he walked straight into a warmly lit bedroom, a half naked Blond boy sitting on the side of the bed staring at him with wide, disbelieving eyes.

Harry had the good grace to turn his head away a little at the sight of his bare torso, pale and slender in the firelight, but as his lips parted with speech, the disgruntled voices caught up with him, seizing him by the scruff of his shirt and he jumped in surprise.

"You aren't supposed to be here!" One boy sneered, suddenly stopping Harry with a harsh yank on his collar, a slytherin girl at his side.

"Leave him alone..." The Blond on the bed chimed, and turning the other slytherins away, he lead Harry further into his private quarters and closed the door on the assailants. "You need to be careful, walking around at night," Draco warned him, as he turned to face Harry finally. He blushed slightly, even without the memories that bound them together, Harry was still the same and looked the same, even stood in the same awkward stance. "W-What do you want?" He asked huskily, his throat still dry from the shamed sobbing.

Harry chewed his lip for a moment, seriously beginning to think it had been a habit of his, as he surveyed the Blond quietly. "You... There's something... It felt like I was...being *pulled* here." He watched those glassy, grey eyes, red from crying widen at his words and Draco moved towards him, his arm rigid as if it took all the strength in the world not to touch him.

“You want me,” Harry said simply, surveying this boy carefully – not that he had the time and privacy to do so. He was sure of the fact, and still Draco didn’t deny it. Harry swallowed hard, his breath shaky and uncertain. His skin was buzzing and his chest felt warm, near-complete...

“Hermione showed me a memory of us... She says...she says you aren’t good for me, and that I should stay away from you,” he raised a brow at the concern on that pale face. “I saw...I... *Your* Harry loved you, I think and she...she told me you bullied him – me – she said – she said you held my face under boiling water!” He was aware of the sense he *wasn’t* making but Draco, to his credit, seemed to know what he meant, seemed to bring his hands up in the *need* to touch him.

“It wasn’t like that!” Draco insisted, his arms swinging up to Harry’s shoulders hastily (at last, at the point where he couldn’t hold back any longer) and like electricity, his touch statically shocked the dark-haired Boy before him. Harry jumped in surprise at the sudden outburst, and the feeling that came with it. “Sorry I...I didn’t mean...” Draco began, clearly he had scared Harry, who seemed to quiver at the intensity of this feeling rushing through him, the feeling he couldn’t understand. “I did do that to you but...” Still quivering from the touch, Draco paused and changed his words.

“You feel it don’t you? This sudden rush when we touch, like a force, magnetically drawing us together, like...like a *need*? You said yourself you felt like you were drawn here didn’t you?” Draco asked, wide-eyed and waiting. Hopeful. He knew that even with everything lost, this connection between them both remained, if not with more intensity than before. He knew Harry felt it. He had to.

Harry stumbled back into the bed post, his skin buzzing in aftershocks, his eyes wide and surveying the desperate Blond. “W-Were we... Were we happy? You... I sacrificed myself to save you; I saw that – you must have been important enough for me to do that?” Draco’s eyes glistened with a sheen of emotion that Harry

only *wished* he could feel. Aside from the confusion, the fear, he felt this throbbing, pulsing *something* – coursing through his veins and bursting where they had touched. But he had no idea what it was, or why his lips had gone dry, or why his stomach hurt at the sight of this boy’s pain.

“I...I felt something,” he murmured quietly, as if afraid of letting Draco hear him. His eyes traced the pale, alabaster flesh carefully, wondering whether he would feel the shock again...

“Is this...what I felt...is it normal magic? Did you cast a spell on me? Or did...is this something that happens to everyone?”

Draco sighed, there was so much he wanted to say but the words wouldn't come, every time he needed to say those most important things to Harry, his body froze and his mind went blank. “It's hard to...to explain...” Draco began, his hand trailing across his forehead in frustration, massaging it as though he had a headache. “You cast a spell against me... But...” Draco paused. How would he tell Harry he practically nearly killed him? Harry was bound to think he was lying.

“You accidentally cast a spell on me, that nearly killed me,” He continued, turning his head away from Harry's startling, emerald gaze, “And then this feeling between us formed, and I...well I'm not quite sure how.” Draco stopped again; it was all coming out wrong.

Harry’s eyes widened and he felt the confusion whirl in his mind like a thick mist. “You...You mean that this is all from a spell? The feelings you feel...are they not... You only love me because of a spell?” He asked, slightly panicked at the thought. He could not remember how those emotions felt, but he was sure the light in the Blond’s eyes, the glistening adoration was sincere.

“Is that...is that why you...*bullied* me?” Harry asked with a small, quiet voice.
“Because I cast a love spell on you?”

“It wasn't a love spell. It was a spell to cause me harm...as an enemy,” Draco corrected him immediately. “And I...my feelings, they're not...” *Why can't I just say it?* “When it all began I really, really hated you.”

Harry's eye's widened but before he could speak Draco continued.

“I'm not really sure why – I suppose it is down to a lot of reasons, but over time that *changed!*” He exclaimed. But Harry didn't seem to be buying it. Hate to love wasn't something that was easily believable, not to someone who hadn't lived it. “I know I have done some...nasty...no...simply unspeakable things to you but I – you have to...”

“I don't understand...” Harry murmured quietly, falling into a sitting position on the edge of the four-poster. “Did I... Did I pursue you then?” He couldn't imagine pursuing a man that had done such vile things to him, and he was sure that the hot water and the domineering attitude on the staircase memory were not the worst of it. “H-How did... I was *your everything*, like....like a lover or...? Does that mean we...?” He flushed, so many questions, he felt so foolish and awkward, he might be getting this completely wrong...

“And if this wasn't a love spell, you mean...the love wasn't created from the spell? So what was? This tingling? This emptiness in my chest? What does the spell do? Call me to you like a lost dog?”

“I don't really know what we were, what we *became*. I suppose you could say we became lovers but in the beginning, this feeling that was created with the spell that night, it kept drawing me back to you, and then sometimes I would feel I... Well I wanted to see you, even without the feelings of this bond we share.” Draco couldn't believe he was admitting these things; he'd had so much trouble admitting anything

with Harry before, but now... It seemed...well...like he *had* to, *needed* to.

“At the beginning you pursued me relentlessly, while I tried to ignore these feelings I was having for you, these thoughts, these *needs* – everything. I pushed you and pushed you away, but you...” Draco paused and smiled slightly at Harry directly (something that the old Harry would never have experienced). “...You just kept coming back.” Draco paced over to the enchanted window and gazed pensively into the distance.

"The *bond* that was created between us, it's like a static feeling, a magnetic pull that keeps drawing me to you, and you to me, whether it be out of mere fascination or pure curiosity, the rush that burns through me..." Draco's eyes ignited with longing and he held his hands higher staring down at them. "It makes me need you." He finished. He wasn't sure if that had come out exactly how he wanted but he had at least tried.

Tears trickled down his cheek and he turned his head further towards the window. He was aware Harry was watching him, but he was hollow, void of the fire his Harry had burned so brightly with – and this Harry couldn't understand a shred of what he was feeling now.

Harry gazed at this heartbroken boy and got to his feet slowly, approaching the boy with uncertainty shining in his eyes. He had wanted answers, and these *were* answers, he supposed. *And he is telling me the truth*, Harry thought, stopping just a few inches from the Blond, whose gaze was fixed beyond the window. *No one can lie like this, I cannot remember what it is to be lied to, but this heartache isn't a secret, isn't fake – I can feel it inside me!*

“And...this emptiness inside my chest,” he began shakily, his eyes travelling down the slope of Draco’s shoulder, then his arm, to his pale wrist and long fingers... “This pain, it’s yours, isn’t it? I can feel it?” A small nod was his only answer, and his teeth were at his lips again, gnawing nervously. The moonlight shone in through the

window, which was odd, he thought, since he was sure they were in the dungeons – magic he supposed. Either way, he watched it glide over alabaster flesh enchantingly, and whether it was the magic of the sight itself, or just the pull of this *bond* he was pulled towards him, his fingers reaching out and brushing over Draco's hand.

That shock made Draco jump but he didn't move otherwise, merely turned his head to look at where Harry (as opposed to recoiling) pressed his warm hand into the static tingle, studying the feeling hard. His eyes were fixed on the place where his fingers trailed along Draco's wrist, along his thumb and into the curve of his palm. The feeling wasn't that bad, he supposed, it was quite nice, *comforting* and warm, and when he looked up Draco was watching his face carefully.

"Sorry," Harry blushed, drawing his hand away slowly, "That was...I'm sorry."

Draco's hand drew Harry back for a moment, and held those fingers between his own, only a moment, before letting go again. "It's... *It's okay*... I understand..." He assured him, "I...I feel it too." Then, the Blond smiled. Slowly, he turned back to face Harry and sighed heavily, not for the last time.

Bringing his trembling fingers up to dotingly caress Harry's pale cheek, his silver eyes, despite their colour, had an honesty, a warmth and an underlying sadness within as Harry examined them. Draco's eyes flickered then and in a moment his hand flinched back.

"There are more important things in this life that you need to remember, Harry. I may be a large part of your lost memories but I'm not everything." Harry looked quite confused at that statement, but didn't vocally question it as the Blond remained silent for a moment.

Draco knew deep in his heart that all he really wanted was for Harry to remember the world *they* shared together, but with the Dark Lord still around, he knew that Harry needed to focus on other things, more important things than what they'd had. The wizarding world was depending on it.

"You... You're a very important person to a lot of people and you're the only one who can fix things..."

"I... I saw some of that, from the memories Professor Snape gave me," Harry explained quietly, his gaze lingering over the hand he had touched a moment before. "That man...I... Voldemort, he wants to kill me – we tried to kill him, and that's how I lost my memories, wasn't it?" Again, his only answer was a nod, and Harry reached into his pocket, pulling out the wand Pomfrey had handed him earlier that day. "There was some prophecy, and I'm meant to kill him – with this?" He asked, gesturing to the seemingly useless stick in his hand. He waved it, but nothing more than a few feeble sparks came out the end. Was he supposed to know spells?

"Fat lot of good it'll do me – I don't know about this *powerful wizard*, this *Chosen One* your Harry was, but it's not me, I can't do spells, I don't remember any of them!" His voice was desperate now, and he could see Draco watching him warily. The void was all-but gone in his chest but his lost, anxiety-stricken mind still whirled with panic. "How can I save you all if I don't remember?!"

Draco frowned, he didn't know the answer to that either, and he couldn't give Harry all the answers he needed.

"I-I'm not really sure," He began shakily, "But I...I know you have what it takes inside you to beat him, and to win this! He has made your life a living hell from the moment you were born, and you...you will find the passion you had to defeat him again," Draco said, trying to remain soft in his speech. His frustration for Harry would only worsen the situation, and to be totally honest, he was too '*cried-out*' to shout and

scream. His lungs still ached from his choked screaming that he had unleashed on his pillow, if only moments before Harry arrived.

“You *ARE* one of the greatest wizards here at Hogwarts. You have the ability inside you to do what most of us cannot. And even if you have to start from scratch to learn these things again, it will be worth it – you can save everyone and destroy the man who...who murdered your parents,” Draco said finally. But Harry only looked more annoyed.

“I failed once didn’t I?! And I even had others’ help and I still lost! I stand even less chance now I can’t even remember how to make *this* stupid thing work!” He threw his wand onto the un-made bed. It was as useless as he was, without the knowledge he had lost. “W-Why...Why does it have to be...me?” He murmured quietly, turning his head to avert his gaze to the flames roaring in the hearth.

None of this made sense. He didn’t feel particularly powerful, or amazing, but this boy, Hermione and Pomfrey, they had insisted he was their ‘only hope’. Well then...who was *his* only hope?

“Hermione, she said that I...I should stay away from you...but this...this *connection* we have, it will always call me back to you, that’s...that’s sort of like *love* isn’t it?” He whispered, (changing the subject) still not meeting those eyes that he could *feel* watching him, and still feeling the buzz of that touch from before still making his skin hum. But Draco didn’t answer him. “I don’t remember what love feels like; I don’t remember what *anything* feels like. And I can’t...I can’t guarantee you’ll ever have your Harry back...the Harry that can save you.”

“You know, that’s one thing that you and the old Harry have in common – and it’s something I find highly annoying – the way you’re always moaning ‘*why me, why me*’. In case you haven’t realised, life isn’t fair, not for any of us, but don’t just give up before you have all the answers or before you have even tried?! That would make you

a coward, and Harry isn't like that. He's the bravest wizard I know, whether you like it or not, you need to realise what and who you are!" Draco said sternly, clearly annoyed at this boy who was practically tarnishing the Harry he had loved, the one that had (so foolhardily) sworn to protect him.

"The Harry I knew, yes he whined, but he – he gave it everything he had, and if it was never good enough, he would give a thousand times more *until* it was good enough," Draco declared, those eyes turning bitter and cold as he stood strong with a frown crossing his face and what probably seemed like harsh words leaving his lips. But Harry needed to hear them.

"I'm not going change who I am, or go completely soft on you *just* because you lost your memory of me, but at the same time, I don't expect you to go back to the way you were, and if you can't then that's...well it will have to be fine, won't it?"

Raising his eyes to meet Draco at last, he saw the pale skin silhouetted against the bluish light from the enchanted window. Something seemed familiar here and it drew him forward a few spaces, so that he became very conscious of how this boy still wasn't wearing a shirt. Was this ok? He had meant a lot to this boy; did that mean they had been this close before? *Closer?*

Without thinking, his hand was drawn forwards, his fingers almost *summoned* to trace the opalescent scar over his heart. Draco drew in a gasp but did not move, and grey orbs shimmered in a telltale way that made Harry choke slightly. "C-Can I...Can I trust you?" He murmured, almost pleading.

When Harry's fingers traced over Draco's chest he felt his heart leap, and a sickening nervousness crept into his throat from his stomach. His voice lowered from before and he answered him finally. "That's something that takes time, I want to say yes, but right now, we're strangers, and though you are with me, I feel more alone than I have ever felt. I need to know I can trust you too."

Why was it so easy to talk to this Harry?

Harry tilted his head slightly, his green eyes glinting in the slither of moonlight and he smiled, easily this time. Draco didn't expect him to be alright, like the others but more than that, he was being more honest than the others had been, even if being honest hurt his feelings. But right now, he didn't *know* about feelings, he couldn't remember most of them, what he wanted was the truth, whether it was bad or good.

He didn't deny he hurt me, he thought as he leant over to pick up his wand. He could have and I probably would have believed him. He could have given my sympathy and taken advantage of me, but instead he gave me the truth, told me how it was, how pathetic I was being – because he knew that's what I needed to hear.

Turning the stick over in his hand thoughtfully, he ran his fingers over the surface, over the bumpy handle, and felt the heat rise to his cheeks as Malfoy continued to survey him heavily. "I like that you're honest with me," Harry stated, simply, having no sense of tactfulness without his memories. Draco looked a little surprised and Harry considered his wand again for a moment, his smile still gracing his lips without any effort. "So...will you teach me magic?" he asked, again, without mixing his words. "Will you show me the spells I need to help everyone?"

"Well I..." There wasn't any reason why he should object. Yes their wizarding levels differed but if that's what Harry *wanted*...

"You will have to let me think on it?" The Blond asked, his fingers trembling still in his pockets. He didn't really know what to think right now, *saying* he would do it was so much different to the act itself. He had not even come to terms with the fact he had lost the person he loved yet, the person that Harry may never be again. And then all

this? It was like a whirlwind of things happening all in one shot and he just needed to think.

“It will probably be a *yes*, but I just need a bit of time?”

Harry nodded quickly, “Of course,” he murmured, not really understanding what Draco had been talking about. He scanned the deep grey of those eyes again, finding the emptiness in his chest abated somewhat. Was that because Draco felt better somehow at his presence? He wasn’t really sure how this connection worked...

“Professor Snape said that you and Hermione are catching up on the work you missed,” he said matter-of-factly, trying to sound conversational, to alleviate the tension between them. Draco raised a brow at him in confusion, but nodded soundlessly nonetheless. “I...err... Good luck with it,” Harry murmured, a tight knot forming in his chest at the realisation that Hermione, for whatever reason, hadn’t been telling him the whole truth before...

“Can I come see you again?” He asked, without really knowing if the request was inappropriate or not. Stunned for speech for a moment, Draco frowned, before giving a small, assenting nod – it was almost as if he were afraid of speaking to him for the fear of regretting the words that may spill from his mouth. Harry smiled back easily, considering the delicate curve of the scar over the Blond’s heart for a second longer (though not sure why) before turning and moving towards the door.

“See you later then?” Draco questioned as Harry left, the boy offered another small smile and turned to open the door, looking back once more at Draco before closing it behind him.

Draco watched as that door closed and his eyes began to prickle once more. He didn’t

want to cry again. His eyes felt swollen, but he couldn't control his emotions, and they began to stream. Bringing his hands up to cover his eyes, he slumped down onto the mattress. His chest felt constricted as he rolled sideways and sunk his head into the pillow. Why did this hurt so much?

I knew I felt...something for him, but I...I didn't think I was this in love with him...

~To Be Continued...

Chapter 22: Chapter Twenty-Two

(Bound By) Clandestine Addiction

[Chapter Twenty-Two]

The further away from Draco's presence he moved, the harder and more desperate the pull of his skin, his body – the bond wanted him to go back. With his hands clenching into fists, Harry set his jaw, continuing up along the path he had followed down here earlier. There were things that needed to be done!

Moving along the corridor and passing the hospital wing, Harry studied the shadowed halls, trying to remember the way. A side-passage, a secret in the dark and he was there. Throwing open the oak door Harry watched the girl inside jump in surprise at the sight of him. "Harry?" Hermione asked, her voice tinted with wary confusion.

"You lied to me," He sneered, having not enough memory of her to feel pity. All he knew was that he needed the truth, needed honesty and she hadn't given it to him. She'd given him biased half-truths, and he needed to know why. "About me and Draco, you lied. And I want to know why. Why didn't you tell me? You told me you were my friend?!"

She stuttered for a moment, a mixture of annoyance and upset striking her in one stroke. "I...I didn't lie to you...he is evil! W-What has he been filling your head with?" She asked, horrified before approaching him anxiously, bringing her hand up to his cheek only to have it cruelly swatted away.

"Harry – please!" She begged, tears pricking her eyes. She didn't even really understand it herself, but something about Harry going back to Draco scared her. What if he went back to hurting Harry? Or worse?

“He’s...he’s not good for you...!” She choked, hanging onto his robe and clawing at the sleeve, trying to make him see (what she saw as) sense.

“BUT I DON’T REMEMBER THAT!” Harry snarled, peeling her hands off of his robes and shoving her back. “And to be honest, the only one who hasn’t lied to me is *him*! Even in that memory you showed me, I could see – he loved me, I saw, I loved him! Why didn’t you tell me?! I...I don’t remember ANY of you, only what Professor Snape showed me, pieces here and there, the basics – but I don’t...” He ground his teeth into his gums painfully; yes he had seen this in plenty of memories – anger. Burning, fiery fury gushing through his blood like liquid.

“I trusted you! I trusted you to help me get my life back, but you only saw fit to show me the pieces you *wanted* me to see! He was part of my life, a big enough part that I was willing to throw it all away! I trusted you and you played God with my life, you manipulated it to the way *you* wanted it!”

Hermione's eyes began to shed thick tears as she struggled through her next sentence. “It's not like that, even now, you're acting like I'm the enemy – like I'm the biggest problem here. Harry, there are worse things out there, and Draco is one of them! He is a Death Eater, his father practically sniffs the feet of the man who killed you're parents! He is manipulating you! Why...why can't you see that?” She gasped breathlessly.

Harry shook his head, the amount of information she was forcing into his head making it spin. He growled under his breath. “He told me – he *told* me that I should focus on Voldemort instead of him, and you know what? Not once did he deny what you said, and he could have. Not once did he say a bad thing against you, and he could have.” Harry shook his head again, stepping back slightly, wavering under the overwhelming situation.

“The only person manipulating me, trying to make my life to their liking is you,” he murmured, turning, his heart heavy to the door, he couldn’t look at her. “I’m sorry...about...about Ron, but it doesn’t make what you did...right...”

Hermione burst into a gush of uncontrollable tears then, and all at once her emotions exploded, she fell to he knees where she had stood, immobilised by the pure shock of the use of Ron’s name. So cold and unthinking, nothing the old Harry would have dared to say. She sighed brokenly, and he heart shattered inside her chest. “Don’t say you’re sorry when you don’t mean it! Don’t you DARE say anything when you have no idea what you’re talking about!” She screamed.

“He was *your* best friend too! How can you just speak of him, as though he is nothing and your problems with Malfoy overweigh everything else!” Hermione couldn’t control it any longer, how could Harry be so cruel? So heartless? Still so in love with a boy he had forgotten when he couldn’t even feel the any pain from the loss of another, of Ron, who she had thought meant so much more to him.

“I’m not the Harry you once knew!” Harry spat. “Draco doesn’t outweigh anything else but at least he can understand that! And I know how hard it is for him because I *feel* it! I only have a few memories of Ron, and I am sorry he died, it seemed like he was a good friend to me, but I can’t undo it anymore than I can bring back the memories of him!” He watched her then, her eyes wide and glistening with tears.

“You’re in pain, Hermione, and so is Draco, and I...I wish I could remember faster, so I could make that pain go away... But I may never remember... We’re all suffering; we should be supporting each other not picking enemies between us!”

Hermione sobbed harder and turned her back to him, walking over to the other end of the room. “Leave...” She whispered into the dimness of her misery, and uneasily, she waited, but he stood behind her still. Why wouldn’t he just leave? Now he had done the damage? Quickly, fuelled by the unfairness of it all, she whirled on her feet to face

him again, her features tugged inwards with heartbreaking agony as she screamed. “I said *LEAVE!*”

* * *

Harry was plagued with dreams that night. Dreams of the few flashes of memories he’d seen, of vibrant red, snake eyes, a constant hissing of his name. He dreamt of pain, shooting across his forehead as if his skull had been cracked open – the memory of it and the blood clear as day, only to awake to find himself in a tangle of sheets on the floor, his arms reaching out into the darkness for something – something he couldn’t remember...

When morning came, it was a mixture of the sheer echoing emptiness of his chambers and the pressures, the thoughts whirling around and around in his head that lead to his flight from the room. He had sworn he could hear that serpentine snarl hiss out his name, louder with every minute. The sunlight was a vast contrast to his dark nightmares, but the noise was what hit him first. Then the sight of hundreds of students bustling passed to their lessons.

It was overwhelming. He backed up a little, considering going back into his room to escape the madness of activity, the screeches of delight and the voices, but the images of his nightmares were still too vivid and he stepped forwards, losing himself with the crowd. Or at least he had hoped to...

Heads turned, he heard the muffling whispers of his name. He eyed passers-by warily, each face stranger than the other, and quickened his steps. He had no idea where he was going, but he was going there fast! Not fast enough, he soon found out. No sooner had he bolted into the first corridor than he saw an endless line of rowdy students (about his age), evidently waiting to go into their class. They saw him, and he could not help but recoil back as a few stepped towards him, spitting out his surname like it was a vile swear-word.

“So it's true then, the great Harry Potter remembers nothing?” One of them hissed out (Harry noticing that they wore the same green on their robes as Draco had). One of the boys walked over and shoved him backward to the wall with a thump. “Well is it?” He demanded, expression twisting with a malice not unlike an evil, spitting pitt-bull.

Harry stared at them a moment, before shaking his head and attempting to side-step them. A spiteful thump against his shoulder sent him back against the wall and he hissed in pain, rubbing his shoulder and glaring up at the two main attackers, and the boys and single girl at their flanks, the girl sniggering her pleasure at his situation.

It was no good, he couldn't remember them, and he was easily the smallest one here, and of course, none of those lining up at the classroom door seemed to show any inclination of helping. “Potty looks scared,” The dark-haired girl cackled, and Harry felt his cheeks heat with shame at not being able to defend himself. He worried if the *past Harry* would have paled so easily, would have stood there frozen like a coward...

And they insist I'm their only hope? Harry thought miserably, jumping as another shove at his bruised shoulder smashed it into the stone wall. He cried out this time, doing the only thing he could do and reaching into his robes, holding his wand aloft as a weapon. He didn't know how to use it but they didn't know that – or so he thought...

The bigger boy guffawed, the others laughing alongside him in Harry's face. “You don't even know which end is up,” the big one snarled, swatting it out of Harry's hand. Harry watched it fly to the floor. “Snotty Potty, can't even remember how to cast spells? You-Know-Who must be shaking in his boots!” A big, meaty fist shot up, cracking Harry across the jaw and Harry went sprawling across the floor. He winced, but not just from pain as he scrambled onto his hands and knees, and stayed there.

“Go on Potty!” The girl screeched over the boys’ shoulders. “Crawl for your wand!”

The slytherins watched as Harry fumbled for his wand, and his glasses which had fallen from his face. They all laughed. “Haha, can't even see straight!” One of them snarled, nudging the other with a spiteful smile.

“That’s because he isn't straight!” The girl made a revolting, clucking sound in her throat, as if she were repelled by her own saliva when the comment was made. The bigger of the boys leant down and spat at the floor beside Harry’s groping hands.

“You're scum, mate!” He sniggered with venom, getting back to his feet and kicking the crumpled *Chosen One* in the side sharply. And again, with a hard, biting blow to the stomach with his shinny shoe.

Harry flinched and shuddered as another body pressed over his, grinding his hips into his backside slowly. “NO!” He screamed, retching at the feeling, and the boy above held his hips and laughed.

“You sick freak, Potter, you didn't seriously just get of on that, did you?” But before Harry could respond the girl had already.

“He blatantly did,” She smirked.

“That’s enough!” A voice demanded from nowhere, the familiar Blond slytherin, dressed in his school robes striding in before them, with a look of absolute disgust on his face. “Anyone would think you're the queer one, Knott!” He snapped, “Get your hands off his arse you sick freak!”

Harry saw the blond blur and snatched up his glasses and wand quickly, stowing the latter away and placing his glasses back on his nose as he looked up. Draco was standing beside him, over him. He swallowed hard, humiliation tinting his cheeks and knotting his stomach with sickness. Scrambling to his feet, he fell to the Blond's side, his head down. He could not believe Draco had seen him sprawled out like that, so pathetic and not even fighting back. His jaw clenched as his eyes stung. He didn't know a lot about the old Harry but he knew this much, he hated being weak!

"Aww, your boyfriend is gonna cry, Malfoy," the short, stout slytherin (at the side of the largest one) sneered. Harry's eyes flew to Draco, mortified and denying it as much as he could without words, but Draco only offered him the most fleeting of looks, before turning a cold, hard grimace on the leering group.

"You must be gutted your nancy fuck-toy doesn't remember how to suck cock," the larger boy jeered, cruel laughter filling Harry's ears. Harry shuddered at the suggestion, at the taunt of things he couldn't remember, no matter how hard he tried and shrank behind Draco a little more, shamefully. *You fucking little coward*, his mind spat, that cruel, hissing voice of his nightmares taunting him relentlessly inside his own head, so that there was nowhere to retreat to.

Draco growled, now furious. His hand reached out before Harry in protection as he surged forward in an attempt to punch the boy before him. He sorely missed and found himself in a headlock, thick, suffocating arms crushing him. He gasped and spluttered for breath, his movements dying when he realised escape was impossible.

Grinding his teeth together, Draco gave a sneer, and then a smile when the boy holding him jumped back in revulsion at his next words, "What? Just because you're jealous of my *nancy fuck* and you can't get anyone, you hold me up just to get a few cheap thrills?" Draco struggled out of the loosened hold and broke free. "I am worth *ten thousand* of you!" He yelled, stumbling back to Harry's side.

“I’ll show you what you’re worth, you stinking, traitorous pouf!” The big one leapt forwards and Harry, without really thinking, jumped forwards, the big fist cracking his mouth hard. Stumbling back into the wall, he winced, blood crying free of his split lip as Draco took the next blow with a growl. All of the bodies were lurching towards them. Harry felt the panic surge as Draco cried out in pain, as they pressed in suffocating. Something in him flared hot and brilliant, sent his hand into his robe and he brought the useless wand out once more.

“Stop it!” He growled out, the scream scratching at his throat and then the hall was enveloped in a startling light. The tormentors flew backwards with the sudden blow and Harry stared at them when the light faded, his knees quivering slightly. Draco was next to him again, saying something, something he couldn’t make out, but Harry could not tear his eyes away from where their enemies were grumbling in pain and staggering, weakly to their feet. Was that...? Had he done *magic*?

“What is going on here?” A sudden, deep tone cut through the tense silence and Harry felt Draco grip his arm, as if afraid he might lose track of him, just as Professor Snape came into view. The dark potion’s master considered the chaos, his cool eyes lingering over Harry and Draco for a moment longer, before a sneer turned on the others. “Thirty points from slytherin, *per* offender,” the man sneered, “and another ten for every coward who stood by and watched.” Everyone in the line tensed as that glare was turned on them, but it was only for a moment, as the professor considered the other two boys.

“Potter, Malfoy, to my office, I think, for those injuries,” he stated simply, and without waiting for argument he turned, his dark robes swirling around him as he did so. Harry looked up at Draco for what to do, (and where to go, since he had no idea where Professor Snape’s office was) still shamefaced by the way the Blond had had to come rescue him.

As they followed the professor along the daunting corridors of Hogwarts, (a place that really did seem darker since their return, Draco noticed) the clouds rumbled, threatening rain. Harry looked afraid and Draco shivered, slowly reaching over (still

walking behind Snape) and brushing his fingers over Harry's hand, entangling a few of their fingers together and squeezing them softly. He wasn't sure why he had, or whether Harry would pull away (and for the first time) he felt nervous while holding him, but something inside him kept those trembling digits there. And he smiled when Harry peered contently, though sheepishly up at him.

They soon reached the Professor's office and their hands broke apart when he turned and opened the creaky door. "Follow me," He instructed, striding ahead and rummaging around in the nearest cabinet for some potions. "I believe the first thing we need to reinstruct you in is self-defence, Potter," Snape started, handing the boys the effects he had gathered from the cabinet.

The Potion's Master watched the exchange, unnoticed by his two students. Harry winced, letting out a little gasp as Draco held a cloth, dampened with a vile smelling serum, to his split lip. It stung spitefully but the pain ebbed slowly away. As it faded, his green eyes stared at Draco, at the intensity in that gaze that studied him, and him only, as if he were the only thing in the room. He blushed and averted his gaze, not noticing Snape surveying them from across the room.

"Sorry," Harry murmured, peering up from under his lashes as Draco drew his hand back – Harry's lip healed. He seemed confused as to what Harry was saying. "For... I should have stood up for myself, instead of dragging you into it," he ground out hurriedly, grateful when the Blond took his glasses (broken from the fight) off his nose – no doubt to repair them. It meant he didn't have to see him while he felt so shameful and wretched...

"Don't be pathetic," Draco said, with a smile. But Harry looked confused. "Look, I care about you okay!" He stated, well aware that Professor Snape was watching him. He felt awkward admitting that, (and even more so in front of Snape) and found himself a little relieved the old Harry wasn't here to see this. He turned to face his professor and pulled out a chair, sitting in it beside Harry. Drawing his wand, he flicked it over the broken spectacles. "*Occulus reparo!*" He chanted and the glass clicked back into place.

Harry stared, in awe as the renewed glasses were slid back onto his nose, blinking in surprise when Draco offered a needless, almost teasing prod at the bridge of his nose. “Thanks,” he said, his eyes following Draco’s wand as he stowed it away. “What I did earlier? That was magic, wasn’t it? But I thought I needed to remember spells?” He watched Draco’s mouth open to answer, but as it was, Snape had made his way over to them, answering him first.

“When young witches and wizards are infants, they sometimes perform magic wandlessly, when great need arises – it is an explosion of sorts, of the power within. That is similar to what happened earlier. Whether you remember or not, you carry magic in your body, all a wand and spells do is harness it to will.” The Professor turned his hand to Malfoy and handed him a potion for his own abrasions, studying the young man’s more relaxed demeanour for a moment. It was as if protecting Potter had alleviated some of the aching burden he had carried...

“Considering your...*connection*, it may be best if Mr Malfoy reinstructs you of the basics of wizardry, Mr Potter,” Snape began, *feeling* Draco’s head lift a little at his words. “Professor McGonagall thinks it will do to leave you stuffed up in your rooms away from the world, safe. Safe, indeed but not practical. You will never remember and you will never recover, or do anything but wither if you shut yourself away...”

“Sir,” Harry began, noticing how Professor Snape prickled a little at his politeness. Yes, he was certain the old Harry had not been Snape’s favourite student. “Will my memories come back to me, if I try hard enough?” He was hopeful, that was, until he saw those dark eyes flicker to Draco and then him again, as if considering them.

“You may never remember naturally, but I believe any magical tinkering on my part may damage your mind further than the spell did...”

“I...right,” he said simply, turning his head away slightly to gaze off into the messy

potion's lab. His lack of memory hurt people, like Draco, like Hermione, who hadn't spoken to him, or even seen him since she had told him to leave. What was more...he *needed* it! To save people – to kill this...*Voldemort*!

A sudden dab of that healing salve pressed into the bruise at his jaw, alleviating the ache slowly, and his eyes flicked to Draco thoughtfully. He had to admit, it was nice being cared for, not being quite so alone in the labyrinth of his empty mind. Harry chewed his lip for a moment, noting that Draco frowned at the action briefly, and Harry could not help but smirk at how right he had been. This was obviously a bad habit, but also, Draco had been close enough to him...*before* his memory loss, to know of such a thing...

"So... What those boys said," Harry began quietly, "We're gay then? They called me your boyfriend?" Beside him, Snape stiffened and then moved off swiftly to busy himself with something across the room, leaving Draco to stare at him in embarrassed surprise.

Draco's eyelashes fluttered awkwardly as he turned his flustered head to the side. "Er...yeah," He stated, though they had never really discussed what there were to each other before now. Harry had started out as something completely different to what he was now. Draco shifted uncomfortably in his seat. Why was this situation making him feel so nervous?

He had never felt like this around Harry before, timid and unsure of himself. He caught Harry's eyes for a brief moment then, however and noticed him looking just as confused as he was. "Are... Are you disappointed?" He asked simply, a frown twisting his features.

Harry peered up at him shyly, a little dazzled by the sincere change in the usually brooding blond. He seemed quite innocent and sweet in his timidity, and Harry cleared his throat uncomfortably at the memory of that soothing hum that had eased

his fears of the thunder just before. This had been what he was missing last night? He wondered, flushing slightly with the thought that, he was sure he could remember, some briefest flicker of being held while he slept. But that was impossible surely?

“Disappointed?” He asked at last, bemused. “How could I be? You defended me, even though you were outnumbered, you were honest with me even when you didn’t have to be. I...I can see why I...” He flushed, not sure if he should be saying these things. Were these things *Harry* would say? Things Draco expected him to say? He hadn’t been too bothered about their reactions to start with, but now he wasn’t alone, he wanted it to stay that way. That aching loneliness...he never wanted to feel that again.

“I like knowing that I belong to someone, it makes me feel a little less...*lost*.”

Draco smiled. “That’s so like you...”

Harry seemed to go wide-eyed as he continued.

“You-You always say whatever is on your mind, no matter how it sounds,” He finished, rising from his seat and reaching over to place Harry's wand in his hand.

Harry thought about that for a moment, thought about that smile and realised he hadn’t seen Draco give one so sincerely since he had awoken in the Hospital wing with no memories. Turning his attention back to his wand, Harry turned it over in his hands a few times, examining it. It didn’t look familiar, but it *felt* like his.

“I trust Mr Malfoy’s...*responsibility* over you, will not distract him from his studies? He is, after all, taking his final exams soon,” Professor Snape said as he returned to them (now that the embarrassing conversation was over). “Miss Granger also.”

Harry perked a little. He knew something about this from the memories Snape had provided.

“Yes, Hermione is the brightest witch of her age!” He stated with conviction, turning his head to Draco, “But you said I was powerful? Don’t I get to take my exams?” Draco looked a little startled that anyone would *want* to, Snape, however, considered him gravely.

“Being as you do not even have the knowledge of a first year, it would be impractical – try not to grasp at every minute detail of the life you used to have. The Dark Lord was wounded by what you did at Malfoy Manor – breaking his wand, but he is furious and he has set...set a plan in motion that even I am not privy to.”

Draco stiffened at the name, and Snape turned his gaze to him fully. “I fear yourself, Miss Granger and Mr Potter are his prime targets, I think...I think the only rational move is for myself and McGonagall to prepare the Order, but given the prophecy... We will need Mr Potter at least capable of using *one* offensive spell against *Him*.”

“The prophecy – I remembered that part, you showed me – I have to kill someone, don’t I?” He said simply. “I’m the only one that can.”

Referring to the Dark Lord with no knowledge of him certainly was a weird prospect, and Snape shifted uneasily at Harry’s naivety at the entire ordeal. “Yes, Mr Potter, you could say that...”

“Uhh,” Draco hissed in disdain, “Don’t be so calm about it, I mean, it’s *Him*! He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named!” It was apparent even now, there was still that anxious and faint-hearted veil lingering over the surface of Draco’s recent acts of bravery.

“Draco, be quiet,” Snape hushed him, looking back to Harry. “You are the only one to do this,” He assured him, shoving Harry’s old album into the unknowing boy’s hands. On the front page, his parents danced in a gentle rain of leaves in a magical repetition. “Your beloved parents, Potter, they are all you need to know,” Snape said coldly,

never once looking down at the picture.

The Professor cast a knowing look to Draco, who nodded. Snape held the pouch that Draco had given him for safe-keeping carefully, and passed it to Harry then, who took it warily. The dark-haired Boy frowned slightly, weighing the pouch in his hand before pulling it open and staring inside at the contents.

Numerous things lay inside, undamaged, the bag must have been enchanted because there were too many things to fit without magic's aid. His hand dove in and he randomly retrieved a long, thick feather, scanning the odd colourings of it thoughtfully, but it was no good. He had about as much memory of it, of the things in the pouch as the people on the front of the album Snape had handed him. Staring up at Snape and Draco, despairing at his ignorance, Harry tucked the feather back inside the pouch, noting the way Draco's eyes flickered, the ache in his chest (that he was sure was connected to the Blond's moods) throbbing forebodingly at the fleeting sight of the feather.

"They are your only and most prized, precious possessions," Snape informed him, "Draco was in charge of their care during the battle."

Harry nodded, understanding, not that that helped him any. Opening the heavy page of the album, Harry flicked through it slowly, silently for a moment, recognising Hermione and Ron (from his brief, reinstated memories) he also recognised himself, and yet, none of the others...

"Why isn't there a picture of you in here?" Harry asked quietly, directing his cautious gaze to Draco, who again, looked awkwardly surprised.

"Well because..." He began warily, again, he felt somewhat awkward in the presence

of Professor Snape, but he tried to ignore it for Harry's sake. "We...I suppose – well, we weren't always friends, close or... And we didn't really take pictures or make memories together, not *those* kinds of memories in any case..." Draco flushed at that. If Harry knew which kind of memories he had meant, he would probably be blushing too.

"I'm not some perfect, angelic boy you fell in love with after some romantic courtship. I hurt you Harry, did things, and you have to know, I would probably have never considered making memories with you, not the old me anyway." Harry looked confused. But it was true, Draco didn't want to build an image of himself that he never was and would probably never be, even with the feelings he harboured for Harry, he would never be an angel. No, he was more a devil. And now it felt like he was still one but only in disguise, and he didn't want the person he had come to love to be blinded by something that was fake. False truths were not an option, and this devil needed to tell his angel the truth...

Harry wasn't the only person who had been changed in all this, this experience had hit Draco and opened his eyes in a way he never thought possible. He would not become Harry's hero, he couldn't, after the things he had done, but the devil inside him wasn't so cruel anymore. Even so, Harry deserved the truth.

"Oh," said Harry, a little lost for words. What *could* he say? He hadn't fancied the relationship he had lost (along with everything else) as perfection, but it had been hard to think it had ever been that bad. Now he understood. Feeling himself withdraw from the openness they had shared before a little, Harry stood. "I don't remember why any of these things were important to me," Harry murmured out, the look in his eyes indistinguishable. "But...thank you for them anyway."

Considering Draco, and the very uncomfortable Professor for a moment longer, Harry just nodded again. He felt anguished for some reason all of a sudden, more than usual at any rate, and he wondered whether the constant sorrow was the expected effect of losing everything he ever was, or whether the man he'd been before was simply...*like this*.

“I’ll...I leave you then, when shall I meet you...to learn magic?” He felt like that was the most pathetic, ridiculous thing to say right then, and he ground his teeth together at the sound of them.

“I...” Draco considered Harry's features for a moment, and the passing look of loneliness that washed over them. He didn't want to lie to Harry about anything from before, but he felt like he had just pushed him even further away, rather than allowed him to just see the truth. Just because it wasn't all *cotton and candy*, what it was becoming was... His thoughts drifted.

Draco wanted to say more, about how close they become, he wanted Harry to know everything, but too much damage had already been done. He was just going to have to take what he could from Harry right now, and that was teaching him magic...

“Alright. We can meet tomorrow, in the courtyard?”

Harry nodded again, catching his lower lip between his teeth carefully. He was quite sure Draco could feel his emotions too, but perhaps he did not consider them enough to realise what was wrong. He shook his head this time as he turned. It didn't matter, he should be grateful for the distance, rather than the definite pressure of a relationship he barely understood pushing on his shoulders. Yes, he should have, but the relief of it left him feeling quite alone, once again.

“See you tomorrow,” Harry said, off-handed, as he held his bag of treasures to his chest, eyes stinging as he opened the Professor's door, shutting it firmly behind him.

Professor Snape turned his head to Draco once the door was closed, saying nothing. Draco didn't need him to speak; he needed to talk or to at least know he was there. When the Blond said nothing, however, Snape passed Draco the other vial he had retrieved from his cabinet, pressing it gently into the boy's pale hand. The limb did not even respond, as if he had not felt the touch. "Dreamless Sleep Draught," Snape explained, "These things take time and patience, Draco, and both of those require a well-rested mind. Take it, clear your thoughts of him, at least when you sleep, or you will never be ready."

Draco exhaled loudly and nodded, picking his bag up from the table before quietly leaving the room. He wasn't feeling particularly comfortable with going back into the dungeons tonight, he felt like an outcast in his own house, and though he had never doubted his slytherin bloodline, he knew many of the students in his house were looking at him, with terror, with *disgust*. Like he wasn't one of them since he betrayed Lord Voldemort for Harry Potter...

Soundlessly he walked through the corridors staring at the Dreamless Sleep Draught, how had his life come to this, needing to drug himself with potions to wash away the reality, just to sleep? He clucked his tongue in annoyance, shoving the vial into his pocket.

"What's that you have there?" Came a voice from the side, making the Blond jump. He spun on his heel, only to see Hermione stepping towards him. She gestured towards the vial in his hand. "More poison for you to infect Harry with? He needs to remember who he is, not who you are. Not what you made him..." Her voice trailed off, the last words cracking slightly with the weight of the confusion, the lost feeling that plagued her.

Moving closer towards him, Hermione paused a few inches away, surveying him carefully as he stowed the vial inside his pocket more securely, not meeting her eyes. The tension hung like a thick veil of dust in the air. The both of them stood there, rooted by hurt and anger, but where Draco stood, deadily still, Hermione was shaking, her hands curled into fists and her teeth ground together.

“This is... If you hadn’t been there...” She began, her voice trembling with her this time, and Draco’s cool demeanour, his silence only drove her mad. “If you hadn’t come, Harry might’ve saved Ron instead of you! And now...even when he has no memory, all he keeps coming back to...it’s not magic, or You Know Who, or Ron, it’s *you*.” She shook her head, the sting of tears reaching her eyes. “Why is it always you...?”

Draco sighed deeply, he felt stunned, he didn't really know what to say to her, how could he say any of the things on his mind when Hermione was already as close to the edge of oblivion (with the loss of Ron) as she could get. A sad glaze crept over his silver eyes and he looked to the side, avoiding her gaze. “I...I'm sorry about...Ron. I–” He started, but Hermione didn't seem to want to let him slip in his apologies, anything that would make hating him harder, and she jumped immediately into offense.

“You’re *sorry*! You’re sorry?! I *loved* Ron, and he knew it! We had our fights but we treasured each other – you, you *battered* the one you loved; you burnt his face and *urinated* on him! You told him he should die; you wouldn’t even admit he was your *boyfriend*! You hurt him, wasted the love you now suddenly claim to feel – you flushed it away while my love was taken from me! And you’re *sorry*?!” She shook her head, her arm coming out to steady herself against the wall, as if her legs could not bear the weight alone.

“Why do you deserve him, Draco? Why should I stand by and let you drop him then pick him up as you please, again?! Ron is gone, he’s never coming back but Harry is still here! If I can’t have Ron when I would have given *anything* to be with him, then why should you have Harry, when you’ve done nothing but use him when it pleased you?”

Tears stung in the backs of Draco's eyes. *She was right*. Slowly the treacherous

droplets fell in thin trails down his cheeks and his heart ached. “I...I just...” He moved his hand over his face, attempting to cover his tears. How could he let her see him cry? Harry had been the only person to see that and now...

Why was he so weak?

“Don't you think I already know all of this? I know...but that *doesn't* change *anything*! I won't tell you that if I could go back and do things differently I would have, because that would be a lie. Everything had to have gone this way for me and Harry, no matter how much I regret it, because it was those things got us here! Made me realise just how much I... *fucking love* him...!”

Draco went silent for a moment. Stunned by his own words. Had he really said them aloud?

Hermione stared at him, eyes wide. Then, suddenly, her hand flew to her wand and she turned it on Draco. “Draco Malfoy so help me... You, you've *never* admitted you loved Harry, why should I expect anything but for you to deny it the next moment, when it suits you?” Those cool eyes merely rested on her wand, but not warily, not fearfully, just *dejectedly* as if he could care less what happened next. Her breath was broken by shaky hiccups of choking tears, and her wand arm trembled as she lowered it. “I... Harry is vulnerable now, Draco – he is fragile and I... I don't know if I can trust you to take care of him...”

“You don't have a choice. He doesn't belong to you, and no matter what you think, I'm going to be there for him. You don't have a choice and I'm not here to prove anything to you.” Draco kept a stern lip, even though he should have probably tried to be a bit more tender with Hermione, he just couldn't help himself, it was in his slytherin blood and his self-seeking nature.

“I just... These feelings aren't something that we can all handle, it's taken me a long time to realise my mistakes, and even though I was cruel to him, it doesn't change how I feel now. I'm sorry, but that's all I can give you.”

“No, he doesn't belong to me,” Hermione insisted, her brows furrowing, “But he doesn't belong to you, either – he might have once, but not anymore. Or was I mistaken in seeing him flee Professor Snape's office, no doubt because of something *you* have done?” She threw him a final, intense glare before sweeping past him. “We all make mistakes, Malfoy,” she murmured, pausing just a few feet from him, but not turning round. “But don't use them as an excuse not to make things right. Harry deserves it to be better than it was before.” And with that, she stalked off up the corridor, leaving Draco alone with his thoughts.

Draco stormed over to (practically *into*) the nearest wall, with adrenaline surging through his veins and threw his arm into it with a blistering smash. “Fuck!” He snarled uselessly, something in the back of his mind reminding him how irritated his mother would be with his language. But she was not here, no one was. And he received a morbid sense of satisfaction in feeling pain.

Suddenly, with his knuckles bruised and blood spilling from the broken tips, his arm felt weak and he crashed into that wall fully this time, sliding down it uselessly. His limp hand smacked with the floor, bones (which he had probably just broken) started to ached, and tears fell harder and faster down his alabaster cheeks. His throat felt constricted with misery, leaving him struggling for breath.

“I...I don't want it to be like this,” He wept, his throat cracking when the words spilled out over his broken, chapped lips. “Just make it go away... Please...”

* * *

Back in the eerie darkness of his rooms, despite his fear of what lingered in every shadow, Harry had fallen into a disturbed sleep, watching the fire die. And that's exactly what this slumber felt like, death. His body was on fire, a thousand, tiny needles of sweat piercing his freezing, fevered skin with unbearable heat. How was it possible to be drowning and on fire at the same time? He couldn't breathe, his tortured, searing, freezing flesh crawled like it was alive and his body arched forwards with pain.

Cool, hard laughter struck his eardrums, echoing through his head, resounding, louder and louder with every minute. Cruel laughter, and screaming, lots of screaming.

Suddenly, the darkness behind his eyelids flashed into a startling white light and then a room, a rotting, decaying place with water and the corpses of spiders hanging from the ceiling spiralled into view. Cruel, red eyes flashed, the snake-like stare of his nightmares, but it felt so real. "Harry Potter," the voice hissed, weak, but not lacking for malice. It seemed familiar, as it had been before...

"Tell me, *Severus*," the snake-like man hissed from his chair, weakly gesturing his wand to the Potion's Master convulsing on the floor. "Tell me, where is Harry Potter?"

Severus screamed, writhing like an animal thrown to the fire. "My Lord, I do not – Potter is missing!" With those words, his movements stopped and he lay there, panting at the Dark Lord's feet.

"Rise!" Voldemort hissed, snarling out a senseless growl when the man took too long.

Snape stumbled to his feet, his dark eyes scanning the handful of followers that remained at the Dark Lord's side. Many had died during Potter and his friends' attack, since the aurors had followed them in, but other Death Eaters had merely scattered, afraid at seeing their Lord rendered so weak, and without his wand. Still, that was a

handful more enemies than Severus cared for.

He lifted his hand shakily for his *Master*, and then his back stiffened as the Dark Lord searched his thoughts. Or those that Severus permitted him to see. And so, Voldemort drew back from his *servant's* mind, none-the-wiser, dismissing Severus with a flick of his hand. "Leave, return to your post," he spat weakly and Severus bowed low, casting a glance to the few remaining followers and ascertaining that the Malfoys must have been among those that fled – they made the right decision, for once then.

The Dark Lord took in a wheezy, unsteady breath. Yes, he could feel it now, all of his horcruxes were gone, Potter had somehow discovered and destroyed them all, and he was too small a slither of soul now to split it again. "Once the boy dies," Voldemort sneered, "Then immortality will be mine..."

Suddenly, a piercing shriek filled the air, and Voldemort stiffened his neck weakly, turning towards the sound. Beside him, Bellatrix cackled madly, swishing her wand so that the victim she had released from the silencing spell crashed down from the ceiling, the aged body cracking menacingly. But still the victim screamed, writhing in agony at the *Cruciatius Curse* seared his blood.

"Another of Dumbledore's *pets*," Voldemort hissed, and the man bellowed louder, seeming not to hear him. One look from her master and Bellatrix let the spell fall, the victim's body dropping, shattered and quivering on the ground. "*You*, maker of fine wands – still refuse me?"

The man rolled over in his agony, choking on his tongue. "I – will *not* – I will not aid you!" Ollivander gasped, blood leaking from his lips. Voldemort smiled cruelly, despite his weariness. Yes, all his horcruxes were gone, or else he would never feel so drained. The destruction of one, or even the majority of them would not be apparent, but the destruction of *all*...

“You fancy yourself a hero, old man, by refusing me? Hero is just a name they give the fools who die for glory – but there is nothing glorious about death,” Voldemort taunted, waiting patiently for the man to cease his sudden coughing fit before he continued talking. “You think people will give you honour? Think people will give the *mighty Harry Potter* honour, when he dies?” Voldemort leant forward as much as his agony permitted, his face dangerously close to Ollivander’s, so that his foul breath fogged up the wounded man’s features. “He will rot in the ground, *after* I have had my *use* of him. And while the worms and the beetles eat away at his skin, people will worship *me*, the victor, and those who do not, will curse their precious Potter for failing...”

Ollivander looked up into his face, raising his chin to stare at the Dark Lord, despite the pain in his limbs. His entire frame shook from the mere effort, but he forced himself to anyway. Voldemort needed *that* wand to face Potter, it gave him an advantage, he needed it mended, but only it’s maker, he, Ollivander could even attempt it. The image of the naïve eleven-year old that had stumbled into his shop, not knowing the significance of his name or his scar, flashed across his vision and Ollivander let out a low, crackled laugh before rolling onto his back, shaking his head slightly.

“I will...I will *not* aid you,” the old man gasped out. Voldemort sneered, snatching Bellatrix’s wand from her hand. A low, violent hiss spat from his lips and as he brought the wand down, Ollivander shook with white-hot pain. And thousands of miles away, so did Harry Potter.

Harry woke up screaming, his limbs wrestling with the sheets they had been entangled in and his skin dripping with sweat. He bolted upright in the bed, the sudden darkness (since the fire had died) choking him, suffocating him. Still half asleep he fought with the covers before rolling off his bed onto the floor. The cool stone pressed against his sweat-slicked skin, and Harry panted heavily, shutting his eyes tightly against the room as he tried to chase the vision, the *voices* and the all-too real pain from his nightmares away. But he couldn’t.

That man, Voldemort, plotting to kill me, he thought, and not in a nice way he was sure. His body shook with the memory of Voldemort's voice, telling of how the beasts of the undergrowth would gnaw away at his skin. Harry curled in on himself, jaw set as the more prominent image of that man, suffering, for him. He had caught a fleeting glimpse of that man from the pensieve, Ollivander, who had given him his wand, was probably dying...so that he could face this...*Voldemort*, and save them.

I have to save them, he thought determinedly, shoving the pitiful pangs of fear from the forefront of his mind. He couldn't remember his old life very well, he didn't know who he was, but he knew people needed him, and they needed him to do better. He was resolved to do exactly that!

~To Be Continued...

Chapter 23: Chapter Twenty-Three

(Bound By) Clandestine Addiction

[Chapter Twenty-Three]

The dirty bandages left a stinging pain inside Draco's wrist, and along his knuckles, he had overdone it once again, but he just felt so infuriated, because everything Hermione had said to him was correct. Everything he had done was...

Well there weren't words for it, and he felt ashamed, hurt that he had done all these inhuman things to the person he loved. *You're supposed to cherish the one you love.*

"I...I fuck everything up," Draco whispered in a careful and crackled tone. He gazed down at the blood that was seeping through his bandages and clenched his fist. *It's all broken, because I... I should have never gone along with them. I shouldn't have, but I was scared and I did anyway, everything is so fucked up because of me, because I'm such...such a coward...*

His tears stung his skin as they spilled over his lashes, the whites of his eyes red and raw from his misery while his chest felt tight, breathless as if it were on the precipice of explosion. They had been back at Hogwarts less than a week and already his throat ached from the never-ending nights of screaming into his pillow – already he felt like he just wanted to die. His mind couldn't make sense of why any of this was happening, no, he didn't want to find sense in it, in something so maddening.

Falling back into the minute comfort of his pillow, he found himself unable to rest let

a lone sleep, even with Dreamless sleep draught he had been given. His mind was uneasy and his skin pinched and prickled menacingly. Something was flowing through him, he could feel Harry's emotions flooding him, as if his wondering about the uncomfortable feeling in his skin had opened the dam keeping them out.

Cruel, red eyes flashed, the snake-like stare of his nightmares, but it felt so real. "Harry Potter," the voice hissed, weak, but not lacking for malice. It seemed familiar, as it had been before...

He's having a nightmare? Draco realised, bolting dizzily from his bed of tears, he stumbled under the covers and out of the bed. His feet trembled when they hit the floor and he stumbled dazedly along the stone walls until he reached the door. But then his hand would move no further, he couldn't open it, he froze. What was wrong with him?

Harry needs you damn it, his mind snarled. "But I – I can't do it, he hates me! I'm...I can't...!"

There was darkness where he was, thick and heavy, pressing down on his chest and stifling his breath – and Draco brought his hand up to his own chest for a moment. It was as if it was happening to him! He was short of air, and he could feel sweat beading down his neck even though it was not his own. There was a wave of determination, but it was punctuated thickly by fear and shivering confusion and...*guilt*. How could a nightmare make him suffer so intensely, and what was more, draw him, Draco into it so vividly?

His other hand was still on the door handle, frozen, as if he had lost control of his muscles whenever he went to turn. What should he do?

Why can't I...I can't open it? I...

Draco's line of thought stuttered, he couldn't move. *What's wrong with me?* His feet felt like they were glued to the spot, his legs and the back of his knees felt numb, like all the strength inside them had been stolen away. His arm hovered in the air above the handle, not once moving from that spot, his fingers trembling in their stillness. Why couldn't he move?

Sweat trickled across his forehead then. As a rush of burning, searing *something* swelled in his gut. "I have to do this...I..." But his hand didn't move.

You're worthless – nothing, you don't love him! It's all because of you, you're the reason for everything, his failure, his disaster, the loss of Ron, Hermione's pain, everything is your fault! It's your fault! YOUR FAULT!

"No," Draco hissed at the voice, his expression knotted with confusion and utter agony. "It's not, I didn't..." He felt his insides crumble, his heart seemed to speed up, until it was hammering in his chest nauseatingly.

You, it's all you. It has always been you! You're the one to blame! You should just disappear! Disappear!!!

"No!" Draco screamed aloud from the top of his lungs, his chest breaking with the depths of the tortured snarl slicing through him.

Suddenly his hand plummeted down to the handle and he grabbed at it, like someone

had just dropped a weight on his entire body and sent him hurtling down to oblivion. He stood for a few moments while his hand quivered on the handle and then finally found the strength to twist.

* * *

Harry shuddered as he walked the freezing archways of the courtyard the corridor leading from his rooms led out to. The chill cut through his flimsy pyjamas and he wondered if he shouldn't turn back, but he didn't. That place of his nightmares was waiting for him, and he was in no hurry to return. He was restless, shaken with the fear that underlay his newfound determination. Because he remembered that voice and it made him shiver for an entirely new reason...

The cool emptiness of the courtyard was eerie and he jumped back in horror as something flew passed him, nearly colliding with the wall in his haste.

"Watch where you are going, Potter boy," The silvery, transparent figure sneered. Harry stared at her with wide eyes, not liking the unsettling, chilling shiver her presence sent through his skin. Not like the warming caress that summoned him, like a gentle embrace away from her. He nodded his head apologetically, before side-stepping her floating form, and hurrying along the corridor. But in his haste, he turned along a corridor he didn't recognise, and found himself quite...*lost*. Above him, a magical staircase moved, swirling to meet the various landings. He had to step back to get out of the way of a particular set of stairs, but as he did so, his eyes flew to the person that was coming up them.

Swallowing hard, Harry stepped back a bit more, giving Draco room to step onto the landing before the stairs moved again, but for a moment, the Slytherin seemed frozen, moonlight streaming in through the magical windows to illuminate his blond locks. Their eyes locked, and they stared at each other in silence for a long time.

Why is Harry...? Draco gazed, almost blindly at the dark-haired boy standing on the landing down from him. His eyes widened and his heart seemed to have stop beating for a brief moment in his chest. "Why are you here?" He didn't even know why he had just asked that, hearing how foolish it had sounded rolling of his tongue – it was Hogwarts, so of course Harry would be here.

Draco hurried his bandaged hand quickly away from Harry's eyes and into his pocket, but he was sure Harry had already seen it and averted the subject elsewhere with another question. "I...I had a feeling you were suffering?"

"I..." Harry began uselessly, his tongue sweeping along his bitten lower lip. "I saw... Voldemort was torturing someone and he was...he was talking about me," he said, seeing no reason to lie. Then Draco stepped onto the landing with him, and he felt his breath catch in his chest. His skin crackled with the static of the other's presence. "I seem to have a lot of trouble sleeping," he admitted with a small laugh, his gaze tracing down the length of Draco's arm to the hand he had concealed.

"Your hand?" He asked, his fingers twitching slightly, not sure whether it would be prudent for him to reach out for it. Draco had seemed to open himself but then shut himself away today; he didn't really know which he should expect.

"I know how you feel, about sleeping," Draco added, returning a smile, only Draco's was filled with a slight sadness. He tried to bury his hand further into his robe, but the bandages seemed to be coming lose and Harry could see.

"It...It's nothing, I just had a slight accident earlier, but it's fine now," Draco assured him. He hoped that was believable, the last thing he wanted Harry to discover that he had been feeling so guilty after what Hermione had said to him, that he had punched the wall so hard his knuckles had shattered. Not to mention Hermione would probably

deny it and make him look like even more of a liar...

“I don’t suppose you – you want to go for a walk with me?” Draco asked, knowing that they weren't supposed to leave the castle at night, but it was worth the risk. And those words just kind of stumbled out.

Harry stood there, rooted to the spot for the moment, before a smile reached his lips. *Don't let hope reach you*, he tried to tell himself, *it'll hurt less that way*. But it didn't stop him from following his smile with a nod and pursuing Draco as he walked him slowly out towards the grounds. The path out into the chilly night air was a winding one and Harry could not help but wonder if *Harry* had known the castle so well before...

They came to a wooden, covered bridge that Harry wasn't sure he liked the look off, but followed at Draco's side anyway, casting his glance up to him when he thought the Blond wasn't looking. Unfortunately for him, Draco flicked his gaze to him at just the wrong moment. “I...I've decided. I'm going to do better...better than I've been doing,” Harry stammered out in his rush to hide his embarrassment at being caught looking. “People are dying, and if I'm the only one that can stop it, then I can't let them down – not again.”

They came to the centre of the wooden bridge and Draco walked towards one of the edges and leant thoughtfully against the balustrade, while Harry followed him to stand right beside him. The water below sounded so calming in the night's air, trickling through the supports below the bridge. And the stars twinkled dazzlingly in the calm reflection of the water.

“You're – you're so brave, Harry, more than you know,” Draco blurted out hastily, looking away with a flush redness. But it was not too long before his eyes were drawn back, just in time to catch Harry looking of the other direction, bearing a slightly flustered look himself.

Draco found himself mesmerised at the way the moonlight set Harry's features glowing in the dimness. The darkness concealed most of his face, but that was a stark contrast to the gentle light that illuminated his forehead, and along his nose down to his lips, lighting up his most tender features. Draco's eyelashes fluttered for a moment, and he quickly turned away again when his eyes seemed to want to root themselves to those lips.

"I mean, you never cease to amaze me, even now, with your courage. it's – well it's admirable..." Risking another glance back at Harry, he realised Harry was looking at him now and he quivered slightly when their eyes met, a familiar magnetic pull drawing him in. His lips were too close, too close...

Something in his chest tightened at the reflections of the moonlight from the water shining across Draco's face, and Harry could not help but chew his lip slightly as Malfoy's eyes darted across them. *What is he thinking?* Harry wondered, panicking slightly at the familiarity and yet the strangeness of this all at once. He could feel that warmth spreading through his lungs with Draco's feelings but he couldn't decipher them, because he had never felt them before.

Draco called him admirable, said he was amazing? Harry flushed a little, wanting so desperately to look away in embarrassment at his inexperienced reactions. He must look so ridiculous to Draco, gawping at him like a blushing virgin when Draco knew *personally* that he wasn't. *No you just feel like it, little idiot*, Harry scolded himself. But then the static crackled along the wet line of his lips, making him shudder as Draco slid closer, closer. *Oh my god...*

Harry caught sight of the moonlight reflecting in those darkened eyes, looked briefly to Draco's lips as the Blond rubbed them together slightly, as if to moisten them. And then Harry slammed his eyes shut, the image, the closeness too much for his brain. He gasped, hands drawn into tight fists. "Y-You're...you're going to kiss me?" He

whispered, his voice almost lost in the silence it was so quiet.

Draco smiled when his lips touched Harry's. He couldn't believe Harry had said that but the disbelief quickly washed away when they met, for the first time in what seemed like an eternity. Harry's lips tasted different from before, lost and confused, but still as tender and sweet. He sank deeper and closer, drawing an arm behind Harry's back and pulling him in tightly. He felt that stunning static rush through his fingertips, but he couldn't stop, no matter what he had done. Such an overwhelmingly powerful warmth had exploded in his veins, stronger than before, more intense than anything he had felt, and all his guilt, pain, and memories of everything that had happened seemed to just vanish when their lips were touching.

He smoothed their mouths together a few times, before finally feeding his tongue inside slowly, though Harry seemed to not know what he was doing (which felt odd, since in reality, they had done this before) as Draco explored that familiar place. Harry's mouth remained rather still while Draco deepened the kiss, twisting his tongue carefully over Harry's. It was hot and heated with a steamy wetness Harry wasn't sure off.

Draco couldn't help himself. He wanted to stay like this for as long as possible, but then he felt Harry wincing against him and realised he had forgotten that he wouldn't yet be used to such an intense kiss. Drawing back until their lips broke apart wetly, Draco's verbal incompetence returned.

"I...I didn't," Draco stopped. Harry seemed stunned.

Harry felt his head spinning and he brought his hand up to touch his lips, almost thoughtfully. Had they always kissed like that? With such intensity? The fire of it almost scared him, had made his stomach knot then lurch with insistent flutters. To him, he supposed, for all his lacking in memory of his sexual experiences, this was all happening for the first time again. It must have been hard for Draco to hold himself

back...

“No,” Harry began unsurely, so embarrassed he was sure his cheeks wouldn’t ever go back to their normal colour, “I...I just don’t know what I’m doing. I don’t know how and...you were just...really good...”

You idiot. If he wanted to snog a swooning girl he would, stop acting so pathetic!

Draco smirked. “Well of course I'm good, I'm a Malfoy,” he retorted simply, before flushing darkly at what he had just said, his confidence wasn't completely lost, and he hope Harry wasn't offended. He considered him a moment though, and thought he better be a bit more considerate of this Harry, who wasn’t entirely certain of what comments like that did or didn’t mean.

“I mean...you weren't bad, I just – you're not angry?” Draco asked. His eyelashes fluttered again. Why did this feel like it was his first time too? He had kissed Harry on plenty of occasions and a lot rougher than this, so why was this different? Now that he thought about it, they hadn't really had a first kiss, it was more a fight for dominance, a spiteful struggle in the madness of argument. He couldn't even remember them having nice kiss outside of sex that made him feel like that...

“Only with myself, for not knowing what to do,” Harry assured him, a smile flickering at his lips at the fleeting glimpse of the Blond’s confidence. “We must have done that lots of times but I...I don’t remember so... It’s like I have to start from the beginning.” He gave a small, nervous laugh as Draco watched him, struggling to cover up his awkwardness. Risking another glance to those eyes, he leant a little closer, but Draco didn’t seem to understand the subtle hint so he had to voice his wishes. “Can I try again? Maybe...slower?” He managed out, his stomach and chest tightening in anticipation, desperately wishing for the ground to just open and swallow him whole. He was so embarrassed, and Draco was just smiling at him patiently like he was a stupid child...

Slowly, Draco drew Harry back to him until their torsos touched. He closed his eyes and patiently drank every sensation in. Why was this so blissful? He had never experienced satisfaction from just waiting for a touch before. But every moment he waited, with his eyes shut and the sounds, smells, the *tastes* of what was about to happen sweeping over his other senses, he was so thoroughly captivated – albeit nervous.

The wind whispered through his hair and brushed it sideways slightly as he leant further into Harry, stopping just before their lips met. “Kiss me.”

Harry’s heart leapt into his throat at the invitation and he tilted his head up so their mouths slid together. He stammered after that, since that was all he knew, but rolled up onto his toes anyway, hesitantly opening his mouth and capturing Draco’s top lip gently between his before drawing back a hairsbreadth, exhaling slowly. Draco’s lashes fluttered, but before he could assume Harry was finished, the dark-haired boy dove for his mouth again, a little more insistently, groaning in his inexperience into the kiss, as Draco’s tongue slithered out between his parted lips.

For a moment, Harry thought he swooned. His head felt giddy and one hot palm pressed to the nape of his neck as the other slid over the small of his back. He touched his tongue’s tip to Draco’s hesitantly, moaning again when the length of the Blond’s wet muscle slid along his, mapping the hot cavern of his mouth. And Harry was panting and wriggling a little, and so those arms squeezed him tightly, before Draco drew back wetly, leaving Harry to stare up at him with hazy eyes and kiss-bruised lips.

Draco smiled. “You’ll need some practice, but that was much better,” He teased, not moving away enough for their bodies to part. He held Harry in his arms, for as long as he could. “I...I don’t want to lose you again,” He began, until he found himself aware that Harry probably didn’t know what he meant.

“Lose this...this feeling! I don't want you to ever forget how it feels when we touch.” The awkwardness swelled inside him anew with every syllable, but still, this Harry was so much easier to express himself to. Maybe because this Harry hadn't learnt to tease him yet? Maybe because Draco himself was different now? Whatever it was, it was all so overwhelming.

“I don't know how I ever forgot you in the first place,” Harry said quietly, his voice a little raspy with emotion. “But I felt really...really empty when I woke up and didn't remember... I don't want to feel like that again, but...” He paused, just because they had kissed, Draco couldn't be under any illusions that he'd have *his Harry* back exactly the way he had been.

“I don't know when you will...have me anywhere *near* the way I was, the way you want me. I may not ever be able to kiss you the way I did before or...” His voice trailed off, and he chewed his lip again. Such a dirty habit. “I might never be as good as before but... If we can go slowly, I'd like to try?” Truth be told, this whole situation still scared him in a way, but it was more thrill than fear.

Draco smiled still, with an understanding now. He knew things couldn't go back but this was a start, and if Harry felt something still, there was a possibility things could just be better this time, without all the heartache from before.

“No, because this time, it will be better,” The Slytherin assured him in a low hum, gazing at Harry with such devotion that he never knew he held inside. “I know it will, it's odd...some of the things I couldn't tell the old Harry, I can tell you.” He paused then, he wasn't sure what he was trying to say, but it felt *right*.

“I suppose I mean that...I think things between us – well I think I can tell you I love

you now, without feeling I shouldn't. I've never felt more certain about, anything..."

Harry nodded with a smile, not really knowing what to say but knowing that what Draco had said had made him happy and uneasy and excited all at once. He dropped his gaze after a moment, a strange warmth spreading through his chest, his entire body right down to his fingertips at the Blond's words. Slowly, without really thinking of what he was allowing, his fingers leant forwards, sliding over Draco's wounded knuckles gently through the bandage, a subtle static buzzing through his skin at the contact. His smile broadened.

"What spell will you teach me first, tomorrow?" He asked, his mind drifting absently back to the darkness of his room. "Can you teach me how to make a light?" He peered up at Draco from under his lashes, wondering if the Blond could possibly guess why he wanted to learn something like that first...

Draco blankly looked at him, not really sure what he was thinking, but feeling uneasy when he asked for a certain spell. "I can, but why that kind of spell in particular?" Draco's eyes remained tight with uncertainty. What was Harry thinking?

"I will teach you everything I know, anything I can."

Harry pulled distractedly at the sleeve of his shirt. *I don't want to have a panic attack every time I wake up from one of those nightmares*, he thought, but he would never admit that that was the reason. "It just...just seems a good place to start," he explained, shivering as the night's bitter coldness cut through his flimsy pyjamas. Casting his eyes out across the misty chasm below, out into the night, he felt the inevitability of his return to bed, and dreaded the sound of that cruel, piercing laughter...

“When I have to face *Him*,” Harry began, rubbing his arms to keep warm, “Will you be there? To help me, I mean?”

“Well I...” Draco hadn't even thought about the fact that they would have to face the Dark Lord again! With all the things that had happened, *that* prospect had been shoved into the depths of his mind. The chilling truth was that in due time, they would have to fight again. But for now, he had already lost too much by *His* hands and he didn't really want to think about it.

“I suppose I will be,” He said at last, with a reassuring smile. “But we have other things to focus on before then, alright?”

Harry nodded, strangely enlightened by that smile, and for a moment, the coldness biting into his skin faded. “Okay,” he said.

“Good evening, Mr Malfoy – Mr Potter?” The second name sounded like a question from the lips of the Potion’s Master as he stepped out of the shadowy grounds and onto the bridge, approaching them slowly. He cast his onyx gaze either side, as if scanning for another presence, but said nothing of it. “You are both out...rather late, are you not?”

Draco’s lips parted to answer, but Snape cut him off.

“There was movement along the gates of the school, all the way across the boundaries of the wards,” Snape warned, looking out through the arches to the dark outline of the trees the moon illuminated. “The other professors and I have secured the perimeter, but nevertheless, wandering after dark is not advisable.” Snape surveyed them both, and their closeness, he was aware he had given them both (particularly Potter) extra liberties, but those were for very specific reasons...

Harry seemed to look at Draco for some kind of reassurance and the Blond bowed his head apologetically. “Sorry, Sir, I suppose it was silly of me to suggest we go out at this hour,” Draco said, walking past Harry and towards the professor.

“You should know better, Draco,” Snape reminded him, as the blond youth took him aside for a moment.

“Sir, any news on my parents?” Draco whispered, “It's just, after the attack I...I've been a bit worried?”

Harry watched from the distance, but couldn't exactly make out what Draco had just whispered to the teacher.

Snape cast a glance to Potter, before looking back at Draco carefully once more. “I alerted the Order to your whereabouts during the attack, a lot of the death eaters were killed, the most dangerous of them, Greyback, taken out by your own hand. You're your aunt Bellatrix and a few remain. A mere handful. The others who survived, fled to safety – seeing the Dark Lord's wand broken, it broke their faith. Your parents are with many of them in a safe house. They are safe. He cannot hurt them anymore.” The Professor swore he saw Draco release a breath of relief and with it, Snape glanced over to Harry again, and then down to Draco's arm, a thoughtful silence falling briefly.

“The Dark Lord is too weak to harm us through our marks, he can barely *call* us. He *knows* that his horcruxes have been destroyed and yet...” Snape held off, as if not sure he should speak. “Potter...their connection has but intensified and I cannot...I cannot help but think that maybe, maybe the destruction of the horcruxes has brought their connection *stronger* because of what happened that night...when Potter reflected the killing curse on him...”

Draco's eyes widened, his gaze flying back to Harry. He wasn't sure *exactly* what the professor was saying, but he was sure it wasn't good. "Professor Dumbledore entrusted me with all his...*ideas* of the link between Potter and the Dark Lord, the parseltongue, the *dreams*, but I hope that his suspicions were unfounded, if they were *true*, Draco..." His voice trailed off into nothingness, not daring to enlighten Draco to the *exact* idea Dumbledore had had.

"Right," Draco said blankly, worriedly, but suppressed the anxiety swiftly before it reached his features. He wasn't really sure about the severity of what the professor was saying, but he knew that it was probably a fact now the connection would only have intensified. In fact after feeling what he had earlier, when Harry was having the nightmare, he was certain of it. It hadn't been like anything he had felt before from Harry, it was darker, heavier, suffocating...

"Don't keep me in the dark!" Harry protested as he strode forward into the conversation. But Draco merely blanked him when he grew closer.

"You answered my question, thank you, Sir. I'm taking Harry back to the Gryffindor quarters now."

"I sleep in a suite near the Hospital wing," Harry corrected him tryingly.

"Of course," Draco said, clearly distracted as he steered Harry away from the professor. "Goodnight, Professor," He added to Snape, before pressing firmly on Harry's shoulders and moving him away. He felt Harry's limbs bunch in protest, but the boy came along with him all the same.

"You're hiding something from me," Harry stated as the Blond lead him back through the courtyard, towards the Hospital Wing. The chill prickled his skin, but the impact of the shadows and the eerie voices of ghosts did not touch him at all. Still, he leant closer to the Blond to steal some of his warmth. "It's something you think will scare me, or overwhelm me, isn't it?" He asked, though Draco's eyes remained ahead. "It's...it's something about me...and it isn't good, is it?" Harry could not help but

wonder if his past self was this persistent, this *determined* to know everything. *Nosy you mean*, his mind corrected.

“Look, Harry, you need to get some rest, I don't want to hide anything for you, but you will learn it all in time. You don't have any reason to know anything or live with the pain yet. If it was important, I would say,” Draco reassured him without daring to meet his eyes, leading him through the corridors that seemed hauntingly deserted at this time of night.

Draco offered a shimmering smile to Harry as they reached the dark-haired boy's door. He tried to remain calm but he couldn't help himself, and found his hands rising to Harry's face. There they held, thumbs smoothing over those cheeks as he smiled distantly for a moment longer. “Night,” he offered at last, before departing without another word.

* * *

Harry lay on his bed, the curtains drawn wide so that sunlight streaked in through the window, his arm held aloft, wand in hand. Last night had only confirmed his beliefs – he had to remember his magic at least, he needed to use it! People needed him!

His gaze wandered down to the large texts lying open, strewn across his bed. Hermione had turned up early that morning, which initially, had filled Harry with a relief so strong he could not help but smile, but it was gone as soon as it had come...

“I just wanted to bring you these,” Hermione said, brushing past him and dropping her armful of books onto the bed carefully. She paused a moment, her back to him, as if she needed to take a moment to gather herself, and then, eventually, she turned, her face twisting as if in pain. “I have put tabs on the passages that are most important.

They are all the Volumes of Standard Book of Spells that I have – we studied from them in charms so...I thought you could use them now... ”

Harry flinched at her ‘matter-of-fact’ tone, wishing he could make the argument they had go away, but then...he supposed he couldn’t... He hadn’t done the damage after all, and whilst he didn’t like the result of their confrontation, those things had needed to be said...

“Thank you,” Harry murmured, not really knowing what to say to her. What was there to be said? She needed to come back on her own.

“So how are you feeling?” Hermione had asked, though she wasn’t particularly looking comfortable with herself and the way she was standing let off all the signals that she felt just as awkward as he. “I...I have been worried about you, and about...well what’s happening with him.. ”

“You do know, his parents are death eaters, Harry? They work with You Know Who!”

Harry sighed heavily, dropping his gaze to the floorboards. “I know because I heard Voldemort was abandoned by many of them,” he said stiffly, “Including Mr and Mrs Malfoy. And Draco and I are...” He drew off, searching for the best words, ones that didn’t rub her face in it. “He has helped me get a lot better, Hermione, and he’s going to teach me some spells – to face Voldemort with.” He saw her then, her eyes flicker with some unnamed emotion, and he knew that wasn’t the answer she was looking for.

*“And I... Draco kissed me...” He set his jaw, wondering how she would react. He knew her hurt was great, but she was meant to be his best friend, wasn’t she?
“I...think I liked it.”*

Her eyes widened in shock. Malfoy was unbelievable. How could he do this again?

“What?!” She choked out, not really sure what to say, a blistering swell of emotions building in her chest and constricting her breath. “I...I just... Harry, didn't you listen to me?” Her eyes stung painfully, it was happening all over again, just this time without Ron, and no one even seemed to care about that.

“How could you, after Ron? Harry, open your eyes!”

“They are open, Hermione,” Harry replied, his voice tinted with the sadness of her determination to lose them Draco as well as Ron. “Draco didn't kill Ron, in fact the only person he hurt was me, but he has changed and I won't lose another person, another memory, I won't lose anything else!” He shook his head, why was she so set to cause more heartache? “I heard everything you said, but perhaps it is you who isn't listening? Ron is gone, Draco isn't – we should be standing together not picking amongst ourselves.” He stepped towards her, not sure whether he should touch her or not, so his arms remained limp at his sides. “I need you both to get through this – both of you.”

“But Harry, I... I don't want to see you in any more pain. If you're with him, he...” Her voice trailed off. If only Harry knew the things he had done, he might think differently. She grabbed him then, pulling in into a sudden, fierce embrace, burrowing her head into his shoulder. “You're my best friend, I want to help you defeat him, but I don't trust Malfoy, and I never have. Part of me still thinks he will deceive you and I can't let that happen to you. We have taken enough risks for a lifetime, Harry.”

“You don't have to trust Draco, because I do – he has had plenty of times to take advantage of me since I woke up with no memory, but he hasn't. He...He makes me feel...safe, Hermione. The only person that tried to deceive me was you.” He felt his temper raise as his patience dwindled. She wasn't even admitting she was in the wrong? Despite her good intentions...

She glared at him furiously, and Harry stepped aside as she aimed for the door. "I need your help, Hermione, but I can't make you, you have to come to me, and Draco, on your own."

"I never thought I'd hear you say he makes you feel safe. With you both it was always a ride, but never a safe one, and you were never wearing a seat belt. I just...find it hard to believe... or to stomach," She explained, about to make her departure. "Is there no way you will change you're mind about this?" She wasn't even sure why she was asking, even with the memories lost, Harry was ever the same, once he got an idea in his head, he would follow it through, he was just that stubborn..."

"The only person that can change my mind about him is him," he assured her, teeth clawing at his lip anxiously. "Hermione, don't distance yourself from me because of this, please." He reached forwards then, tentatively setting a hand on her shoulder. He was still very unsure of when it was appropriate to touch people, and who. "I have lost one best friend; I don't want to lose the other. We...we worked together, all of us, including Draco – we did it before, why can't we do it again?"

Hermione could only sigh. "I'm not really sure," She started, turning to face him, a tear escaping the corner of her eye and sliding down her cheek. "Would you...would you come visit Ron's grave with me, later on this evening? I thought you might like to come - you weren't able to attend his funeral, so I...?"

She hoped he would come along with her in the evening. She had so much she wanted to say to him, that she just couldn't say without Ron being there. "I think you... I think it would be good for us to go together, the three of us?"

Harry's eyes fluttered, in surprise. He hadn't honestly thought about Ron's funeral, or

family, though it had been evident from his few, flashes of memories that they had been important to him. He dreaded the time when he would have to face them, not remembering them properly, not knowing most of their names, only knowing that initially, he had got their son killed...

“Of course,” He murmured, his voice quiet, facing the Weasley family he scarcely remembered would be a trial for a later day. Hermione was meeting him half way at least, by involving Draco. “I...I have a lesson with Draco this afternoon, but maybe we could meet you and go after?”

“Yes, I would like that.”

Even the books had not made him able to perform spells, for some reason. But the books indicated certain arm movements, so perhaps that was what he was lacking? He supposed Draco could help him later. He knew of incantations, of spells he had to master, but after all the time he had poured over them, he had only managed to focus his magic into his wand. Every now and then, a few sparks flew from the top, sometimes all different colours. At least he knew he hadn't lost it, he supposed, but he was still anxious for this afternoon, to hopefully harness some of it again...

Apparently I was this powerful wizard, how on earth do I get that back again – and quickly?!

* * *

Draco finished dressing himself and put on his robe, looking at himself in the mirror. He'd never thought he would be wearing this uniform again, it was only today that it had properly struck him – he was back here, wearing it again, despite how much he had changed, how much he had gained and lost since it had last draped over his shoulders.

He tried to smile at himself in the mirror, but it quickly fell away to a frown. He had to be positive, but really, he was *scared*. He wanted to be Harry's rock, have the confidence to help him back up and defeat the Dark Lord. But after everything that had happened, he had felt even more afraid than any of the times before, knowing he would have to face that man...*again*.

In a way, he supposed, maybe it was a good thing Harry didn't remember, because knowing he was just as scared if not more so...to have to face him yet again after their most recent failure... It was unthinkable to anyone in their right mind...

As lesson time called for him to leave his rooms, Draco made his way towards Charms – fitting, since he would be teaching Harry this later, he should probably take some notes for him...

“Oi! Malfoy!” Someone called from behind him. And from the sound of that voice, it could not be good. Turning around he saw Crabbe, Goyle and the usual slytherins – the Death Eaters’ children that had once rallied behind him. “Yeh’ve been hidin’ away a lot *Malfoy*,” Crabbe sneered, as they approached, towering over Draco who, had in his day, been a coward countless times. “*He* is wondering where your parents have hopped off to, thinks you need to be eliminated...thinks maybe, you and your Potty boyfriend need to watch your backs...”

“Yeah,” Goyle added, stepping up to Malfoy, who did not move. “And the Mudblood. All three of you are at the very top of his to-do list!”

“Go eat some more pie's, *honestly*, the bad boy look has never suited you,” Draco spat, realising that the boys were now cornering him from every angle. Crabbe, Goyle and the other slytherin boys moved nearer, backing him into the wall, but the Blond held his chin high, not so much as *glancing* down.

“Don't you – you know, think it's *sick*?” Goyle sneered, “I bet the Dark Lord is disgusted with you, slaying the slytherin name this way?”

Draco growled under his breath. He knew full well they were referring to his homosexual activities with Harry. But then a smile struck his face. “Say it, go on! Say just what it is that makes the Dark Lord so disgusted with me?”

Crabbe leant in, seizing a fistful of Draco's robes and pinning him to the wall, lifting him up onto the very tips of his toes. “It's that you're a dirty little faggot!” He spat, his pungent breath steaming over Draco's face, making him cringe. “A filthy nancy-boy who turned his ferret tail and ran to the *Chosen One's* protection in exchange for some arse.”

“Tell us Draco,” Another slytherin voice hissed from over Crabbe's shoulder, “How are the faggot lessons going? Potty remembered how to suck your cock yet?”

“I bet you would love to know that, wouldn't you? Just how the *lessons* are going?” Draco sneered, feelings his throat constrict against the tight hold, but he continued to smirk up at them. “It takes a real man to be fucked up the arse,” Draco snickered, undermining them the only way he knew how. “Bet you'd love cock if you tried it, but good luck getting your dirty hands anywhere near mine!” He could see the disgust at his words burning inside their eyes.

“Yeah, bet it takes real *pride* to spread his slutty legs for you, bet it takes all of his Gryffindor courage to bend over for you,” Goyle sneered, “You know, his room is all the way down by the Hospital wing, quite far from you, if someone should slip into his rooms—”

“There'd be no one to help him,” Crabbe finished, his knuckles pressing menacingly up against Draco's throat.

“You fucking *dare*,” Draco hissed, knowing there was no other way than to surrender. “Fine. What? What do you want me to do?”

Knowing that protecting Harry came above all else, he couldn't risk someone hurting him, he would rather endure anything they did or said to him, rather than see Harry come into harms way again...never again

“I'll do whatever you want, just bloody tell me already, but leave Harry alone.”

“We want you to suffer,” Goyle sneered and the others laughed nastily. “We want you to pay for betraying us for a piece of perky virgin arse!” Those fists tightened in his robes, slamming him hard against the wall, making the Blond wince. “But we won't demand anything right now...”

“No,” Crabbe smirked; they had certainly come a little way away from Draco's merely flunkies under the careful guidance of the Death Eaters. “We'll let you *think* about it for a while, wonder what's coming next...” And with that, Goyle's fists pressed up hard into Draco's windpipe for a long moment, before they drew away, leaving Malfoy to his thoughts – or worries.

“Ouch,” Draco winced as he rubbed at his shoulder where it had been thrown into the stone, shuddering down the wall to the cold stone floor. He sighed heavily and let his heartbeat return to normal for a few moments as they walked away.

“I killed a werewolf! I went up against the Dark Lord,” he murmured to himself, his voice wheezy thanks to the bruising on his windpipe. “Nothing you can possibly do will hurt me as much as what he did. No matter how much you try and humiliate me, if it's only me suffering, I'll survive.” Stumbling back up to his feet, he brought his

hand over his left temple, noticing the blood on his eyebrow. It must have been cut in the scuffle. With a low, exhausted sigh, the Blond cast his eye down the now deserted corridor, moving along in the opposite direction to class – he knew better than to march into Charms with an injury his classmates had inflicted. He'd better go take a look at how bad it was in the toilet before he went.

~To Be Continued...

Chapter 24: Chapter Twenty-Four

(Bound By) Clandestine Addiction

[Chapter Twenty-Four]

Harry kicked his heels impatiently against the legs of the polished table he was perched on. The halls were empty at the moment – as he knew they would be, he was waiting for Draco to come out of Charms after all. He didn't remember where that was, exactly, but he had felt where Draco was easily enough, and right now, the tingling, comforting hum in his skin told him there was but a wall – *this* wall separating them.

Harry held his wand in his hands, running his fingers over the smooth carved marks in the handle and shaft of the wood. It was hot where he had been working at his magic all day but he only felt more restless and eager to improve. *Was I such a geek before I lost my memory?* He wondered, tapping his lips with his wand's tip. His thoughts drifted then, to last night, and that kiss...

Harry shuddered pleasantly, trying to push that image from his mind as his cheeks flushed. He had no idea what love felt like, but he was sure he had felt it last night, burning through his clumsy, awkward lips from Draco's glorious mouth. As if knowing it would be the most inappropriate time to do so, the Charms door flung open and students started to pour out. Harry jumped, scanning the faces of the students – who watched him intently as they passed, some even lingering to look at him. But he didn't bother about them. Hopping off the desk he smiled as he saw Draco leave the room, his head low, as if deep in thought.

“Draco?” Harry called, several heads *aside* from Draco's spinning towards him as he

approached. If he had not been so overzealous, and so eager, maybe he would have taken the time to notice Draco's look of shock as Harry stopped before him, the dark-haired boy bringing their lips together as if it were as natural as breathing. Harry seemed to be unaware that others were watching, that was, until a loud assault of jeers erupted from the Charms doorway – where the slytherins had just stumbled out into the hall.

Harry stepped back a bit from Draco, looking between him and the slytherins, before shifting uncomfortably. Perhaps initiating a kiss hadn't been appropriate? Even after last night? He cringed at his stupidity and looked up at Draco, who seemed unsure whether to look at him or the slytherins making crude noises at them. *So bloody eager to try again after last night*, he berated himself, *idiot...*

Draco shrugged off the slytherins and dragged Harry away, whispering into his ear harshly. "Don't try something like that again... You hear?" He spat, regret ebing in his chest at the shamed look that crossed Harry's features. "Look it's just, I'm not ashamed. They just...I don't want you to get any grief – slytherins can be cruel," Draco warned, but Harry still seemed too embarrassed to keep eye contact.

Draco was still a bit shaken that Harry had even tried that, it was so unlike him (the old him) to attempt such a bold move. However, he supposed that this Harry was more oblivious to the stares that such an action would attract. "You just...we don't do *that*...in front of people," Draco tried to explain.

"Right," Harry said, his fingers curled in and biting into his palms. He was so stupid. He could do so much damage just because he couldn't *remember* what was suitable and what was not. "I'm...I'm sorry, I didn't think I just – I was happy to see you, I didn't know it was wrong." He kept his eyes down, the way Draco had hissed in his ear just then, it had made him shudder. He was angry – *he'd* made him angry.

He followed Draco into a deserted classroom, away from the madness of the students

rushing out of their lessons. Harry moved into the centre of the room, pausing to run his fingers awkwardly over the worn desk-top he had stopped by. Last night things had flowed easily, he had felt a pleasant jerk in his stomach every time they'd spoke and that blissful static when they touched. Now, because he had been hasty he only felt ashamed. "I really am sorry," he repeated, hearing Draco shut the door behind him and step a little further into the room.

Draco marched over to him, shoving Harry into the door he had just closed, the boy's back slamming sharply into the wood and Draco's hands were pressed above his shoulders ominously. The Blond smiled devilishly smacking his lips suddenly against Harry's, fast and strong, so different to that kiss in the corridor, with his tongue plunging deep into his mouth before pulling out in haste.

"Now we are even," He breathed with a playful glare, wiping the fallen saliva from the corner of his lip before returning to the front of the classroom.

Harry stared at the Blond's back, his hand touching his kiss-bruised lips. It hadn't been like that when Draco had kissed him before, hadn't been forceful, but he still liked it. Not having any memories of previous experiences, he hadn't really thought he could have tenderness one moment and then forcefulness the next. He felt a blush spread to his cheeks. This...*teasing* Draco felt different. Not bad, but it would take some getting used to, but then...intimacy of any kind would take some getting used to.

"I practiced magic earlier," Harry stammered out trying to change the subject to save him embarrassment. "I studied some books and I felt the magic go to my wand but...I couldn't do the spells. What am I doing wrong?" He drew his wand from his pocket and waited instruction, though he already had guessed what he was doing wrong. Wrist movements, the books had indicated them but he didn't know them.

With a fleeting look at Harry, Draco flicked his wand at the desk, conjuring an empty

muggle drink can and placing it perfectly in the centre of the desktop. "I want you to knock the can off the desk," He instructed him, but Harry only looked at him blankly. "It's so I can examine what is going wrong, would you just try?" Seeming to find himself at last, Harry nodded and held his wand up, but tried nothing as soon as he saw a disapproving Draco strolling over to him.

"You're holding your wand wrong," He explained, manoeuvring round to stand behind Harry, helping to place his arms in the correct way. Harry quivered at the closeness of Draco's touch. Why did this feel so...intimate?

Harry swallowed hard as Draco's arms surrounded him, both hands pressed around his wrists and fingers to correct how he held his wand. His cheeks felt hot. He could feel Draco's breaths disturb the hair at the nape of his neck, felt that chest against his back with each inhalation. Everything was so close and static prickled his skin at the innocent touch on his hand. "G-Got it," he murmured, "*Flipendo*, that's the knock-back jinx, right?" He felt heat rush to his groin at the sensations created by the soft flutter of Draco's hair, the smoothness of the skin that scarcely touched him with the small nod Draco gave.

He went to flick his wrist, but before he could, Draco moved his arm in a specific movement. He followed it easily. "*Flipendo!*" He chanted and one of the cans flew backwards off of the desk. Harry smiled. "I did it!" He exclaimed, "I did it! That was brilliant! I did magic!" He would have jumped in excitement, in achievement but the heat of Draco's body was a better reward and he was worried if he moved too much Draco wouldn't manoeuvre them back into this position. "Another spell? What other ones can I do?"

"Well, firstly, I want you to try that again, this time without my assistance," Draco instructed, moving back a few steps from Harry he noticed the boy slump, but he remained focused when he rose his arm and chanted.

“Flipendo!”

“I did it...!” Harry exhaled, causing Draco to smile intensely.

“You really are gifted,” Draco joked. *After just the one attempt?* “We could try a disarming charm next, or perhaps levitation? All of the most basic spells are useful in numerous ways and I think that learning as much as you can will be the way forward... The way towards defeating *Him*,” Draco explained, his lips twisting with an encouraging smile.

“Levitation?” Harry repeated, reminding Draco very much of a child at that moment. “As in...make things fly?! Show me that!” In his excitement, he had whirled in Draco’s arms to face him, the easy smile on his lips slipping slightly under a blush. They were so close, their lips were almost touching, and the Blond’s hot breath was spilling over his flushed cheeks...

Harry cleared his throat, stepping back slightly and moving over to bring the cans he had sent sprawling across the room back. He made a show of setting one on the table and the other on the floor, taking his time before returning to where Draco stood, just in front of him as before, but not turning to face him.

“I’m going to try and make the one on the floor fly up and place itself on top of the other one,” He said, holding his arm up, waiting for Draco to tell him how to do it.

Draco nodded and raised his hands again to Harry's to position them, tenderly drawing his fingertips over the dark-haired Boy's wrists as he did so. “You have to say, *Wingardium Leviosa*, and feel a sensation of lightness course through you. Feel what you want to happen. When you feel that, use your magic to push it to the surface, to your skin and right up to your wand. You are the magical object, the wand is just a point to which you focus it.”

“Right,” Harry said, closing his eyes, trying not to shiver and pant at the simple pleasure of Draco’s fingers over his. He leant back a little, without realising and inhaled shakily. “*Wingardium Leviosa!*” He chanted, his eyes flicking open as he did so, but the can on the floor merely gave a lurch upward into the air, before dropping back down on the tabletop, not landing on the other can like Harry had wanted. He growled under his breath.

“You can’t expect to do everything first time,” Draco assured him, waving his own wand to direct the can back onto its starting point on the floor, “Again,” he hissed in Harry’s ear. That time, Harry did shudder, and he felt his arm go limp under Draco’s grasp for a fleeting moment.

“*Wingardium Leviosa!*” This time, the can leapt up faster, making Harry jump, but as he flicked his wand to the side the floating object screeched to a halt midair, as if awaiting instruction. Harry drew in a slow breath, carefully trying to manoeuvre it atop the other, but his hand was not precise enough and the two cans knocked each other off the desk. “Bloody hell,” Harry grumbled, those electrical tingles shooting up and down his wand-arm *far* too nicely.

“Don’t get frustrated, just keep trying,” Draco encouraged awkwardly. Harry tried a third time and continued to get frustrated when he couldn’t do it. *I spoke too soon about him being gifted*, he thought. “Some magic just takes more time and a lot more practice. You have to put more energy into it, feel it flowing through you.”

“Like this static feeling I have around you, you mean?” Harry replied abruptly, to Draco’s surprise.

“Well...” He didn’t really know, after-all what did he and the old Harry really know about the bond, other than it was formed by *Sectumsempra*? And that it had a wild,

intense desire to keep drawing them back to one another...like magic. Or was it more than that?

“It – The bond, I mean, it's more than magic to me, it's...it's my feelings too,” Draco admitted quietly.

Harry felt his cheeks flush impossibly hot at that, at the honesty in those stormy-grey eyes. A small, embarrassing breath shuddered through his lips and he partially wished he had never asked. He wondered, not for the first time if the old Harry made such a frequent arse of himself. “So...if I feel them...it must mean more to me, too?” He asked, unsure. The intensity of it, the burning undeniable connection, the feather-lightness to his chest...there was no way that this wasn't magic.

It feels like magic, he thought, but did not dare to say aloud. And now suddenly he was far too embarrassed to meet Draco's eyes.

Draco smiled. “I...I don't know if you feel this bond coursing through you like I do, but if you do, channel its energy, all your energy into the spell, and you will definitely be able to do it.” He moved back into position and held Harry's arm once more. “I'll assist you again, and then you try, alright?”

Harry breathed deeply, calming the shuddering, hungry tingles that rippled through his skin and turning to face his objective once more. This time, Draco forced his wrist movements to be more pronounced and when Harry cast the spell the can lifted gently into the air instead of jumping wildly and spinning. No one could imagine how *strenuous* it was to make a can float on top of another. He swore a bead of sweat had just trickled down his neck, because the thin trail it left went cold as Draco exhaled against his skin.

There is nothing sexual about this you little pervert, his mind scolded him, and his arm tensed, Draco's falling away to let him do the work, and slowly he lined up the cans perfectly, before dropping the spell. "I did it!" He exclaimed. "I did it!"

"Good," Draco said, his breathing laboured for some reason. "Again."

Harry tried a few spells, and though they were only minor (and he *knew* that) it didn't stop his skin from glowing with pride when he near-mastered each one. *Didn't stop me sweating either*, he thought, wiping his forehead with the back of his hand. *Magic is exhausting!* But above that, Draco seemed mildly surprised he had managed to grasp them all so quickly. Maybe it was because he had only 'forgotten' them, and was not learning them from scratch, maybe his body remembered them?

"That was brilliant!" Harry gasped, noticing that Draco would take to staring at him a few moments at a time, before looking away awkwardly. "When can we try again?!"

"I think that's enough for today. Too much at once can also be a bad thing, Harry. You need to master these spells, but it would be useless to fill you with too much information at once," Draco informed him. A good few hours had come and gone so quickly. And even though he wanted to spend longer with Harry, he realised that it would be selfish to demand more of his time under the pretence of a lesson.

"Maybe you should go eat now?" He suggested.

Harry stared at him for moment, not really understanding what he meant before he realised – they'd been here for hours, it was probably dinner time by now. "Madam Pomfrey brings my meals, but you...you and Hermione eat with...everyone else, don't you?" He asked, already knowing the answer, but hoping Draco would see the point of it nonetheless – they didn't eat together, and Harry didn't want to be left alone just yet. They weren't due to meet Hermione for a little while yet surely?

Draco studied him quietly, before flicking his wand to vanish the two cans into nothingness. Harry smirked briefly. He loved magic, he had found, despite how exhausting it could be. That thought drew him back to Draco, and he flushed slightly, thanking the heavens that the Blond wouldn't know what he was blushing for. But then, the other boy made for the door, and Harry felt a sudden spout of desperation flood his lungs.

“Wait!” He gasped out, darting forwards quickly to Draco's side, not sure what to do once he got there. He kept his eyes on the place where Draco's school robes fastened, unable to look up for a moment, he didn't think he could speak if he met that gaze. “Can't we... Can we do something else? Anything? I...I don't want you to go...just yet.”

Draco smiled and his eyes shimmered with hope, like the sun flickering through a cluster of grey clouds. “Like what?” He asked carefully. He wanted to reach over and grab him, hold him until he knew that that was his place, but he knew he shouldn't. This time, he knew he had to do things right for Harry, take his time, respect him...

“There's nothing else,” Draco stated as airily as he could manage, trying to push *everything else* he so desperately wished they could do from his thoughts.

Harry felt his stomach plummet at the briefest flicker of heart-aching *longing* in those grey eyes before Draco turned. He felt his chest tighten as the moment escaped and Draco's hand reached the door-handle, turning it and pulling the door open. But it was only open an inch before Harry slammed his hand against the wood, Draco spinning on his heel to meet his gaze. There was but a scarce hairsbreadth between them, and Harry's tongue shot across his suddenly dry lips as he felt Draco's startled breathing disturb the hair at his forehead.

Their eyes met then, and nervous as he was, Harry felt his anxiety swallowed by this sudden need. Seizing a fistful of Draco's robes he yanked him down to his lips roughly, his other hand sliding madly up the back of Draco's neck, disturbing his pristine locks and groaning into that mouth when it parted with kiss-muffled words. It may have been protest, but Harry couldn't hear anything, not above the shrill ringing heat in his ears and he ran his tongue along those flustered lips clumsily, but hungrily.

Warmth swept through his body like electricity through a wire and as he pressed up into that mouth he pinned Draco's hard, stunned body between himself and the door. The Blond hadn't responded yet, not at all, as if he were struggling to resist temptation and so Harry gasped with surprise into those lips as fingers knotted in the back of his hair, yanking his head back until Harry's throat was arched nearly painfully.

Draco shoved his lips into Harry's, unable to resist. He massaged that mouth brutally with his own, mapping the depths with his tongue, that swirled inside for the taste and feel of Harry's deepest places. But then, his eyelids clenched with guilt and he pulled hastily away from the kiss, releasing Harry's hair as he drew back.

Harry stumbled back a few steps, while Draco collapsed back to the door, breathless, and staring up at Harry with a dark self-loathing in his eyes. "I...I don't think that..."

"Then don't *think*..." Harry hissed lowly, leaning forwards again, slowly this time. He hadn't – or didn't have any *memories* of having this before, so he couldn't *miss* it as such, but he needed it, more than he was anxious or concerned for the reasons Draco was refusing. "*I* think – think that you like me, so that's all that matters." His mouth went for Draco's but at the last minute the Blond turned his head, so that Harry's lips met his cheek, Draco's hands holding his shoulders as if in preparation to push him away. But he hadn't just yet...

Harry pressed in again, so that the heat of their bodies surged behind their barriers of

fabric when he rubbed against him, mouth leaving a wet trail down the smooth column of Draco's throat. The Blond gasped, his fingers tightening around Harry's shoulders and Harry smirked against the skin, brushing his nose up the side of his neck before breathing heatedly in his ear. His own cheeks were flushed with awkward embarrassment, but he supposed his teenage hormones were making up for that plentifully.

"Kiss me back," Harry demanded huskily, but Draco didn't look at him, it was as if he couldn't. "You want me, don't you? Well *have* me!"

Draco shuddered, his hands slipping from the balls of Harry's shoulders and fisting the boy's shirt collar. His eyes met Harry's and in an instant he pulled him in so that their lips collided once more.

Yanking his lover's collar, he flipped Harry around to pin him roughly against the door. His knees slid forward and spread Harry's legs wide apart, rising up to jerk against his heat, to rub along that swelling hardness. Harry's fingers flew up to the back of his neck, stroking it tentatively, ruffling the little blond hairs and Draco wriggled against the touch, groaning at the pleasantness of it. "Hmnnnn..." His fingers entangled in those ragged locks and pulled the kiss deeper.

So smooth, so tender, so familiar, so... What am I doing?

"I can't I'm sorry... We...we shouldn't," Draco gasped, saliva spilling over their lips as he pulled away again. "At least...not yet."

"*Stop* pulling away from me!" Harry growled, jaw clenched as his hands slid down the smooth plains of Draco's chest. He had seen it barely a few nights ago, and the memory made his trousers tight. Leaning in, he rested his forehead against the hollow

of Draco's throat, grinding his hips into the Blond's thighs, and pressing his own up into the Boy's trousers. "Be close to me, I *want* you to..."

Draco shuddered, breathing louder when that *electricity* touched him. "Ahhh..." He groaned when his own hardness thrived with pleasure against the feel of Harry's. So hot and too close...

"I...I..." Draco gasped, he couldn't control it any longer. "S-Suck me...suck me off?" He pleaded, guiding Harry's head down gently towards his heat.

Harry flushed, sitting back on the balls of his feet as he watched Draco's slightly shaking hands fumble with his belt and trousers. He felt something in his stomach jolt at the sight of that hardness, pressing eagerly against the barrier of grey boxers as Draco pushed his trousers down. He looked owlishly up into those eyes then, glaring down at him with a sheen of liquid lust and desire and Harry swallowed hard, eyes following the path of Draco's hand as the Slytherin dragged his fingers slowly over the shape of his cock through his boxers.

"Y-You mean... Y-Your...your dick right?" He stammered stupidly, yelping when Draco took his wrist and forced the hand to caress his heat through the flimsy material. Again, Harry struggled to swallow the lump that was forming in his throat. His confidence waned at the first hurdle with such inexperience impeding him. He didn't remember what to do – again! What if Draco expected him to know?

His mouth fell open for speech, but before he could manage words, Draco had slid his boxers down his thighs and closed Harry's fingers around his twitching cock. There was a gentle pressure at the back of Harry's neck, pleasuring him with those blissful tingles not insisting just guiding and Harry closed his eyes as he brought his mouth to Draco's heavy erection.

As soon as he did, his teeth grazed the soft skin and the Blond hissed in pain. Harry leapt back, staring up at him in horror. "I'm sorry! I'm *sorry*!"

A shuddering Draco winced when Harry's teeth caught him, but smiled through it nevertheless, and assisted him to continue. "It... It's alright. J-Just use your lips more and try not to use your teeth," he explained, carefully stoking his fingers along Harry's neck, easing him back in.

The Blond gasped when Harry's hot lips reached him again, only this time, with much more finesse. "Hmm...t-that's right, I-like that," Draco hummed, feeling a hot, disorientating warmth encase his cock like a cocoon, saliva dribbling down the shaft. Draco slid his hands either side of Harry's head and moved him more rhythmically along his pulsing length. "G-Good, that feels good if you suck like that..."

Harry blinked up at him for a moment, flushing at his predicament and at the way Draco pulsed in his mouth when he had looked up. His cheeks hollowed as he sucked, swiping his tongue along the thick vein at the underside. Draco quivered, beads of sweat slicking his forehead, making his hair stick to it and Harry shifted where he knelt there, so tempted to touch the bulge pressing painfully against the zip of his trousers.

His eyes closed then, because it was just too embarrassing to look at him while he did this. He drew back with a wet smacking sound, kissing the tip and divesting it of the pearly pre-cum gathered there. It was bitter, but he swallowed it, sliding the tip of his tongue around the purple head, dipping in and out of the foreskin before swallowing him again. Draco's hands caressed his cheek, his neck and then his shoulders, occasionally sweeping back up to run through his hair and he squirmed beneath the attention. He couldn't remember ever being touched so intimately, and he had to wonder if it had ever been like this before? Or perhaps it was simply their reunion that made it more intense? He wasn't sure...

The cock in his mouth was hard and desperate for release and Harry finally reached down, palming his own prick hungrily, the action drawing a groan from his mouth, vibrations sliding sinfully along Draco's cock and up his spine.

Draco's eyes widened with a kind of lustful fire when he looked down to see Harry rubbing himself. "Go on," Draco whispered seductively from above. "Touch it." Harry drew his lips away from Draco's aching hardness for a moment and blushed, but Draco merely smiled devilishly as he slyly hissed again, "Touch your cock, pleasure it...for me?"

Harry unzipped his trousers slowly as Draco watched, biting down on his lip with anticipation from above, he too was blushing when Harry's cock sprang forwards and out of the material of his undergarments. "Hmmm, so hard, and so big....!" Draco groaned, causing Harry to wriggle with electric tingles below. "Stroke it while you suck me off."

Harry nodded as Draco pulled his head back over his cock, wet lips enveloping the tip and sliding along the length to the end, so his chin bashed into his balls with a slap, and then hastily back again with a wet smack. "More....suck more...!" Draco groaned. "So good! So deep!"

Harry choked as he took it as deep as he could go, inexpertly coming back off with splutters a few times. Using one hand to steady himself on Draco's hip and fisting himself hard with the other. Draco's hand was stroking the back of his neck now, instead of holding it, making him quiver and swallow the Blond down eagerly. The swallowing helped and he breathed shakily through his nose as he took Draco deeper, until he hit the back of his throat.

His hand sped over his cock then, fingers twisting around the tip to make him groan madly around his mouthful. He felt Draco's balls tighten under his chin, the way his

own were doing. Heat swelled in his gut and everything tensed. Something was happening. His limbs went into spasms, his mouth rising and falling over Draco's thickness enthusiastically. He didn't remember what it felt like but he had a vague idea of what was about to happen...

Suddenly, he pulled his head back, saliva trickling down his lips as the hand not occupied by his drooling cock, seized Draco's hardness, stroking it vigorously the way he was doing to himself, the way that made his own body shudder and jolt in warning of...*something*!

"Y-You're so – so hot!" He gasped out, feeling Draco's fingers knot in the back of his hair again to steady him as he stroked them both. His hips were twitching up into his hands, body writhing. "Oh...What's – Oh my *god*!"

"Ahh! F-Fuck..." Draco moaned, throwing his head back suddenly. "Yes! Yes...k-keep going! Aahh!" The muscles in his backside tensed as Harry jerked him fluently, harder, faster, he didn't know what, but he felt as though he was going crazy. His mind reeled dizzily with that familiar feeling he knew so well. "D-Don't neglect your own, stroke it! Let's...let's cum together! Please..." Draco didn't know what it was but he felt more connected to Harry now then he had ever been and it was incredible. "Hmm...hmm, Potter, it's...ahhhhhh!"

At that moment, at the sound of that voice panting such needy, debauched things, Harry's vision swirled, his glasses slightly fogged up and his fingers clenched tight around the both of them as his prick exploded over his hand, his cum drizzling over the floor. He blinked, gasping for breath at that very moment he came, finding Draco's spendings splashing across his parted lips, his flushed cheeks. He felt the heat pulsing wildly in his hand and leant down further to lick at the leaking erection, a final jerk from Draco spurting his white seed over his glasses. He jumped but didn't move back, slumping uselessly onto his knees as Draco's hand cupped his neck. That seemed to be all he could manage, that and breathing, his head tipped back against the door as he waited for the white-flash of oblivion to subside.

“W-Wow!” Harry panted, his head leaning against Draco’s stomach to support him.

Draco slowly fell from his high with a devilish smile gracing his parted lips, cold sweat falling from his neck and down his back as he crashed down to the floor with Harry, too weak to stand after such an intense explosion. He leant his hazy head into Harry's neck, still breathing hard. “T-Thanks... Felt...good,” He groaned, while Harry pulled his damp body closer. “You...alright?” Draco asked, looking down into his lover’s eyes through cum-stained spectacles.

Suddenly, the boys’ attention snapped to the classroom door as the handle began to turn. It wasn't locked.

Harry’s brain didn’t seem to be capable of processing what it all meant that quickly, the sound and sight of the handle turning, the door opening. All he managed to see was Draco grasping his robe sleeve and wiping his face quickly. The black of his sleeve swept across his vision, and when it and the cum was gone, he quite clearly saw Draco watching him carefully, but with a tinge of embarrassment – looking at the person standing above them he saw why.

“H-Hermione?!” Harry gasped; tucking his sensitive cock back into his trousers and doing them back up hastily. Draco let out a sigh of what must have been frustration, waving his wand over the both of them to clean them of unnecessary fluids before getting to his feet and leisurely righting his state of undress. Harry dropped his gaze from Draco’s body when he realised he was staring, before blinking sheepishly at Hermione.

“S-Sorry,” he stammered, not entirely sure why he was apologising, it just seemed appropriate. He was missing the closeness already – the way Draco had tipped his head into his neck just then...

He was jerked back to reality by Hermione's voice.

"W-What were...?" She shook her head. "No that was a silly question." Rolling her eyes and shaking her head again, she continued. "In a classroom? Draco?" She began.

"You can't tell me you never—?"

She cut Draco off with a furious glare at that. "No, Ron and I have never! How dare you even suggest it, considering....?" Her eyes prickled again, a familiar line of tears building up inside her exhausted tear ducts.

"I-I'm sorry, I didn't mean..." Draco began, but she interrupted again before he even had a chance.

"Harry, are you coming with me or not?"

Harry stared between them for a moment, not really sure what to do for the best, before he nodded resolutely. "Yes, we're coming with you, like you suggested, right?" He said, leaving no room for her to argue by seizing Draco's wrist and heading through the door. "Come on, Hermione. How are we getting there? Where is it, anyway?" He asked, wondering if it'd be on Hogwarts's Grounds or elsewhere, he didn't really know how these things worked... Snape had given him a fleeting memory of Dumbledore's funeral (whoever Dumbledore had been, he didn't really grasp that) but that was about it.

"Just follow me," She said sighing. She really didn't like how close they were becoming again. There was already no room for her in Harry's life anymore as it was, and she — she needed him.

Draco's eyes widened when Harry took him forward by force, finding himself being led by the wrist and out of the classroom, with his dark-haired companion entangling their hands. Awkwardly, Draco tried to pull away as they followed Hermione, but he didn't want to make a scene in front of her, so he was left to simply pray no one saw them, Harry Potter and Draco Malfoy, walking hand-in-hand along the corridor.

Harry's stomach, his legs felt a little shaky, and his cheek, the back of his neck still tingled where Draco had touched him. It felt like he was still there for a moment. He reached up with his free hand, absently touching it, seeing Draco look up at the action in confusion as they walked. Harry smiled thoughtfully, that aching loneliness in his chest completely banished, and he rubbed his thumb over the back of Draco's hand as they walked.

Turning the corner out into the courtyard, Harry flinched inwardly at the sight of the slytherins gathered under an arch, guffawing idiotically about something inane, but turned his gaze ahead before they noticed him looking. They were looking at them now, he *knew* they were, but he wouldn't give them the satisfaction of knowing that. Hermione tipped her head back to him reassuringly, despite her dislike of how entwined he and Draco were and Harry inhaled deeply.

But whilst he was determinedly not looking, Harry also missed the way Draco looked over to the staring slytherins. The Blond did not miss their glares, or the way Goyle ran a finger across his own throat, miming his intentions quite clearly. *You're dead*, it said.

Draco's hand fell from Harry's at that signal. "Sorry, my palm is sweaty," He lied, shamefully, but he didn't want Harry hurt, and he could only imagine the things the slytherins might try if they witnessed any more of his gestures of love with him. Slytherins were sly and they rarely kept promises, he could only hope they wouldn't go near Harry while he wasn't there to protect him, and he didn't want to add unnecessary fuel to the fire.

“Come on, keep walking,” Draco encouraged when Harry seemed to stop disappointed at their fingers unknotting.

They passed through the wooden bridge again, out through the stone circle and down through the grounds. The air was crisp, light and Harry shuddered despite himself as they approached the trees near the furthest edge of the lake, where a small crowd was gathered. The sun was still clinging to the horizon, painting the sky and lake with beautiful pinks and stunning purples, but as Harry saw the majority of the crowd had red hair he inwardly cringed. He’d been given enough fleeting thoughts of his fallen best friend to know they were his family, and he was terrified of how he *didn’t* know how to act around them.

But as soon as he reached them, just as he turned his head to receive some sort of reassurance from Draco, he was pulled tightly into a hug. “Oh! Harry dear! Oh my!” A plump red-haired woman cried as she pulled him tightly into her chest, sobbing as she squeezed him. Harry flinched, but allowed her her comforts. *This must be Ron’s mum?*

When she finally released him, he forced a small smile, grateful that the others seemed to realise he wasn’t comfortable. They must all know he didn’t remember them. A red-haired girl and several other boys surrounded their mother and father and Harry nodded to them politely, spying a few professors and students (mostly from Gryffindor). Professor Snape and Professor McGonagall stood closest to the lake and Harry felt eased that he knew some of them at least.

A small, softly arched tombstone lay in the ground, fresh grass laying in front. They had laid him to rest already, it seemed. Harry took a step to the side, feeling Draco follow, but not as closely as Harry may have liked. *Ronald Bilius Weasley* was engraved in the pearly stone and Harry’s hand moved up to his throat, rubbing it softly where a painful lump had formed.

“Is there anyone who would like to say a few words?” McGonagall asked and Harry took a few steps back as the Weasleys circled the grave, some crying, some standing stiff and barely silent. Hermione however, had buried her cheek into a red-haired girl’s shoulder, sobbing with heartbreaking shudders. Harry’s teeth sank into his lip anxiously. What was he supposed to do? Say? His eyes could not tear from the grave now and he felt a sickening, plummeting *agony* in his stomach – and he didn’t know why.

Inclining his head to the side, eventually he managed to tear his oddly stinging eyes from the grave and look to Draco, who wore an odd expression on his face. Harry stepped back to his side, startling the Blond from his distance and drawing that grey gaze to his face. Harry exhaled shakily, feeling choked and lost but not *why*. Why did he feel like he wanted to be held, or *something – anything!* His fingers slid down, knuckles brushing over the back of Draco’s hand gently. Draco had pulled away from him a moment ago though, and he didn’t know if he could handle being rejected again, so he didn’t try to interlock their fingers again.

Draco took hold of Harry's hand for a moment – he already felt out of place being here, so what difference would it make? And Harry needed him. The slytherins weren’t here to watch when he pulled Harry into a close hug, burying his head into his neck (he knew all eyes were probably on them) but for a moment he didn't care. He needed this just as much as Harry did.

He felt Harry grip the back of his jumper tightly, but only for a moment when a furious voice sounded before them, and he let go.

“What is *he* doing here?” Ginny huffed indignantly. Hermione was stood beside her, looking just as annoyed as her, even though she had been the one to bring them here.

Harry looked between them, confused and a little more lost with every moment. “He’s my boyfriend,” he said simply, as if that were a perfectly obvious answer, not realising that his and Draco’s relationship had been secret before this...incident. The way Draco’s eyes widened told him he had made some mistake though. He watched the red-haired girl go rigid with fury, her eyes flaring and out of the corner of his eye, he saw that the girls were taking exactly this opportunity while none of the others were looking. Before he could even look back to her, however, a sharp smack stung his face, the sound ringing out through his ears. He flinched away, hand coming up to his cheek as he stared at her in confusion.

“How dare you?! How *dare* you lounge all over your *gay* lover – the very one that made your lives miserable for so long?! How dare you smother yourself with him at my *brother’s* funeral?!” She screeched. Harry winced, stepping back to Draco’s side slightly, even as Mrs Weasley reeled on her daughter.

“Ginny! Enough! It is not your business how Harry needs to be consoled when he has lost his best friend!” She seized her daughter’s arm roughly, but Ginny pulled free, glaring between Harry and Draco as if she couldn’t decide who to hate more. “He is hurting too, Ginny, do not judge his way of coping with–”

“What *best friend*?!” Ginny spat, “He doesn’t even remember Ron, why is he here if all he wants to do is grab at Malfoy like a needy pouf!”

“I’m going to leave,” Draco announced quietly.

“Yes, please do,” Ginny sneered, “Ron never liked you, I don’t even know why you’re here!”

Now openly placing a kiss upon the side of Harry’s cheek, despite the looks, Draco began to turn away. He didn’t belong here, he didn’t feel right being here, him and Ron had only got on in the end because they had to. Not because they chose to. The Weaslette was right, he shouldn’t be here. As he went to leave, however, Harry grabbed his sleeve desperately.

“No, don’t leave,” Harry whispered, his fingers tightening in the fabric, his head spinning from Draco’s open affection. “It’s just her – the others don’t want you to leave,” he shot a glance to Hermione, who must’ve known better than to protest, because she remained silent. “I want you to stay.” His teeth caught the inside of his lip and he felt like screaming at the frustration of it. How could he have felt so wonderful a moment ago and so desolate now?

“He *was* my best friend, wasn’t he? And Hermione asked me to come. And I want Draco to stay,” his fingers of his free hand curled into a fist and he raised his chin as he looked at Ginny, his confusion swirling into anger. “And it’s no wonder I’m a *pouf*, if the people that have given me the most trouble since I’ve woken up with no memory are two *girls*!”

“How dare you?! How *dare* you?!” Ginny repeated in anger, this time Mr Weasley came over to her side.

“Ginny, Sweetheart, come on, come away,” Mr Weasley steered her away more vigilantly than his wife had and Draco stayed, but he stood a fair distance behind from everyone else.

“If everyone would like to place their roses down now?” Sounded McGonagall’s untroubled voice and one by one, friends and family carefully laid down flowers, or small gifts upon the burial site. Hermione couldn’t help but weep, her hollow agony sinking deep into her chest like she a thousand daggers piercing her soul, and her soul was Ron, and he was gone. She knew death, she had seen Harry face it countless times over, but she never imagined that to lose a loved one of her own would be this painful.

The clouds seemed to be darkening above and the faces of all the people standing around were broken. Lost. There was nothing that could replace him, or make it

better. Just hope. Hope that they wouldn't lose any one else. And whether they wanted to admit it or not, Harry was their only hope right now. He was the only one who could avenge Ron and let him rest in peace knowing that it wasn't for nothing. Even if right now, Harry didn't realise that.

"You may not have the key to fix things, but you have the key to try," Draco reminded him, watching as the crowd slowly parted their separate ways, until few were left. Ginny made sure to throw them a disgusted look as she walked on with her parents, but it was a sneer Harry barely registered.

"I want to be alone with him for a little while," Hermione explained quietly, her eyes on her only love's name, etched in stone, a single rain drop crashing down on the bridge of her nose.

Harry inhaled uneasily through that crushing ache in his chest and he reached forwards, squeezing Hermione's shoulder gently. "Are you sure?" He asked, "I can stay?"

But she gave a weak, tear-stained smile and shook her head. That seemed to be all she could manage. Harry could not seem to leave her either, or the grave though it's very sight made him want to fall to his knees. He stepped back from Hermione slightly, rubbing his stinging eyes with the back of his hand under his glasses.

Far above, the sky screamed, a deep roll of thunder sounding, their only warning before the heavens opened and rain descended. Harry felt Draco behind him then, but couldn't find the strength to turn and face him. He swore he heard the Blond murmur something in his ear, but couldn't make sense of it through the haze that had settled behind his eyes, that ache not even dissipating when Draco took his wrist and drew him away, along the soothing shadows of the forest's outskirts.

Trees reached over them as they weaved under the semi-cover of the treetops, rain

still splashing over their faces, their bodies but not with as much ferocity as before. If anything, Harry felt oddly soothed by the difference in the cold raindrops sliding down his skin and the heat of Draco's fingers around his wrist.

"He...he meant a lot to me...Ron, didn't he?" Harry whispered, falling still suddenly, and Draco stopped beside him, surveying him carefully. "I don't remember – only the glimpses Professor Snape showed me, but..." he brought his hand up to his chest, as if that would appease the pain. It did not. "I still feel it...like I'm mourning for him – missing him... Did I care about him...enough for it to hurt this much?"

"He was your very first best friend, even before Hermione," Draco informed him. "Even though we didn't get on at the start, I know he meant a lot to you. Whether you remember him or not, it will hurt...it's just natural, I suppose."

The willowing tree that they had scurried under for shelter from the rain allowed some droplets in, tinkering down the sides of their faces like cruel, cold reflections of tears. Draco moved in and roughly pulled Harry's wet, rain-touched lips to his own, though he wasn't sure why he felt like he had to – a feeling, so similar to the static of the bond calling him in, only this time, there was no sign of the bond summoning him, it was him alone. His feelings, his desires.

Harry's aching heart fluttered as those lips massaged his own, those fingers smoothing along his damp cheek and into his soaked hair. The stinging in his eyes finally erupted into thick globules of tears that swept down his cheeks. His eyes closed against them and his arms wrapped around Draco's neck, pulling him harder into his mouth and gasping with need into the kiss, sinking to his knees in the dirt and pulling the Blond with him.

Slowly, Draco drew back, but not far enough to stop the panting of his hot breath from steaming over Harry's cold face. Harry smiled despite himself, soothed a little by the closeness. "This is...makes it...easier," Harry stammered out, his voice husky from a

mixture of sadness and need. Reaching up to wipe the offending, treacherous tears and rain droplets from his face, Harry tried to avoid Draco's eyes. Why did he have to cry in front of him? How pitiful...

His breaths came out in foggy pants and he shivered against the cold, grateful when Draco slid forward against him a little more, unwittingly offering his body heat. But that nervousness and curiosity was stirring in him as well, distracting him from the swelling sadness. "What was...what was our first time like?" Harry asked, his cold hands sliding down Draco's chest and under the black of his robes in search of warmth. Draco quivered at the sudden coolness, but didn't pull away.

"It was..." Draco sighed awkwardly. Their first time had been...horrid. How could he tell Harry that he fucked him so hard that he made him bleed? Made him hurt because he was careless and senseless. How could he say what really happened?

"It wasn't...I was a different person when we did it – for the first time, and I...I was..." Harry waited, with a look of enlightenment on his face. He was about to be disappointed and it was all Draco's fault. "I was really rough with you..."

"Oh," Harry murmured, not really knowing what to say. Hermione had shown him but a glimpse of the badness, of that he was sure but Draco had changed, somewhere along the line. He couldn't imagine this person (pressed so warmly and comfortingly against him when he needed it most) ever hurting him. When he'd first felt these...these feelings...whatever they were, he had imagined their first time had been...

"But there were lots of other times, weren't there? Times that I liked?" he prompted.

"I think so," Draco began warily, "I'm not really sure." It felt odd, being this open and in contact with Harry, they had never really spoken about sex, or anything to do with their 'relationship' to one another, not in any great detail. "We...I never asked you, we

didn't talk about it, so I don't know whether you liked it or not,” Draco said lamely. “I assume you did, because you kept coming back in the beginning, even when I said no...”

Harry laughed quietly, leaning back on his hands so that Draco was kneeling between his open legs. “Yeah, that sounds like me,” a small smirk flickered over his lips, Draco didn’t seem to be particularly bothered that he had chased after him, so he wasn’t bothered by it. It was the mere thought that, now the situation was reversed – Draco seemed to be the one pursuing him. “I...I errr...liked what we did earlier – did we do that before?” He watched Draco tip his head slightly with a nod, his tongue swiping over his lips. Unconsciously, Harry mirrored the motion.

When Draco didn’t seem like he could form a verbal answer, Harry shifted, making himself a little more comfortable. He shivered without Draco’s body heat warming him and he reached up with one of his freezing, numb hands, pressing it against the flat of Draco’s chest, feeling his heart thudding wildly against his palm. With his gaze flicking up to meet that gaze hesitantly, Harry curled his fingers around the Slytherin’s tie, tugging him down to his lips.

“Hmmm,” Draco moaned against Harry's lips, pulling him closer from the cold. He edged his robe off then, and broke the kiss, carefully laying it on the freezing ground, offering it to Harry to lie on. Harry smiled, moving to the makeshift blanket and kicking his shoes aside so he didn't drag mud along the garment. Slowly, Draco pulled Harry back in, fisting his collar desperately, while Harry mimicked the need for closeness by tugging on his tie again.

Lips clashed as in a dream, raindrops mingling with spittle when they touched again, but this time, they didn't part. Draco slid his tongue in deep past those teeth and inside Harry's warm, pleasant cavern, tangling their tongues together and rolling them back around each other languidly. Their, saliva, their breath mixed in with each frantic meeting of lips and Draco held him closer, pulled him deeper, pushing that muscle as deep into that throat as he could.

“Y-Yes...” Harry panted into that mouth, tugging insistently until Draco’s tie came free and his freezing, shaking hands could fumble with the shirt buttons. As soon as his fingertips brushed over the Blond’s hard pectorals he felt Draco jump slightly from the shock of it, and Harry smiled into his mouth. Draco shifted above him, his knee pressing against the hardness in Harry’s trousers and their lips parted wetly.

Staring up into those eyes with wetness clinging to his lashes, Harry gasped for breath, pressing unwittingly into the knee between his thighs. “Can we... I want to...try it again, then.” He murmured incoherently, unnerved by the grey orbs shining with some terrifyingly intense emotion above him. “The first time, I mean?”

Draco could have sworn his heartbeats were lost in the sea of emotions, for that moment he couldn't breath. Eventually, he swallowed hard and nodded. Even though they had done this time and time before, it felt strangely new to him too. “O-OK, if you're sure?” Draco asked huskily. He wasn't even sure if this new Harry knew how men did...it. Or what he would make of it. *What if he hates it?*

But then, Harry nodded and Draco smiled, reassuring him with careful eyes. “I'll be gentle,” The breathless, rain-streaked Blond assured him.

~To Be Continued...

Chapter 25: Chapter Twenty-Five

(Bound By) Clandestine Addiction

[Chapter Twenty-Five]

Carefully, beneath a thundery cloud of rain, Draco pressed Harry down onto his robe once more, lying him there and smiling the entire time (something he hadn't been able to stop doing lately, now he was close to the one he loved again). Unbuttoning Harry's shirt tenderly, he placed a few kisses down the side of his cheek, then over his eyelids, and along his eyelashes. Draco felt Harry flutter below him and that only made his cheeks bloom with colour in response. "Hope you're ready for this, Potter?"

"As ready as I can be," Harry breathed, with no little amount of anticipation clogging his throat as Draco dropped a glowing kiss to the hollow of his throat, startling a gasp out of him. He felt his eyes sting again, and closed them, defiant and embarrassed when those hands slid down his sides, caressing the backs of his thighs through his trousers as Draco urged them further and higher.

He inhaled sharply, the noise a high pitched whimper as that mouth travelled across his chest with a trail of butterfly kisses, before flicking one of his erect nubs with that tongue. Harry's hands fisted in the robe he was lying on awkwardly, his body quivering from the personal heat that made steam emanate from his skin under the shower of rain. He wanted to say something, anything, but the overwhelming tremors silenced any endearments. He was so embarrassed and hungry at the same time, his sadness tenderly kissed away.

Draco traced dizzy circles around Harry's erect nipple, suckling it with a little more strength every now and again so it rose away from his body on occasion. Each time he

pulled harder, Harry wriggled. “You like that?” Draco asked carefully, almost lovingly, it wasn't teasing like any of the times he had spoke during (not that Harry remembered).

Harry carefully nodded when Draco trailed kisses back up his torso to his collarbone, licking in harsh diagonals towards his neck. He pressed his mouth deeper into the next kiss that locked their lips together, bruising the skin when he sucked heavily on that lower lip.

Slowly, a hand circled the shape of his cock, pressing against his trousers and Harry groaned, his hips arching into the subtle touch. Those fingers tormented him for a while longer, tracing him lovingly as that mouth trekked down his rain-dampened body. Harry felt his fluttering stomach muscles clench tightly in anticipation as Draco's tongue teased the rim of his bellybutton before licking at the light trail of hair that disappeared under his trousers.

“O-Off!” Harry gasped out, “T-Take them...them off!” He swore he heard Draco chuckle before long, pallid fingers tugged his belt with teasing, occasional jerks. Harry wriggled in frustration, still feeling Draco's breath torment his stomach, that hair trailing along the newly revealed skin of his pubic bone as his trousers were pulled swiftly off his legs. He fell quiet and still for a few moments, not really knowing what Draco was going to do next...

“Hmm, it seems *bigger* than I remember,” Draco whispered, giggling against the shape of the organ through the thin barrier of his boxers, and Harry flushed those words, at everything about this situation. This torment of words, or body, of the little shivers that licked his spine at the sound of Draco's voice – the things he was *saying* to him made him feel extremely embarrassed...and hot. Had Draco always been like this during sex? He couldn't help but wriggle madly when he continued to tease.

Raindrops escaped through the canopy of trees to paint the nape of Draco's neck, and dripping down onto Harry's torso as the Blond continued to lay careful kisses over his belly. Draco traced his fingers from Harry's sides and down over his hips, his touch feather-light and teasing as it ghosted over the rim of Harry's underwear. A lingering touch over the flimsy material and then he pulled it away from his penis, which sprung up towards his face suddenly.

"Hmm," Draco hummed, licking over the sensitive tip.

"Oh! Oh...my...!" His jaw set as he struggled to keep silent, his hips jerking up into those lips. "That feels...*really*...!" Throwing his head to the side he felt his body quiver, his skin crackle with the static of every touch. Raindrops slid through the glossy curtains of blond hair still, splashing over his stomach and thighs, fingers smoothing over his legs as he wriggled, that mouth hovering just out of reach. "I...I love your hands!" Harry gasped out through flustered arousal and sensation.

Spreading his legs wide to accommodate, eager for more, Harry's fingers slid down to caress whatever he could reach and when his knuckles brushed over Draco's cheek, he felt the Blond smile, a hot breath of air ghosting over his prick. Harry gasped, his cock hard and arching hungrily up for Draco's mouth. How could he have ever forgotten sensations like this?

"Ah ha...not so eager..." Draco teased, lifting Harry's legs and pushing them backwards, delving his tongue along the underside of Harry's twitching erection, following the vein down past his balls and over another place that Harry was unfamiliar with. Draco smiled against the skin and he was sure Harry could feel his hot breath rushing over the tender flesh around his hole.

With a sudden flick of his wet muscle, he pushed his tongue deep into Harry's resisting hole, pushing deep into the ring of burning tightness. He felt that body arch against him and that hole squeeze around his tongue, but Draco only pushed deeper.

He staggered as Harry's hands struck out and grasped Draco's robe (that he was lying on still).

“You like that?” Draco purred.

“T-That’s-! You’re – you’re licking my – oh *god!*” The back of his head pressed hard into the ground, fingers tightening into white-knuckled fists around the robe beneath him. He felt the burning pleasure surging through his body in thick, heady waves, following the way his body arched and rippled under Draco’s touch. The heat descended to his loins and his hole convulsed eagerly around that questing tongue. So hot and strange and new – even though he knew they must have done at least some of these things before.

His cheeks flushed with embarrassment and ecstasy. It was so...*dirty!* Yet he could feel his cock tightening impossibly, until the intensity made him *ache*. Looking down, he could see his pink cock head peaking out from his foreskin, dribbling over his stomach and jerking with every squirm of the muscle inside him. The position was a little awkward, but the hands holding his thighs up and open steadied him, the sight of those long, pale fingers on his skin making him pant.

“Y-You’re – this feels really...” But his jaw clenched against any coherency. The fog of arousal descended over anything tangible beyond now, where they lay. Everything whisked under the mist to be forgotten for now. “D-Draco? It’s...*so intense...*!”

“Intense, hmm?! Draco tormented him with continuing licks, a certain smugness overwhelming his features. *Intense*. His smile grew at that. He wiggled his tongue deeper inside that tight ring and glanced up every now and then to see Harry's cock spilling a dribble of pre-cum over his stomach. “Hehe...” Draco giggled devilishly, pulling his tongue from the winking hole and crawling up Harry’s body to mesh their mouths together hungrily, biting on the boy’s bottom lip teasingly before pulling away. He smiled and laughed softly, his tongue ghosting over Harry’s neck and

nibbling his ears, making Harry wriggle wildly. So many sensations in such rapid succession!

His talented tongue crept down Harry's neck, dancing hotly over his collarbone, along his sternum and diverting to the side to a nipple. He hummed when he reached the nub, sucking it into his mouth hungrily, swirling the very tip of his tongue over the already wet, erect, nub he teathed. Nibbling on the sensitive, pink flesh, he panted gently against that damp skin, driving Harry madly to places he couldn't remember ever being before.

Draco's clothed bulge rubbed up against Harry's backside as he tormented the hardening nipple at his mercy, his aching hardness sliding seductively between those cheeks and pressing against his hole dryly, relishing in Harry arching into him.

“Haa...!” Harry gasped, his hands flying to Draco's hair and the nape of his neck, where his fingertips massaged him with encouraging firmness. That devilish tongue circled the flesh caught between those teeth gently and Harry arched back. His cock pressed ardently up into Draco's stomach – despite the clothing – and Draco's hands spread his cheeks for the smooth bulge to slide up and down his crack easier.

Harry closed his eyes then, savouring the pure sensation. Draco's hands kneaded his flesh, as if savouring the feel of his skin again and Harry felt something odd tingle in his chest at the thought that... Draco had lost him before, had probably missed having this, the closeness, and now he was getting it back? *It must be so overwhelming for him*, Harry thought, opening his eyes, and looking down to see Draco covering him completely.

The hand at the back of Draco's neck slid slowly down to those shoulders, willing the tension away as the other slid down the front of the Blond's throat, tugging at the buttons holding his shirt closed. “Take it off?” He asked huskily, his voice quiet though summoning Draco's shining eyes up to his face nonetheless. The Blond seemed to

hesitate for a moment, and Harry swallowed, undoing a few buttons himself to allow the very tips of his fingers to touch the skin. He would be memorising this body from scratch, but Draco already knew him, had already had him and the realisation of how relieving and overpowering it must be to only *just* have him back made perfect sense with the hesitation in those eyes.

“Wait,” Draco said, knocking Harry's questing hands away. Instantly he remembered the scar on his chest, the one caused by *Sectumsempra*. And for that moment that the realisation swelled in his head he felt as if he couldn't do this. If this Harry didn't remember, there would be questions and then answers and...

Draco pinned Harry's hands back roughly behind his head, forcing them under one hand and distracting the boy from his shirt by reaching down for his pants to unbuckle his belt. Harry's eyes had widened and Draco knew that he knew. He could feel the feelings from himself rushing into Harry and he drew away hastily.

“I...I can't...!”

The rain fell harder now. All the arguments, all the memories they had shared... It was all too much to know he had lost them. *This* Harry didn't know that he had almost killed him and when Draco thought on it, this Harry didn't understand anything – *nothing!* He wasn't...

“Not with you...not like this!” Draco gasped. “I just *can't*.” Harry sat up awkwardly and looked at him. And not knowing whether it was the right thing to do or not, Draco unbuttoned his shirt.

”This is why.”

Harry frowned at him, leaning forward to run his fingers over the scar across the Blond's heart and watching as Draco shivered from the contact. His fingertips tingled, as always when their skin met, but he couldn't see the importance of it.

"It's a scar," he said simply, "I've got one on my bloody forehead! It doesn't matter!" It dawned on him then, as those recent words cut through his mind, '*Not with you...not like this!*' His stomach lurched and he felt awkwardness creep through his skin as the passion faded, replaced with an ugly anxiety that made him feel quite sick. "But earlier you – you...well *you know!*" He was so ridiculous, why couldn't he say *came – for me*, even? "And you...you kissed me so I – I thought you, well...*liked* me? What's wrong all of a sudden?" When Draco just stared at him with dark, unnameable emotions crossing his eyes, Harry shifted uncomfortably, feeling incredibly inadequate and pulled at Draco's robe so that it was folded over him slightly. "Is it because you don't think I'm...*your Harry?*" He asked, his voice even quieter than before, "We're the same person, aren't we?"

"I do *like* you, it's just that—" Draco paused, observing him. He looked like Harry, smelt like Harry, even pulled the same expressions as him. But... "You're not the Harry I..."

Draco looked at him harder. What was he saying?! He was Harry. He had always been Harry. Just because his memory was gone, didn't mean he was someone else. Did it? Did a person need memories to make them up? This *was* Harry! The same scowl, the same eyes and the same soul shining in them. Shining wetly with something so dreadfully similar to betrayal.

"I-I'm so...so sorry!" Draco choked, reaching his hand out to Harry's cheek, only to be flung away.

"NO!"

"But I—" Draco began, quickly cut off by Harry's suddenly furious expression.

“I’m not the Harry you *what*? I really – I really thought you...” Harry blinked hard, the tears from before (the ones he’d been trying to escape) stinging the backs of his eyes like a whip’s lash. “Earlier – when we...*touched* it was...I really thought it was – *I was* special to you. But then you...” His voice trailed off again, and stumbling over confusion he dropped his eyes from Draco’s face, unable to look at him for a moment. “When I asked you what I meant to you – you said I was your everything – *me*, was that a lie? Or has this all been some way to make me give a shit about life – enough to save you all? Am I anything besides this bloody *Chosen One* you’re all so determined I become again?”

Draco grasped Harry roughly and shoved him back, pinning him to the floor by his shoulders. Harry struggled, but did not break free and Draco's blond strands hung into his piercing, silver gaze that stared down at Harry's wriggling body. The grey, cloudy orbs swelled with tears.

“I don’t know what’s wrong with me lately, but I feel like such a pansy, and that’s *your* fault. So *yes*, you mean something to me – more than you can *imagine* and I...” Draco shook his head. “I don’t know what I’m trying to say.” He leant towards Harry again, he wanted to kiss him, wanted to hold him...

“You’re more than just the *Chosen One*, you’re mine. My chosen one and I–” Draco stuttered. “I do love you.”

Harry blinked up at him, startled to silence but mentally cursing the shimmering wetness to his eyes that would not go. His mouth moved soundlessly for a few moments, not sure what he should say to that with this tight, fluttery feeling in his stomach. Everything felt drawn and tense like a string Draco could snap at any given moment. Draco’s anticipating breath dusted his face and Harry blinked again, an unphysical pressure at his throat.

He shook his head to clear the fog of confused emotions, but it failed and he found his fingers curling into Draco's sleeves unwittingly. "I don't think you've ever said that before, have you?" Harry managed at last, eyes fixed on the undone buttons of Draco's shirt as if they were the most interesting thing in the world. He couldn't look in those eyes and form words at the same time. "I...that you love me, it makes my..." He flushed darkly as he finished, voice muffled by embarrassment. "Makes my chest feel funny, and queasy – in a good way."

There was a lingering moment, and then above, he heard Draco give a small snort of laughter, but not the spiteful kind. Harry's head shot up defiantly. "Don't you bloody laugh at me!" He declared indignantly, swearing his skin would never go back to its rightful colour after this. "You just said that I was yours! Of course that's going to make me feel all – all...flustered! Would you rather I said I felt repulsed?" That was the awkward embarrassment talking and Draco was still smiling at him, as if he knew something he didn't.

"You're such a girl," Draco teased, sitting back. "I have said that to you once before, you know?" He informed, and Harry's eye's widened. "When I was about to cum inside you." Draco chuckled, watching Harry flush a darker (if that were possible). Then he leant in at last, with a teasing smile tugging at the corners of his lips as he brushed them over Harry's, a hairsbreadth between them. He did not initiate a kiss. "So, may I kiss the idiot now?"

Harry scowled but tilted his head all the same to accept the coming kiss. "How about you kiss me until *the idiot* gets here?" He growled, trying to ignore the way those words (of Draco releasing inside his body) sent shivers down his spine, a thick wave of blood to his interested half-erection. He was still naked and Draco was still over him. There was a fleeting glimpse of that devilish smile and then that mouth slid over his, like two pieces of puzzle slotting together. It was calm for a moment, like last night on the bridge, Harry having to exhale shakily into that mouth before he pushed forwards eagerly, parting his lips to a questing tongue.

Things felt easier again, that veil of shelter slipping back into place, as if their argument was an arm that had pushed it aside and now it was gone. The only arms now were the ones enveloping him and pulling him up against that body and that kiss. The forest felt cold around them, but Draco was warm, and that seemed to make perfect sense in more than one way.

Their lips parted with wet gasps and Draco pressed his nose into Harry's cheek for a fleeting moment, before dragging his mouth along his jaw and panting over his neck in a moment of recovery. He mouthed his neck deliciously until Harry squirmed; tilting his face to feel Draco's wet locks against his skin and his chosen one gasped again when his mouth caught his skin in the most provocative, treasuring way. "C- Can we – can we try again? Or i-is it—" That tongue probing his pulse with tickling licks was so distracting. "-Too...Too soon?"

Lucky he's a man, he thought through the settling haze, he understands eager and desperate and need – like I need him right now or I'll fall apart. He could feel the heavy weight of fear and pain lingering behind the veil, but he was separated from it – protected by Draco and his words and body.

"Yes," Draco said hastily. His fingers ran over Harry's cheek as he swept his tongue inside again, murmuring (intoxicated) into the kiss. "I want you – *so badly*," Draco admitted, reaching down to that place below, to that erection that was now full and hard again. He grinned seductively into those lips.

"The idiot is *hard* again," He teased, pulling away with a trail of spit connecting their mouths, until it broke and Draco shifted his way downwards. Why was that smile making Harry shudder like this? So devilish and naughty! "Hmmm, you know, your cock has always been very obedient of it's master."

"Master?!" Harry gasped, his voice an octave higher than he'd like and Draco giggled. Seeing that innocent and shocked expression spread across over Harry's unsuspecting features, it was so pleasing that it just made Draco tease him all the more as he stroked his swelling organ slowly.

“That's right, it's master.”

“I – I saw a glimpse of you and me...in Hermione's memories...we... You tied me up, did we do...do *dirty* stuff like that a lot?” He asked with a shy gasp, unable to stop himself from looking down to where Draco had cast the flimsy shield of his robe aside and was rubbing his ready erection again in slow, seductive strokes. He felt the hot fingertips of Draco's other hand press at the nape of his neck, holding him close, their breath mingling and their lips barely a few inches apart as Draco stroked his eager cock.

“N-Nice...!” Harry groaned out, “T-The way you t-touch me – so *nice*!” Draco pulled him closer then, so that when he gasped out his pleasure and tossed his head his breaths ghosted over the shell of Draco's ear, making him squirm against him.

“Hmmm... Well, I can give you a *demonstration* of some of the things we did if you like? Maybe fuck you in a skirt again, or watch you wriggle with a butt-plug in your arse? Make you cum using just your hand while I watch?” He hissed in Harry's ear. “I *could* go on?”

He laughed softly as Harry blushed insanely beneath him. Surely *not* in a skirt? Was he *that* shameless before?

“Your tight little bum is twitching for me, can you feel it?” Draco questioned huskily, releasing that cock to run one of his fingertips tenderly down to the base and over the skin around his opening, before bringing that finger up to his tongue to wet it. He sucked on it seductively, sliding it in and out of his pursed lips to give Harry a show of what was to come, before pulling the drenched finger out and reaching down. That simple touch of his finger to that forbidden place heated his body with the static bliss

between them and he wriggled the digit into the tight entrance to Harry's body.

Harry's hands flew to Draco's shoulders, to steady his suddenly swelling anxiety. He caught his lip with his teeth and tipped his head into the side of Draco's neck so that the Blond couldn't see his expression. *Be gentle, Draco, take it slow* – how could he ever say those things? Especially when Draco had just revealed how risqué and debauched some of their trysts had been? The single digit (though a shock) felt good inside him. His back arched so that his cock pressed into Draco's clothed one when that finger curled slightly, stretching his tight, twitching hole. It rotated inside him before stretching out, then in again in slow, teasing *come-hither* gestures – but inside of him.

White-hot pleasure swallowed him whole and he swore everything below his waist had simply melted in the heat. He was so hot, overcome by the pleasure and the newness but also the anxiety of what he guessed was going up there very soon...

That finger was torturing that special place inside him now and he felt his walls spasm around it, begging for more. He squirmed, his body writhing like a charmed snake and he bit his lip hard then in an attempt to stifle his noise, grateful Draco could not see his face.

“What’s wrong? Is it too much?” Draco asked, half teasing when he went to pull it out. Harry darted for his hand before the finger withdrew completely.

“No...! No it's fine...!” He murmured. But Draco knew better.

“If you wanted me to be gentle, you could simply ask? Don't forget that I feel what you feel,” Draco reminded him, and he knew Harry felt stupid at that. “Open your legs as wide as you can,” Draco hissed, his words scorching Harry's ear at their close proximity. “Come on, lay back...”

Once reassured, Harry was happy for the dark seduction to slither back into Draco's voice and shivered pleasantly at the sound as he leant back, spreading his legs eagerly and watching Draco smirk at said eagerness. Harry cleared his throat needlessly to cover up his embarrassment and turned his head to the side, realising he was still the only naked one.

"Aren't you – err...Are you going to undress now?" He asked, wishing his bloody prick wouldn't look so embarrassingly enthusiastic for anything that might come it's way. He should show some restraint shouldn't he? Draco leant back on his knees, obviously about to undress and Harry swallowed hard, unable to tear his gaze away from the flash of pale skin he could see where Draco had opened his shirt. He didn't think *restraint* was going to be possible with Draco...

Draco carefully unbuttoned the rest of his shirt, it easily fell from his arms to the floor and he tossed it aside. He raised his eyebrows playfully before reaching for his trousers, wriggling free from them and kicking them aside. He brushed his hand slowly over the waistband of his underwear and Harry could see the outline of his prick pressing against the material. Unconsciously, he licked his lips and Draco noticed. "That hungry for me, Potter?"

Finally he pulled the material away from his cock and it jerked out, pulsing midair. Draco gave a deep sigh, brushing his cock over Harry's purposefully when he shifted to draw his wand from a pocket inside his robe. Harry arched wantonly, crying out in frustration when Draco pulled away, as though the static of his body pushed him to do so. Being *that naked* and *that close* but unable to touch was just *unbearable*.

Draco cupped his fist mid air and held his wand's tip to his palm, as if his hand were a container, chanting softly. A green fluid poured from his clenched fist, spilling down his wrist a little, and Harry watched him apprehensively.

“Oh, look Harry, the colour matches your eyes!” Draco joked, reaching down and opening his fist to slide his slippery hand over the end of his penis. Slowly he massaged lower, keeping eye contact with Harry the entire time as he greased his cock. Harry seemed both ready and aggravated below him. Draco could feel the sexual tension as tight as a bowstring between them. Harry’s delicious frustration was flooding him and that only made him harder!

Harry squirmed in anticipation, and a little anxiety still, as his emerald orbs studied the hard cock in Draco’s fist. That cock looked a lot bigger than the finger that had pleased him a second ago, and the entrance it was aiming for was clenching impossibly tight in aftershocks, in greedy pleasure. The look of that jelly substance Draco was massaging into himself made him wriggle. It looked slippery and nice – almost as nice as the desire blazing in grey eyes as they surveyed him.

But when Draco didn’t move any faster towards him, he half-growled, half-whined in frustration, spreading his legs as far as they would go this time. “P-Please! Whatever you’re...you’re going to do...now, please? I-I *need*–” But his words were cut short as Draco’s free hand sought Harry’s wand from the discarded clothing and pressed it into Harry’s hand. Confused, Harry closed his fingers around it, but just as his lips parted in question, Draco leant a little further over him, stroking his own cock in a manner of pleasure as opposed to preparation...

Slowly, Draco leant down and sucked the tip of Harry’s wand into his mouth, just the first few centimetres, but he held Harry’s gaze the whole time, drawing off with a trail of spittle still touching his lips. “Put the tip inside you,” Draco insisted with a deep, husky drawl. Harry shuddered, his needy cock arching into his belly desperately and spitting out a dribble of pre-emission. He reached down with a shaky hand, finding his clenching ring of muscle after a few tries and slipping the wand tip in. He gasped, tossing his head to the side but not from physical pleasure – the tip was small and stiff and didn’t feel nearly as good as that finger. But Draco, watching him like a starved man might a cooking roast, it made him groan just from the sight of it, just from the small pressure of Draco sliding his hand around his own, as it held the wand inside.

“Say *Dilugero*,” Draco said, in that same, delicious, honey-tinted tone that made Harry hungry for his mouth, as if he could *taste* the sound. He swallowed hard, his tongue swiping over his lips before he managed to comply.

“*Dilugero!*” He panted and suddenly, a cool wetness exploded in his backside. He jumped slightly, startled but as his muscles clenched, he felt the slick jelly dribbling out of his hole a little, and knew what was happening, he even felt the anxiety-incited tension slide free of his lower body as well.

“Now?” He groaned eagerly, tossing his wand to the side. “That means now, doesn’t it?” Oh, how badly he wanted Draco’s mouth – his entire *body* right, now, he swore his mouth was watering.

“Be sure to tell me to stop if I hurt you,” Draco reminded him, though he knew neither of them could back out now. Draco held the tip of his slippery erection against Harry’s tight, leaking hole, pushing the tip in and out against the straining ring of muscle a few times to allow Harry to experience the feel of it. “Hmmm, so...you want my cock inside of you?” Draco teased, not sure how Harry would react (being as this was Harry's first time) but nevertheless excited. “Well if I asked you to beg, would you?”

Harry stared up at him dumbfounded for moment, but if their skin had tingled nicely when they touched before, it was like an electrical surge into ecstasy when Draco slid his thick cock-head over his twitching hole. All the nerve endings felt like they had been fried and he turned his head into Draco’s robe, inhaling the scent of him as his eyes slammed shut with embarrassment at Draco’s heady, seductive voice. “*Oh god I love your voice,*” Harry panted, not sure whether he’d said it aloud or not but judging by the small chuckle, he supposed it was definitely aloud.

But then Draco reached up, plucking his nipple teasingly, as if to provoke an answer to the earlier question. Harry groaned, pushing back slightly into Draco’s cock, irritated when Draco pulled it away. He knew it would hurt, at least a little, but he

wanted it, so badly – he wanted to be close to someone, to Draco as much as possible. And beneath that desperate need his cock was aching and dribbling, his whole body twitching. *Oh god...*

“Yes! Yes I’d beg! I’ll do it now but please, do it, please!”

“Hmmm, I like your voice too, Harry. And when you beg it makes me harder,” Draco admitted seductively, pushing his cock against the burning opening now until the pulsing head slid inside. Harry panted heavily and winced, but Draco didn’t ease back, only pushed himself deeper inside. “Ahh...!” He heard Harry gasp from below, watching the dark-haired boy throw his head back fiercely, his lips parted. Draco licked along the line of that kiss-bruised mouth. Part of him just wanted to eat Harry all up, his tongue deviously delving into every untouched part.

“You like my big, fat cock in your arse then, hm?” Draco asked huskily and Harry’s head tossed from side-to-side in a dizzy delirium. “It makes you feel hot, doesn’t it?” Draco hissed, emphasising the *‘hot’* with a long lick up Harry’s feverish throat.

Harry gave a few, feeble, open-mouthed gasps in his attempts at speech, his fingers biting hard into Draco’s forearms without his knowledge. His legs tensed as Draco’s cock sank into his body. It didn’t hurt per se, it was the initial, *full* sensation that made him uncomfortable, and there was a stretching twinge at his entrance but nothing more. He flushed his darkest, cracking open his glazed eyes to stare hesitantly at Draco’s face as he realised – if it was relatively easy to take him, he and Draco must have done this *a lot!*

“It feels...*weird*,” Harry panted honestly, enjoying the pressure of Draco tipping forward to rest his forehead on Harry’s as he slid in all the way, their hips flush together for a moment. “Not bad but I...I feel really *full*...” He added the last part rather sheepishly and felt the soft flutter of Draco’s chuckle dusting his lips, offering a breathless smile in return. This felt easy and nice and so...*intimate*.

Draco's arms came about to cradle his shoulders then, the backs of the fingers on his left hand brushing Harry's neck, then his face, reaching up easily to brush aside his fringe to give his ugly scar a soft caress, all as he started to move slowly in his body. Harry stiffened at first, not sure he liked the tugging of his insides with each movement. But then those fingers brushed over his skin again and he opened his eyes, in time to catch Draco's glistening gaze before those lips took his mouth.

He relaxed then, relishing small passes of those fingers, of those lips and Draco's breath over him, and the shallow, leisurely thrusts into his body after a short while – a *very* short while. Harry shifted his hips a little, propping his legs up on Draco's waist and lifting into him experimentally. He groaned into those lips as that swollen head brushed over the spot that made his hips dance erratically up into Draco's body. No, he *definitely* liked the way his (now quivering) walls were tugged with every movement.

"Ahh...!" Draco groaned the moment Harry's walls clamped tighter around him. "So...so good!" He stuttered out, his hips grinding along Harry's back legs with such a delicious friction. "My cock is hitting you deep, *Harry*, how...how deep does it feel?" Draco asked hazily, moving in haphazard jerks, in and out again, his foreskin tugged back sinfully with each thrust into that body – that tight, amazing hole that was sucking him in for more.

"You want me. Your body wants...wants me so...*so fucking* much...I...!" Draco pulled out again, but not completely, trying to delay the heat building already in his balls.

Harry's head raised at his sudden stillness. "Are you alright?" He asked.

"I just... I was too close," Draco answered, his mind fogged by passion as slowly he moved back inside. He took hold of his wand and murmured the familiar spell under

his breath, his free hand spilling over with slick, green fluid once more. Circling the swollen head of Harry's erection with his slippery forefinger and thumb, he watched the organ slide through with ease. He groaned at the sight of it, pink and hungry and at his mercy.

Harry shuddered at the initial jerk of pleasure that rippled through him as his cock-head popped through the slick tunnel of Draco's fingers. He looked down then, (couldn't help himself) and his green eyes, glistening with pleasure watched as Draco's thumb swept over his leaking tip, rubbing the oversensitive, pink flesh teasingly. The digit stole along the ridge beneath and dipped underneath his foreskin after every stroke. Harry wriggled then, pushing back into that cock barely inside him to swallow it again.

"Y-Yes!! Yes that's – that's so good...!" He groaned, reaching down without thinking to rub his own heavy balls as Draco teased him. God that made him squirm. It was all so intense and Draco, he was watching him the whole time, as if he were a desert dripping with a sweetness he'd like nothing more than to devour. And Harry's member was certainly dripping – it was practically salivating in Draco's hot grip.

But then, Draco's slippery forefinger and thumb slid down, strumming the ridge of skin leading down his cock from the head and Harry's eyes slammed shut, his hand flying down to Draco's wrist, but not to stop him. He didn't know *why* he had reached for him, but it just felt too good!

He could *hear* the smirk, and that thumb pressed down on the ridge of his foreskin again, this time tugging it down slowly as the rest of that hand encircled and jerked his weeping length. His hips arched up, his cock jerking once, twice in warning. "N-No! Stop that'll – you'll make me–"

Draco shuddered unbearably. He knew if he kept it up Harry would cum anytime soon, but his hand was unstoppable still, he *couldn't* let go. His wrist ached but he continued to fist the slick prick, moving his hips in sync with the movement, sinking as deep into Harry as he could go.

Harry swayed his head from side-to-side erratically. *This feeling!*

“You're so hard and so stiff in my hand, Potter, and your bum is...is clenching around my dick so...so hard!”

“T-That's...!” Harry's teeth ground together and his jaw clenched. He was sure this shouldn't feel so good, but every thrust into his slick channel tortured the same sweet spot that finger had reached. “Cause it – it feels so – so...!” He couldn't finish his sentence. His body felt like it was on fire and yet he was drowning at the same time – in bliss. Cheeks colouring, he felt his balls pull up tight to his body at the sound of that voice, the hairs on the back of his neck and arms prickling deliciously. Squeezing Draco as close as he could, hugging the hips gyrating into his own with his thighs, Harry wantonly clenched his frantic muscles around Draco's throbbing hardness.

“K-Keep – keep talking! T-Talk to me!” He pleaded huskily, pushing on his balls and pulling them away from his body a little to cling to the pleasure a little longer.

“My dirty little *Chosen One* wants me to dish dirty words over his ears?” Draco teased, reaching up and tugging on Harry's left nipple, flicking and twisting it. “You feel so fat and hard in my hand – *dirty*, but that makes me want to eat you that much more...” Draco grinned, pushing his straining hips as he felt his entire body tense. It was building again, what was wrong with him – needing to cum already?!

“I-I'm close!” Draco panted, unable to move his hand away from Harry or stop his rising climax. Something inside him was just too hot and heavy, Harry's insatiable body was swallowing him and drowning him in the most complex tide of bliss he had ever felt before. This was...too...*good!*

“E-Eat me?” He panted in hazy confusion, but the words and the possession so potent in them made him arc upwards, the hand on his cock squeezing him as it moved faster. “Y-Yes *please* – let me – Draco, let me...” That voice – he was sure it wasn’t normal to be so turned on by it. His arse seemed to be so tightly clenching, hungry and demanding that he was being pulled inside out with every thrust.

His cock tightened impossibly in that grasp, that place inside him burning and twisting and Harry released his balls then, hands flying to Draco’s pale shoulders where his nails sank in. “C-Cum – cumming – I’m–!” He felt something in his throat tear with the scream that left him as his white-hot release spurted through Draco’s fingers and over their stomachs messily. In his euphoria he hung onto Draco’s shoulders for leverage, pulling himself up onto those thrusts, riding the gasping climax out and hearing Draco breathing heavily over him. He was pretty sure he had never felt anything like this – there was no way this feeling could be forgotten.

“I – I...*bloody hell...*” Draco groaned through clenched teeth when Harry wriggled himself around him, pushing back into his cock in his maddening ecstasy. “Fuck!” Draco’s stomach dripped with a white sticky substance from where Harry had just exploded on him and he glared down at it, still moving Harry into his thrusts, his hands both on those slim hips now, driving him back onto his thickening prick. “So- So much cum...!” Draco panted, his tongue hanging from his mouth a little.

“So *hot*, so bloody *close*!” Draco gasped out, throwing Harry back madly to the robe and pounding forwards into him. His balls slapped loudly on Harry’s backside, his sac throbbing as he drove himself inside, spurting every last drop of his climax into that slick tightness.

Harry collapsed back into Draco’s robe, gasping at the sensation of Draco pulling out of him slowly, hot emission dribbling down his crack. He wriggled at the feeling, the sweat feeling cold on his skin now – that was, until Draco’s hot body covered him once more, that mouth sliding lazily over his. A few times Harry’s tongue reached out

to tease Draco's lips gently, but it was a gentle passion this time and his eyes fluttered closed as those arms surrounded him again.

"That was...that was really – was it always that good?" Harry asked with a breathless smile. Wasn't it supposed to hurt the first time? But then...it hadn't officially been his first time, he supposed. And the pain from before, the misery, it had been pushed to the very edges of his world, it seemed. Nothing was penetrating this warm glow that possessed him. "Thanks," he murmured, a bit sheepish now the throes of passion were a murmuring tingle in his flesh and Draco's very naked body was the only thing protecting him from the elements. "It was really...really nice. I...you're..." What else could he say? There weren't any words for it...

Draco raised his finger to Harry's lips, halting him in his speech, and he smiled. "Sh-Shut up for a minute..." He growled, breathing heavily as he came down from the rapture that still sent ripples of delight through his core. He dipped his head into Harry's shoulder for a moment longer, before rolling sideways onto the robe beside him. His eyes fluttered as they opened at last and the rain was falling heavier now, but he didn't seem to care, neither of them did.

Draco looked sideways at Harry, whose eyes were closed, whose hands were holding his stomach (which was no doubt shaken by the ride), who was probably as exhausted as he was. Beyond dark, ebony locks and the thick lashes dusting those cheeks was the boy he loved, was *Harry Potter*. The same Harry he had always been, with or without his memory. Draco's heart seemed to speed up, and he could have sworn it skipped a beat or two.

I wish I could just lay here with him forever, Draco thought, burying his head deeper into Harry's shoulder. He breathed him in slowly and more carefully, as if the soothing smell of him was a fragile thing easily lost if he didn't take care. He closed his own eyes once more, in the hope that these few moments would never end.

~To Be Continued...

Chapter 26: Chapter Twenty-Six

(Bound By) Clandestine Addiction

[Chapter Twenty-Six]

A deep, shattering gasp passed Harry's lips as he slumped into the nearest chair, setting his wand down on the desk in front of him. He was exhausted. A little over a week of Draco's assistance and he was already in control of some of the basic spells he thought he needed (again) but that came at a price. His skin felt irritated, hot and itchy and his body ached right down to his bones. He'd been pushing himself so hard, too hard the last week or so, and that, combined with the nights where those horrifying dreams continued to frequent...he was running himself ragged.

Draco flicked his wand; banishing the piles of ash Harry had reduced the suits of armour to, before approaching him with an oddly satisfied smile. Harry might say the Blond looked proud of him, if he dared. As it was, he merely sat up a little straighter as Draco approached, shuddering at the tingles that caressed his agonies as Draco's fingers slid over his on the desk.

"I'm doing well, right? Maybe now I've got the hang of basic spells we should try a few that I will need to face...well...*Him*," Harry suggested, his eagerness covering the fact that he was still panting from his last effort, hair ruffled with sweat. But he couldn't let Draco see how tired he was, he needed him to teach him more – fast!

If he finds out how exhausted I am he will think I can't handle it...

He looked down from that intense gaze to stare at where those pale fingers that seemed to risk a touch at every given opportunity, a smile gracing his lips. "You've been spending so much time with me lately, are you sure you're still giving enough time to your...proper lessons? Hermione seems so busy with homework that she

never..." He trailed off then, front teeth worrying the inside of his bottom lip. But then, Hermione had been offish since the funeral, having taken Ginny's side all because she'd been bothered by how close he and Draco were becoming? Homework loads had nothing to do with how she'd only been to see him three times in the last week and a half. He'd even asked her to help with these lessons but she hadn't turned up again since then...

Suddenly, Draco's fingers squeezed his a little harder, drawing his attention back up to those eyes and he remembered –Draco could feel where his emotions may be wandering.

"If I didn't want to be here, I wouldn't be here," Draco reassured him, holding Harry's hand a little tighter. "You're tired, maybe that's enough for today," Draco suggested bluntly. But Harry immediately opened his mouth to protest.

"No," Draco groaned, heading him off. "Anyone can see you have been overdoing it. What is the point in learning all this, if you're only going to be too tired to perform perfectly? Not forgetting that I can *feel* your exhaustion. Get some rest!"

"But I have to be ready, don't I? What if – what if *he* storms the bloody castle to get us! And I know – Professor Snape has already said, he can't breach the wards but if he's so powerful surely he'll find a way?!" Draco was giving him an odd look, as if he had seen this determination somewhere before, but Harry ignored it. "I have to be ready, I don't want to fail again, there's too much at risk!" But the Blond was still ushering them both out of the abandoned classroom. Harry gave a small sigh and followed his lead back in the direction of his room. He didn't think he was going to win this argument, but that wasn't for lack of trying...

"I'm not that tired, I promise, I've still got at *least* an hour left in me. I'm a wizard aren't I?"

“You aren't listening to me,” Draco replied simply, “If he *storms the castle* when you're too bloody exhausted to fight, there would be no point anyway would there? It's a double-edged sword, Harry, don't be stupid, and *give up* trying to be the hero. Just do what you can without overdoing it, alright?” Harry looked dumbstruck for a moment. But Draco just gave a soft smile. “Don't look so offended, I am only telling you how it is?”

A small sigh of resignation passed Harry's lips. “I know. I just want to get this over with. I hate waiting and hiding in here, waiting for something to happen. And the time that's not spent learning these spells, it's filled with all the horrid possibilities of what could happen this time and nightmares of what has happened before. I want this over.”

Draco seemed to be choosing his words carefully in the silence that followed, that continued until they were at a stand-still outside of Harry's door. Harry fidgeted nervously, not very anxious to head back into the solitude of his room and watched Draco's thoughtful expression carefully as the Blond's lips parted in speech at last.

“I know how anxious you feel, because believe me, I'm feeling it too. I just...you're going to have to deal with it,” Draco said, leaning over to kiss Harry gently on the cheek. Sniggering whispered into his ears from the other end of the corridor. The slytherins were there.

“You should go that way, into your room.”

“But Draco, it's lunch,” Harry argued. Draco gave a gentle, worried smile.

“Oh yeah, go in there for lunch then...”

Harry looked confused for a moment, but decided not to argue, Draco was already doing so much for him, he was probably just feeling the pressure too and turned into his room.

“I’ll see you later,” Draco promised, watching until he was out of sight, before turning on his heel and walking towards the slytherins. He knew it was asking for trouble, but he didn't want them to pursue Harry, so instead he walked forwards to meet them.

“Oi, oi, Malfoy! Where’s your *girlfriend* gone?” A voice called out and Draco kept his head up and walked right past them, which would have worked had Goyle not seized his arm roughly and whirled him around to face them. “I didn’t see you give him a proper kiss, you might hurt his *nancy-boy* feelings if you carry on like that,” Goyle sneered.

“Come on, Malfoy,” Pansy shrieked, forming the front of the group today. “Tell us how the cock-sucking lessons are going – that’s what you’re doing in that room every day in your free lessons isn’t it?”

Before Draco could even think of an answer, Crabbe shoved the Blond hard back into the stone wall.

“You’ve really let yourself down,” Pansy continued, her voice a tad darker than before, “Your whole family is *nothing* – your parents are hiding like cowards and you’re running around kissing Potter’s arse – literally?”

“Remember what we said?” Crabbe sneered, pressing in so that Draco was pressed uncomfortably against the hard, unforgiving stone. “You’re gonna have to pay for both you and Potter.”

Draco bit down hard on his lip and laughed, glaring sideways at Pansy. “Yeah, well I may have *'let myself down'* but at least I'm not running around like you, kissing the Dark Lord’s arse! At least I think for myself...!” Draco hadn't even started, and though he knew he was merely taunting the fire, he couldn't help the words falling from his mouth.

“Why is it that all the slytherins do nothing but give our house a bad name? I'm glad I've changed, because I can see how wrong I was...unlike *you* pathetic fools who have nothing better to do then try and make my life a misery,” Draco gave a bitter grin, looking back to Crabbe and Goyle. “And as for my *nancy* love life, well at least it keeps me in better physical condition, take a long look at yourself before you criticise me!”

SMACK!!

Draco crashed into the wall, barely remaining on his feet as Crabbe's meaty fist cracked across his jaw. The slytherins watched with satisfaction as blood trickled from Draco's lip. Goyle stepped closer to Crabbe's side, seizing a fistful of Draco's hair and yanking it spitefully so that the Blond had to look up at them. “You're not in a position to be acting brave, Malfoy, and besides it doesn't suit you. This isn't Potter you're fucking with now you little ponce – you're playing with the big boys now.” There was a sickening foreboding in his voice that Draco didn't like the sound of and he lifted his chin defiantly, like Harry would have done, despite the blood crying from his split lip.

“Get on your scrawny little knees, *Malfoy*,” Pansy hissed from behind Crabbe and Goyle, the others gathering in closer. There was no way out, but Draco didn't move. And they didn't force him. This was a trial on his pride.

“Get on your fucking knees or we'll just go knock on Potter's door – we hear he's more than willing to surrender to anyone who flatters his rancid little backside.”

“You're not *serious*?” Draco protested, but was in no position to argue really with his hair being yanked from his head. And the threats against Harry, they made a bile rise in his throat. There was no use having pride when his life was on the line, or (more importantly) Harry's. And so, slowly he lowered himself to his knees.

“Satisfied, Crabbe? Am I in the position you want me?” He couldn't help himself, but he soon regretted his words, when that fist slammed into his face again. “I'm on my bloody knees, alright?!”

“Yeah, just where you like it – or don't you return Potter the favour?” Pansy mocked him, giving a small nod to Crabbe and Goyle as if they had planned it all – but then, they probably had. “That's just not right; we'll have to show you how.” Again that edge of foreboding and Draco wished desperately that he *didn't* understand what she meant. That fist that had smacked him twice already was on his shoulder, squeezing painfully and keeping him in place, as if they knew he would rise in abhorrence of what was about to happen.

Draco felt his stomach knot with inevitable revulsion as Crabbe and Goyle's fists tightened on his shoulders and Blaise moved between them, unzipping his trousers with a menacing look in his dark eyes.

Draco shuddered unbearably. Closing his eyes he swallowed hard, he flinched and looked away, repulsed at the sight of the boy's cock hanging in front of him, held in dark hands. “I'm not putting that anywhere near my mouth,” Draco protested. But Blaise merely sniggered.

“Who said I was putting it in you're mouth? I would never taint my body by allowing you to have you're *nancy* way with it...”

Draco's eye's widened in surprise. “Nancy? Say's the one standing over me with his rank prick in my face? Fine, so what then?” He asked, spitting the last part with as much venom as he could muster. Blaise's eyes lit up then, like a spark in a fire and he grasped Draco's collar, hitting him again, more blood crying free of his flesh as it cracked along his eyebrow.

“You look at me – up at me from the ground like the filth you are, worse than any mudblood, you blood traitor. You just sit there, you don’t have to do much else, that should be enough to remember, shouldn’t it?” Blaise mocked him, running his dark fingers along his limp member. He gave Draco a look of pure disgust before closing his eyes, and jerking his cock to hardness quickly, this wasn’t for pleasure; it was for humiliation – Draco’s humiliation. And it was degrading enough just kneeling there at their feet, waiting for Blaise to finish above him, all of the slytherins watching, laughing...

“Do you stare up at your girlfriend so dutifully, Malfoy?” Crabbe sneered, knowing full well Draco had been told not to look away. “Maybe we should invite Potter to come watch next time?”

“Shut up!” Draco snapped at the mention of Harry’s name, sinking his teeth harder into his lip in repulsion. This was sickening him. Blaise wasn’t really going to do what he thought he was, was he? Kneeling up straight, he clenched his eyelids tightly. He didn’t even want to *think* about it, let alone see and *feel* what was about to happen. Growling from behind his tightly clenched teeth, he managed a grin. “You’re getting off on this, aren’t you? All of you?” Draco taunted, opening his eyes again and chancing speech, even though he knew he shouldn’t.

“I bet having someone like *me* below you this way is making your cock rock hard!” Draco hissed with a mocking seductive *hum* that none of them seemed to care for. Blaise stopped for a moment, tugging fiercely on Draco’s hair. “What’s wrong? *Gay boy* spoke the truth?”

“Keep your eyes open and your faggot-mouth shut!” Goyle snapped, his fingers digging into Draco’s shoulder so hard now that the Blond winced at the bruising grasp.

“You’re the subordinate here, Malfoy,” Blaise hissed, his words hitching as he fisted his cock faster, evidently trying to get this part over with. “You’re nothing, you’re the dirt under my feet and if you forget your place again I’ll catch up with your precious

Harry Potter when you're not around..." He trailed off allowing the insinuation and the vile possibilities to permeate Draco's mind and stepped closer so that his dark erection hung over Draco's face. "Do you know your place, Malfoy, tell me?" Blaise opened his eyes then, staring with absolute revulsion into Draco's eyes as he neared his end.

Draco growled with frustration, there were too many things happening at once, and none of them pleasant. But Harry was such a weakness for him, he knew he only had one choice here, so he swallowed hard, suffocating on his broken pride when his words followed...

"Below the likes of you...!" He choked out in a whisper, just as he was yanked sideways, right under the white liquid bursting from Blaise's hardness. Draco shuddered and winced, coughing as the white acid hit his eyes, he felt sick, so sick. This was....

Crabbe and Goyle held Draco's lips apart, making sure that Blaise jerked the last of it down the depths of his throat and he coughed, choking on the vile and bitter taste that stained his lips.

"Say it again...and louder this time...say where you place is, Malfoy," Blaise chuckled darkly, splashing a few finishing jerks over the Blond's face. Draco spluttered for air when the darker boy above released his hair, falling forwards to the floor in disgust. He spat the horrid substance from his mouth, but that taste remained.

"Below you!" He yelled this time, hoping they would leave him alone on the floor to fade away.

The laughter was all around him now, sickening, overbearing and he swore he was about to vomit Blaise's vile fluids back up any minute now, but he'd be damned if he curled up and cried while they watched. He had been a coward before, worse than that

perhaps, but he'd faced more terrifying things in the last few months than a gang of spiteful slytherins. There was rustling above him, but he didn't bother to look up, not even when Pansy spoke again.

"This is to ensure you don't forget," the girl shrieked, but she sounded a little further back than before and there were bodies above him again, casting their vile shadows over him with their suffocating closeness. Draco flinched as he felt a burst of hot liquid over his face, and then more, everywhere. His stomach roiled at the smell and at the ever-present, echoing laughter.

He clenched his eyes shut and waited, waited for them to leave, and for this day to be over. He honestly wanted to be sick, wanted to get to his feet and curse the lot of them, but then Harry...

He couldn't show them emotion, any reaction at all, he just couldn't. It was better to lie here and let them do what they were going to do and for a moment, he felt a wave of guilt rush over him.

This is what I did to Harry. I put him through this, my own piss, I smothered him with it! Made him...oh God...

Draco felt that thought turn to acidic bile in his throat. He understood now, more than ever, the things he had done to Harry, and it hurt, more than any amount of abuse or rancid piss that his once companions had to offer. And while they stood over him laughing and cursing, they were only making him stronger inside, making him realise what a nasty and cruel person he had once been.

"Taking it quietly like a good little nonce?" Crabbe spat, literally on Draco, he and the others putting themselves away.

“It’s because you know you deserve it,” Blaise snarled, “You know you’re nothing – *nothing*. And you’ll be worse than nothing once Potter dies, they’ll be no one to shield you then.”

More laughing and then...

“Someone’s coming!” A younger voice said, probably a look-out and the slytherins offered Draco their final glances of contempt before hurrying from the scene, but not quickly enough to avoid notice.

“Malfoy?” A female voice called, but Draco didn’t look up, but she was coming closer. “Malfoy – Draco? What on earth are you-?” Hermione stopped a foot or so away, the smell and the physical evidence finally hitting her. Her face went white, and she swallowed hard around the sudden lump that had formed in her throat. Draco had been proud to an unbearable fault, even when he was *with* Harry and this – letting his old companions (they could never be named friends) do this to him? For that was what it had been...*letting them*.

“Draco?” She said again, slowly this time and quietly, as if unsure of herself. Delving into her robes, she brought out her wand. “Let me help you.”

“NO!” Draco yelled, beneath a murky puddle of disgusting fluids. “I’m fine...” He said, pushing himself up slowly by one hand and trying not to slip back. She looked bewildered, and very confused and Draco carefully searched for his wand inside his cloak. His hands were shaking.

“Well you’re obviously *not* alright, are you?” She argued. Draco just shot her a glare.

“Look, I said I’m fine, alright, just back off...” There was a moment of awkward silence between them then, while Draco cleaned himself up. Thank *Merlin* for cleansing spells - though those didn’t rid him of the vile taste in his mouth.

“Would you not...not tell Harry about this? I just...don’t want him to worry. He has enough to think about and...”

Hermione frowned then, she wasn’t too sure about that. But she couldn’t deny the shivering sensation in her chest when he had said that. He had never been so considerate, or protective of Harry. “Harry and you are in this together, he should know about something like this – you’d want him to come to you for help, wouldn’t you?” She saw the way he moved his lips and flinched at the taste on them, and considered conjuring him a glass of water, but the Blond would simply refuse.

“Draco, how long has this been...? It can’t go on like this, most of them – at least four are death eaters, they could seriously harm you for Voldemort. And Harry needs you, he – he doesn’t trust anyone but you, don’t you see that?” She demanded, a considerable amount of desolateness seeping into her voice.

“You’re one to talk, Harry need’s you too and you haven’t exactly done a fine job of that lately.”

She sighed heavily, exhausted by it all. “That’s different.”

Draco gave an irritated ‘*tut*’. “How is it? Because I’m here? Because I, Draco Malfoy am in the way? So what? Harry is your friend, put him first instead of letting your hatred of me get in the way.” He paused then, they were getting off of the subject...

“Look, I don’t want him to know. I just...I really don’t think he needs to know when I can handle it by myself, alright?” Hermione didn’t seem to be accepting that easily, but he could only try.

“It isn’t my business to tell him, but what if those slytherins do? They aren’t above it you know, they would tell him, make him watch just for spite—”

“This is hardly a ‘run to a teacher scenario,’ Granger.”

“I wasn’t suggesting a teacher, I was *insinuating* magic – like *wizard’s* have,” she bit out, frustrated with her help being swatted away. “We should put an end to this, Draco, I can help you. And we can help Harry!”

“No,” he said stiffly, “It’s fine, I only have to deal with it for a short while anyway. So just...*don’t*.” Draco was *determined* on withholding this from Harry; he didn’t want him to know. He couldn’t. And struggling to his feet at last, he gave Hermione a small smile. “Look, I appreciate the help but I’m fine.”

Hermione frowned, rolling her words around in her head for a moment before she spoke them. “Malfoy – *Draco*, you’re...you’re right, about Harry,” she began shakily, lowering her eyes to the ground somewhere, she couldn’t look at him, not now the reality of what had been happening had rushed forth, erupting from his short words. He was right. “I...I lost Ron and I just... I’d seen the way you’d treated Harry before, and I didn’t trust you to be...to be what he needed once we found out he was so vulnerable, without his memories. I didn’t trust you to take care of him and...” She shook her head, straightening up to stare Malfoy straight in the eye, she owed him that much.

“Harry said it wasn’t my business, and he was right. But I had lost Ron; I didn’t care to lose Harry too – whatever the cost. But it was still wrong, and in the end it’s...it’s hurt Harry more, and I should have trusted you, I should have known when I saw the way you were holding him back at Malfoy Manor...” Her voice trailed off, the memory of that moment, of that battle too much. For when Draco had been holding Harry so closely, as if he were something precious, her most precious thing had been bleeding in her arms.

“To be...taking care of him despite the inconveniences it causes you and your pride,” she began hesitantly, not sure how this new Draco would react, “Like the kiss outside of Charms the other day – yes I saw it, as did the slytherins. If Harry had done that before we left to destroy the last horcruxes and Voldemort, you would have...well you know what you would have done,” she murmured, not wishing to remind Draco of his mistakes, just as she didn’t wish to be reminded of hers.

“To do that...you must love him, a lot.”

He nodded slowly. “I do – *love him* that is...more than you can ever realise, but I love him in my way, the only way I know how, and that’s good enough for him. I’m not the...the standard boyfriend, Hermione, and I promise you, I never will be, but I’m also not the same person I was before. Both Harry and I have changed.”

She was right; the *old* Draco would have pushed Harry to his limits and cursed him without a second thought. He really *had* changed...

“And I’m sorry about Ron, but you know, if he were still here we probably wouldn’t have got on any better, that’s just how it is. He’d probably be joining in with the slytherins for once,” Draco laughed, trying to lighten the situation, the heaviness in the atmosphere. “I don’t expect you to trust me or forgive me for the things I did, and I don’t want you to. I just want Harry to be safe, and I want the same things as you in that matter – my life is nothing to his. I’ve risked everything for him, even my family. He is all that matters now. So I won’t burden him with yet *another* of my stupid problems. He has enough to deal with.”

Hermione stood agape for some time, her mouth moving soundlessly, and uselessly toward speech a few times, before she just gave up, shaking her head slightly once more. Draco had suffered just as much as she had, if not more because where she

should have helped him, she had made it worse. “Ron had come to terms with the fact that you would protect Harry, he as much as said so. And I...I know you’ll be what he needs, I cannot ask for more.” She stared at him for a moment longer, before giving him a small nod, and turned, but something stopped her.

“Draco,” she said, turning to him, and reaching for something inside her robes, “Here.” She gestured for Draco to hold his hand out and dropped a small round coin into his hand, she knew he recognised it. “I’ve edited their properties. I surmised that...while we wait to make our move, or for Voldemort to make his, it is best for us to be able to contact each other. I’ll give one to Harry; just...rub it if you need us.” With that, she whirled around and headed around the corner, leaving Draco alone and staring at the odd markings around the edge of the coin, each side dictating where either Harry or Hermione where at that moment, it seemed.

He smiled sadly at the coin. She had never stopped thinking about loopholes and had never stopped being prepared. She may have seemed to be avoiding him and Harry, but the truth was the entire time she had never stopped thinking about what was important. Even if she had gone about it the wrong way, it had always been for Harry’s sake.

“Thanks,” Draco murmured softly called after her, but wasn't sure she heard. He spun around and headed hastily for the nearest empty classroom, he didn't much feel like eating in the presence of everyone after what had just happened to him. But he *definitely* wanted to get rid of the lingering bitterness on his tongue.

* * *

He’d visited this place before. Every night he’d seen it, felt the cold, spiteful brush of the wind slicing through his skin like knives, felt the earth like icicles piercing his bare feet. Everything hurt, always when he came here. The graveyard welcomed him in, the rusted gates swinging open menacingly, beckoning his naked body inwards.

Naked and vulnerable, he walked the stony, vicious earth, blood crying from the delicate flesh of his feet as they were shredded with every step.

The darkness had voices, dead voices, and though he couldn't remember all of the people they belonged to, he knew their names, he knew they were his parents, and Sirius and that boy, Cedric Diggory, he knew they were the dead, and he knew they were shrieking, screaming in pain – pain only his sacrifice could save them from. He just knew, felt it in his bones.

Harry shuddered from the icy cold, his skin turning blue as he followed the path, graves on either side of the aisle he walked and the statues, the angel and the gargoyles, they turned their heads as he moved – their faces drawn and gaunt as if they were screaming too. And then, he came to a halt at a great, pearly tomb he had seen before, but it was not meant to be here. Albus Dumbledore's grave was at Hogwarts, he had *seen* it! Beside Ron's!

Oh god, Ron, he thought, and they were there, the statues nearest to him, they were Ron and Hermione and Draco, and Harry felt tears (so cold that they ripped his skin as they fell) cascade down his cheeks. They would die with Ron, if he did not do it.

“Once more, Harry, I must ask too much of you,” whispered the kind, translucent face before him, the aged, grandfatherly expression of Albus Dumbledore. Yes, he didn't remember much, but he remembered those words had been spoken before, and not just in this dream...this dream that was different this time, it had meaning now – purpose!

“Yes, Sir,” Harry murmured, flinching when those hands (as cold as death) reached up to touch his face. His body shuddered then, and Dumbledore stood back, watching him, gesturing with a dead, blackened hand to the simple grave slab, and the dark words engraved on it.

Tom Marvolo Riddle

None can live while the other survives.

And then, Harry had a perfect realisation of what that meant and his insides shuddered with it.

Suddenly, the earth parted beneath him, the soil shifting and groaning as if in pain. Harry screamed, his throat tearing with the sound as he sank down, the earth scratching at his throat and his eyes while swallowing him whole. His hands clawed at the ground, but it was sucking him in. The statues of Draco and Hermione moved, close to him now and he held his hand out to them in plea.

“Help me!!!” He screamed, long, spiteful fingers like claws dragging into his legs, ripping them bloody beneath the soil – pulling him down into Voldemort’s grave. But Hermione and Draco remained still as stone and Dumbledore shook his head cryptically.

“It will never be over, not until they are all gone, Harry,” Dumbledore said simply, and suddenly the arms of Draco and Hermione were filled with trinkets, a cup, a locket, things he knew – horcruxes. And then, the cursed objects fell on him and he plummeted into darkness. His heart went rabid in his chest, thundering as he gasped and spluttered for air that wasn’t there, and when the soil had swallowed him completely, two, red eyes were all he could see. Those claws, they sank into his throat and he felt his lungs struggle for air that wasn’t there, he cried out but couldn’t scream.

“Do you understand, Harry?” Voldemort hissed in the darkness, and then the red of those eyes devoured him whole.

Harry threw himself awake, clawing at his throat as if to pry the invisible hands from it. He struggled, tossing and turning until the sheets had wrapped around him and he screamed out loud this time, before rolling onto the floor.

Suddenly, two, hot hands were on his shoulders straightening him up, and he struggled against the grasp, not yet fully awake and still screaming. “Help me!!!” He gasped and then the hands shook him again.

“Silence! Potter, now!” A voice hissed and Harry’s eyes flew open, Severus Snape’s face silencing his cries. It was a dream. Only a dream.

“Professor!” Harry spluttered, a dream I – I’m sorry it was—”

“I know very well what it was, Mr Potter. With the World’s saviour writhing on the bed and unable to wake, Legilimency was necessary – I saw everything.”

Harry’s eyes widened at that deep voice, at what it insinuated. Everything, the horror of it all, and yet those dark eyes, as black as the soil that had swallowed him, they flickered with anxious knowledge. Snape knew what it meant?

“Professor...what was...? I’ve had the same dream before, but never...it’s never ended like that. It...it means something, doesn’t it?” His throat was raw from screaming, and he rubbed it slowly, words nearly incomprehensible and sweat beading across his skin, but he stared into the Professor’s face, waiting...

“Yes.” The Professor swallowed hard. “But you need to rest, we will talk it through in the morning.” Though Harry looked irritated, clearly disturbed and in no way able (or wanting) to return to bed, where all he would do is scream and shiver. Snape walked

around the other side of his bed, summoning a bowl to fill with conjured water. Carefully places the accompanying flannel into the bowl, he wrung it out, dabbing at Harry's sweaty head slowly.

“You need to rest. If you cannot sleep then lie here quietly – it's just gone two in the morning, and we can't be discussing such matters when you are clearly exhausted and...*stressed* enough.”

Of course, Harry protested, he wanted to know. Being kept in the dark longer would only make him worry *more*.

“I...I want to see Draco and Hermione,” Harry insisted, they would tell him wouldn't they? If there was some hidden meaning? He had a vague idea of what it meant, but without his memories, how could he be sure? Pulling himself backwards out of Snape's grasp, Harry set a hand on the side of the bed to steady him as he stumbled to his feet, heading for the door. But the shadow that was Severus Snape swept across his path. Those dark eyes shone like onyx in the dark and the Professor glared at him a moment. Harry stared back, unyielding, even as his limbs quivered in aftermath of the dream and sweat summoned a chill to his skin.

“Just Draco then,” Harry corrected himself, “He's probably felt my...*distress* anyway, that's how it works between us.” A small pang struck his chest then. Oh how true that was, wasn't he concerned only earlier today, about a sudden flash of Draco's distress, only to be brushed off.? Draco had insisted whatever it was was nothing, Harry didn't think he'd get away with such a flimsy evasion...

“You need to rest,” Snape insisted, but seeing he was not about to win with insistence, he moved to another tactics. “You think it will be fair to go and wake Draco at this hour?” Snape started, as if the guilt trip route would be a way out. But again, Harry was smarter than that and he would resort to sulking like a spoilt child until he had his way, if need be.

“Honestly, you *Potters* are all the *same*,” Snape said under his breath, but Harry didn't quite hear him, *luckily*. The Professor quickly whirled on his heel and hurried along the corridors to where Draco slept.

Left alone in the dimness, Harry rushed back onto the bed, the childish thought of feel safer there spurring him to pull the covers up over his legs which he drew into his chest. He sat there in the dimness, listening to every flickering sound, watching every shadow (that wasn't really there) morph into something twisted, into the dead, clutching hands dragging him into the grave.

Shivering at the all-too vivid memory, swearing he could still *feel* those fingers on him, see those eyes in the dark, Harry fumbled for both his wand and glasses. Shoving his spectacles hastily onto his nose, Harry flicked his wand at the fireplace. “*Incendio!*” He murmured, having mastered the spell earlier, and the fire roared to life, filling the room with a comforting glow. And yet still he shivered, it was ridiculous enough that the *Wizarding World's last hope* was afraid of the dark all-of a sudden, (perhaps without the comfort, or strength of his memories) but to be reduced to such tremors over a nightmare? However horrifying and real it had been?

“It will never be over, not until they are all gone, Harry...”

They...meaning the horcruxes that dream Hermione and Draco had thrown on top of him as he sank into the grave. But then why did he, Harry have to be buried along with them?

“Do you understand, Harry?”

He did, and yet he didn't, there were things in his dream he thought perhaps belonged to the mind of the old Harry, like this knowledge, this feeling that the dream was real and that his sudden death, the feel of having to sacrifice himself...

What does it mean? He wondered, closing his eyes against the room, his fingers knotting in the sheets as the cold sweat trickled down the back of his neck. He kept seeing their faces, their gaunt, deathly faces as statues, Hermione, Draco...and the haunting voices of those he'd lost – it was too much to bear!

Suddenly, the door flew open, and Harry had only time enough to feel a small, alerting tingle before he opened his eyes, Draco marching across the room and to the bedside, those eyes already scanning his appearance he noticed. A certain panic and anxiety thrumming in Harry's heart, but it was Draco's as well as his own and Harry gave a small smile at the relief he felt from it. When he had called out in that dream, when Draco had let him drown in the earth he had felt so alone – it was as if the warmth was spreading back through his deathly cold body.

“Are you alright?!” Draco asked at once, alarmed, his hands pressuring Harry's firmly. Harry smiled weakly, and he loosened his grip.

“Now, Draco, I don't believe that Potter should be kept awake too much longer. However, I will leave you for a moment to talk,” The Potion's Master stated, granting them privacy and stepping out of the room.

The door quietly closed and their attention drew back to one another, Draco's lips parted in speech, but Harry's finger pressed over them gently, silencing him. Draco swore he flushed at the feel of that finger and closed his eyes when Harry sat up to kiss his forehead.

“I'm fine,” He said slowly. And Draco opened his eyes again.

“W-What happened, tell me?”

Harry frowned up at him for a moment, not really sure what to say now that he had him here. “I had another dream,” he explained, his voice still hoarse from the screams. “It was different somehow this time though I... I was by *His* grave and I could hear the voices of dead people. I saw you and Hermione and Dumbledore, and...the ground was trying to swallow me...” His voice trailed into a low whisper then and he dropped his gaze to where his fingers worried the edges of the duvet, unable to look up even when Draco slid onto the bed beside him.

“I was being dragged into his grave with him, and Dumbledore, he said that it’d never be over until *they were all gone*, and that’s when...you and Hermione, you threw the horcruxes on me and I... The grave took me...” He worried his lip again, chewing it until he felt it grow sore under the anxious attack of his teeth. Draco’s hand found his across the sheets and he squeezed it, inhaling shakily. “I think...I think that it means that there is...there’s a horcrux, inside me.”

A sharp inhalation, a gasping breath from Draco and Harry’s head shot up, seeing the horror burning in those eyes. Harry frowned. “You know what to do, don’t you? You helped me destroy the others? You can get this one out of me, right? Before we have to fight...*him*?”

“I...I...don’t...” Draco felt astonished, unsure, felt *heartache* swell in his chest. How on *earth* would they be able to destroy a horcrux that was inside of Harry unless he...?

“You’ll have to die...” Draco gasped with a sudden realisation of horror. “I...I mean...” Draco stopped as the horror filled Harry’s face and Draco jumped to his feet and began pacing uselessly. “But, that...that doesn’t make sense. *‘Neither can live while the other survives.’* If you have to die, then you never had a chance to begin

with?! Your soul purpose was *not* just that. You weren't put on this earth *just* to destroy him! I won't let it be..." Draco declared, choking on the brewing tears that caught at the back of his throat.

"You're more than that! Y-You can't..."

Harry crawled to the edge of the bed, catching Draco's pyjama sleeve as he paced, and bringing him to a stop so that he could look up into those tortured grey eyes. "I...I have to die?" He asked, but it felt more like a statement than a question. His mouth moved soundlessly for a few moments, and then...

"But I'm the only one that can kill him, you said so. Or does that...maybe *both* of us have to die, somehow when we face each other – maybe I only have to survive long enough to kill him...?" His voice trailed off quietly then, as the realisation of his fate dawned on him.

Draco remained silent and stopped still, eyes glazing over the cold dimness of the room. He couldn't think, he felt numb, his feet felt frozen to the floor. He had already lost him once and now he had him back (for the most part) the thought of losing him again was...

Cold.

Empty.

Painful.

There were no words that could describe that feeling of loss, there was only desolateness, and agony, the kind of which he simply couldn't face again and survive. Not a day, not a night without Harry, without knowing he existed.

"I...I don't know, Harry, I don't..."

Harry tried to swallow, tried to moisten his suddenly dry throat, but he could not, and he could not escape this knowledge that, Harry, or at least the Harry he had been before, he had known this already. Why wasn't this more of a shock? "P-Professor Snape, if there is anyone that knows how to get this out of me it's him, surely?" Harry gasped, "I have to – I have to face him, no matter what, I know I do but I...I don't want to die..." The last part was almost a whisper in the cool room and Harry slid forwards on the edge of the bed to rest his forehead against Draco's stomach, closing his eyes and inhaling deeply.

Didn't he deserve happiness? A life after all of this darkness and pain and sacrifice? But that was just it, the feeling in the dream. He was going to have to sacrifice himself in the end and as that thought scoured his heart, Harry's fingers tightened in Draco's clothes. He didn't want to leave anyone else behind; he didn't want to be alone, without Draco again. He didn't want to die...

Draco pulled Harry into his arms for a moment, a small fleeting moment and held him close. It was as though their heartbeats were connected, in sync – both lost and terrified, of this, of death, but mostly of losing each other.

"Your time is up, gentlemen," Snape stated, pushing the door open and causing the boys to jump apart. Draco inhaled sharply.

"You know about this – about the horcruxes, Sir, and Harry... Can't you...won't you

talk to us about it? Harry doesn't have to die, does he? I...I won't let him. I won't."

"Draco," The Professor began, clearly seeing that his favourite student, the one he had sought to watch over before now was distressed.

"The piece of Voldemort's soul resides in Harry's body, it can only be destroyed by a few means, none of which I believe you wish practiced on Mr Potter. The Killing Curse, Fiendfyre, the sword of Godric Gryffindor – to use them would be to kill Potter also, and I know not of any other means." He felt something inside him, inside his well-sealed heart clench at the sight of Draco's expression, the boy's fingers sifting through Potter's hair as if to clasp him to his body in protection.

"Draco, I will look, I will search for an answer, however...if the time comes...if Potter is forced to face the Dark Lord before then..."

"I have to die," Harry finished quietly, saying the words the Professor had not. "We have time...but only as long as it takes *Him* to come find us, isn't that right?" Harry asked, and he turned his head to see the Potion's Master give him a small nod. Swallowing hard and closing his eyes to gather some strength to move past this, shoving the mindless fear to the recesses of his mind, Harry knelt up on the bed, so that his eyes, shining emeralds in the dimness, locked with Draco's tear-stricken gaze.

"If it comes to it, if we...we can't find a *cure*..." He swallowed again, but nothing would wash away the searing pain in his throat. "After I've killed *Him*, I – I want to... If I have to die, I want to die...in your arms, with you as the last thing I see," he managed out at last, setting his jaw with the will not to break. Draco's couldn't see him shatter. "If it comes to it, I want you to be the one that kills me..."

Draco's eye's shot open wide in an instant and he glared at Harry in horror. It was almost as if he had been *petrified*. "No." He said at once, with detest, with anger. "NO!" He shouted this time, stepping back once, then twice more until his back hit

the wall. “NO! NO!” He drew his hand up to his head and leant into it for a moment, before fleeing to the door.

“Draco, wait!” Snape tried, but Draco was already gone by the time he reached the door.

How could he even suggest?!

Draco raced through the corridors and round the spiralling halls until he reached the nearest boy’s lavatory. He rushed into the nearest cubicle, locking himself in, and waiting for the silence to finally consume him, he choked. Falling helplessly down against the cubical wall, the gloomy, chilling air swamped his lungs as he collapsed, and he screamed. Crying – the tears flooded his eyes, they would not stop, they *couldn’t*.

“Why? After all of this, after everything...why does he have to...?” His chest hurt where he struggled to contain his sobs. He felt as if everything he cared about was suddenly being ripped from him, leaving his world empty. He was empty, a hollow shell of what lay ahead. But then, he felt the static of the bond ablaze in his chest, not only that, but a familiar feeling piercing his scarred arm...

The Dark Lord was getting stronger, there wasn't much time.

“FUCK!” Draco screamed, smashing both fists forwards into the opposite wall in frustration. “I don't *want* this!”

“Draco...”

The Blond flinched at the voice coming from the other side of the cubicle door, watching Harry's feet under the gap from where he stood.

“Draco...I...I don't want this either,” Harry breathed, “I...I *want* to live, and I want to have the chance at life, but if it comes to it... All the lives I would save by dying are more important than just my life alone. But – I want to stay with you, and I'm going to try and do that with all my strength. I've just...just got you back, I don't want to go anywhere without you...”

“Piss off, Harry!” Draco snarled under his breath. He saw Harry's feet step back a couple of paces in response to his anger, but he was still there. *Talking...*

Jumping to his feet, Draco ripped the door open furiously. “I said *piss off!*” He screamed, eyes filled with fury, something *this* Harry had never seen. “I don't...I don't want to see you right now!” He declared, lowering his eyes, unable to look in Harry's face.

Harry seemed to hover for a few moments, and then his steps drew him back a little more, hesitantly. His breathing quivered a little and Draco watched his shadow furiously. A few quiet murmurs, attempts as speech and then he heard Harry give a dry sob before bolting from the room, the toilet door falling shut long after he'd left Draco to his solitude.

~To Be Continued...

Chapter 27: Chapter Twenty-Seven

(Bound By) Clandestine Addiction

[Chapter Twenty-Seven]

Harry reflected the spells cast easily, before diving towards the floor and rolling across the stone to avoid the last, fiery light. He gasped for breath as he struggled to his knees, throwing up a shield charm when he stumbled to fend off the coming attack. “*Levicorpus!*” He gasped, and he watched as Hermione’s ankles were yanked out from under her, dragging her body into the air. Hermione shrieked, her hands flying to her skirt to hold it down but her spell had already been cast. Harry ducked, the blue light scraping his ear, taking a few strands of hair with it as it flew into the wall with a crash. The stone cracked, but there was no more damage done.

“*Furnunculus!*”

“*Expelliarmus!*”

Harry’s spell hit first, sending Hermione’s wand flying from her hand and rendering her *Furnunculus* useless. Standing there and gasping for air, Harry could not even manage to smile for his victory, despite how Hermione was beaming down at him. “*Liberacorpus!*” He chanted, and Hermione was brought back to the ground.

“That was excellent, Harry!” She chimed, still grinning as she dusted herself off and flattened her dishevelled locks. Harry gave her a weak smile, handing her back her wand. “Perhaps Professor Snape or McGonagall would agree to duel you now you have beat me a few times – just to practice you know...”

“Yeah, good,” Harry murmured not really caring to show much enthusiasm as he turned his wand to repair the damage done on the empty classroom he had been using for his spell lessons with Hermione this week, and Draco before that...

Draco...

Hermione watched him for a moment, considering her words carefully before she braved speech. “Have you not spoken to him yet?”

Harry shook his head. “I tried to find him but he just tells me he doesn’t want to see me...”

Hermione frowned. “Harry...it is...*a lot*. He has just realised that he...*loves* you, and to have fate demand that you’re taken away – he can’t fathom it, and he can’t move past the unfairness of it. Would you, if the situation were reversed?”

Harry shook his head slowly, tucking his wand inside his school robes, which (he’d found) helped him to avoid unwanted attention from other students if he wore them, allowing him to blend in with the crowds.

“If...it were Draco I’d...I’d accept no other possibility, I’d find another way,” he realised, quietly, not sure if he was talking to Hermione or himself. But he didn’t know what to say, or do, he just wanted to take it back, that stupid, selfish suggestion, and have Draco here, watching him, seeing how well he was doing...

I want him to be with me; just with me that’s all I want...

“I think you were trying to be brave and I applaud you for it, but he probably found it quite sickening to be asked that... To go in his arms? I know if I were in that situation...well I...” She shook her head slowly. “I wouldn’t really want to think about it... And for him to see you accept *dying* so easily?” Feeling exhausted from

their mock battle, Hermione stopped at last and took a step back from her friend, who seemed rather confused as to why she was siding with Draco all of a sudden.

“I'm surprised you're agreeing with him, considering you did all you could to disagree with him before,” Harry bit out, his voice quite terse.

“I'm not! I simply...I know how he feels. Ron and I... I held him in my arms and watched his face fade, watched the colour drain from his skin, the warmth bleed into cold. I – it's something no one should have to witness It's the most painful experience anyone could...” She shook her head, the agony too much to bear. “So...So don't say you will die, don't accept it so easily – just don't!”

Harry studied her face for a moment, not really sure what to say except for, “Alright, I won't – and I don't *want* to die, alright? I was just...I think I'd already accepted it before I lost my memories, didn't Harry – I mean *I* ever talk about it?”

Hermione shook her head a fraction either side, her brows drawn into a frown.

“That's odd...I mean...unless I felt like I didn't want to worry you? But I felt sure that I had to die, somehow, to finish this and I think maybe I'd gotten *used* to the idea.” He grimaced at the thought. How long had his past self held this knowledge? A seventeen-year-old *knowing* they would die?

“We'll find a way, I hope. If there is one, I am sure Professor Snape will find it, Draco seems to have a lot of faith in him,” Harry murmured, heading across the room to open the classroom door, Hermione close behind him. But that left one crucial, aching problem in his chest. Draco still couldn't stand the sight of him. A low, tortured sigh tore from his lips as he and Hermione left the classroom. “What am I going to do, Hermione?” He breathed, thinking that she knew what he was talking about and that for once, she might know how Draco was feeling.

“Well, give him space, if that's what he wants, though I suppose he can be quite stubborn,” She laughed softly at that. Ron was the same. “You have to keep trying

with him, if it gets to that point where he keeps telling you to leave then...”

“Then?” He prompted.

“Then make him listen to you and apologise, alright? Right, off this way then,” She finished, adding the last part as cheerily as she could given the circumstance.

“This way? *Why?*” Harry asked in bewilderment.

“Because this is the direction of Professor Snape’s office, and I want him to see if you’re ready for a duel with someone a little more challenging than me. I think you’ve done marvellously since we’ve been tackling it together.”

“Oh, right,” Harry murmured, the suspicion lowering from his voice as they moved towards the dungeons. He frowned then, sliding his hands into his trouser pockets to give them something to do. He felt, apprehensive now. “Uhh... Professor Snape – he doesn’t like me much, does he? Don’t you think that he might... That is, a duel against me might be—”

“Too much excitement for him?” Hermione suggested with a smile, “You haven’t got on well, no, but this is about the end of the war, I am sure he will acquiesce to the request.”

* * *

“They are bloody *tormenting* me, Sir, I had to lock my door with magic last night, just to keep them at bay – *just* to stay safe!”

“Draco, you aren’t the cowardly child you used to be, what are a mislead band of slytherins going to do that could even compare to facing the Dark Lord?”

“You don’t understand, they—”

“I suggest if you are unwilling to tell me how they are causing you that much trouble, you ask your friends for advice, Granger and Potter would be willing to—”

“NO! I-I don't want Potter involved,” Draco protested, marching furiously to the other side of the office. This wasn't going the way he'd planned. He'd been sure Snape would help him, but the damned Professor demanded to know details before he offered assistance...

“I thought you *loved* him, Draco. Isn't that what you claimed?” The Professor asked, his voice deeply meaningful.

“That's *why* I haven't told him, he has too much to worry about and I—”

“You see, this is where children like yourself don't understand what it means to love another, a relationship consists of trusting the other and telling them everything so that you may better aid and support one and other.”

“If you're such an expert in that department, where are your kids and why aren't you married yet?” Draco asked bitingly as Snape turned to face him.

“That's enough, Draco. Remove yourself from my presence.”

“Please, Sir, I have never asked anything of you, not *once*! Just this?”

Snape took a step down from where his desk sat and flew toward Draco. Digging his fingers into the boy's shoulder roughly, he glared. “I said. Get. Out.”

Draco turned on his heel, frustration at being denied coursing through his veins like heat through metal. As he reached the door, however, it swung open.

Harry froze in the doorway when he locked eyes with Draco across the room, causing Hermione to collide with him. There was a moment of perfect silence, where Hermione and Snape surveyed the two wordlessly and then, Harry swallowed hard, seeming to shatter the stagnant second. Draco growled under his breath and moved towards the door again, but Harry snagged his arm, yanking him back around to face

him. "I'm sorry, alright I – I didn't think about what I was saying. I was just...I was afraid, alright? I was afraid of dying!"

Harry flinched when Draco wrenched his arm out of his hold with a sneer. He hadn't seen that expression cross his face before. "I can feel how miserable you are, surely you can see how..." He lowered his voice with the next part conscious of the Professor's and Hermione's presence all of a sudden. "...How miserable I am without you?"

"Get off of me," Draco stated simply, purposely shoving Harry sideways when he freed himself and stormed out the door. With the weight of the slytherins' threats, Snape's refusal and Harry's insensitivity on his shoulders, he didn't much feel like negotiating right now. And it wasn't like he could ask Harry to share a bed, (to make him feel more at ease) considering the way things stood...

"Draco, wait!" Harry called after him, only to be ignored.

"Best leave him be, Potter," Snape insisted stiffly, turning his unstable temperament to him and Hermione. "What do you want?"

"Sir?! What was that about, Draco, I mean – well, why was he here exactly?" Hermione asked, trying to draw Harry's attention back from the doorway that Draco had just disappeared through.

That's right, she thought. He doesn't remember the way Draco was, or any of his mood swings, or what he was like. Even with his recent change, even with how far Draco had come, it was easy to fall back into *bad habits* under such massive pressure. She knew better than anyone how Draco was feeling, and how those bitter emotions could twist you.

"Harry?" She asked.

Harry shook his head, bothering the inside of his lower lip with his teeth again. If Draco ever kissed him again he'd certainly notice...

"I've been learning magic, Professor," Harry began, shifting radically from the subject of Draco, anything to try and smother the Blond's potent pain in his chest. It stung, far worse than any of his own problems, far worse than even that slap of rejection.

"Draco and Hermione, they've taught me – I've duelled Hermione a few times and last time I even took her down without getting hit once." He turned his head then, moving across the dungeon office to stand before the Professor's desk.

"If there is a point to wasting my time, Mr Potter, I'd prefer you get to it quickly," Snape said, his fingertips pressed together before him and his dark eyes staring up at Harry ominously. Harry stiffened at the second brush-off he'd received in the last two minutes. "I would like to duel you, Professor – Draco looks up to you and you know so much, I was... Well Hermione thought it might be good if I practiced duelling with you, being as you know spells, darker spells, like...like *He* knows."

"Lord Voldemort has a name, Potter; do not go back to the old days of *You Know Who*, that would be counter-productive." Though Harry had no idea what was meant by that – without his memories he knew little more than what he was told about '*Him*'. "You should spend less time upsetting that boy," Snape continued, "He has too much to deal without handling you and your diabolical requests."

"How do you?"

"Like you said, Potter, he looks up to me."

Harry sighed at that. He didn't think Draco was the sort of person to confide in anyone, but he supposed everyone needed some-one to break down with...

“So...is that why he was here just now?” Harry asked.

“No, he was here for another reason. Perhaps you should ask him about it?” Hermione caught the Professor’s eye then for a split second – she knew that he knew. Had Draco really been having that much trouble with the slytherins that he would come to Snape?

Harry’s jaw set and his hands curled into fists at his sides. “Draco wants me to stay away from him – how can I do anything but comply when he does nothing but cast me aside?” He spat. He didn’t need Snape reminding him how very far away he was from Draco right now; he could *feel* it, like an ever-present burning inside him. “I came here to ask your help to defeat *Voldemort*. Are you going to help me, or not?”

That same sneer he knew all-too well spread across that face and Harry glared back impatiently, waiting for his answer. He had more to worry about than this gloomy potion’s professor.

“I think, Mr Potter that given your circumstance, I am the only solution – I cannot refuse. Lock and seal the door, Miss Granger,” Snape insisted, picking up his wand and circling the desk. Harry jumped at the sudden movement, stepping back to put some more distance between himself and Snape. Hermione (proving her intelligence once again) lay back against the door, well out of the way, and watching them carefully but instead of apprehensive (like Harry) she looked...excited?

Bloody boffin is waiting to see who gets their arse handed to them, Harry thought bitterly, taking another step back and holding his wand out before him, waiting for Snape to begin.

“Wands at the ready!” Hermione announced from behind, causing Harry to look round at her blankly.

“*Flipendo!*” Snape shouted, sending Harry flying across the floor. The Chosen one quickly scrambled to his feet. “That is what happens when you take your eyes off the target for one second, Potter!”

”He does know this, Sir! We practiced! He was aware with me, you just – you didn't say go,” Hermione interjected.

“*Silence!* If you think for one moment that the Dark Lord will give Potter a chance to say collect himself you are out of your mind! Always be on your guard, Potter.”

“Right, Sir,” Harry said once again, and the Professor raised his arm, readying for another attack...

Harry glared at him, and taking him at his own game this time, acted first. “*Avis!*” He screamed and with a flash of blinding light, hundreds of birds exploded from his wand, hurtling towards Snape. In his surprise, the Professor tumbled backwards, the creatures thundering into him. Taking advantage of this moment of blindness, Harry rolled to the side, behind the desk and waited.

“*Expulso!*” Snape snarled in fury and the birds exploded with a screech into nothing. Before he could even whirl to search for Harry, the Gryffindor gave a wicked smirk and threw his wand arm across the table.

“*Mobiliarbus!*” Harry flicked his wand hard and the nearby armchair flew across the room. Snape’s eyes widened and he leapt aside, narrowly escaping. Harry’s smile broadened. If his professor was going to cheat, was going to give it his all, then so was Harry.

“*Wingardium Leviosa!*” Snape snarled and Harry fell backwards in surprise as the Professor sent the desk he had used as cover flying across the room with a crash.

Harry gulped, the fury in those dark eyes almost petrifying – almost.

“*Confringo!*” Harry shot out, the light hurtling into Snape’s dark cloak, setting the hem ablaze. Somewhere across the room, Harry heard Hermione gasp in protest, but he paid her no mind. Bolting across the room, Harry watched the Professor fumble his wand – the fabric was burning through far more quickly than either of them could have anticipated. *Some flammable potion’s ingredient on his robes*, Harry thought. Highly likely. A frown descended and he skidded to a halt a few inches from Snape.

“*Aguamenti!*” Harry gasped out in a panic (sweat slicking his body) and relief spread through his chest like the fire that had set Snape ablaze as he watched the flames extinguish. But then, dread filled him all over again as he felt the blunt tip of a wand pressed into his throat, *hard*.

“*Avada*, Mr Potter, you are now dead, for your foolish, *needless* display of foolhardy Gryffindor chivalry,” Snape sneered and Harry swore a little saliva punctuated the words. “Make such a fatal mistake of self-sacrifice and the wizarding world is doomed.”

Harry glared, swatting the wand away from his throat angrily. “What did you expect me to do? Let you burn?!” He snapped. The Potion’s Master’s lips drew into a tight smile.

“I expected you to realise *bait* and not take it – what if a death eater begged you for mercy? What if a female one gasped for a break? You would stall, just as you did then, and you would die, just as you could have then. Do not sacrifice the wizarding world on account of ridiculous sense of *mercy*, Potter.”

Harry went to open his mouth but across the room, Hermione cleared her throat needlessly, cutting him off, but drawing her eyes to him. One look in her intense, calculating eyes and Harry knew. However irritating it was...Snape was right. His lips

clamped tightly shut and he gave a small, resentful nod before taking a few steps back and aiming his wand at Snape. “Again?” He murmured.

* * *

“Oi! Where have you been *Malfoy*?” One vile Slytherin jeered as he marched over to the dishevelled blond who had just burst into the common room, seething with rage.

”Leave me alone. I'm not in the mood for your *games* today!” Draco snapped, rushing towards the stairs leading to his room. Too late – his tormentors had already surrounded him, leaving him cornered.

“Well we aren’t in the mood for your *distasteful* lifestyle with Potty, but we still have to witness it!” Crabbe snarled, grasping Draco's arm spitefully.

“Maybe you should cover your eyes if you're really so offended by watching two blokes kiss, wouldn't want to imagine what you would do if you saw us *fuck* – saw *how* we fuck!” Malfoy hissed, tearing his arm from Crabbe's grip. “Oh, that's right, probably run off to *Mummy*, eh Crabbe, wouldn't you?”

“You know, *Draco*,” Pansy began, weaving between the taller boys and glaring at her friend. “The fact that he is a boy isn't the only thing that's *bothering* us, you know. I mean, we could even handle you if you were just '*that way*', but it had to be *Potter*.”

“Yeah, *Potty-Wee-Potter* is probably the worst person you could have chosen,” Goyle said, interrupting her.

“So what is it about him, hm?” She prompted.

“Yeah, what makes him so *irresistible*. What makes you, *hard*?”

“Certainly isn't his looks,” Crabbe and Goyle argued together with distasteful chuckles.

“Is it the fact that there's so much hate and jealousy between you that it gets your stiff little prick rock hard? Or is it that you truly feel sorry and fell in love?” Blaise mocked him. “You really did, didn't you? How *precious*...”

Draco flushed slightly, unable to stop it even with them watching. He *knew* that they knew, it was in his eyes. He remained silent, what was the point in denying it? They would only twist his answer to suit them regardless. Suddenly, Goyle rushed towards him and shoved Draco with both hands, the Blond stumbled but held himself up on the wall. “Back off!” He protested. But no use.

“*Incarcerous!*” Pansy chanted, a wild, snake-like rope bursting from the tip of her wand and tying Draco down, binding him to nearby objects – a random table leg, and a large lamp, stretching him until his arms were pulled wide apart.

”What the hell are you doing?!” Draco panicked, wriggling in the ties that bound him.

“Showing you how pathetic you really are,” Pansy sneered, stepping back. Draco’s eyes went wide, he knew what that step back meant, it meant she was handing his torture over to Blaise and the others...

As if sensing his thoughts, the dark boy knelt down to his level, a wicked smile twisting his lips. “You weren’t even worthy of what we gave you last time,” Blaise began.

“Your cum and piss?!” Draco spat with disgust, only to be back-handed across the face. He winced while he kept his face turned, his cheek throbbing menacingly. Their eyes on his pain and vulnerability – and laughing in his face. Draco swallowed the sound of pain threatening to escape him and pressed his unwounded cheek into the cold stone stairs that lead down to his room, (his sanctuary, if he could only reach it).

Then, there was a fierce, unyielding pressure on his unblemished cheek, hard leather pressing into it and turning his face back up to the slytherins. There, he saw Blaise

standing over him, keeping his head in position with his shoe pressing into his face. He winced but the boy simply grinned at his plight. "Lick it," Blaise sneered.

"Burn in hell!" Draco grunted, under a dirt-ridden sole, but Blaise didn't budge. Draco's eye's narrowed and he breathed heavy, deeply, trying to rein in his panic. "If you think for a moment I'm licking the shit off your shoes, you're out of your bloody mind!" Draco yelled this time; his face reddening with anger as he struggled furiously against the ropes. His back ached on the edge of the step, but he didn't care anymore. He couldn't *take* anymore!

"Let me go this instant!" He demanded, his lungs hurt, almost like they were bursting as he all-but pleaded for release. How had he got to this, this *pathetic* thing he was now? He closed his eyes for a moment, just a moment. *Just* to forget. Everything went black and it was quiet inside this mind, no one could get in – it was peaceful. Time moved slower here and he was free, just wandering aimlessly in space. It was cold and dark but somehow it was safe.

Somehow it felt safe being alone here, in the cold, in the dark. Because no one could see him and he didn't remember anything. He felt – not dead, but crossed over, *done*. There was just nothing, he was nothing. No Voldemort, no Harry, no torment, just nothing. He hadn't felt this comfortable in a long time, it was good, it was relaxing...

He leant back against the dark and damp walls of his mind and crashing clumsily into them he stumbled down without pain – it didn't hurt in this place, there was no hurt. There was only calm. Only dark. *You don't have to worry here, Draco, your mind is your sanctuary. You can withstand this, you can withstand anything...*

I am safe here. I am safe. I am Happy. Yes, you are happy.

His eyes flickered open suddenly and he had returned. He looked up and flinched upon seeing them all still looming over him like vultures waiting for his last breath.

“I said suck it!” Blaise hissed.

“No!” Draco protested, more fiercely this time. He wasn't about to be walked over anymore. *Not anymore!* He closed his eyes once more as something (or someone's fist) smashed into the side of his jaw, blood spewing from his face as his head swung sideways into the bottom step. He didn't have to feel the pain. Not if he closed his eyes.

I'm safe in here, no one can get me, no one can hurt me. Not anymore. Not anymore.

Suddenly, someone's spiteful hand stole into his robes and he snarled and snapped at the limb like an animal, only to fall still and deadly silent as he saw what the (now withdrawing) hand was holding. “Yeah,” Crabbe sneered, “Now I got your attention.” The oaf held Draco's wand between his two hands, the wood looking so fragile in his thick fists.

“Lick it, Malfoy, the dirt you're not even worthy enough to taste or he'll snap your wand in two,” Blaise snapped, shoving his foot harder into Draco's cheek. Draco's eyes were wide with horror. That was the worst punishment for a wizard, whose wand was an extension of their magic – their soul!

* * *

“That...That will *do*, for today at least, Mr Potter,” Snape breathed, straightening up and dusting himself off as he seemed to struggle not to pant and betray his exhaustion. Harry smiled broadly. He had not won, not exactly but he had lost that last round only

by a technicality – *the technicality that Snape cheated and fired a shot at Hermione to distract me*, Harry thought. But then, his argument was that he would expect Voldemort to attack his comrades so would be prepared to protect them and himself – he had not expected Snape to fire a random shot at a student! *So I didn't technically lose*, he insisted, as he watched the professor flick his wand to repair his office.

“Sir,” Harry nodded, straightening his dishevelled appearance as best he could. “Will next week be alright? To try again I mean?”

Snape turned to face him then, his dark, intense eyes flicking to Hermione then back to him again, as if contemplating something. “Bring Draco with you, as well as Miss Granger, and indeed, same time next week,” he murmured, turning back to his desk. “You are dismissed, Potter.”

Harry inhaled deeply, a sense of achievement surging through his soul as he and Hermione surfaced from the Potion’s Master’s office. “That was – that was *insane!*” He gasped as he turned to Hermione, who was smiling proudly at him. A pang struck his heart at the sight of it; he wanted Draco to have seen it...

“I mean, I lost but I kept up! I had to think faster and move but keep track of my surroundings at the same time,” Harry explained with excited speed, following his feet without really paying attention to where he was heading, and Hermione following his lead along the corridor. “I had the hang of it by the last round – I reckon I’ll have him next time!” But still, it was a hollow victory, knowing Draco was still furious at him, could not even bear to look on him – *feeling his...boyfriend’s* bewilderment and heartache...and...

Harry stopped then, his eyes wide but staring at nothing in particular. The emptiness that throbbed in his chest, it burnt like the warning glow of flames when you drew too near.

“...believe so anyway. And you’re not even listening, are you, Harry?” Hermione asked with amused impatience, “You’ve let success go so far to your head that you’re not even heading the right way – the exit from the dungeons is this way,” she said, gesturing behind them. “Do you have some business in the Slytherin dormitory?”

Harry swallowed hard, as pain and humiliation – mortification like he had never felt sped through his veins until his arms and stomach quivered warningly. “I think...Draco he’s...I can feel something is wrong,” he whispered, his body surging into movement. He could feel him nearby, the bond buzzing through his skin stronger and stronger with every step.

“Harry!” Hermione called after him, hot on his heels. “Draco – I can’t tell you but, there’s something you need to–”

“He’s in trouble, Hermione,” Harry retorted, rounding a corner and speeding along the stone floor so that his manic footsteps echoed through the hall. The portraits screeched in indignation and fury at their ‘running in the halls’ but he paid them no mind. Then he saw it, the portrait guarding the Slytherin common room – it was going livid!

“...Never seen anything so vile before! Professor Snape!!! Professor Snape! Where is the punishment for this injustice!”

Harry skidded to a halt before it, hearing Hermione’s frantic breathing behind him, meaning she had kept up. “Let me in!” He demanded of the portrait. Only to be screeched over. “Professor Snape has granted me entry, if I please – I am not of any house at the moment, now let me in!”

“Let us in,” Hermione growled darkly, stepping forward and brandishing her wand. “Or I know a good few spells to wipe you clean as a blank canvas.” Immediately, the screaming stopped and the portrait flew open so fast that it’s gilded frame nearly smacked Harry in the face. Harry cursed it as he flew through into the common room, stopped dead by what he saw.

Hermione gave a small gasp of horror behind him that no one seemed to notice, but Harry reached for his wand, holding it out with an arm as rigid as stone. “Get *away* from him,” he hissed, with all of the fury of the dark lord they all followed. The perpetrators jumped back in surprise, but not far enough away from Draco, and not in surrender. The slytherins sneered at him with twisted glee.

“Oh, look, Malfoy, your princess Potter has come to watch after all,” Pansy snipped.

“Perhaps he’d like to join you?” Blaise sneered, giving Draco’s cheek a spiteful nudge with his foot as the Blond tried to turn his face away from Harry, not wanting to look him in the eye.

“Get lost, Harry! Draco spat, to his surprise, looking in his direction but not really at him. Harry had seen him, hurt, and broken, *defeated*, and bleeding...like a pathetic, incapable little child. He was a disgrace...

All eyes were on his shivering bound body, so helpless and so *very* lost. His face was full of colour for someone so pale, he was burnt, a red flush of anger filled his aching features with detest, embarrassment, *hate*. Why did everything inside his head hurt? Like it wanted to split open? Why did he feel sick? He didn't want Harry's eyes on him, on this!

Blaise drew his foot away from Draco's and rubbed his hands over the hard area in his pants. “Come to see the show, eh Potter? Your boyfriend looks good covered in cum, though, you would already know wouldn't you?” Blaise teased.

“I've had...enough...*enough*! ENOUGH!!!” Draco screamed and his magic burst out of control, spiralling down his shoulders. A brilliant green aura formed and radiated from his tired limbs. The rope around his wrists loosened under his strength, and the

bonds split. Bolting to his feet, he snatched his wand from the slytherins' hands.

SMASH!

The slytherin lamp beside him exploded, cutting across the room and bursting into a thousand tiny shards, causing all the stunned students around him to scatter, leaving only Hermione and Harry there beside him. The pieces shattered across the floor, like Draco was shattering, right now.

“GET OUT!!! GET OUT!!! GET THE HELL OUT! Draco shouted. Harry had seen!

“That's right, run away, *cowards!*” Hermione exclaimed with a brutal hiss as the perpetrators darted away. She raised her wand as they fled but Harry held her back and rushed to Draco.

“Draco! Why didn't you let me help you if it had gotten this bad?!” Hermione gasped out.

Harry turned his face to Hermione, stunned. “You *knew*? You knew this was happening and you didn't tell me?!”

Draco and Harry still hadn't made eye contact. For some reason they had shared no words since Harry's arrival. The shock of it might have been too much for Harry but Draco felt so...dirty and disgusted with himself. He hadn't wanted Harry to see him, to see *this*!

“He was protecting you, Harry, you idiot! Draco? Say something!”

“You still should have said...?”

“Suffering is like a moth to a flame with the two of you, it really is,” Hermione sighed

heavily, getting to her feet. “Stay here, and *together*, I’ll fetch professor Snape.” She said, rushing to the door.

Harry growled under his breath, trying to stifle the rage surging towards the slytherins, and towards Hermione and Draco for keeping him in the dark (whatever the reasoning behind it had been). Suppressing his anger and helplessness until it faded a little, Harry moved forwards, Draco’s wretchedness swelling in his throat until it choked him. Slowly, he came to halt beside Draco, not missing the way the Slytherin flinched and would not meet his eye.

“I felt your pain and misery,” he began quietly, “I...felt it and you...you brushed it off...like it was nothing. Your pain, it could never inconvenience or...” He grit his teeth. This was all coming out wrong. “You protected me, and came rushing to me when I needed you – why can’t I do the same for you?”

Draco kept his face turned and Harry frowned at the blood and purpling bruise blemishing his cheek. Chewing his lip and thinking hard of the spell Draco himself had taught him, Harry brought his wand up to gesture at the Blond’s face. “*Episkey!*” He chanted clearly and with a wince from Draco, the bruise and the blood began to fade. But still, he would not look at him.

“Look at me,” Harry whispered, his words almost pleading. “Draco, look at me.”

Draco turned his face to Harry but his eyes were still wandering. This felt degrading. “What?” He asked simply, as if nothing had even happened.

Harry flinched back at the disconnection, at the bluntness and gnawed his already sore lip as he contemplated that vacant look on the Blond’s face. “Don’t be ashamed of anything, because...you took that for me, didn’t you?” He watched Draco’s eyes

widen and stepped closer, his own gaze wandering Draco's face, his dishevelled hair and he ran his fingers through it softly, smoothing it back, even as Draco watched him. A spark of subtle pleasure made both of their mouths move with silent gasps. "I'd rather you didn't handle it alone, but...you did. And you took whatever they dealt you, including the shame and misery that came with it, and you did it for me – I'd rather you hadn't but...how can I think that anything but...amazing?"

Shifting nervously, his fingers fidgeted against his palms. He just wanted to touch him again, the need and the loneliness soaring to impossible heights.

"Look, I don't want to talk about it, can we just...just forget it?" Draco said, his eyes meeting Harry's at last, his neck, still quivering from Harry's slight, but powerful touch.

Harry looked sad for him. *This must have been so hard for someone like him, he thought. He was such a proud person, from what I've told, what I've seen...*

"I just – I don't want to remember, besides, I was...I am fine...I was at a place where even you couldn't reach me," Draco explained with an exhausted sigh. "It wasn't anything, it was just..."

"That doesn't make it right," Harry interjected, his voice still husky and soft, almost soothing like a caress to his newly healed cheek. Then his face twisted with a frown. "I don't like that either, not being able to reach you... I – you're always there, in my mind, *all around me*," He flushed at how romantic that had come out, but still felt the sting of Draco's words. "You're everything, remember? That's why it's...it's been so bloody *miserable* with you not even able to *look* at me these last few days."

"I won't say sorry, nor will I forgive you if you die...I won't, Harry," Draco said with

a stiff tone, looking deeper into Harry's eyes, remaining very still. Draco growled with frustration when Harry said nothing and grasped his face between the palms of his hands. "You won't die on me!"

Harry felt his eyes tingle with moisture as his face did the same from the touch of Draco's hands. He blinked once, twice and leant into the touch, his stomach fluttering. "F-For you," he breathed, his voice almost lost when he felt Draco's breath on his cheeks. "I won't – I won't die. I swear it. We'll just have to find another way to destroy the horcrux inside me – but we'll find it. We're wizards, it can't be impossible!" He felt his face colour as one of Draco's thumbs slid over his lower lip, swollen from where he had chewed it relentlessly. That blissful tingling spread through the sensitive place when Draco's callous pad swept over it.

"The slytherins – Snape will sort them out, and if they still bother you..." His tone went dark for a moment, eyes shining meaningfully. He didn't need to finish his sentence; the result of their continuing assault was already implicitly implied.

"So," he began carefully, not wanting Draco to push him away again for his implied potential vengeance. "If we forget this, am I forgiven, then?" They were so close now their chests were touching, and he drew in a deeper breath just to feel their shirts brush together.

Draco pushed his thumb harder into Harry's broken lip and watched him gasp. *So close.* He lunged forward. Brushing past the broken skin with his own lips he tugged at it, sucked and licked it relentlessly until Harry screeched. The Blond smiled, while Harry flinched away. He was smiling at causing him pain? "I haven't forgiven you," Draco stated huskily. "I just...I can't...stay...away from you!" Their lips edged closer together, until they were only millimetres apart – almost touching. Harry drew his lips back and Draco followed, almost magnetically. Frustrated, his hands suddenly swung up and grasped at that dark hair, pulling him back against him until their lips roughly collided. *At last.*

Harry winced, not sure he liked the way Draco still hadn't forgiven him, even when he, Harry hadn't pressed him on the matter of the slytherins. His lip stung from Draco's spiteful fingertip and he struggled against the grip on his hair, momentarily soothed by the swift pressure of that tongue tracing his minute wound before it slipped between his lips to touch his own hot, dormant muscle.

So long, it felt like he'd gone without this so long and for a moment, Harry forgot his reservations and remained still and pliant under that demanding mouth. A low groan vibrated in his throat and he felt Draco smirk against him smugly. A frown creasing his brow at that, Harry felt the gravity between them tremble enough for his mind to take control and he brought his hands up to Draco's chest, (half-heartedly) shoving back away from him, gasping for breath.

Fighting his colouring cheeks, Harry fixed the smirking Blond with his best scowl. "I don't like the way you say that – that you *can't* stay away from me, like it's a compulsion like...like if the spell didn't exist you wouldn't want me," Harry murmured, his eyes shining with lust even as he spoke. It had felt too good to be touched like that just then, powerfully, irresistibly, as if Draco *had* to have him right then, regardless of their problems. His flush darkened. He much preferred this, this raw need Draco expressed than his careful courting, it hadn't seemed...

Draco laughed (despite his dislike at being pushed away). He shrugged, and brushing off Harry's words he moved to span the gap between them again. "Does it really matter what the reason is?" He asked, bringing his hand slowly back to Harry's lip. "You want me to need you, don't you?"

"Yes..."

Harry let out a breath he couldn't recall holding against the fingertips caressing his busted mouth and tried to maintain his indignant façade a little longer. He didn't want

anything that Draco was unwilling to give without his asking. *It doesn't mean anything if I have to ask for it*, he thought. "You don't sound like you know much about the spell, so what if something changes it? What if we never feel this pull—" He was cut short by the soft tingling spreading across his lips from the touch and up over his flushed cheeks until his head felt too hot. But what if this meant nothing? Nothing beyond a slip of a spell that he, Harry hadn't even *meant* to use...

"If you never needed me of your own bloody accord then the things you feel are as worthless as the effects of a love spell," Harry growled out with disdain, why couldn't Draco see that it *did* matter! "It means everything – if these feels are real or not. It means everything, just the same as you mean everything! How can it not matter if I don't know that you feel the same or that if something happened for the after-effects of the spell to disappear, that you wouldn't just go back to the way things were before – whatever that was?!"

He watched the shock register on the Blond's face. He hadn't counted on the finer details Hermione had given him recently in their reconciliation. Their bond was an after-effect to the spell of sorts, rather than a direct result of the curse, or at least that's what the past Harry had thought. "*You said once, that you'd always loved him – albeit in a bizarre way,*" Hermione had explained carefully, "*We heard it, Draco, Me and...Ron... You assumed that it worked similarly to how your mother's love saved you from the killing curse. That spell, the one you used on Draco was meant for enemies, but he wasn't an enemy, not in your heart. And you were still so close when Snape saved him...That must be where the after-effects occurred, I'm not sure how, since only Professor Snape alone would, being as he created the spell, however... The why is more important...*"

Present Harry took a step back so that Draco's touch fell from his lip. He didn't want to be placated right now. He wanted Draco to answer him properly, to understand (if he possibly could) why this was so important. *I don't want to lose him*, he thought with no little amount of desperation. But he knew, his feelings had come from before the spell, he wasn't sure of exactly when, or how long before, but he knew that then they had to be real. But Draco...

“You said it yourself didn’t you? At the beginning you hated me, you wanted me to leave you alone – how can I know the spell didn’t *make* you *think* your feelings had changed?” Draco still hadn’t moved since he’d spoken and Harry growled in frustration. “Or maybe it’s not even that?!” He snarled. “Maybe I’m just your favourite local celebrity,” there was definite bitterness in his voice now. “The bloody *Chosen One* whose arse you just happen to have taken a *shine* to, and let’s not forget, the bloody prat is so in love with you he’ll let you do anything you take it in your head to do!”

Draco threw himself at Harry, adrenaline pulsing through his veins as he walked his lover backwards until he stumbled over one of the tables in the centre of the slytherin lounge area, watching him tumble back onto the sofa. Draco thumped his hands down furiously beside Harry's head (which was propped in the arm of the chair, while he lay awkwardly across it one foot on floor) and glared.

“Is that what you honestly *think*?” Draco spat, seizing Harry by his collar and pulling his head up so their faces were only a hairsbreadth apart. “We *can't* change the past and I've told you before I *like* being with you, that I... Uhh, why does it even matter? I've already said that I *love you*, for whatever fucking reason. That's how I feel *now*, whether it was from the spell or not. Do you honestly think it's just the bond that's keeping us together? That's keeping me interested in you?”

“It makes more sense than the alternative,” Harry replied stiffly, “Look at me, then yourself and tell me which theory makes more sense? Why the *heck* would you fall in love with me?” He cringed at how hollow his voice sounded just then, and turned his head to the side so Draco couldn’t see his eyes, glaring at the empty fireplace as if *that* was to blame for all of this. He didn’t care if the whole castle heard him at this point.

“I saw those personal things of mine, the things you kept safe for me during the battle – Snape gave them to me,” Harry murmured, his voice rough but not shouting any longer. “There was *nothing* in there about you, nothing. There wasn’t a picture or

letter or anything. I didn't have any memories of you at all! I had a feather and a bloody broken mirror but I didn't have anything that proved I was more than just the scrawny, scruffy consequence of a spell thrust on you!"

"No, you're right, what *possible* reason could I have for falling for *you*?" Draco hissed, almost hysterically. His nose was now touching Harry's and his eyes were staring into him, while his eyebrows were drawn tight in a state of *disgust* for Harry's hurtful suggestions. "I've wasted all this time over some spell, just some fucking *accident*, haven't I?" Draco leant up slightly, while his knee remained between Harry's legs on the sofa.

"No, you're right, you're *pathetic*. I mean...you can't even look at me, and you actually think that I would sacrifice everything, my life, *my family* over something as ridiculous as a spell bond, a spell...as if that's *all* it was to me! Like that's all *it is* to me?!"

Draco swallowed hard, staring at Harry for a moment and considering what to say next, he felt his stomach take a plunge. It was psychically painful that Harry thought this could even be possible...

"Would you rather me say I hate you? 'Cause I'll say it, I'll say I *fucking hate you*, if that's what you want to hear, Harry!"

Harry bolted up from where he lay, shoving Malfoy roughly back into the couch and getting to his feet, seething. "And whose fault is that, it's not my fault that I feel this way?! Do you think I want to feel inadequate?! Do you think I *made* myself feel like the only way someone would love back is a bloody spell?" He stood there for a moment, his arms rigid at his sides. He didn't like the way Draco had sounded just then, but his frustration that the boy didn't seem to get it was superior at that moment.

“I don’t want you to hate me, you bloody prat! I want you to need me!” He screamed, sure that he heard slytherins stirring from below. He didn’t care. “I want – I want to be – I – Why wasn’t there anything of you in that bag?” He couldn’t let that go, “Nothing. Say that I were to accept that you...you *love me*, for me, because of me? Why was there nothing of you in there – that bag of things that was *so* important to me?”

“We weren’t your average couple you know! We weren’t ever romantic or sentimental. I never did anything like that for you, I’m not *like that*. What were you expecting? Some overdramatic gesture of undying love from a film?” Draco laughed bitterly at his own question as he stood up and moved back over to Harry.

“Maybe the *old* Harry realised this and he knew that he already had the actual me and didn’t need to have a sentimental shit to carry around with him?!” Draco yelled. “Maybe he realised that nothing I could ever give him would be as good as having me – as myself, and maybe that’s why he never asked for anything?! *Maybe*, just maybe, he took me as I was...and that was good enough, bond or no bond!”

Draco was physically shaking now. Finally at breaking point...

“He never expected anything, he just accepted what I could give him. Do you even *know* how hard it was for me to accept that we were 'together'. to let you sit there and refer to me as your *boyfriend*? No...I bet you have no idea, because it’s always about you and how significant *your problems are*?!” Draco screamed this time, throwing his fists forwards and hurling Harry towards the cold dungeon wall. His nails bit into those wrists as he pinned him there, seething.

“So say that we *are* together because of a spell, say that’s all it is...what then? You want me to leave, you want to end this? I’ll walk away right now and go to my parents, away from this, and away from Voldemort if that’s what you think – if that’s

what you *want*? You obviously don't trust me at all if you think I'm here because of something so insignificant! You stupid prick!! Draco screamed, smashing his fist into Harry's jaw. His eyes narrowing and he took hold of Harry's collar again, yanking him from the wall to the floor.

Harry cried out as he hit the floor, spluttering and choking on a mouth full of blood. He grimaced at the throbbing pain in his jaw, pulling himself onto his knees and touching the area tenderly with a flinch. He kept his head down. He didn't want to see Draco like this. "So this is the person I saw in Hermione's memory?" he murmured, ashamed of the way his voice cracked.

~To Be Continued...

Chapter 28: Chapter Twenty-Eight

(Bound By) Clandestine Addiction

[Chapter Twenty-Eight]

“You’re twisting everything I’m saying,” Harry began, not able to put the force into his voice again right now. He reached out, and with his back to Draco, he used the arm of the chair to pull himself up to his unsteady feet.

“I can’t even say how I feel about *myself* without you thinking it’s an automatic insult to you – you – you mean everything to me! Have I ever insulted you?! I think even then – bloody *flattery*, you idiot!” He spat, whirling to face him, “I said you were too fucking *beautiful* to possibly want me. That wasn’t for you to get offended over! I just wanted you to understand how...” He cringed at the sound of Draco’s previous words still ringing in his ears. “You said the old Harry and me were the same, that’s changed now we’re arguing?”

The strength found his voice again, and he glared at Draco, who remained tactfully silent for now. “Lots of people argue, boyfriends, lovers – people disagree, but they don’t have to hit each other.” He thought about the way Hermione had told him Draco had held his face under scalding water, Draco hadn’t done anything like that since he’d had his memories erased. Harry frowned as he stared at him. He liked the confidence and the boldness more than Draco tip-toeing around him, liked the assertiveness Draco had taken before this argument had exploded, but this spitefulness didn’t have to come with it...

“I didn’t know how hard it was for you, because I don’t remember – I don’t remember what it was like to nearly *kill* you, or to hate you, and I don’t remember how this all

started,” He lowered his eyes for a moment, focusing somewhere on the wall over Draco’s shoulder. “I remember waking up and seeing you break because I didn’t know who you were, and the only memory they gave me of you, was one of me willing to die for you. Then there was...*nothing else*, it was...” he growled in frustration at not being able to remember or put his words into proper sense.

“I was confused and I might’ve been wrong to be scared of losing you but...” He held his chin up then, moving forwards to span the space between him and Draco. Throwing his arm at the wall on Draco’s side, he caught the Blond’s chin between his fingers then, like Draco had done to him before and glared darkly into his eyes, his tone set and smooth. “It doesn’t give you the right to hit me, *ever*, nothing does. Couples argue, but they don’t have to hit each other to do so, even when they’re wrong. And I’ll accept who you are, I’ll love you all the same, just like you do, for me,” that sounded funny in this voice, what should have been endearing sounded ominous. “But you will never hit me again.”

Draco growled in frustration at that dark look, at the stubborn words coming from Harry’s lips. He felt the fingers at his chin pinch a little harder, pressing for his answer and the fury rushed through his blood. He wanted to *hit him* again.

“Get off me!” Draco hissed, shoving Harry away from him roughly. Silence fell between them. Draco's face remained trained on the floor. He felt a surge of pride stabbing at his stomach. He didn't like *this Harry* – even though he had said they were one in the same people without his memories, he *was* different. *This Harry* who was defending himself more, who was talking of morality when everything he’d just said was making him fume, filling him with an immense anger he hadn't felt since the very beginning. But most of all, he loathed that he had fallen so uncontrollably in love with the bloody prat that he was respecting his wishes (by not hitting him again) it was rather...humbling.

“I want you to leave,” Draco said at last, not looking at the boy. He couldn't. Not with this feeling in his gut.

Harry raised a brow in challenge. “You think I’m going to leave every time you get angry, just in case you hit me? I’m not a coward, and neither are you so *look at me.*” He wasn’t shouting, but he was firm, voice set in stone in the way it hadn’t been since he’d awoken on that hospital bed. Harry frowned when Draco didn’t oblige and stepped towards him again, not pinning him in with his arms this time but allowing his face to press against Draco’s, summoning his gaze upward. “Look at me,” he repeated, not satisfied until those suddenly dark eyes glared up at him.

“I prefer you full of fire and that confidence that I can mistake for arrogance sometimes. I prefer you assertive, you seem more real this way.” He considered Draco’s expression, making sure his words were sinking in correctly, the Blond still looked furious but Harry knew the words were registering. He didn’t want him to be different, just to treat him respectfully. “And there are a few finer points of this relationship we can...*refine* when this – *Voldemort* – is all over, but I love you, and I’m not going–” He was cut off as Draco struggled and moved to shove him back again, but Harry caught his shoulders and pressed him firmly into the wall, green eyes shining with determination. “I’m not going anywhere,” he ground out, jaw set.

“I said get the *fuck* off me!” Draco shouted, finally meeting Harry’s eyes, his own narrow and raging. With a sudden leap, he seized a fist full of Harry’s hair and tugged his head backwards, until the strands almost tore from the roots. Draco threw his lips harshly into Harry’s, lustfully, angrily. Why couldn’t he stay away? It was as though his rage was only *inspiring* his need for *him* – for this person who was pissing him off just by being in front of him right now!

He threw himself forwards and both him and Harry flew back into the opposite wall once more, Harry taking the brunt of the heavy crash into the stone wall. But Draco didn’t back off, he forced his tongue into those unwilling lips and fought his way into him with passionate force.

Harry fisted his hands in Draco’s hair and robes in kind and tugged back on them

hard, ripping those lips away from the kiss. He leant in to graze his teeth roughly along the line of Draco's jaw, which jerked away from him spasmodically as he tried to overpower his hold. Harry snarled in frustration and yanked Draco's head roughly to the side in chastisement, sucking pale flesh into his mouth and catching it between his teeth as he did so. He heard Draco gasp, his body arching into him for a moment, but only for a moment before his struggles intensified.

Tearing his mouth from the nicely bruising skin, Harry threw his body weight into Draco, spinning them so the back of the Blond's legs were pinned expertly against the back of the couch and his arms flew out to find purchase as both he and Harry nearly went flying over the furniture with the force. "You're an arrogant, smug, *sulky* little brat Draco Malfoy," Harry snarled, leaning in, gasping to attack those lips again, confidence flaring in his gut with the lust and frustration and he groaned into that mouth before dragging away, but only enough to breathe.

"But you're also persistent and loyal and constant, and I want you – exactly like that," He felt a very *Draco-like* smirk tug at his lips as he ground his hips into the other's, tearing a low hiss from both of them.

"And you're a whiny, sentimental *needy* idiot, but I still want to fuck your arse so I suppose that makes us even," Draco hissed, smiling smugly as he rolled Harry beneath him, placing himself in control once more. Harry's hands fought against Draco's furiously and he managed to push both him and Draco backwards from the couch.

Draco fell back and crashed passed the table, knocking the vase that had been on top to the floor where it smashed into pieces. Harry tumbled after him, landing heavily beside Draco on the stone floor

With a low hiss of pain, Draco rolled over to tower above Harry's body, straddling his hips to pin him in place. His hands shot up (before Harry even had a chance to move)

and caught his wrists, holding them tightly and securely in place as he slid his erection up against Harry's crotch, livid with lustful frustration. The material boundary incited burning friction between their frantic cocks as they fought to reach each other, to seek enough pleasure to find their peak.

Harry smirked broadly, jerking his hips up into Draco's cock and groaning with need. His arms strained under Draco's grasp and he writhed deliciously, enjoy the mouth-watering struggle. It didn't matter that Draco was physically stronger, the sensations rushing up and down his bloodstream made blood roar in his ears. "Really?" Harry panted, bringing his legs up to press against the defined curve of Draco's backside through the fabric. "'Cause right now *you're* in the position to be fucked..."

Above him Draco sneered and Harry laughed, turning his head to mouth the sensitive shape of Draco's wrist, tense from holding him, with every syllable of his next words. "Tell me all of the *sentimental needy* things I say that annoy you," Harry teased, licking at the soft line of Draco's tendon until the Blond let out a small noise of smothered pleasure.

Draco felt his grip loosen when Harry's hot tongue met it, trailing hot steamy breaths over his flesh. He shuddered madly then and dragged Harry's wrists up, shoving them back down again with a thud – to make a point, to warn Harry *not* to taunt him like that. Not to make him *melt into him* that way...

"I hate how you're always saying you *need me*. How you always say you *love me* – the way it just rolls off your faggot tongue with ease, like you have no shame!" Draco breathed huskily, and despite realising this would only feed Harry's fury, he continued. Being fought off at every step. Harry finally struggled free and stood up. Only to be stopped as Draco rushed after him and flung him back against that familiar cold wall, his palms laying flat against the stone, either side of his head. "And I hate that you think that just because I don't gasp out all the sentimental things you want to hear, that this is somehow *fake*."

Harry sneered at Draco angrily, but the Blond wasn't done. "But most of all, I hate *you*. Hate you for making me fall *this* in love with you?!" Draco said, slamming his lips back into Harry's.

"One of us has to be romantic," Harry retorted easily, "If I'd felt shame we wouldn't have ever got this far." He remained there for a moment, running his tongue in a subtle circle around the tip of Draco's tongue as it savaged his mouth, before drawing back and nipping the bottom of the Blond's lip. His jaw ached from where Draco had punched him and he winced a little, but didn't let it stop him.

Jerking back from Draco's lips he shoved him until his backside slammed into the edge of the nearby desk, smirking with seeming victory as he threw a hand down onto the Blond's chest to hold him down on the desk. "Seems like you love to hate all of those things, Mr Malfoy," Harry murmured, seething, jerking at the Blond's belt roughly and pulling until he got his trousers undone. "You'll probably like getting fucked up your faggot arse too!" Caught in his moment of distraction, however, he heard another snarl of annoyance and found himself slammed face first into the same desk Draco had briefly been pinned to.

Draco laughed scathingly at Harry's attempt. "You weren't seriously thinking you were going to fuck *me*, were you?" Draco hissed, pressing Harry's head into the table so his face squished into the surface. His other hand stole around from behind, reaching to grasp at Harry's front and he fought with the belt buckle until it loosened. Feeding his fingers over the zip he hastily pulled it down and tugged at the trousers which Harry seemed to be fighting to keep on.

Harry let out a low curse and Draco smirked darkly. "You want to watch your filthy mouth, Potter," He snarled sexily, releasing Harry's head and yanking him over so he was now propped against the desk, facing him. He spread those legs apart with his own. Harry struggled and pushed away, but it was no use when Draco finally pulled the garment from his fighting body.

“You seemed to like what I can do with my filthy lips,” Harry smirked darkly, though the notion was nowhere near as effective with a blush riding the ridge of his nose thanks to the cool dungeon air sweeping over his lower body. Straightening his glasses on his nose (after being unceremoniously crushed into the desk) Harry lifted his chin confidently. “You must have let me have at least one turn, even you’re not that stingy – didn’t I like it or something?” He watched Draco’s face change oddly and Harry raised a brow, only to be shoved so he was lying flat over the desk.

With his trousers and everything else yanked off along with them except his grey briefs Harry grimaced as Draco pressed in between his legs again, their erections grinding together sinfully through the veil of fabric. Harry reached up, seizing the green slytherin tie and yanking his lover down by it to reach his mouth again.

“You know, I think you like fucking famous, scrawny boys with glasses,” Harry growled as Draco’s breath fogged up his spectacles slightly, yanking him down by his makeshift leash to suck at the kiss-bruised lips again, but Draco pulled back with that same, leering smirk.

“I don’t see the *scrawny boy with glasses* complaining now, do I?” Draco hissed seductively. Ripping his tie from Harry’s hand, he drew back sharply, but never once relinquished his hold over the *Chosen One*’s body. “I did let you...*once*. You were rubbish and it ended badly,” Draco informed him, quite bluntly. “I can give you the memory if you so wish?” Harry eye’s shot open at that and Draco’s lips drew into a wider grin. “But first... *Stop* fighting me. Let me have you, and admit defeat,” Draco demanded breathlessly, his hands still holding Harry’s wriggling form in place.

“Your cock is so hard its jabbing me in the stomach. It *wants* me, like *you* want me...” Draco pushed Harry’s hands together above them, grasping them with just one of his own and using the other, he pulled at the grey line of material between him and Harry’s cock. A guttural groan of appreciation left his lips at the sight of the blistering hot, needy organ bouncing up into the air as it was freed.

Harry gave a low hiss and his hands curled into fists under Draco's grasp. "I – I'm sure I – I wasn't *rubbish* at it!" Harry growled between pants for air as Draco's fingers smoothed along his inner thigh teasingly. Even as he struggled, his eager cock betraying him and reaching up for that hand that missed it every time. "I bet you were just too bloody proud to admit you liked me in your lily-white backside!"

Clearly irritated by that comment, the hand hovering over his body reached up to punish his nipple through his shirt. He gasped and squirmed, jabbing his heels into the backs of Draco's knees to make him stumble but all that did was make Draco yank him up from the desk and throw him into the wall. His school robe was yanked none-to-gently from his shoulders and tossed aside.

"Careful!" Harry chastised furiously, but as he struggled to turn and shove the Blond back, his right arm was seized and pulled tight behind the small of his back – locking him there. Pressed against the stone wall, Harry flushed as the portrait just above his head crowed indignantly, the hot palm of Draco's hand smoothing down his arched back until it settled on his arse, not moving just yet, just tormenting him.

"You'll be happy to know that I was complaining about not feeling anything with a cock your size," Draco said in feigned reassurance, his words too husky for Harry to throw him back, even if that was what he wanted. Those hands traced the smooth shape of his bum, occasionally grasping the skin and tearing it apart so that the wrinkled skin near his entrance lay flat.

Harry hissed in pleasure at the feeling of his arse being man-handled and Draco smiled as he darted for Harry's neck. His lips slipped wetly over the peachy flesh and he sucked greedily, grazing the skin (almost painfully) with his vampire hunger. He bit down. Harry cried out in surprise, his body jerking uselessly while Draco slowly drew back to survey the bruise he had left him.

“Bastard!” Harry growled, knowing full well what he had just done and what he would be stuck with for the next few weeks. Though he had no memory of the humiliation and the slytherins’ banter before when Draco had done this to him, he was about to find out once again now he had another. And the students were all too aware of who was privy to his body now – he didn’t stand a chance...

Carefully the Blond’s tongue led a thin trail of saliva up to Harry’s earlobe, while his dry finger probed the twitching hole below. Harry’s entire body shuddered as Draco held him against the wall, smiling smugly the whole time. “Prepare to be buggered until you can’t walk, *Harry!*”

“Oww!” Harry griped, not liking the feeling of that dry digit pressing against him, his tense body resisting it completely. He laughed then, jerking his hips forwards and away from Draco’s touch. Not to be beaten, Draco’s arm circled his hips, pressing into his pubic bone but missing his aching cock completely and yanking his arse back out under the mercy of that probing finger.

“That hurts!” Harry hissed, eyes clenching shut at the personal pain. “Use something?”

“No,” Draco argued simply, pressing his finger a little deeper into the hole denying him. Harry wriggled uncontrollably. He didn’t want the pain of rough sex with someone who wouldn’t even give him lube when he asked for it! Draco held Harry against the wall with one hand, and he wrapped his legs around Harry’s to keep them spread, plucking his finger from that hole to make way for his throbbing hardness. “You see? The pure fear of thinking I’m going to have you raw against a wall is making you so fucking—”

SLAP!

“I said *use* something! I’m not a nonsensical sex-doll,” Harry bit out, letting his hand fall from where he had struck that pretty pale face. Draco growled at the burning sensation in his cheek and his eyes narrowed. Twisting Harry around so that he could glare down at him, he slammed him back into the stone again roughly. A morbid sense of triumph swept over him at the sight of Harry’s wince when his abused body kissed the spiteful surface again.

“Don’t you ever hit me you prat – especially when you gave me a lecture about violence!” Draco hissed, his anxious fingers yanking at the tight rim none-too-gently. He struggled with his own trousers at the same time, routing through the line of material until his ravenous prick was free, pressuring Harry’s resisting, twitching hole. Harry gulped – *hard*.

“I didn’t *hit* you so hard that I laid you out on the floor with a bloody lip,” Harry murmured, “I barely touched you. Hermione could hit harder than that.”

Draco didn’t seem to be listening. “You want lube? So *beg me?*”

Harry looked completely shocked at those words, the part of Draco he had never seen. He was so vile and nasty, spiteful debauched and worst of all, he was making him harder! No wonder he was a slytherin...

He winced again at the way his stupid cock arched up into his stomach, leaking at the furious heat flaring in Draco’s eyes. “Don’t be a prat, Draco, use lube on me.” He wriggled, his brows knotting together in the middle when the Blond pressed in a little. Harry hissed at the raw, stretching agony.

“Stop hurting me!” He said, in a voice all-too serious and Draco stared into his eyes for a moment, remaining quite quiet. Gasping for control over his breathing, Harry surveyed the Blond for a moment, the fire in that cool gaze registering at last. This was all just another form of sex. Pulling his hands up from pushing Draco away, he settled them on the Blond’s shoulders, dragging him in tight against his body, pressing his dribbling cock up to smear the pre-emission over Draco’s sweatshirt.

“Please, stretch me,” Harry gasped out, swallowing hard and forcing his confidence to the surface. “Slick my arse for me, please...”

“You self-righteous, whiney little git – *fine*,” Draco said, pulling his wand from his pocket and rolling the wooden stick over his tongue, slowly, seductively (still grinning smugly) until it was dripping. Carefully, he reached down, pressing his impatient penis into the back of Harry’s thighs as he slipped down into the valley of between those cheeks, searching for the dent that would lead him deep inside the desperate, tight walls of Harry’s existence.

“Hmmm, so you want me to fuck you now?” Draco teased, making sure to keep his tongue on Harry’s oversensitive neck at all times. “Beg me. Beg me to lube up your tight little bum?”

Harry let a low groan shudder from his lips and he pressed himself into the stone wall, gripping Draco’s hips with his legs tightly and clenching around the invading wand. “Oh...*Merlin*, that’s delicious!” Harry gasped out, smirking through the pleasure of having such an every day object inside. “Hnn, do you think about where that wand has been when you use it in your lessons?” Harry breathed hotly over Draco’s ear, tilting his head into Draco’s slightly. “Do you ever get hard in charms just thinking about – ahhhh!” His words were cut off by a groan of bliss as Draco twisted the wand to stretch his insides in a firm circle, spreading him wide. Opening his prim hole. It was so dirty and delicious.

“Use...use lube on me, hurry, I want you to fuck me,” he stammered out, his voice raspy and deep. “Please...I’ll do anything!”

“Hmm, of course you want it,” Draco breathed, sliding the shaft of the wand in and out of the rigid hole slowly. “So tight... You can barely handle this thin piece of wood and you think you can handle my cock, do you? Do *anything* for it in fact?” Draco raised a brow derisively, swirling his wand around inside until Harry screeched and shuddered in blissful delirium. “Anything?”

“Yessssss,” Harry hissed in delight, smirking at the screeches of dismay from the portrait still above him. “Just use lube first, then – oh *lord* – anything!” Harry ground his erection into Draco’s stomach, sliding his hands under Draco’s jumper and scraping at his shoulder-blades with his nails as he clung to him. He found his hips were moving in hungry gyrations with Draco’s wand movements and he growled in frustration.

“*Please!*” He groaned out, “Cast the bloody spell so you can fuck me or I’ll go mad!”

“*Delugero!*” Draco chanted, and Harry's body jerked at the sudden burst of cool jelly, the orange liquid oozing out of his pucker, as if to tempt Draco in quicker. It never ceased to amaze Draco how the colour always came out different...

Draco leant in then to bite Harry's ear, worrying the lobe deviously. Dropping his wand carelessly to the floor, he reached for his needy cock, which he positioned at the winking entrance. Slowly the greasy liquid smeared over the end of his cock from Harry's leaking crack, covering the tip and making it glisten wetly – *enticing* him to ease his cock inside and he gasped as he breached the tight ring. It was so hot inside he swore he was melting and his member tingled at the tight ring pulling him, *wanting* him.

“Fuck!” He gasped, unable to stop the line of saliva that was drooling over his chin. “Hmm...! My-My cock feels crushed?!”

“That’s – Dear Lord that’s so *good!*” Harry agreed, closing his eyes to savour the stretching feeling he’d come to relish. Pressing his nose into the curve of Draco’s neck he nuzzled it hard for a moment in release of his thrill, groaning into the flesh before laying a trail of hot, hungry nips up the pale column. “W-We were apart too long, you feel *huge*,” Harry panted into the soft shell of that ear, letting his tongue punctuate his words with a swift lick of its shape.

His entire body felt tight, like it was joint with strings that were about to snap. His jaw set and he pushed eagerly down as much as his position permitted, hanging between Draco’s body and the wall. He felt his opening swallow that thick girth slowly and his soaked walls were tugged at deliciously as Draco pressed inwards. “I knew you liked fucking scrawny boys with glasses,” Harry mused, catching Draco’s earlobe between his teeth and gently rolling it against his tongue. “If the slytherins just came up those stairs now and saw you...”

Harry's fingernails dug deeper into Draco's back and the Blond hissed in the glorifying pleasures that the pain gave him. His cock swelled, surging further inside Harry as the nails dragged downwards when it began to slide in and out of him.

“Ahh...it's so...fuck!” He winced. His eyes shut tight and his lips were drawn magnetically to Harry's, his mind bidding him to nip fervently along that upper-lip, silently begging for more of him. His hands that held Harry against the wall now reached down to stretch his cheeks as far as they would go and he slammed upwards with brutal, bruising force.

“You said you would do anything, yeah? And anything means every time you feel the need to speak when I'm making your little cock *leak*, just refer to me as *lord* or *master*,” Draco growled softly. Harry was still unaware of how badly

superiority got to him – so badly, and though the dark-haired boy looked confused, he nodded regardless. And Draco's smile widened across his entire face. “Heh...”

“Bloody righteous pervert,” Harry hissed, loving the way Draco spread him open to his thrusts. “*Master*,” he added with breathless haste as Draco stilled inside his body in threatening reminder. His cheeks flushed at the sound of it on his tongue, but at the same time it sent a thrill of pleasure through his bones until he shook with the spasms of need. “*Master*,” he murmured into that mouth, Draco pulling back from his lips with a wet trail of saliva connecting them still, “Harder – I’ve needed you for – it’s been...over a week!” He managed out, tightening his grip on Draco’s hips with his thighs and pulling him in tighter, deeper.

Draco growled sexily with satisfaction at the way Harry was complying so nicely. It was all so fucking steamy and making him tingle all over. “Hmm, say it slower...?” Draco pleaded, sliding his cock deeper and faster into that slick chute. Harry threw his head back suddenly and his body rippling with those thrusts, forcing him to shudder and groan loudly before pulling back and shouting, “*Oh, Master*,” slower from the top of his lungs.

Draco's trousers fell to the floor from his waist and he kicked them aside, the wall felt cold on his knees when they encountered it underneath Harry’s frantically writhing body. He felt Harry's legs tighten around him; pull him for more and he jerked quicker, giving him what he wanted – what he was begging for so prettily.

Slowly, Harry tilted his head again so that his mouth covered Draco’s flustered ear. “Hmm,” Harry purred sensuously, “*Master*, I like this game. You’re more yourself when you’re smug and arrogant – *I like it*.” His last words were a low, seductive hiss and his tongue slithered into Draco’s ear to accentuate that fact. He dragged his nails along Draco’s back in the same instant, the combined sensations making the Blond arch into him ferociously with a groan.

“Y-Your cock feels really – *hot* in me,” Harry murmured, “Master,” he added belatedly, losing his mind as his head rolled into Draco’s neck as ecstasy made his bones quiver. “Oh *God* – was it always this good, before?”

“Of course, *I’ve* always been good,” Draco teased him smugly, earning a groan from Harry in response to his self-centred sense of humour. “Well it’s...true, isn’t it?” Draco asked, knowing what the answer would be, and he caught a glimpse of Harry’s face, blushing darkly before the boy turned his face away. “See” Draco grinned, thrusting in so deeply Harry swore he could feel that cock in his chest! “You smell so *hot*, Harry,” Draco hummed, the sweet smell of his sexual pheromones filling Draco’s nostrils and sending his dirty, debauched senses into a hazy mist of mind-numbing pleasure.

“Ahh, bloody hell I...I-I’m *fucking*...the *Chosen One*!” Draco shouted gleefully.

Harry cried out at those words, the simple friction of Draco’s stomach against his hardness not enough and he hooked one arm around the Blond’s neck completely, his other hand reaching down to fist himself hard. His cock jerked in his grasp, staining Draco’s clothing with opalescent trails of arousal. “Yesssss!” He hissed again; sweat beading down his skin and welding their hot skin together as they grinded together sinfully.

“F-Fuck me!” He growled, “Fuck the *Chosen One* – you’re...you’re the only – one – who gets to!” He felt a smile touch his bruised lips at the possessive snarl that left Draco’s mouth. The Blond’s hot hands gripped him tighter, and he felt his skin melt and tremble at the feel of them. “I love your hands,” he murmured out incoherently, not for the first time, and those deliciously possessive lips found his, demanding the taste of his mouth in a way that made Harry’s stomach tighten with bliss.

“You like my...my *hands*?” Draco breathed dazedly, grinning smugly at the compliment (and his hands). He blinked. He supposed he did have nice hands didn’t

he?

“Do you like my hands now? Draco hummed in a low and lustful tone, running them slowly along Harry’s shuddering thighs and over his hips until he quivered and gasped. “Hmm you really do like my hands, hm?” Draco toyed with him, hissing hotly into the shell of Harry’s ear as he jerked his hips upwards, drawn as if by gravity into that sweltering hole.

Draco had forgotten this, this *feeling*, this *passion*, this *need*. He felt so close, so together and his lovely hands couldn’t stop touching, running over him like he was the most beautiful and rare of artefacts. He just couldn’t keep away. It was like they were drawn to him, but so much more powerfully than before.

“My cock feels...feels so good!” He admitted, with a tinted blush to his cheeks. “I...I never want...want this feeling to end...”

A smile twitched at Harry’s lips at that and he let his head fall back again, Draco mouthing his throat breathlessly as he jerked up into his body. Heat spread from every place the Blond touched him and spiralled up inside him until his body shuddered, on the precipice of explosion. He couldn’t remember having this with Draco before, this play at desperate roughness and it felt like his body was searing with hundreds of tiny flames all over.

“So – hot! You’re so...” His teeth sank into his already busted lip and he shook his head in sensuous confusion, his fingers tugging on himself impatiently. He couldn’t manage out anything coherent.

“I know, I *am* so fucking hot aren’t I? And my cock feels huge inside of you, doesn’t it?” Draco asked, but with the air of answering the question himself in his smug tone.

He licked viciously at that bruised part of Harry's neck, munching across the inflamed and tender area. Harry tightened around his cock at the twinges spiralling down his spine.

Those hands over Harry's hips ran down as he pressed harder into him, forcing Harry to stay in place against the wall by the pure pressure of how tightly knotted together they now were. Taking those smooth hands, he traced them over his belly slowly in tickling, feather light touches until they met the tip of his cock.

"Want me to touch you're cock, Harry? Draco teased, running the palm of his hand over the swollen head slowly. He could feel his huge cock tearing into Harry's arse, could feel his walls shaking with spasms around him as if he were being electrocuted with sheer pleasure.

Harry groaned in agreement, his own hand abandoning his needy prick and sliding up through Draco's locks, tugging gently every so often. "Y-Yes!" He gasped out when Draco did nothing about his burgeoning arousal. "Touch my cock – more – make me... I need to come!" This (just over a) week had seemed far too long without the Blond's touch, and that made every whisper, every static surge enhanced.

His arse clenched spasmodically around the leaking thickness inside of him, betraying his need for everything and he hissed in frustration when the pad of Draco's thumb merely circled his swollen, aching tip. "*Please*, Master," he amended, "Stroke my cock – fuck me until I cum!"

"Hmm, *say that again?*" Draco pleaded, clenching his hand into a fist around the end of the aching cock in his hand, loving the way it was jerking upwards, needing him. "Say master again...?"

The Blond slowly rolled his hand down over the throbbing organ that seemed to thicken in his hand. It was pulsing and writhing like a needy virgin in his grasp and Draco spoiled his lover's body with hard, deep thrusts as he pumped that drizzling organ generously. He groaned out his passion then, pressing his own tip deep and fast into those clenching, swelling walls. They were so wet and dripping around him, pulling him in like a magnetic force, like they needed him to exist. "Ahhh, f-fuck!" Draco yelled, feeling his cock sucked into that magical, mouth-watering place.

"*Master*," Harry murmured huskily, a devilish smile at his lips. "That feels so good – harder, let me finish soon, please!" He *heard* more than saw Draco's breathlessly triumphant smirk, those lips laying hungry nips at his neck between lustful words and desperate thrusts. He felt his hole clench hungrily. He was too close. "Faster!" He insisted, rolling his hips back into Draco's hardness, stretching himself blissfully as that hand grabbed him tighter now, twisting at the crest of every stroke, pre-cum slicking his movements.

"Y-You're such a filthy pervert," Harry gasped out, smiling, his voice barely audible, "*Master* – let me finish, please? Cum in my arse – I can't...!" He was cut off by a fierce frisson as those lips slammed into his, coercing his open easily before sweeping possessively over his tongue. Draco drew back from his mouth with a wet sound, his possessive smirk making Harry's inside squirm wonderfully. He loved this side to him, the sound of his voice when he was like this...

Draco licked along the seam of his mouth sexily, sure that Harry was watching the slow movement of his tongue rolling seductively over his pink lower lip. He wet it purposefully, so it was glossy with saliva. "Beg me. Beg your master to let you cum!" Draco hissed, shoving his thick, drooling prick roughly inside, and ramming Harry back harder into the wall. "You like me fucking you up against the wall, don't you? You dirty little boy, Potter." Laughing deeply between panted words Draco wriggled, reaming that slick hole wide with his savage, circular thrusts. "Don't you?" The Slytherin demanded. "Tell me, Please...uhhh, tell me, you... Fuck – so good! Y-You like it when I fuck you...eh, *princess*? Fuck you so hard that you're practically crushed against this hard stone? You love the feeling my filthy cock gives you, don't you?! Ahhhh...so *close*...!"

Harry swooned at the sound of that voice for a moment, their meaning taking a moment or two to register in his head. And when they did, his lips parted to answer, but not quickly enough.

“Princess, indeed, Mr Malfoy?”

Both boys fell completely still at the sound of that stoic voice, accompanied by a small gasp from the doorway. Harry cracked open his eyes, and slammed them shut again instantly at the sight he found there, wishing the ground would open up and swallow him whole. Hermione stood, flushed and abashed at the sight of them, hastily turning her gaze away, while Professor Snape was staring, unmoved at the pair of them.

Draco leapt back from him and Harry shot across the room, bashfully trying to cover what was left of his dignity as he struggled into his briefs and trousers hastily. “May I ask what you two thought you were doing performing such lewd acts, in the Slytherin common room – with an audience?” Snape shot at them, and at that, both Harry and Draco’s gazes move to the stairs leading down into the dormitories, where a small group of first years were now looking horrified.

“Bed,” Snape hissed at the first years and they scattered without needing a second request, leaving Harry avoiding Snape and Hermione’s eyes as he struggled to straighten his appearance, his cheeks aflame with mortification.

“Well if the Slytherins can bash my brains out here, I don’t see why we can’t fuck?” Draco snapped, protesting ludicrously (to Harry’s further embarrassment) though he was still stuck on the princess comment...

Hermione seemed to be covering her face, regardless of the fact she had seen worse before from these two. Draco pulled on his shirt slowly and redid his buttons, irritated beyond belief at this interruption when he was so close. “So are you going to move me now, or leave me to wait here for my slaughter?”

Failing to change the subject, the Professor ignored him for a moment, hurrying both him and Harry to redress before he would further talk with them. And they both did – quickly.

“Now that the inevitable distraction of your sexually-frustrated teenage bodies is away,” Snape began testily, Hermione finally raising her eyes from the floor.

“I went to get the Professor,” Hermione explained, still blushing as she looked between Harry and Draco. “I told him everything – and that he just *had* to help you, and–”

“I will relocate your room to a spare relatively close to the Hospital Wing,” Snape interrupted, prickling at Draco’s attitude and Hermione’s presence, it seemed. “Although, I believe settling you in a room so near our Mr Potter here may have its drawbacks as well as *benefits*.”

The way the professor hissed that last word made Harry choke on his own saliva and he glanced quickly to Draco before struggling to tie the knot in his tie, anything to give him something to focus on besides their current situation.

“Well thanks a lot,” Draco snapped sarcastically, “Go ahead and move me when Hermione asks you, but not when I–”

”Draco, I did not realise how bad the situation was,” Snape hissed, jumping to defence. Draco sighed, irritation swelling in his pure blood.

“Well I bloody *told* you, didn't I? Anything else?!” Harry seemed to be glaring

sideways at him now, flushed still from before as he finished buckling up his pants. Both were frustrated at having their climax, their relief snatched away.

“So you and the *princess* can now remove yourselves from the slytherin dungeons and you...” Snape paused, glancing over to the remains of the vase that was shattered on the floor beside the fireplace. “That was a school heirloom, from Salazar Slytherin himself that you have broken here, who did this?”

Harry cleared his throat needlessly, lowering his eyes bashfully. “Joint effort, I’m afraid Professor,” he mumbled, hearing Draco snort with irritation beside him. *Someone’s cranky when he doesn’t cum*, he thought, amused. Snape’s brow wrinkled with true annoyance and he drew his wand, gesturing over the shattered vase.

“*Reparo!*” He hissed, before setting it carefully back on the table. “The next time you engage yourselves in adolescent romping do so *away* from the eyes of the other students. It is inappropriate for students to engage in such activities on school grounds regardless.”

Harry raised his gaze a tad, and before he could stop himself, he replied, “But I’m not a student, Sir.”

Snape’s sneer intensified. “You’re both of age, but Draco is still a student. We really do not want to have our saviour charged with taking advantage of a minor.”

At that Harry’s eyes widened impossibly and Draco burst into laughter.

“He’s older than me!” Harry spat, “And he was clearly the one taking advantage! It wasn’t his arse that was getting—”

“Be that as it may, Mr Potter,” Snape cut across him easily, “This is not a time for you

to be getting into needless trouble. And if you don't mind, I would like to invite both Miss Granger and Mr Malfoy to our next training session."

Harry swallowed. He didn't like the menacing sound to his voice then. "Of course, why?"

"You did not think that you will be able to face the Dark Lord and his remaining followers one at a time, did you? The odds will be unfair; Mr Malfoy himself had to fend off many of them whilst you faced the Dark Lord before."

Harry's mouth moved soundlessly for a few moments, stunned by the renewed promise of a battle he was unlikely to survive. He said nothing on it, however, not with Draco's apprehension slithering through his chest in tight coils. "You're all going to fight me at once," he said, his words not really a question. Snape gave a small, barely visible nod in answer.

"And now, it perhaps would be a good idea for the three of you to remove yourselves from the Slytherin common room?"

Draco shrugged and moved towards the exit, with Harry trailing behind, while Hermione watched them both walk past and then slowly followed. Snape took a final glance around the room before also departing and heading off down the opposite corridor, his cloak trailing in the air behind him as he vanished into the maze of corridors.

"Honestly you two?!" Hermione lectured them as soon as they were out of earshot of the Professor. "I'm glad you've made up again, but do you always have to make such a scene!"

Draco grunted at her. He still hadn't entirely forgiven Harry for that insensitive request, but thought better then to bring it up again.

“I have to go to class,” Hermione continued, “You two can do what you want, though Draco, if you care at all about passing your exams, you should probably go too!”

“Yeah,” Harry murmured quietly, trying to keep the gloom from his voice. “One of us should get good marks – so that you can get a job while you’re jobless bum of a boyfriend sits at home.”

Hermione turned a glare on him. “Harry – how could you say that about yourself – you’re–”

“I can’t take my exams, Hermione,” Harry murmured, “Harry – *I* spent years studying just like you two, but I can’t remember enough to take my exams. Waste of time I s’pose...” Why did he find it so hard to meet Draco’s eyes when they moved onto this topic? He was scared of his reaction of course, but also...he was envious – of both of them.

When this was all over, they got to have jobs, move on with their lives, he could never have that, even if he survived somehow. It was an ugly emotion that made him wince to think of, but it was there, every single time they disappeared to their lessons and left him studying battle tactics and hexes...

“Just shut up, Harry!” Draco said bluntly. “Focus on today, I’m not taking my exams to secure my future, I’m taking them because I have to. Just focus on the now and stop sobbing about all the things you can’t change.” Hermione looked shocked at Draco’s words, and for a moment she considered slapping him. Ignoring her glare, the Blond moved in front of Harry and placed his hands on either shoulder. “You will have a good future so just...don’t worry about such minor things, *alright?*”

Harry stared at him vacantly for a moment, before letting out a small sigh at the sight of the reassurance in those grey eyes. “I’m sorry – one thing at a time,” he murmured, realising it was foolish to worry about things like school when Voldemort was still alive and plotting against them. So foolish. “I’m jealous, I suppose, of all the people

whose biggest worries are their exam results.” He gave a small, half-hearted laugh, seeing the sympathetic sadness shining in Hermione’s eyes, but when he looked to Draco, there wasn’t any pity there, and he was grateful for that.

“Sorry,” Harry said again to him, realising he was right (and still a little cranky from not *finishing*). His body was aching from exhaustion now and he was sorely tempted to lean forward and feel Draco’s body against his, but advised against it. “I suppose any future without Voldemort is a good one.”

Draco looked at Harry blankly and shrugged. “I’m going to class,” He stated simply. He felt too agitated to talk with Harry right now and he was only making it worse on himself. A mixture of emotions were rushing over him, making him want to take Harry into his arms and tell him it would all be fine, but he knew he couldn’t promise that, he knew, and he didn’t want to think about it.

The Blond soon faded out of sight, leaving Harry to dwell upon his emotions with Hermione. Draco felt a plummet to his stomach with each pace that moved further away, but if he couldn’t be strong for Harry and push him in the right direction, who could? Harry needed that, *that push* to make himself realise that there would be more to fight for. And that there would be a future waiting for him if he fought hard enough for it. With an attitude like he had right now, he clearly stood no chance of taking on the Dark Lord, not if he felt there was nothing waiting for him on the other side, and Draco *knew* this. *He needs to be mentally strong, as well as psychically.*

“Maybe I got it wrong then, you guys didn’t work it out, but you were – were...*anyway*?” Hermione asked, the confusion of them having sex even though they were on bad terms still confusing her. “I really don’t understand your relationship,” She admitted light-heartedly, attempting to lighten the mood. “But I guess that’s what makes it special?”

“That is how we vent our frustrations I think,” Harry replied, nonplussed, still staring in the direction Draco had disappeared in. “He’s scared, like I am, when this is all over he – *we’ll* be better. If we can survive everything we’ve been through so far we’ll get through this. And as for the future, there won’t *be* one if I don’t get my arse into gear, so I better get back to it, I suppose.”

Hermione smiled at him. She supposed Draco was right, and she finally beginning to understand why he did some of the things he did. He knew as well as she that the only person who could knock sense into Harry's head was him.

“Listen Harry, I'm...I'm sorry for before, the things I said about Draco, I was just – well I am, *still*. I miss Ron. And of course I know that's no reason to act the way I did, just seeing the things he did to you before worried me, I didn't want to lose you too. And after this I – I wasn't sure we could trust him, but... I am really sorry, I didn't need to doubt him at all. I was the one at fault and I was just wondering if you can ever begin to forgive me?”

Harry stared at her for a moment, taken aback and oddly touched by her words. “I... Of *course* I forgive you!” He declared, before throwing himself forwards and pulling her into a tight hug. Just because he didn’t have his memory, didn’t make his feelings any less real or powerful. “We’re in this together – me, you and Draco, and we’ll make...make Ron proud.” He heard her give a small, dry sob then and an accompanying nod. “It’ll be alright, Hermione, I’m going to finish this, for you and Ron and Draco if no one else.”

~To Be Continued...

Chapter 29: Chapter Twenty-Nine

(Bound By) Clandestine Addiction

[Chapter Twenty-Nine]

Harry inhaled deeply, closing his eyes to calm his flaring nerves, his knuckles whitening as his fingers tightened on the desk's edge. The three most prominent figures in his life were all witnesses this time, he didn't want to slip up and disappoint any of them – even his greasy potion's master...

“Some time today, Potter,” came the slow; deep drone of that voice and Harry winced, cracking open his eyes. “Splendid, now do you plan to begin, or do you wish to keep Mr Malfoy, Miss Granger and I in suspense for a little longer?”

Harry snorted under his breath, grumbling something unintelligible before standing straight and drawing his wand from his pocket.

“Are you sure you're ready? I am the *Chosen One* apparently – *Sir*.”

“Always the same, *Potter* – cocky arrogant little swine!” Snape growled venomously. “With an attitude like that you will always have a weakness!” Even though Snape knew Harry's words were only half hearted, he couldn't help but lecture him, after all this was no time to be smart or funny!

Draco stood grinning. He couldn't help but find Harry's light arrogance amusing. “Well give us a show then!” He prompted with a smirk. Snape straightened himself up for a moment and bid Harry to lower his wand. Striding over to Draco, he fisted his hand into his collar. “Draco, this is no laughing matter! I was certain you of all people

would be here to train Mr Potter, not to encourage his idiocy!” The dark Professor hissed, clearly agitated by their light-heartedness.

“Wands at the ready!” He announced suddenly, causing Harry to be more serious and alert to him now and leaving Draco with an irritated frown. *He was right though*, Draco realised.

It’s hardly my fault if Draco rubs off on me, Harry thought distantly, taking his place opposite them in the centre of the room, his wand aloft. Especially with all of the rubbing they did...

“*Rictusempra!*” That sudden shout from Hermione made him jump backwards in surprise more than reaction, (of all the people to cheat he hadn’t expected it to be her, what with two slytherins in the room) but he avoided it all the same, rolling backwards over the desk and using it as cover. His three *adversaries* scattered then. He didn’t see where Snape went but he had a clear view of Hermione bolting towards him while Draco darted aside. Harry threw his arm across the desk barrier.

“*Obscuro!*” He chanted and watched as a thick black blindfold appeared over Hermione’s eyes. The girl stumbled, reaching wildly for the material over her eyes and Harry got to his feet then, his wand poised for spell to incapacitate her, but no sooner than his lips moved than the *whizz* of a spell shooting past him (narrowly missing his ear) sent his gaze flying to the Blond a few feet to the side.

A diversionary tactic – how very slytherin, Harry thought. “*Incarcerous!*” He yelled, watching Draco’s face remain coolly impassive, a startling bright, golden shield of light roaring to life between them, sending the spell flying back at Harry. Harry yelped as rope flew around his ankles, sending him crashing to the floor. He cried out as his ribs collided with the unforgiving stone.

“H-Harry?!” Hermione called out, still struggling to remove the blindfold, obviously concerned. “Harry are you—”

“Just *what* kind of Death Eater are you posing as, Granger?” Snape’s voice sneered from somewhere off to the side. “You are his enemy for this battle. Do not hold back! If Mr Malfoy can do so then so can—”

“*Expulso!*” Harry cut across him, sending the spell hurtling in the direction of Snape’s voice (unable to see him from the floor behind the desk). He saw though, when the cauldron nearest Snape exploded, the boiling contents flying everywhere.

Draco darted quickly through the building smoke and swept Hermione aside with one arm, narrowly avoiding the acidic fluids bursting from the cauldron. Thank *Merlin*. Some toxic potions were so corrosive they could sear the flesh clean off your bones until all you were left with was sizzling marrow.

Hiding briefly next to Hermione, now unconscious, (thanks to their rough collision with the floor) Draco slipped her aside and out of harm's way. Slowly creeping back through the smoke, his gaze darted through the cloud of smoke, catching a glimpse of the professor, hiding behind bookcase in the corner.

Flashing lights from his wand shot at Harry through the thick mist. His lover had to be on his guard when Snape moved and made his attack from the blind spot.

“*Expelliarmus*” Snape chanted, a dash of light shooting from his wand and knocking Harry's wand from his hand, and his body to the floor in surprise. He moved closer as Harry hurried down to find it, in panic but not quickly enough, for Snape was striding over to him. “If I were the Dark Lord, I could kill you now!” Snape sneered unimpressed. Harry winced at the pain in his ribs and reached for his wand again.

“*Accio wand!*” Harry choked with his hand outstretched and his wand jerked upwards into his hand again. He swore he could *hear* Draco grinning, he had taught him that he could summon his wand. As soon as his fingers grasped it once more, he turned it on the desk separating him from a surprised Snape. “*Engorgio!*” The desk expanded with a sudden jerk, sending both himself and Snape flying across opposite sides of the room. A *woosh* of air was knocked from his lungs as he slammed, hard into the bookshelf, and he raised his arms above his head for feeble protection, seconds before the books came tumbling down on top of him.

Keeping a firm hold of his wand, Harry winced as he crawled out from under the rubble frantically, rolling across the floor and aiming his wand at his bound ankles. “*Finite Incantatum!*” That uncomfortable, painful twinge of *pins and needles* shot through his feet as the blood rushed back to them, and he grimaced, taking hold of the edge of the desk and staggering to his feet. Just in time to see Snape dispersing the steam from the cauldron’s explosion, but evidently distracted by searching for Draco and Hermione to ensure they were safe after the explosion. With a broad smirk gracing his lips, Harry brought his wand up swiftly again. “*Expelliarmus!*” Harry called and the Potion’s master’s wand flew through the air, straight into his hand. He could feel his cheeks aching from the smile now, wishing he didn’t feel so smug about disarming the professor. Draco was definitely rubbing off on him.

“Never allow yourself to be distracted, Professor,” Harry murmured, his voice as close to a taunt as he dared, and Snape scowled.

“The Dark Lord will not be so easily distracted. Do not get *cocky*, Potter.”

Harry raised his eyebrows mockingly, before turning to search for Draco and Hermione, only when he turned he felt the pointed tip of a wand pressed into his throat. He froze instinctively, swallowing against the sharp pressure in his windpipe, as Draco’s suddenly dark eyes glistened in the soft lighting of Professor Snape’s office. His muscles bunched in anticipation.

“Dead man walking,” Draco hissed darkly into Harry’s ear, drawing the wand slowly over his throat and downwards so he shuddered. “You need to try harder than *this*, Potter.”

Harry remained still for a few moments, breathing heavily in those arms before throwing his elbows back into Draco's sides sharply, bolting from his grip. Draco stumbled slightly and reached for him again (still armed with his wand in his other hand) and he blinked. Where was Harry?

Turning on his heel, he stumbled when Harry shot a spell his way, sending him backwards into the wall. Something crunched as he hit it, but he clutched his wand still and hurried back to his feet.

"I'm trying," he insisted, while his mind added *very hard indeed*, as that familiar, throbbing warmth flooding his veins from the sound of Draco's voice just then. He swore his cheeks were tinted pink. "*Accio* Tapestry!" Harry summoned the tapestry across the room, and Draco turned just in time to see it flying towards him, knocking him to the ground easily and entangling him beneath it. Harry rushed forwards then, stooping to where Draco struggled for freedom. "*Accio* Draco Malfoy's wa—" But his voice cut short as Draco scrambled half out from under the blanket of material, and Harry caught sight of the mess that was his right arm. It looked like *steam* as coming off his flesh, his sleeve completely disintegrating and his skin blistering.

"Stop!" Harry cried out, halting Snape in his footsteps, probably by the desperation in his voice rather than his actual request. "Draco, what is – oh god...the cauldron?" Draco frowned at him, as if annoyed they had stopped, and pulling away when Harry tried to reach for him. "I'm sorry, I should've thought...I know we were taking it seriously but that's no excuse to—" He was cut short again, by Draco's voice this time.

"Keep fighting!" Draco snapped, clearly in pain but furious all the same. "If the Dark Lord attacks me, if you run to my side, if you look away for even a moment you will be *killed*!"

With that, Snape flew forward, his wand pressing into Harry's temple to make the point clearer. "And I'd be the one who kills you right here!" He growled, in a chilling tone. Harry swallowed, hard, still struggling to look away from Draco, whose arm was still searing. "Look at me, *Harry!*" Snape shouted. "The Dark Lord plays on *weaknesses*, he drains your strength by manipulating them. He already has an idea that Draco is important to you but if you show him any sign of just how much, he might purposefully turn on Draco and he won't stop until he wipes him from this earth – Miss Granger too," Snape reminded him coldly.

Harry lifted his chin, his jaw set. "I'll protect them again, like I did last time," Harry insisted, "And in all fairness, in the real battle, it won't be me who's responsible for Draco's injuries. Even *you* were distracted looking for him and Hermione when the cauldron exploded, so don't talk down to me like I'm the world's biggest fool for caring when the people I love are hurt because of me!" He snarled, bringing his wand out and flicking it at Draco's wound. "*Episkey!*" He chanted, but nothing happened.

"The wound is too severe," Snape explained stiffly, "it will need a potion and bed rest to cure – and you, Potter," he leant down, his dark shadow looming over the boy menacingly. "You *are* the world's biggest fool indeed, but for other reasons. You are the only one that can vanquish the Dark Lord; you cannot afford to lose simply because you played favourites with your loved ones in battle—"

"I'd sacrifice the world for Hermione and Draco and I don't care what you think of it, Sir," Harry spat, glaring up at the professor a moment longer before glancing back to Draco again, searching those eyes for his thoughts on it all.

"Oh, that's *right*, spare me and Hermione while you die and the Dark Lord takes us down anyway with our families and the people we care about, *just* because you were too noble to use your head," Draco declared in disdain, "I won't let you save me only for my family to be killed!" Still clutching his wounded arm, he stumbled forwards, making sure to shove his shoulder hard into Harry as he passed him. And then, he spun on his feet, glaring at them all.

“I'm going to the hospital wing.” He grunted, leaving Professor Snape and Harry to the awkward atmosphere. Snape hurried to the corner and swept an unconscious Hermione into his arms.

“And I'll be taking Miss Granger, since it seems to be Mr. Potter's top priority,” Snape snarled as if Harry weren't there.

“What about the *fight*?” Harry asked befuddled, a vile pressure plummeting in his gut, this time feeling guilty about wanting to save the people he loved? Was he really so wrong for that? Snape turned to look at him darkly.

“It will have to wait, won't it?” He hissed bitinglly, brushing past him as well.

Harry's arms went rigid at his sides and he spun on his heel to glare at the departing professor. “I'm *not* apologising – I'm never going to be sorry for wanting to save my friends!”

“No one is asking that of you, silly boy,” Snape sneered, without even turning to face him as he carried Hermione from the room. Harry ground his teeth together furiously. Somehow, everything always came back to him – he could do nothing right. But he tried, he spent every day trying to be stronger, better, so he could save them. But was he ever going to get there?

Harry turned his wand on the chaotic office, repairing the shattered cauldron with a murmur and flick of his wand, and sending the furniture back into their respective places – although it would serve Snape right if he left it the way it was. A low growl of frustration tumbled through his lips, as he left the office at last, slamming it purposefully behind him.

“I say!” A portrait of a gruffly old man declared indignantly Harry didn't even look up as he stalked up the dungeon corridor. The Hospital wing was his destination but he would take his time getting there, not eager to come face-to-face with the snarky

professor again so soon.

What did he mean then? Harry thought bitterly, his mind wandering back over Draco's and the Professor's words. It all seemed so confusing, he knew he wasn't wrong for wanting to help them. He supposed they were all yelling at him because, despite everything, he hadn't learnt very much (at least that's how he felt anyways).

I should probably ask Draco to clear that up for me later, he thought. It bothered him that he could never do anything right (so it seemed) and he wondered if the *old* Harry Potter would have acted this way – so recklessly. He knew he wasn't stupid, but he *felt* it.

Slowly his footsteps lead him the familiar stretch of corridor, the final stretch before the hospital wing. He breathed deeply, but his steps seemed to get smaller. He didn't want them to all be looking at him with disappointment – with *annoyance*. He had wanted to prove to Draco that he could do this, and admittedly '*show off*' a little bit. Not to injure him and cause him to be angry, though Harry was sure that the injury wasn't why he was mad.

Drawing his wand from his pocket, still moving slowly, Harry held out his left hand, his wand aimed towards it. *I should do something. Something to say I'm sorry.* Then it hit him, something he thought would be suitable, though, he wasn't sure that would be such a good idea with Snape and Hermione present. But still...

His cheeks flushed.

“*Orchideous!*” He chanted, his face contorting into a frown of concentration. He wanted to get this right – spectacular even. At first there was nothing, and then a dazzling light glowed at his wand tip, a large, extravagant bouquet appearing in his

free hand, although his other arm came around instantly to support the sheer weight of it. Pink and white lilies, flared gracefully into full bloom, the darkest of the pinks nowhere near matching the colour suffusing his cheeks. Draco was going to laugh in his face, he could see it now...

There was an odd, twisting, *churning* anxiety in his gut then – in anticipation of what Draco would say or do, he felt nearly nauseous with nerves. *Especially since he hasn't really seemed to forgive me for what I asked him for a few days ago*, his mind added, reminding him of his foolish, ridiculous request that Draco be the one to end it, if it came to it. They were speaking, and seeing each other of course, but that look in those eyes, and the way they would touch at every possible opportunity (even just the brush of their fingers together) hadn't been there.

The Hospital wing doors were there now, and he swallowed hard, his grip on the romantic gesture tightening almost impossibly. *Why are you doing this? You're such an idiot*, his mind spat, *knowing* the outcome before he even stepped in the door, but he pushed it open anyway, never able to resist the way his skin seemed to be tugged towards wherever Draco lay. He heard the room go silent as he stepped in, the screech of the closing doors piercing the quiet.

Snape was in the office doorway, Madam Pomfrey beside him, whilst Draco and Hermione lay a few beds apart. A few first years also gathered in the corner around their friends, whose ailment Harry didn't stop to notice – for every head turned to him as he entered, and he was frozen there for a moment, not looking up at Draco, not daring as he approached the bed. Hermione was still unconscious, and maybe that was a good thing, because he was sure she'd be giving him that look of warning, and he thought he'd lose his nerve and all that remained of his dignity and bolt from the room if he saw that now.

He swore he could already *hear* Snape sneering from the doorway...

Clearing his throat uselessly, Harry came to a halt beside the bed, still looking at the armful of flowers, (determinedly *not* at Draco). He remained still for a moment, until he found courage enough to thrust them out to Draco, not trusting his voice to say anything but, "I'm...I'm sorry," he murmured.

Draco flushed a crimson shade of red and bit down on the side of his lip awkwardly, eyes wide at the great bouquet of flowers now pointed in his direction. All the pain in his arm seemed to fade and everything went still. He sat still for a few, silent moments and the entire room focussed on the bizarre and embarrassing gesture. What was Harry thinking?!

"You're sorry?" Draco gasped, finally breaking that silence with a flicker of his eyelids (though everyone's eyes were still fixed on him and Harry when he began to speak). This was awkward. He snatched the flowers roughly from Harry's hands. "I hate flowers!" He lied, throwing them on the floor beside the bed like they were a dirty pair of trousers.

The dark-haired boy had been correct about one thing, it wasn't sitting well with Draco, but not the way he thought. No Draco was sat uptight and stiff. This had embarrassed him more than anything, and he wasn't making fun of Harry at all...just loathing him for putting him in this position. "Anything else to say?" Draco hissed, and everyone else in the wing seemed to go back to what they were doing, or at least pretend to.

Harry found himself staring at him for a long time, a treacherous stinging he didn't surrender to pricking the backs of his eyes. His mouth moved soundlessly, stunned for a few moments before he lowered his gaze again, not looking at the embarrassing gesture on the floor as he leant in, kissing Draco's cheek. "Just...sorry," he murmured stiffly, so that the others in the room could not overhear, he wasn't going to give any of them the satisfaction in seeing him break. He drew away then, his jaw set with humiliation. "Get better – I'll see you around," he said, before departing the hospital wing as fast as his legs could carry him.

Draco sneered and rushed his hand over where Harry has kissed him, rubbing it away spitefully, right now he just wanted to be left alone, even though watching the person he loved walk away like that was painful. His pride send a painful stab through his stomach and he felt as though he couldn't react. And so, saying nothing, he let Harry leave, walk away without a moments thought of stopping him or apologizing. He swallowed hard and turned on the remaining people gazing at him. "What are you all looking at?!" He spat.

His head hit the pillow hard, crashing down into the bittersweet comfort of it. He shoed Snape away, closing his eyes slowly. He just wanted to sleep for now.

While the gesture of dying for him was noble and brave, it was something he would not comprehend, he could not. If it were anyone else, he would understand, but not someone as important as Harry, with everything at stake, he just couldn't allow him to play the noble hero who died for the people he loved. It wouldn't solve a thing, if he died, Draco and Hermione would still die without him, and that was so painfully obvious to him that he was furious with Harry's ignorance. And what was worse, Harry couldn't even work out why!

* * *

Some time in the night, he was awoken by screaming. Harry's body had flown up from the sweaty tangle of sheets, only to discover he was the source of the screams. At a loss for what do with a recurring nightmare he *knew* the precise meaning of, Harry had simply rolled over, shivering with cold sweats in the darkness, before reaching for his wand. *Lumos* illuminated the tip and he set it on his pillow beside his head, closing his eyes as he tried to steady his breathing – but he did not fall back to sleep again that night...

His mind was too full of dark places, of death and emptiness – why did Draco feel so distant from him when he felt anger or anguish?

Daybreak crept through the castle and Harry didn't move. He felt a familiar prickle of Draco's presence nearing every now and then, but it faded as soon as it had come. And when the sounds of the students hurrying to their first lessons had died, Harry finally dragged himself from the bed and dressed himself half-heartedly. But this wasn't for him. He'd felt bad that he hadn't gotten to speak to Hermione before he'd left the Hospital Wing in such a rush yesterday – she had been unconscious but that was no excuse for not even leaving a note for her. And so it was her that drew him to those familiar doors, the sight of them inciting a wicked uneasiness in his gut, even now. This was where it all began, for him, in his mind anyway.

He had come to see Hermione, not Draco, (the thought of what Draco might say after such blatant rejection made him uneasy) yet he could not help but wonder as he stepped through the doors and found the Blond had vacated his bed. A frown creased his brow, and Harry stepped further into the room, clutching a box of unopened *Chocolate frogs* (whatever they were) that he had found in the trunk in his room.

“Where's Draco?” Harry asked, feigning mild disinterest as he approached his best friend's bed and set the chocolates down on her side-table. She regarded him with an odd look from the bed, her skin quite pale but her cheeks rosy. She was going to be alright.

“What happened?!” She asked immediately. “After I was knocked out yesterday I mean?” She patiently awaited an answer, she just knew Harry had to have done well if they hoped to convince Harry he was making progress. But her smile faded when Harry's turned into a frown.

“I told Snape that I would save you and Draco as well as kill Voldemort and he and

Draco didn't like it," Harry explained matter-of-factly. After less than an hours sleep he just didn't have the energy, he felt so detached from the situation, especially after staring at the door in his insomnia, almost waiting for Draco to step through it. But he hadn't. *I'm not chasing him anymore*; he thought distractedly, *I can only say I am sorry, nothing else. I won't humiliate myself any more by having my attempts thrown back in my face...*

"Draco was injured too, that's why you were brought here – umm...sorry," he murmured, the last part with a small forced smile as he pushed the chocolate frogs towards her. "I didn't mean for you to get hurt, but Draco saved you from most of it so I think you'll be alright." He met her hard gaze then, and knew she was wordlessly insisting he explain the part he was purposefully missing out. A low sigh shuddered through his clenched teeth.

"I brought Draco... I brought him *flowers*, alright?!" He growled, irritated with himself, and how stupid he had been. "And he threw them and my apology in my face. I don't know what else I can possibly *do* for him! I'm working as hard as I can, night and day, with little or no sleep and he can't even forgive me for something I said while I was afraid? After all of the spiteful, vile things he said and did to me for much lesser reasons...and I forgave him for all of them, didn't I?" He asked, but didn't give her the chance to answer, as he slumped into the chair beside Hermione's bed. "I just don't want to fight anymore..."

"Harry, look at me?" Hermione requested carefully with reassuring smile. "You can do this! We all *know* you can and, well... The reason they were probably worried about what you were saying was because you're our only hope. They don't want to hear you say you will sacrifice yourself for others when you're just as important as they are (if not more so in all this). I suppose that was what they were thinking. You know the reaction Draco gave you when you said you would die for him, this is the same thing."

She gave an exhausted sigh, leaning back into the pillows as she surveyed him. "It's just not good enough, and it isn't what they want to hear. It's like you have given up

before you have even tried, even if that's not what you intended when you said those things."

Harry raised his head, intrigued, realisation evidently dawning on him with her words, which continued before he had much chance to ponder them. "I know you thought you were doing what was right for you, but ideally, dying is not an option. And to go near that subject, whether you're doing it with a death wish or with the intentions of a noble hero...it's just not what anyone wants to hear, understand me?"

Harry stared hard at her for a moment, pondering her words, his teeth worrying his lip spitefully. "Of course you don't want me to die – I don't want to either, I was just upset – I've said sorry, I can't unsay any of it," he replied, his fingers tightening in frustration. "I know – I know I shouldn't have said those things, shouldn't think them, I'm just – you want me to be your bloody hero don't you?" He snapped, the despair clear in his voice. "That's what heroes do, they die for the people they love, they don't want to, but they are willing to. That's all. I'm willing to, to save everyone, in the grand scheme of things – the same as *anyone* would be."

"That's fine Harry, I understand, just don't voice it so freely, or so often. Some things, whether they be heroic or not, are better left unsaid." She gave him a softer smile, and he finally returned it weakly. But the peace was shattered by a thundering crash beyond the doorway. Screams carried through the shuddering walls and Harry winced, whirling on his feet to stare at the wood, groaning under the pressure of the trembling stone.

"What the hell was that?!" Harry gasped. Hermione struggled quickly to her feet and grasped her wand from the bedside table.

"We're being attacked!"

No sooner had the words left her mouth than the walls quivered, the windows

trembled in their panes and Harry seized Hermione's arm, pulling her sharply to him, just as the doors flew off their hinges. The first year in the opposite bed screeched, petrified in his bed.

"*Wingardium Leviosa!*" Hermione screamed, and the doors screeched to a halt midair, where she sent them hurtling back towards the familiar assailants that were marching up through the Hospital Wing. *All the Teachers are up in the Staff Room at this time*, Harry guessed, since Madam Pomfrey's office was dark inside. There was no one near enough to be of any help.

"I'll kill you first, Mudblood!" Goyle snarled, aiming his wand at the flying doors and making them explode into tiny pieces, the splinters flying in all directions. Harry shoved Hermione down behind the bed, bolting across the room and dragging the first year boy – bed sheets and all – from his bed. They both tumbled to the floor just as the jagged, wooden spikes crashed into the space he had just rescued him from.

"I'll kill you and make Potty watch what we do!" Came Crabbe's voice this time.

Hermione winced in her space, laying flat to the floor and readying herself to aim at their feet, but not before her hand stole into her robe pocket, where it lay at the side of her bed, her eyes trained on the enemy as the half a dozen *student* death eaters advanced slowly, menacingly. Her fingers found the cool metal of the coin and she rubbed it – *hard*, desperation clawing at her lungs as she threw her arm out under the bed. "*Incarcerous!*" She screamed, and Pansy Parkinson was thrown across the floor, her entire body bound with thick, unyielding rope.

"*Impedementa!*" Harry shouted in unison, and Blaise Zabini's footsteps slowed to the point of slow-motion. "Now," Harry gasped to the first year at his side. "Run to the Staff Room, bring Professor Snape – all the teachers, immediately do you hear? Don't stop until you've made them listen!"

The boy nodded frantically, his eyes wide and his face pale with sickness. He looked like he may vomit.

“I’ll cover you, you run, got it?” Harry explained and again the boy nodded, but as soon as he showed his ascent, Harry scrambled to his feet. “Protego!” Harry shouted, but he wasn’t sure that was the spell he cast – the blue, reassuring light flew around the nameless boy instead of him as he leapt over the beds, the spells the Death eaters sent bouncing back off in random directions so that everyone – even Harry and Hermione, had to duck to avoid them. The ceiling crumbled as one of the darker, heavier bursts of light struck, and Harry watched it carefully. He didn’t want to find out what would happen if the ceiling came down!

“Stop him!” Pansy shrieked from where she lay, struggling but bound, and Crabbe turned, about to dart after the boy when Harry ran into the aisles in the middle of the beds, in plain sight and successfully drawing all attention back to him. “Were you looking for someone?” Harry asked, as coolly as his rapid breathing and frantic heartbeat would allow. A ripple of fear crept up his spine and he knew Draco could feel it, but he was too far away to answer it, even if he cared enough to come looking to find out what was wrong...

He didn’t come when you woke up screaming every night, why should he come now? He’s angry at you – you idiot, his mind spat, even as he raised his wand to the enemy in challenge.

* * *

Draco pulled his hand from his pocket, clutching the coin Hermione had given him; all time froze when he saw the markings around the edges signalling to him, adding to the potent weight of Harry’s fear in his chest. Something was seriously wrong. He seized his wand from the side, staring for a moment at the four walls of his new sanctuary, the room he had been moved to. He had thought to ignore Harry’s fear for

his lover's own sake. Harry didn't think he could cope on his own, didn't think he could face this, but he could and it was up to Draco to show him that, not run to him in the night when his nightmares returned, not to encourage his dependence by cuddling him until his fears dissipated every time – though Draco wanted to.

He scowled at the quivering stone. Harry wasn't that far away. He could *feel* him as strongly as he could feel the castle shaking around him. *Something is very wrong...*

* * *

The air was knocked from his lungs with a *whoosh* as his body slammed into the ground.

“*Stupefy!*” Hermione screamed as she flew across the room, the young death eaters repelling her spell. They should have known – Voldemort's biggest problem, all three of them were in this castle, of course they would use insiders to get rid of them! They should have known...

“*Stupefy!*” Hermione tried again, as the Death Eaters raised their wands. “*Flipendo!*” That second one hit, sending Crabbe flying backwards through the air, soaring into the wall and taking another random slytherin with him. “Harry? Harry, are you alright?” She gasped, stooping to his side but never taking her eyes off of their enemy.

“Smashing,” Harry groaned, his back screaming with negation as he planted his palms on the ground, trying to push himself up. “The teachers won't get here in time, Hermione,” he murmured, reaching for his wand even before he got to his knees. “We're on our own.” He gazed up at her, even though she could not look back and the world around them seemed to come to a stand still in the fleeting moment that the saddest of smiles touched her lips. How many times had it been like this? Just them and Ron, against overwhelming odds?

“Best take advantage of your training yesterday then,” she managed through that pensive smile and Harry nodded, even though he knew Hermione wasn’t strong enough for this. He’d have to try and end this quickly, before she was really hurt. “*Furnunculus!*” He cried as he rolled up onto the balls of his feet, Goyle’s face erupting with boils before he could conjure so much as a word.

“Those marks on your arms aren’t strength,” Hermione stated, moving to stand before them, her head held high. “They’re your death sentences.”

Blaise Zabini sneered at her, full of disgust as he raised his hand (his unoccupied hand) and backhanded her across the face, sending her hurtling across the floor. “Filthy little *Mudblood!* You know *nothing!*” He snarled.

With rage flaring fiercely in the pit of his stomach Harry shot forwards, flaming light bursting from his wand. “*Incendio!*” He snarled and watched with twisted satisfaction as Blaise’s hand, the one that had struck Hermione burst into flames. The dark boy screamed in blistering pain, swiping at Harry with his burning limb and Harry scrambled back to get away from him, stumbling flat on his backside.

“Bastard!” Blaise screeched, “Put it out, put it out!!!”

“Hold still!” Crabbe cried, trying to aim the feeble blast of water from his wand at Blaise’s arm. His skin sizzled sickeningly, blood crying from the blistering wound as he turned on Harry, slamming the Chosen one back to the floor, his foot pressed into Harry’s throat.

“You will pay with your disgusting life, Harry Potter! You’re a fucking *disgrace*, to everyone and everything! And Draco ruined himself the moment he lowered himself to touch you!” Blaise sneered, grinding his foot deeper into Harry’s neck before bringing it hurtling down onto his face. Harry screamed as his nose *crunched* and Blaise smile sadistically, only pressing harder as the bone started to crack.

Then a figure appeared in the doorway, storm-grey eyes narrow and fierce with fury. “Get away from my...*my boyfriend!*” Draco grunted, causing all the attention to flip directly onto him.

“Oh no! Look whose just arrived?” Blaise laughed nastily, pushing his vile shoe harder into Harry’s yielding nose. “What are you going to do, Malfoy? *Cry?* Last time we cornered you, you were too much of a *coward* to even say anything! You froze up, whimpering that you were safe that no one could hurt you – over and *over...*” Blaise laughed louder and more hysterically now. Draco flinched, he hadn’t realised that he was speaking aloud then. Anger and humiliation shook his insides, making the hand that dived into his pocket for his wand *quiver* with it. A rage of racing adrenaline pounded through him.

“That was when you were only after me, and I was willing to put up with anything I had to for *him*, but now you have actually involved Harry, that...that pisses me off!” Draco snarled, “*Expelliarmus!*” He yelled, sending Blaise’s wand flying from his hand, the dark boy stumbling away from Harry, who was already quickly climbing back to his feet.

“Turned all ‘*Gryffindor*’ on us have you, Malfoy?” Crabbe sneered, he and the remaining slytherins closing in, watching as Harry’s hand flew to his nose, blood rushing down his face as he stumbled over to where Draco was standing.

“You came?” he choked out through his bloody nose, grasping his wand with his other hand, even though he could barely pronounce a spell clear enough to cast. Even still, he could not help but notice, despite everything that was happening, the small flutter in his stomach at Draco’s defence, at Draco calling him...

“Harry!” Hermione screamed from where she lay, and Harry’s gaze shot to the nameless face on the right, leaping before his companions to attack.

“*Avada Kedavra!*” He cried.

Draco batted Harry aside, the vibrant flash of deadly green light whizzing past his ear and missing them by an inch.

“*Sectumsempra!*” Draco snarled, in no mood for mercy after seeing Blaise’s foot at *his* Harry’s throat. Harry’s eyes widened as he watched the stranger fly backwards, a sickening *slicing* sound cutting through the air, blood spraying from countless cuts that ripped through his body.

A sickening flash of déjà vu tore through Harry’s gut and he stumbled a little, still holding his wand out straight before him. He blinked away the stinging in his eyes. That flash of light. The fear, the agonising line between hatred and passion and longing. He was so sure Draco could feel it flooding through him, even more so that he *knew* why, and Harry shook his head in an attempt to clear it of the confusion.

Draco shot a reassuring look at Harry, he knew Harry could feel fear from that spell – *that* spell! Harry eased quickly enough with the smile Draco had given him. Walking close to the fallen, dark slytherin, Draco sneered down at him. “This is what happens if you try to kill us – you *fail!*” He snarled, turning on his heel and away from the bleeding body now staining the hospital wing floor.

“What is going on here?!” Snape demanded as he strode in through the broken doorway, Professor McGonagall following close behind. Both sets of eyes shot to the dying body convulsing on the floor with horror. Every wand remained raised, even in the presence of the teachers, though everyone was silent.

Harry hurried to his feet (knowing not to say anything to Snape about what had happened just yet) he glared side-on at Hermione. The slytherins didn’t know Snape was in alliance with Harry, nor did the Dark Lord for that matter, and Snape had to

treat carefully here.

“They’re wearing their Death Eater’s robes, Professor,” Hermione gasped, rubbing her rapidly swelling cheek (where Blaise had slapped her) and stumbling over to stand beside Harry and Draco. “They came from *Voldemort*! They tried to get rid of us because of what we did!”

Harry closed his eyes, trying to shove the nauseating feeling of *remembering* that spell from his mind, stepping back to fall beside Draco, so that he could feel the soothing buzz of the Blond’s heat close to him. His face was throbbing in pain and he couldn’t decide whether it hurt more or less to keep his eyes open.

“Indeed?” The Potion’s Master murmured with a raised brow, casting a glance to the Headmistress before raising his wand. “*Obliviate!*” Snape snarled, and the incapacitated enemy writhed on the ground, before passing into unconsciousness, leaving the room perfectly silent without their cries of agony.

“That will do,” McGonagall breathed nasally, as if she did not approve at all of what was done, “They will recall only their failure, and forget your presence entirely, Severus – should they be intercepted by their...*Master* before the aurors can deal with them accordingly.

Harry’s eyes were wide now and he looked from Hermione and Draco, to the slytherins on the ground – and then Snape. “They...they’ve–”

“It was necessary for me to erase their memory of me being here – if I intend to keep my place as the Dark Lord’s spy,” Snape explained testily, a sneer turning his expression as he looked on Harry’s disapproval.

Harry shook his head.

“I don’t...memory is something sacred,” he stated stiffly, the subject a sensitive one, given the circumstances, “you shouldn’t–”

“Life is far more sacred, Potter, and in this case, mine would be forfeit if they told I did not aid them. And while my life is an empty treasure for you, without me, right now, we do not have a chance.”

Harry raised his chin, the manoeuvre nowhere near as impressive with his nose crippled and blood oozing down his chin. “Just because we needed to doesn’t make it right,” Harry sneered, his words slurred with pain and blood. He wanted to look back to Draco, but he was still so overwhelmed that the Blond had come to his side when he needed him, and without knowing whether Draco would take his side or not, he didn’t want to risk harming the renewed warmth inside him.

Draco turned to Harry and raised his wand slowly, everything and everyone else seeming to fade into the background for a few moments when their gazes locked. Draco smiled, flicking his wand with an elaborate *swish* at Harry’s face. “*Episkey!*”

Harry gave a startled cry as the bridge of his nose snapped back into place. *That isn't the first time your nose has been broken by a slytherin*, Draco thought sadly. And the smile drained from cheeks as he turned to Snape, who seemed to still be speaking. Harry's gaze remained fixed on Draco's sudden frown with confusion before it was also drawn to the dark professor.

“...I said we have to move the slytherins – *Potter, Malfoy!*” Snape snapped, this time with Harry and Draco paying attention.

Harry gave a small sigh, before he, Draco and Hermione joined McGonagall and Snape in levitating the offending bodies out into the hall.

“We have to be swift,” McGonagall stated, “the spare classroom along here will do –

they need to be set down and body-bound until the aurors get here.” The Headmistress directed them through a nearby door, and as quickly as they dared, they levitated their enemy inside.

“That means move faster, Potter,” Snape sneered at Harry, who was at the back of the group. Harry’s jaw set, but the Professor was not done. “If any of these troublemakers awaken before they are bound they could cause our Chosen One some trouble.”

Hermione peered back over her shoulder for his reaction, but Draco seemed unfazed, perhaps silently waiting for it. He didn’t need to look. The Blond could *feel* Harry’s building frustration after all...

“If I escaped Voldemort I must be stronger than you or even I give myself credit for, *Sir*,” Harry spat back testily, swearing he saw Draco smiling a little over his shoulder, as if pleased with the answer.

Snape continued forwards without pause, though if they weren't in such a rush Harry knew the man would have turned to tower over him as he spat back, “Arrogance will get you nowhere, *Potter*, and *neither* will that *cheek* of yours!” The Professor flipped his head to the side, directing his glare to Draco who was giggling under his breath. “Don't encourage him, Mr. Malfoy!”

Draco caught a glimpse of Harry then, who was beaming and he smiled back, before noticing the professor glaring at them both.

They soon reached the spare room and lowered the slytherins to the floor, binding them sufficiently. “Good!” Snape concluded turning to Minerva. “Now, we should inform the aurors—”

“No need, I have already sent word before we came down, Severus,” She said, and Snape nodded carefully before spinning on his heel, offering one last, unimpressed

look to Harry and then strutting away with his cloak flaring behind him. Draco dashed quickly from where he was standing (Harry and Hermione close at his side) and rushed after the departing professor.

“So that's it?!” Draco shouted, halting him in his steps. He turned slowly back towards the blond, who seemed to be filling with rage.

“Draco?” Snape said, calmly.

“You're just going to walk away, with no explanation, no nothing? We could have been killed just now! Is Harry not safe, not even here, at Hogwarts?!” Draco demanded furiously, cutting off every attempt of Snape's defence.

However, he had a point that he couldn't let drop. The teachers should have known, and prevented this from happening. Harry's gaze seemed to be widening at Draco's words, he felt like for some reason he was on the verge of tears. His eyes were prickling madly and his knees felt shaky...

“There should have been better protection for him! You said it yourself – he is important, and yet you let this happen! He just had his bloody nose stamped on–”

“Which you fixed,” Snape interjected. But Draco was nowhere near done.

“So *what*? Because I fixed his nose that makes it okay that it was possible to break in the first place? It...that...that makes it fine for these arses to–” Snape lashed out, seizing Draco by his collar tightly.

“It may have escaped your notice, Draco, but your pretty boyfriend is Harry Potter – The Boy Who Lived!” Snape spat, his face so close to Draco's that the Blond winced at the potent smell of Snape's breath. The last time they had been like this Snape had been angry and scared for Draco's safety...

“He is the Dark Lord’s bane and will never be safe! And now you’ve chosen to...to *lie* with him, you will never be safe either!” There was definite fear there, glowing in such dark, exhausted eyes. Snape had loved very few people in his life and he had lost nearly all of them, he’d be damned if he lost anymore, it seemed.

“You, Weasley, Granger and Potter, you broke his wand, took the bite from his bark and he’s mad for the desire to see you all bleeding at his feet! You cannot let your guard down anywhere – Hogwarts is the *safest* place but it is by no means safe. If you want your precious *Chosen* to survive, it will take constant vigilance! It will take your every strength to ensure he reaches his final task and moves beyond it. You cannot afford to slip up or I...” The Professor stopped for a moment, “We will lose you both. And Miss Granger.”

Draco winced – *hard*. He hated that the professor was right. His eyes twitched and he growled under his breath, “I *know*!”

“Draco, come on,” Hermione intervened, she had already walked closer and her hand was over his shoulder now. He shook her off coldly and turned away from Snape, eyes narrow as he walked back by himself in the opposite direction, not even offering Harry so much as *eye-contact*...

“And now you're running away?” Snape snarled after him, but Draco said nothing and continued walking. He felt too tired to care, too scared to *try*! He already knew he was as close to death as Harry, but as teachers didn't they have the responsibility to make the students at least feel somewhat safe, no matter if they were on the Dark Lord’s black list or not!

“I need to sleep!” Draco sighed, continuing to walk away until he was out of sight.

“Let him go, Potter,” McGonagall said softly, setting a hand on the young saviour’s already heavy shoulders. “He has lost a great deal, and everything he has known, his name, his life, his home, his family...you,” she paused, her accent an oddly calming rhythm and he closed his eyes, trying not to concentrate on the potion’s master’s words too much. *We are never safe...*

“Everything he has hangs in the balance,” McGonagall explained, “he could lose it all, one way or another. He just needs some time.” With that, she patted his shoulder gently again, and sent him and Hermione back to their rooms. Hermione of course, was anxious to return to lessons and Harry waved her on when she tried to linger, there was nothing his friend could do to cheer him right now. He was shaken, irrevocably by the piercing memory of that spell, by Snape’s words and by Draco’s sudden arrival then departure. And he didn’t know what to make of any of it.

* * *

Fear slowly settled heavily on the thin lining of Draco's stomach, never had he been so afraid. He had always known, and he had always felt *fear* in knowing, but when Snape had stated his life’s endangerment so boldly, he suddenly felt sick. He paced hazily along the corridors, his mind broken into a million, senseless, *directionless* particles scattered to the unyielding storm. He had lost who he was, and he couldn't understand, everything was so broken.

But he could not be *silenced* – would not allow himself to be.

Despite everything seeming so surreal now, so nostalgic, so *bright* and *painful*, despite thinking he wasn’t ready, he was growing. Even with the looming shadow of their potential end hovering above them all, he, Harry, Hermione – *all of them*, they

all had something Lord Voldemort did not; they had the one thing it would take to defeat him...

Each other. Smiles, happiness, *love* – all of those things were what kept him here now, what made him immortal. He knew he had to be strong, no matter how frightening it got. His sickness eased then, and his eyebrows slid inwards with a frown.

I won't sit and wait anymore! I will protect Harry! And we will beat this!

The door to his new chambers swung open. Visually, it was exactly the same as his separate one in the dungeon, except that the window was washed with real moonlight now, not an enchanted replica of it. The door slid quietly shut behind him and he moved over to the bed and grasping the vase from the side and setting it on his generous side table.

“*Aguamenti!*” He chanted quietly, filling the bottom of the vase with water and trying not to pay too much heed to Harry’s desperate misery leaking through his core like bitter poison. Harry was having a nightmare again, he could *feel* it like it was his sweat trickling down his neck, his terror wracking his unconscious body until his limbs ached from the tension. He felt this every night, every time, but he couldn’t go to him, not at this hour and not when Harry might assume he was pushing his luck by going into his bedroom. In this situation, Harry had to be the one to push such boundaries...

Slowly he unfolded the white handkerchief he had had in his pocket and set it on the bed. “*Finite Incantatum!*” He breathed and at once, the shrunken object burst back into the full-sized bouquet Harry had presented to him yesterday. Even now, with no one to see him, he flushed. He hadn’t been sure why he’d gone back for them – it seemed his feet had carried him there without his mind realising and it had still been there, on the floor. He hadn’t even apologised...

He carefully separated the flowers and sliced the stems, placing them gently into the vase and arranging them to look nice. He couldn't look at them too long without blushing however, so he placed them on the bedside table and turned away. It was such a romantic gesture, and he had even told Harry he loved him, so why was this any different? Why did it feel so...?

He sighed awkwardly, but smiled. *I should apologise to him*, he thought calmly, but the calm didn't last long when suddenly a prickle ran down his neck and over his shoulders to his chest, stabbing painfully at the scar of *Sectumsempra*. He screeched and reached his hand for his chest. *Harry is...he is suffering!*

But I can't go to him, not...not now, Draco thought, falling forward to the bed, sweat slicking his skin, his breathing growing heavier and louder. Everything inside his chest felt tight and constricted. *Was Harry drowning?* The nightmares had *never* been this *painful* to Draco before – *never* this bad. Or was this connection getting stronger? Why did he feel so much...*suffering?*

“Ahhh!” He cried out in unbridled agony, clutching the sweat-soaked shirt that clung to his chest in his hand. *H-Harry?!*

~To Be Continued...

Chapter 30: Chapter Thirty

(Bound By) Clandestine Addiction

[Chapter Thirty]

“Sectumsempra!”

Harry screamed in agony as the spell slipped through his lips, without his intention. He watched as Draco flew backwards, his limbs cracking menacingly on the stone floor, and blood pooling thickly around him. His eyes were wide, his lips moving with soundless torment. “No!” Harry screamed, throwing his offensive wand away from him, the vile thing that had done the deed. Scrambling over to Draco’s suddenly *melting* body, he heard the chilling laughter that plagued him every night – Voldemort’s chuckling malice echoing through his head.

He reached down with desperate fingers, trying to gather Draco’s body in his arms but his fingers just slipped through, his body rotting away into the stone. He’d used this spell on Draco – he’d nearly killed Draco with that spell! That was how the bond was formed! But the revelation of reality did not save him from the laughter now piercing his eardrums.

He screamed again, covering his eyes as the image of the graveyard swirled before him. He didn’t want to face this again, buried alive by the people he loved...

But he could not escape it, it was inevitable, and still so very real. He could still taste the dirt and the evil writhing in it as he bolted up from the bed, still screaming. He

clasped at his hammering heart as he gasped for breath, his throat raw and ragged. He reached desperately to the side table and seized his wand. “*Lumos!*” He gasped and that relieving light burst from his wand tip, fighting away the shadow weakly.

But something flickered along the crack of the door, blocking the light from it briefly, and his gaze shot to it. It looked as if something – *someone* were lingering on the other side of the door. Slowly, he crept off the bed, as soundlessly as his bare feet would move across stone and Harry found himself holding his breath to quieten the raggedness of it. Pressing himself flat against the door, he felt his skin hum as if the wood were vibrating and he closed his eyes, inhaling deeply.

Draco.

Seizing the handle, he threw the door open, only to find the cold, empty corridor on the other side. Draco, or anyone else who may have been there, was nowhere to be seen. *But I swore I felt him there*, he thought. Or perhaps, he had felt him, but not as close as he imagined? Turning back to his room, he threw open the trunk at the end of his bed, still using his wand as the only source of light and tugged at the neatly folded fabric that he had found in the pouch Snape had given him. Most of the precious possessions had made no sense on first glance, a vacant old bit of parchment, a shard of broken mirror...

This, however, on closer inspection, had made perfect sense, but he had not found use for it, until now. He pulled the sheer fabric around his shoulders and up over his head, watching his body disappear as it settled over him. He just needed to see Draco, just for a little while, even if Draco didn’t know he was there...

Perhaps the cloak was redundant; however, as when he snuck quietly into the Blond’s room, and approached the bed, his lashes were dusting his cheeks in uneasy sleep. His eyes were moving rapidly beneath the lids, his body taut as if under torture and Harry’s breath caught in his throat as he *swore* he saw those lips move in the shape of

his name. Draco had tried to sleep through the agony he no doubt had felt through their bond?

Harry frowned, at the thought that his own inability to suppress his nightmares was costing Draco sleep too. It was ice to feel Draco's emotions, it was nice to feel that tingling buzz through his skin when they touched...but he didn't want Draco to suffer just because of him. *Because I nearly killed him*, Harry thought, the gravity between them overwhelming the guilt and tugging his outstretched fingers to run along the softness of Draco's cheek through the cloak. Draco started at once, snapping awake and rolling back in the bed to stare at the invisible space Harry stood in with wide, sleepy eyes.

His eyelids fluttered, and sleepily he wiped his aching eyes with his sleeve, there was no one there. He sighed deeply and fell back to rest his head on the comfort of the pillow. But his eyes wouldn't close. They stung from his constant crying and lack of rest, but he winced and reminded himself that he had to endure this. *Harry is far worse off and in much more pain than me, I have to be stronger than this!*

Reaching for his wand that lay on the bedside table, he tucked it under his pillow. He wasn't really sure why, but it made him feel safer when his defence was closer. "I must be the worst sort of coward," He hissed quietly to himself, unaware that Harry was listening. He forced his eyes shut this time, even though it was painful, even though darkness plagued his dreams, he needed rest.

Harry's throat tightened until he felt like he couldn't breathe. Draco had been a lot of things in the past, (worse than he knew, of that he was sure) but whatever he had done then...recently, his deeds were nothing like cowardice. Draco was...his flawed but stunning hero, always.

At that moment, the moon broke through the veil of thick cloud, like hope in the dark and bathed his pale prince in its silvery light. Following the trail of the moonlight

upwards, he saw flowers, a lustrous bouquet of lilies stood in the vase, the white ones almost glowing in the dark under the moon's touch and Harry felt his eyes glisten and sting. He blinked hard, gasping as his breath caught again, the noise making Draco turn his head towards him again, staring hard at where he was.

Harry reached forwards, sweeping away his invisibility cloak with his arm so that it pooled at the floor, leaving him vulnerable to Draco's surprised gaze. Harry stared at him for a moment, his eyes shining wetly in the soft light and he set a knee on the bed. Leaning down, he brought Draco's chin up so that their lips could meet, while his free hand smoothed through the soft, blond tendrils. He drew back after a moment, studying his boyfriend's face carefully, as if mapping every shadow and line. He waited then – deciding against mentioning the flowers, Draco had kept them, that was the important thing to him – He waited, with bated breath for his flawed but beautiful hero to break the silence.

“H-Harry!” Draco gasped, shimmying backwards in shock. “A-Are you alright? Your nightmares, I...?” Harry's hands suddenly reached forwards for his shoulders. The blond froze when Harry smiled.

“I'm alright,” he said, earning a smile from Draco in reciprocation. Carefully, Harry wiped the line of sweat from Draco's forehead with his pyjama sleeve. The blond flushed at the gesture, there was that fluttery awkward feeling again, the one unrelated to the bond, the one that was solely Harry's doing.

Slowly, warily, Harry's tongue darted out to wet his dry lips and he sat back on the bed a little more, not sure if he was pressing his luck or not here. “Let me stay here?” Harry asked vacantly, though his eyes were still shining with more emotions than perhaps he could express in words. A frown creased Draco's brow, but it was one of uneasiness not rejection and Harry slid down on the bed, his eyes open and staring at a place on Draco's chest, not brave enough to meet his eyes.

Draco didn't move towards him, seemingly frozen where he was, upright and lost in thought. So Harry remained rigid on the very edge of the bed, so unsure of what

Draco wanted right now. He seemed to have accepted the flowers, but did that mean forgiveness? That he wanted him to be there, in his bed? Or did it not mean anything at all? Harry inhaled, his chest tight. He was so confused. There was a warm body beside him, one that's mere *presence* sent tingles through his skin, yet he couldn't be happy, couldn't be sure if it were appropriate to Draco's desires.

Why did it have to be so difficult? His eyes clenched shut as he felt Draco's gaze finally fall down to him, and silently he waited to be ushered from the bed. They loved each other didn't they? Shouldn't it be easier than this? When Draco still hadn't moved, Harry sighed, reaching across the chasm between them, his cold hand sliding over Draco's stomach and around his waist. Drawing in a shaky breath, Harry felt relief swim through his veins as his skin tingled with warmth, warmth that seemed to stem from Draco's body. The Blond stiffened but said nothing and did not shove him off, so Harry slid forwards, pressing his forehead against the warm, alabaster plains of the Slytherin's chest. Waiting.

Within his breathless chest his heart thumped, once, then twice, until the blond's hand slowly reached up to caress Harry's scruffy locks. "Yes you can stay," He said simply, not knowing what to say after his answer. He stared down at Harry pensively and smiled at the boy's head of unruly hair.

"Tell me what happened, I mean, tell me more about this?" Harry asked, sliding his hand up to the giant scar on Draco's chest. And Draco then stiffened.

"I...I can't. I said you could stay here, but I don't want to talk to you about this, not...just not now..."

Harry frowned, sighing heavily against Draco's chest and tracing the opalescent scar with his fingertip gently. "I did it though, didn't I?" He murmured and Draco remained still and silent in answer. "And when I did, I nearly killed you – that's when the bond was made, wasn't it?"

"What part of *I don't want to talk to you about this* do you not understand?" Draco

snapped, and Harry recoiled a little leaning up on his elbows to stare up into Draco's frustrated expression.

"Sorry," he said immediately, without meaning it fully. "I don't want to fight I'm just... I'm sorry I did that to you...even if it lead to something...amazing."

"You were briefly told what you needed to know about it, I just don't see the point in going over it when we have more important things to worry about!" Draco said. Patting the space Harry had shied from a moment ago. Harry found a smile somewhere inside him and moved up closer to his side. "I feel warmer with you next to me," Draco breathed, reaching his arm around a nervous Harry and pulling him in tight to his body.

Harry felt the tightness in his chest dissipate and he leant into Draco's embrace, inhaling his musky smell and closing his eyes to simply bask in it for a moment before feeling an odd, desperate heat rising in him. A need. He brushed his cheek along Draco's chest, up over his collarbone and along his throat, his lips brushing the rapid pulse beneath before moving up to graze over the curve of the Blond's jaw.

His chest knotting with his held breath, Harry rolled over to straddle Draco's body, their noses touching as he panted heavily against slightly parted lips. He rocked his hips softly into Draco's, so that the Blond's cheeks flushed and he groaned quietly despite his resolve to remain impassive through the advance. Harry's lashes dusted his cheeks as his eyes fluttered shut and he leant in closer, so that his lips skimmed Draco's with the words, "I need to have you...right now."

Before Draco could answer, his hand hooked the back of the Blond's neck and he pulled him sharply against his mouth. He groaned, his tongue swiping over those lips before darting inside to touch the tip of Draco's, daring him to respond, and their mouths parted wetly in necessity for breath.

Draco groaned heavily against Harry's advances, lips so close when the blonde gave Harry a sexily sadistic smile, the boy flinched back a little. "So this Harry has an insatiable desire to top me to does he? Hmm...you really haven't changed at all have you?" Draco teased, though Harry seemed somewhat confused and his cheeks were colouring darker.

Draco's hands flew to Harry's wrists, gripping them tightly before flinging him sideways. He tumbled over him, tussling with him in the sheets until he found himself on top, Harry below him (and groaning). Draco's chest collided with Harry's in the quick movement, their sweat-dappled skin gliding together deliciously, their souls on fire and hungry for more.

Draco's eyebrows arched playfully. "So, you want to top me, huh? You *always have*, but I never really let you, maybe after we defeat the Dark Lord I will..."

Harry snarled teasingly, shoving Draco back hard, knocking the wind out of him and sending his back crashing into the bed. The Blond's arms were pinned at his sides as Harry's legs wrapped around him, leaning down to ravage his throat with his teeth, soothing the already purpling marks he made with his lips. "I'm yours – you said it before, but that means you're mine too," Harry hissed against that adam's apple, his words vibrating along Draco's skin until he could not help but allow a gasp of pleasure to escape his lips.

"You want me, and I'm going to have you," Harry murmured, a sudden confidence flaring inside him at the feel of Draco's hardness against his backside while he pinned him. Draco wanted him alright. "Don't play hard to get, Draco, it doesn't suit you..."

Draco smirked devilishly (after the initial shock of Harry's leap of confidence). "I don't play hard to get, I *am* hard to get. Do you know how many girls wanted me? Before *and after* I started fooling around with you? Don't get cocky!" Draco hissed, shoving Harry down to the side forcefully, his gaze narrowing.

Harry was once again under his control, his body tense under Draco's hold. "And you may want me, while I want you, but that doesn't mean I'll just bend over with ease *like a sissy* and let you fuck me," Draco laughed. "I don't spread my legs as easily as *some* people we know..."

"I'm not a sissy," Harry snapped, "It takes a damn sight more strength to spread your legs and take it than it does to poke your cock through a hole, you arse!" Wrestling one of his arms free he reached up, seizing the back of Draco's hair until his head was bent back harshly. "And you don't have to bend over – I'll take you any way you want, but I will have you." With that, he reached down, cupping the bulge tenting Draco's boxers.

"You little perve, Draco," he breathed, wrapping his fingers around that hardness completely and tugging. "You actually *want* the *Chosen One* inside you?"

Draco shuddered wildly at Harry's husky tone, it was so *hot* and *intense*, his lover's breath tickling his sweat speckled skin gently. "No! That's *not* it! But I...I know Harry wanted it...so...well... It doesn't even matter, just forget it," Draco ground out. He was making a mess of his words, and what's more, he was making himself look ridiculous by actually admitting he wanted to do *that*.

To some degree, he supposed Harry was right about him wanting the *Chosen One* to take him, and to actually try it properly and he was... Well, he was right about everything, but Draco would never give him the satisfaction of letting him know that. The Slytherin simply raised his brows playfully, fisting Harry's hair and yanking his head towards him, bringing their lips but a hairsbreadth apart. "How many times do I have to tell you? Don't. Get. Cocky."

Harry grinned devilishly, following the pull of Draco's fist and smoothing his mouth over Draco's a final time. "About as many times as I have to tell you to shut up and take it," he purred dangerously, giving Draco's throat a mock-punishing bite, before dropping butterfly kisses down that pale torso. Harry exhaled purposefully over a rosy nipple *just* brushing the perky tip between his lips until Draco wriggled in a mixture of impatience and negation. "Yes, Draco, squirm for me," Harry breathed, abandoning the nubs that so wanted his attention to kiss a wet trail down that body. He caught the light dusting of blond hair that led beneath those boxers with his lips teasingly until Draco's entire body tensed with anticipation.

"You perfect little prince you," Harry teased, holding that glazed over gaze as he rubbed his face over the bulge of Draco's underwear.

Draco groaned, his teeth clenching. A confident Harry was fine, but a *cocky* one made him irritated (perhaps because that made them more alike). Draco wasn't sure, but he wasn't comfortable, wasn't confident in his place with Harry when he was like this. It felt like rivalry – *again*.

Draco quickly tugged on Harry's hair, dragging him backwards, his lips sliding wetly from his pinkish nipples as Harry fell back into the mattress. Draco leapt over him with a fierce snarl. "I don't bloody *squirm* for anyone, Potter! Got it?" He spat. His hand hurried down to Harry's pulsing bulge and he grinned slyly when Harry wriggled against his determined, fervent touch. If Harry wanted to dominate him, he was going to have to fight for it. And Draco would not budge easily. *That* or wait until Draco allowed it...

"I love you, especially when you're so turned on you're embarrassed and stroppy," Harry growled, reaching into his pocket for his wand while Draco's furious gaze was focused on his glare. "*Incarcerous!*"

Draco yelped as his wrists were yanked hard upwards and bound to the headboard.

Harry smirked at his fury, flipping him over onto his back and straddling Draco's chest. "I actually find your pride and that foul temper of yours endearing," Harry purred, sliding his pyjama bottoms down (taking pleasure that he was more clothed than Draco, thus tipping the scales of dominance in his favour) and bringing his burgeoning arousal out into the cool night air.

Say what he might, he saw Draco's eyes darken with lust as Harry rubbed the crown of his hardness over Draco's perfect lips. Draco wanted him. "Don't scowl, you can have it whenever you want," he mused, his voice the epitome of derisive seduction and as Draco opened his mouth to spit out a retort, Harry slapped his cheek lightly with his cock. "Look how pretty you look when you want cock," he murmured, feeling Draco's body sizzle with arousal, whether he was angry, whether this was the way he wanted it or not.

"I don't think you like me now that I can give you as good as you get," Harry said, bracing himself against the wall and rubbing his cock into Draco's face. Draco squirmed again, trapped as Harry grinded into his face. "Or is it, that you like it too much, when I play with you? Draco Malfoy?" His tone was a sultry hum now, akin to the buzzing pleasure in their flesh where their bodies touched. He slid down Draco's face again, pre-emission drizzling over the Blond's lips as he drew back to let his arrogant, proud slytherin answer.

Draco's eye's narrowed, fluttering with embarrassment against his crimson dusted cheeks. But then, he closed them determinedly, biting his lip. *This is so bloody hot!* He was (for a moment) lost for words and he struggled for some time to form a coherent sentence. When his eyes opened again, the shone invitingly in the darkness, shimmering in the glow of the passing moonlight as he whispered, "So you cocky little arsehole, you think you have what it takes to follow this through, *do you?*" He jerked his eyebrows up smugly. "Just because I'm tied up, that does not make you the one in control!" Draco snapped, a little aggravated and aroused at the same time.

His tongue shot out and flickered over the swollen head of Harry's cock end. The scrawny boy winced at the fleeting pass of that devilish tongue and Draco hissed,

“See, you won't last *five minutes* in my talented mouth!”

Harry raised a brow, before sliding his thumb into the corner of Draco's mouth, prying it open and sliding his cock fully inside. Draco spluttered around him for a moment at the abruptness, and his murmuring attempts at speech around Harry's member made his back arch. The vibrations felt so good, he slid his hand into Draco's hair, caressing it as he thrust lightly inwards. “Don't talk with your mouth full,” he scolded, tipping his head back in bliss as that slick, tight wetness sucked him until Draco's cheeks hollowed.

“Hnn, that's it!” He hissed, Draco's tongue swirling around his head whenever he drew back far enough. Glancing down, he saw Draco's eyes closed, his cheeks dark with a flush.

Draco felt his hips jerk madly as Harry's cock began sliding easily in and out of his mouth, it felt 'odd' to have no control, but it definitely wasn't something he hated...

“Hmm,” He gasped, tightening his lips hungrily around the invading organ. He could see Harry grinning smugly above him and the blond nudged him with the side of his leg. Harry suddenly pulled out for a moment, his cock bobbing in front of Draco's face as he spoke. “How many times, get that look off your face!” Draco snapped with annoyance. It felt so degrading to be the one being humiliated, even if he was secretly getting off in a way he never knew he could...

“Manners,” Harry groaned this time, his hips jerking with maddening gyrations down Draco's throat, shuddering and panting when the Blond swallowed purposefully around his cock as he plunged into him. “I – I love you!” He panted, his eyes screwing tight now. “You petulant little—” He cut off, his teeth sinking into his lip as he reached around to pluck Draco's eager nipple in reward for his talented mouth. He tossed his head to the side, it was just too amazing!

“I – love – your mouth!” He declared, his every muscle bunching in anticipation of explosion.

“Hmmm,” Draco hummed smugly around that pulsing cock. Harry honestly heated his skin, made him tingle all over with sensation. That long, hard throbbing cock twitched in his parted lips, plummeting heavily into his wet, steamy mouth. It slid in easily with the saliva building around Draco's tongue. He moved his hot, needy throat around the blistering organ and swallowed him deep. He could feel Harry jerking into him with a surge of rising pleasure.

“You...you...like my mouth that much, huh?” He gasped shakily, words blurred by the purpled prick oozing a thin trail of pre-cum along the roof of his mouth. Harry seemed to be blushing. He knew Harry wouldn't last much longer. It felt good always being right! He grinned.

Harry's body jerked and rippled, both hands flying forwards to brace him against the wall. “I – I love – love *everything*!” He gasped, skin trembling with the tension. “Oh please, open your mouth!” Unwittingly, he surrendered his dominance, even whilst topping. Draco's lips parted with a grin, before he opened his mouth wider and Harry hissed, pressing his leaking, throbbing head into that eager tongue and jerking into that mouth as his climax burst on Draco's tongue.

A strangled groan left his lips as Draco's mouth sealed around his cock, sucking his sensitive tip dry until Harry drew back, unable to take the stimulation any longer. Gasping for breath, he slumped over Draco a little, and the triumphant look (and the way Draco was keeping his mouth sealed around the load) should have been enough to warn him of what was coming next.

Holding his gaze, the blond swallowed. “Sit back,” Draco instructed, hands still bound

as Harry began to move back against the bed (so that he was leaning on the end post). Draco's foot crept forward, slowly reaching Harry's chest and trailing feather-light up his skin to twist his left nipple. Harry yelped, a mixture of pleasure and pain rushing over him. Toes weren't quite as controlled as fingers, and it felt rougher. Draco continued to circle his toe mischievously around the perky nub, sending shivers over the *Chosen One*. The slytherin laughed (almost menacingly) when he asked Harry to return to him.

Harry of course accepted (despite being confused) and then Draco spoke. "Ease yourself onto my cock, *Potter!*" Draco hissed, his voice dripping sex, almost *snake-like*. A dirty smirk had overridden his features and his own cock was aching with need.

"It isn't your turn, Mr Malfoy," Harry breathed, sliding back all the same, grinding his hips so that his twitching, hungry hole skimmed Draco's throbbing hardness. The blond let out a choked groan, his arms pulling tight in their bindings as his body tried desperately to reach him.

Harry repeated the motion, just as he raised his hand to trace the shape of his lover's clenched jaw. "As tempting as that is," he began huskily, sliding his first two fingers into the blond's mouth, groaning at the sweltering heat and slick, teasing tongue around his flesh. The memory of Draco's cock stretching him made him salivate, but that wasn't what he intended right now. Right now, he wanted to feel what Draco felt when they were this close, but more than that he wanted Draco giving every last inch of himself to him only.

Draco snarled with annoyance. "Untie me at once!" He commanded, though it sounded more like he was pleading, and he struggled to tear his head away from those fingers, which kept parting his lips wide. Harry's eyes seemed to narrow in amusement while Draco's did so in frustration.

“You've had your fun, now I mean it, *Potter*, untie me!” Draco demanded, trying not to allow his cock to touch that tempting body above him more than it had to. The shuddering tingles were driving him almost insane, and these restraints were infuriating him!

He was been so used to being in control, and while this was fun for a while, it was also degrading, and enough was enough. He almost choked as he panicked and wriggled against the rope, face swelling in dark redness as he tried again to reach for Harry, but got nowhere. The vein in his head was pumping heavily, and showing more the angrier he became. “I said, *untie me!*”

Harry sat back a little, pausing in the action of spreading the Blond's lithe legs. He stared up into furious grey eyes, unsure whether to test Draco's limits any further tonight. “Calm down a little, Mr Malfoy,” Harry breathed, smoothing his hot palms up the backs of Draco's thighs as he pushed them open and slid between them. “You've seen how good it makes me feel...” He trailed off suggestively, bringing the fingers dampened by his Slytherin's mouth to that quivering, puckered entrance.

Draco's body tensed despite the little hiss of pleasure that slithered through his lips, and Harry's eyes flicked up to him briefly, before his head descended between milky thighs, humid breath and devilish tongue brushing over the tight ring. “Ahhhh...!” Draco groaned at loudly, a mixture of hazy pleasure and prickling pain (and damn right embarrassment) bursting through his being.

“H-*Harry*?!” Draco gasped, eyes cracking open a little and staring up at him, glazed over with confused passion. His shoulders tensed suddenly as that tongue licked up the twitching crack. “I don't – I don't...” He stuttered, not sure what he *really* wanted. “This is *humiliating*,” He grumbled out at last, attempting to clamp his legs together, but failing terribly thanks to Harry's presence between them.

The wet moisture leaking from Harry's tongue made that place wet and needy, more

desperate than before. The feeling was strange, but enduring, and before he knew it...

“More?! P-Please...!”

“Hmmm,” Harry hummed, feeling his lover’s slit tighten in pleasure. “You look gorgeous like this.” Yes, head thrown back and jaw slack with delirious pleasure Harry had struggled to get him to surrender to. He seized the back of the Blond's knees and pushed them back to that pale chest. Spreading those cheeks, he dipped between them, mapping the tight, pink ring with the very tip of his tongue.

“You like that, hm?” Harry teased, pulling the wrinkled skin taut and tracing careful circles around it. “Hold your legs open for me?” He asked not sure whether Draco would comply or not but reaching around to caress the length dripping onto Draco's belly regardless.

Draco wriggled perfectly, half arching into that hand and half onto his prying tongue. It strained his muscle but it was worth it, as he breached the rim at last, so tight and hot around him he swore those insides were melting. He tugged on the Blond's foreskin at the same time, relishing every sound and movement. “That's right, talk to me,” Harry prompted, his words a sultry whisper.

Draco raised his legs as high as he could (without the help of his hands, which were still bound) and forced them back and wide apart, thankful his blond strands were covering his glassy eyes. He bit harder into his lip, trying to ease into the awkwardness plaguing him.

“T-Touch my nipples too!” Draco pleaded, in a guttural outburst. He winced as he realised how gay that sounded. What was going on? He was asking *Potter* to twist his bloody tits! But it felt nice – nice to let go of himself for once. “*By Merlin* – Harry

Potter, why do I let you do these things to me?" He hissed, shuddering against the invading tongue which kept pressing deeper. The vicious static *burned*. He wasn't used to this, it was overwhelming.

"So... W-What are you g-going to do? Fuck me?" Draco purred between breathes, his cock springing up towards Harry of it's own accord when he brushed the foreskin down with more force.

"Fuck your tight little bum?" Harry asked, pulling back from Draco's arse, saliva dribbling down his chin as he smiled deviously. "You'd like that, wouldn't you?"

Bringing his free hand up, the Chosen One plucked one of the needy, pink buds, running his callous fingertips around them loosely, before pinching it hard. "Tell me how that feels?" Harry demanded, leaning forward to grind his aching cock along the slick, dribbling crack, humping him slowly as he tortured those nipples. "Tell me..."

Releasing the small bud in favour of other pleasures, Harry sucked his own digits suggestively, before reaching down to press one fingertip into the greedy, welcoming tightness. "God, that's hot!" Harry panted, sliding the appendage in deeper and curling it inside. "You feel so nice..."

Draco growled at Harry's cocky tone and hissed at his invading fingers. He was not amused by the words spilling from those lips and the way those fingers moved inside, but could not help but respond in any case. It was hot and heavy; nothing had ever felt this powerful ever, not even the electricity from the bond.

"It – it feels...*alright*," Draco stated, though Harry probably realised he wasn't being completely honest with that answer.

"Just *alright*? Harry teased. And Draco tensed, shivering wildly, bearing down onto those digits to try and expel them. It hurt! But he could hardly tell Harry to be careful

without making himself look like a sissy...

“Just alright,” Draco repeated, a pained smile crossing his lips once more. “It takes more to make me into some prissy *bottom*...you'll have to try harder than that!” How could he not realise that teasing at that moment was such a bad move, especially when he was the one still tied up?!

Harry frowned, staring down at the place where now two of his fingers were swallowed by Draco's impossible tightness. Draco had been more than happy when his arse was getting licked...

“Your *prissy* bum cant take much more,” Harry murmured, reaching over for his wand and aiming it at the burning hole. “*Delugero!*” He gasped, hoping he had memorised the spell correctly, but as a thick, purple fluid burst over his submerged fingers, he knew he had guessed right. It made the skin around him squelch and he saw Draco blush furiously at the embarrassing sound.

“That should make it a bit nicer for you, hmm?” Harry asked, his voice a low, careful whisper, “Are you embarrassed about all the sloppy noises your prim little hole is making?” The way his words tumbled off his tongue made his cock jerk up, desperate to get *in*. He ignored it for the moment, craning his neck so that his every breath skimmed over the flared, purple tip of Draco's erection.

“I don't *need* lube, I can take it without!” Draco hissed, feeling the cool liquid begin to trickle down between his cleft. He was already too late and Harry seemed to be ignoring that argument as he continued to probe his tight hole with the cold jelly. “And I'm not '*embarrassed*' by anything you do to me!” A poor argument in light of the redness creeping over his cheeks. He arched uncontrollably against the lips around the head of his neglected prick and shuddered. So hot and humid it made him shudder right down to his core, he felt his cock *burn* in it's eagerness

“Nghh!” He moaned, almost as high pitched as a *girl*. Harry instantly looked up at him, not knowing he could make such a sound and Draco flicked his head aside, hair falling into his eyes. “Shut up!” He grumbled, unable to look at Harry. “So I...maybe I get a bit embarrassed...”

“HMMMMM,” Harry hummed deeply, the vibrations carrying through Draco’s heated flesh until it felt like it was *melting* on his lips with the intensity of it. His eyes glistened perversely as he gazed up at Draco, locking gazes, before descending over the dripping cock on his tongue. He struggled to hold that gaze as he dropped over it, swallowing around the thick length as it hit the back of his throat. He inhaled through his nose, concentrating on not choking, before running the flat of his tongue against the hot flesh.

Draco groaned, pulling his legs back unwittingly at the surge of pleasure in his gut and Harry smirked around his mouthful, his cheeks hollowing as he sucked, his fingers twisting inside the slick, loosening entrance. And that indignant, embarrassed flush colouring his Slytherin’s cheeks, it made Harry’s renewed erection leak over the sheets.

“F-Fuck! Draco groaned, jerking into that hot mouth. His cock was on fire! Harry had been good in the past, but this was *unreal*. “M-More!” He winced, the feeling of the fingers inside him maddening, sticky and tight, but delicious. And then, the feeling of Harry’s lips cocooning his cock at the same time! He was... It was...!

“P-Please!! F-Fuck me, Harry!” Draco gasped, drawing the boy closer with his feet. Draco’s cock fell from Harry’s mouth as he followed Draco’s pull, their eyes meeting at last! It was so *strange*, something Draco had been denying – no, not *wanting* to feel... and it felt so...

“Fuck me!” Draco groaned again, with more passion and need this time. “Please?!” He darted up to try and reach Harry, to try and kiss him with his tongue out, but missing and falling back. He wriggled in his restraints, like a panting dog and he begged, again attempting to lean in for touch, but Harry's face was just a bit too out of reach for him. Frustration reached his lustful, darkened eyes. And Harry had more than a mere smile on his face at the sight of such need, such hunger in the face of the proud Slytherin who said he would never be seen as a bottom.

“Yes,” Harry murmured, drawing back from Draco and withdrawing his fingers from that hole noisily. “How can I say ‘no’ when you asked so nicely?”

Reaching up, Harry dragged his pyjama shirt over his head, removing the final barrier between them and tossing it to the side. He gathered some of the lube dribbling out of that hole into his hand, rubbing it over his hardness and shimmying up the bed so that his leaking head ghosted over Draco's entrance. Spreading the wrinkled hole taut with one hand and guiding his erection in with the other, Harry let out a low groan of pleasure as the flared crown popped through the tight ring of muscle. He stilled for a moment, feeling Draco tense and then slid in deeper.

So tight and hot it was sweltering!

“Ahhgnn!” Draco cried furiously. He felt so pathetic but it *hurt!* A rush of stabbing twinges centred on his stretched skin below, and he knew he had let Harry do this once already, but he didn't remember it feeling this painful at first. He groaned with frustration, he wanted to tell Harry to be careful, but his pride seemed to be stopping him and he ended up saying the opposite...

“Is...is it even in there yet?” He gasped, lips widening into an ‘o’ of pain with a hint of bitter amusement lingering beneath. He was amused with himself, that even now, he couldn't be honest about what he wanted, and what was on his mind. He laughed under his breath. He had become so accustomed to lying to Harry about his feelings

that he didn't even think about it before he spoke.

Harry let out a panting gasp, his heart hammering in his chest as if he had run a marathon, and he set his arms either side of Draco's body, drawing back out of the tight sheath of Draco's body until only the tip remained. "*Delugero!*" He chanted again once he had hold of his wand, (never very far away) before sliding back in, the extra slickness easing the burning pain he felt, piercing him with Draco's agony.

"You don't have to lie to me, you know," Harry murmured, his tone a tad softer than before, and with his elbows planted in the bed either side of that breathless body, he brought a hand up to smooth the rogue, blond locks back out of Draco's face tenderly. Draco scowled at him, his mouth opening to spit some retort, but the sound caught in his throat as Harry slid in, slower this time. Small, shallow thrusts carried him in until his balls rested against the stretched, burning cleft of Draco's arse. "Better?"

Draco simply nodded (though he still looked quite uptight and awkward). He felt stupid for a moment, *of course* Harry would know how he felt. He could *feel* his pain rushing through him, no matter what kind it was. Because of that stupid bond! Draco threw his head back when Harry's cock moved in him again. He felt full and breathless, not sure where to turn his head, what to say or do. It was all so disorientating and intimate; the steam from their interlocked bodies was blurring his coherency. He wanted to say *something*!

"I – I just... Ahh! So...so good!" He groaned out brokenly. He felt Harry's hand slide over his hip tenderly, the tickling touches along his sides making him shudder. His skin pimpled and his nipples stiffened at the sudden feather light touch. Then Harry's hand reached his cock, and he had barely touched it before Draco arched forward against it. "Yes! T-Touch me!" What was happening to him?

Harry smiled breathlessly, curling his fingers around the Blond's erection and caressing it with long, fluid strokes. "That's my demanding boyfriend," Harry

growled appreciatively, leaning back to guide Draco's writhing hips back into him. His free hand squeezed him hard now, thumb sliding up to graze the swollen tip and spreading around the pearly substance gathered there. "Taste it," he murmured, holding his thumb to the Blond's flushed lips.

Draco's cock jerked in that hold at those words. *Taste it? How perverse!* Draco growled huskily with a dark smile and darted his tongue along Harry's thumb. "And that's my well-influenced little fuck toy," Draco retorted, like a teacher correcting a student. He licked his lips needlessly. "Hmm, better than your taste," he declared with a chuckle.

Drawing Harry's thumb deep into his mouth, Draco sucked it fervently, seductively swirling his debauched tongue around the digit like it was his cock. Harry jerked up quickly against him and Draco yelped, pulling his head from Harry's hand. Saliva dribbled down his chin and his eyebrows tilted inwards. "What was that for? Because I said my cum tastes better?" Draco joked, and another harsh pound to his ass sent him hissing with pleasure/pain. The motions were growing faster and harder, Draco was drowning in the tide of ecstasy again.

"T-Too much!" He panted. the feeling inside his cock swelling with blistering heat at every movement. "But d-don't stop, *please!*"

"*Finite Incantatum!*" Harry managed out, seizing Draco's legs roughly behind his knees and pushing them back to his shoulders as he plundered that loosening hole, relishing the wet, slippery sounds coming from him. "Pull on your needy little nipples," Harry growled out as Draco's hands were released, his jaw tensed with the unbearable pleasure spiralling through his core. His eyes devoured Draco's body greedily; no one else ever has ever seen him like this, *ever*. He watched the Blond's cock jump with every thrust into his tight, perfect body with utter desire.

"Come on, Draco pull your nipples, touch yourself. I want to see it. Show me how

much you deserve me..." He didn't know where his playful confidence was coming from, but it was no doubt inspired by the furious arousal that jolted through both of their bodies at the sound of it. This was different, this balance between them. It was overwhelming.

Draco flushed madly at the Gryffindor's words. His sides seemed to tense when Harry plunged into him and slowly he brought his shameful hands up at once, crying into the pillow like a girl as he plucked his own pink buds teasingly. "Hmm, bloody hell, so... Ahh!" He screamed, his inhibitions fading and his pride long vanished. He tweaked at the pinkish nubs, and twisted them, circling his fingers delicately over the erect area with tickling touches. Then suddenly, Draco's hands shot down and grasped Harry's sides, pulling him closer, his breathy demand whispering hotly into Harry's ear. "Well come on then, *fuck me*, fuck me hard...!"

"On your belly then, *Draco*," Harry wheezed, his pronunciation of the Blond's name a long, slow hiss and punctuated by a swift lick of the shell of his ear. Draco's body jerked up into him in response. When that was the only response he got, Harry pulled out of that body, ignoring the noise of protest and flipping Draco roughly over onto his front, face first into the pillows. "Keep your shoulders on the bed," he ordered when it looked like Draco might move, seizing those hips and yanking them up until he was on his knees.

His prick ached, jerked, a thin line of pre-emission slicking the tip, as he ran his fingers through Draco's hair, and up along the perfect line of his back, to caress the soft, pale globes of his bum. Draco made a high-pitched attempt at a growl in his frustration, swaying his hips impatiently under the scorching but inadequate touch of that warm palm on his backside. Smiling at the eagerness that had come from such irritated reluctance, Harry brought his palm up, smacking Draco's arse hard.

"Now, what was it that you wanted me to do?" He asked with husky, feigned innocence, sliding the bulging tip of his eager cock over Draco's rim.

Draco flushed, and wriggled a bit, but only enough to show this was degrading him no matter how much he liked it. Draco's eye's widened against the sheets; this position was so unsuitable for someone like himself (yet he didn't argue). "God I hate that you do this to me!" Draco stated deliriously, "Please F-Fuck me, I want you to fuck me! Fuck my tight little hole. Stretch me. Open me, *please*, j-just do it now!" He could practically feel the smirk on Harry's face, and he purposely buried his head further into the pillow when Harry pressed forward and squeezed his penis back inside.

Draco reached his hand down quickly and began fisting his own cock so Harry could see what he was doing from above. "Hmnn..." He moaned through parted lips. "More?!"

"Yes," Harry groaned, his every muscle tightening at the sight of Draco's cock hanging down between his legs, being jerked roughly in the Blond's fist. "You spoiled little tart, you'll get exactly what you want," Harry purred, his voice soft and amused. Setting his hands on Draco's hips, his nails dug in as he shoved roughly into Draco's tense hole, the slick chute swallowing him up eagerly and clinging to him in protest as he drew back, only to drive deeper. A guttural groan left his mouth and his lashes fluttered over glassy eyes as he saw Draco pressing his head into the sheets, trying to silence himself.

"I want to hear you," Harry almost snarled, reaching down and fisting his hand in Draco's hair, yanking his head back just as he gave a particularly punishing thrust into Draco's sweet spot. As Draco's head was torn up from the pillows he gave a husky scream of pleasure. Harry smirked, "You shameless slut," he purred, reaching beneath them to pluck one of Draco's nipples as he hammered his way deeper. "Come on, *Sweetheart*, make some noise for me. Scream until your throat is raw while I stretch your prim little bum!"

Draco hissed through his teeth at Harry's tone. "Stop *that*!" But the vibes of shuddering pleasure coursing through him were obviously forcing Harry to say more. Draco's fingers clenched in the sheets, his other hand tugging madly at his leaking

prick. “You have n-never been this...this *dirty* before,” Draco gasped out through his embarrassment. He had created a monster. “I...call me a slut...call me a slut again?!” He pleaded, his voice louder, shameless now. Harry’s cock seemed to swell in his arse at that. He could swear it was getting fatter and deeper with each stroke. He heard Harry snigger above but ignored it and pleaded again...

“Ahh...tell me what a bloody slut I am! Tell me – tell me how you like my prissy arse, please, Harry – H-Harry?!” Draco’s cries were at the top of his lungs now, tearing his throat ragged. But still he pleaded, needing more. His knees quivered in the sheets, his entire back shivering, glazed with sweat and he was finding it hard to keep his position up. The feelings were overwhelming him and weakening him, yet at the same time sending him sky-high.

Then, he fell forward with a sudden crash and slipped away from Harry. Rolling to his side, he tilted his head back in invitation and Harry smiled indifferently.

“You want me to fuck you sideways?” Harry asked. Draco merely nodded.

“Just do it...!”

“You beg so prettily,” Harry cooed in his ear, taking one of Draco’s thighs and hooking it over his shoulder, so he could see and reach every inch of the lightly flushed, slender body. “Look at me, you pretty little slut,” he demanded huskily, and as soon as those grey eyes, glistening with delirious pleasure were on him, he slid his cock back in the slippery hole. “You’ve gone all loose but you’re still clenching around me,” Harry groaned, reaching down to grab Draco’s cock, as it arched hungrily up to his belly, salivating. “You slut, you love the Chosen One using you as his bitch, don’t you?”

His thumb grazed the drooling slit and Draco tossed his head into the sheets maddeningly, his hand flying down to hold Harry’s wrist, in case he tried to tear it away again. The hot, slickness around him sounded wetly with every inward thrust, tugging a low groan from his lip. “Oh...your arse, it feels so nice! Love

– *fucking* you!” Draco’s body was arched up from the bed after that particularly hard thrust and Harry smirked dazedly as the Blond’s crotch tightened impossibly. “Does my pet slut want to cum?” He breathed hotly, watching shivers caress Draco’s body at the words.

Draco moved his hand down and entwined his fingers with Harry’s over his cock. It felt too good! The end was practically bursting from him in the copious supply of pre-emission. “Please, let me, make me... *God!* I want to cum, please!” He begged, spreading his legs for Harry to slide even deeper. His tight ring below clenched around the invading organ, sucking it in like a magnet each time it pulled away.

“Fuck!! I’m so close – so close!!!” Draco whined, his face wrinkling when his and Harry’s hands both stroked faster along him. “Hmm, tell me I’m a slut, Harry, tell me – tell me anything, just...just talk!”

Leaning down, his hips jack-hammering so hard into Draco’s body he felt the tendons rising achingly in his legs, Harry seized Draco’s mouth in a rough, possessive kiss, jerking that length in his hand maddeningly. They were both so near the end. “You perfect slut,” he spat, biting the Blond’s lower lip until he cried out in pleasure. “Cum for me, make a mess over your Chosen One, *cum!*”

At that moment, his balls tightened and he threw his head back, his load bursting in Draco’s sweet hole. “You wonderful slut,” Harry purred, stroking Draco’s length still, feeling the climax rising through the Blond’s body. “C-Cum!” He hissed, “Cum over me, and lick it all off...!”

“My body, it...it’s ...”

“Tight? Harry answered; feeling it too as that hole swept him deeper and deeper, grasping his cock as tight as it could, milking him dry. Draco rolled his leg round from Harry’s shoulder and gasped, seeing the full view of Harry’s naked front he

pounded back onto him desperately.

“C-Cumming!” Draco gasped, arching forward into that hand with a dizzying rush of whiteness. “I’m – F-FUCK!” He yelled this time. Suddenly the hot, *searing* fluid rushed out over the end of his purpled hardness, the veins throbbing wildly. The substance squirted up over Harry’s chest, slicking his nipples and dirtying both his and Harry’s hands. His body gave a last feeble squirt and then he lay there, panting, gasping for air. Arching up, he drew Harry near, his tongue quick to shoot out and starting to lick his semen from the smooth lines of Harry’s body.

Harry inhaled sharply at the feel of that devious mouth lapping at his over-sensitized skin. Rolling onto his back. He caressed the sweaty tendrils of blond hair as Draco followed him, licking the streaks of his climax away. “T-That...!” Harry gasped, his eyelids fluttering as his vision slowly stabilized. “That was – *amazing*! You – everything with you feels like the first time. You – you felt *perfect*!”

At some point, Draco’s mouth had stilled, and the Blond had slid back up the bed to lie beside him – though slightly higher up (probably in an effort to reassert his dominant position between them). It was for this reason, that when Harry opened his eyes a moment later, he was staring up into Draco’s face, cheeks warm in the afterglow.

“That felt brilliant,” he murmured huskily, spooning against Draco’s body, “Did that feel brilliant?”

Draco sighed deeply, his heart still racing madly from the crescendo of blissful emotion. It had been so intense...

“It felt...good,” He admitted, struggling not to choke on the word ‘good’. His hand

reached across his lovers stomach as he pulled him in. He somehow felt he needed to be close. Carefully, he buried his head into Harry's neck, so that his lips lingered perfectly over the boy's ear. "Don't get cocky now, just because I let you top me this one time," Draco said, explaining it as if to a child. He really was a proud, egotistical bastard wasn't he?

"No, of course not," Harry laughed softly, turning his head eagerly into the warmth of Draco's face and swinging his legs over to interlock with Draco's so that their bodies were knotted together. "But technically this was the second time you have let me," he mused, seizing the covers with one arm and pulling them up around them. "I liked topping you," he admitted bluntly, small, pleasant shivers tugging at his skin as Draco breathed softly in his ear, the arm wrapped around his waist creating a warm puddle in his stomach.

"I like this part too," he murmured hazily, meaning the embrace they were locked in, a yawn tugging at the corners of his mouth. "I dunno if I liked it more than *you* making love to *me* though..."

Draco gazed down at him about to speak, but Harry's quiet breathing had deepened – he had already fallen asleep. Draco's eyelashes flickered and he smiled, glassy-eyed and overcome with emotion. He sniffed. God, his chest felt ready to burst open. But in the most amazing and blissful way it could – filled to the brim of someone he loved so much.

~To Be Continued...

Chapter 31: Chapter Thirty-One

(Bound By) Clandestine Addiction

[Chapter Thirty-One]

Briskly the cloaked figure crept along the unfamiliar street, the light from above was non-existent – the moon having died long ago to the cavernous darkness, and the streetlamps long smashed by the juveniles that lived around the area. Only clouds of ominous grey hung above, there seemed to be a storm coming. As the clouds grew thicker, the black-cloaked professor drew nearer, drawing his hood carefully up to keep his face covered. He trailed silently up the handful of concrete steps and knocked quietly on the door of a very narrow, grey, weather-worn house.

There was only a few moments of silence, a few moments of waiting. The sounds of birds had long vacated, the trees dead and lifeless, the only sound to soothe him the eerie whistles of the wind. And they were nothing but foreboding. “Severus?!” Lucius whispered, taken back as he opened the door. “Come in,” The man insisted, his voice hushed and desperate, looking both ways after Snape had entered to check he hadn’t been followed. He closed the door immediately and a series of swift, magical locks snapped into place behind him. “What are you doing here?”

The dark, cloaked man groaned, raising his wand and pointing it to the corner of the room he had just entered. He swished and flicked and suddenly the sofa and the other objects (like the lamp and pictures that hung on the wall) flew aside, causing Narcissa to become, just a little bit uneasy.

“I am going to put some of the slytherin boys that have been causing problems at the school under your control,” Snape informed the Malfoys, flicking his wand again to

the empty corner he had just cleared. Suddenly, a set of iron bars appeared, bolting upwards from the floor and caging off that corner of the room, with bunk beds and a toilet area inside, much like a small prison cell – except in the safe house’s lounge.

“Why is that, Severus?” Narcissa bellowed, standing up beside her husband, alarmed. “Is Draco...?”

“Draco is fine...” He said, cutting across her. “No, they just attempted an attack on some students, no doubt in shadow of the parents following the Dark Lord and his wishes I imagine.”

Narcissa look relived suddenly. Snape hadn’t entirely lied, he had simply felt it best *not* to be overly honest with them, not to worry them about Draco (despite the issues) when he was fine overall.

“Like Crabbe and Goyle’s children, I imagine?” Lucius suggested, and Snape nodded in answer to that question. “What about their parents, Severus? These boy’s aren’t stupid, it will not take much for them and the Dark Lord to discover they have been extracted from Hogwarts, and are now missing, especially after they stop contacting their parents. Especially once the Dark Lord stops receiving—” His words were once again cut short by Snape.

“You aren’t stupid either, Lucius. I am sure you can figure out a way to keep them here, keep them quiet and under control. I will take care of the messages being sent between their parents and the school. The Dark Lord trusts me, or have you forgotten?”

Narcissa stared at him for a moment, as if deciding whether it was in their best interest to agree or not...

“They attacked that Potter boy, didn’t they?” Lucius asked vacantly, reading his wife’s thoughts and although Severus said nothing, Malfoy knew the answer. “Did Draco get himself involved?” He probed, but Severus turned away from him then, heading towards the door.

“I will be back soon with your...*guests*,” Severus murmured, disappearing through the doorway. He was gone not a few minutes, before several bound, disgruntled bodies appeared in the newly formed cell. Narcissa jumped back in surprise while Lucius simply glared to the barred door that Severus Snape was stepping through, shutting it on the furious slytherins behind him.

“Some warning may have been appreciated, Severus,” Narcissa complained, watching the Potion’s Master lock the cage behind him, and toss the used (no doubt unauthorised) portkey into the roaring fire.

“It had to be done quick, Narcissa,” he explained, before considering both her and Lucius gravely. “I shall of course, be brutally honest – these boys and girl have participated in activities against others that I cannot condone. They must be kept alive – and in one piece, as for the rest, I could not care.” His voice was low and dangerous. What they had done to Draco and even Potter on occasion were cruelties that made his skin burn. They deserved to rot here hopelessly for a few months...

“You may silence them if they become too tiresome.”

Narcissa’s eyes narrowed, she didn’t wish to know the gaudy details of what these fools had done, but she just *knew* it had something to do with Draco.

“Will that be all, Severus?” Lucius began, and the dark professor nodded sharply before apparating out of sight.

“So, Professor Snape is actually on Potter’s side, the Malfoys have gone into hiding and we’re being locked in a cage under the supervision of the *gay boy’s* parent’s?!” Crabbe sneered, nudging Blaise who for the first time seemed uncomfortable in his surroundings – and quiet. Narcissa shot them a dark glare. Pansy staggered to her feet, wearing the same disgusted expression as the others.

“You can’t cage us up here like animals?!” She declared, though it was glaring obvious that they would and they intended to.

“The Dark Lord will kill you for this treachery!” Goyle spat and Narcissa drew nearer.

“You think that man actually cares about you, cares about your family? Your welfare? Your lives?” She asked icily. “He doesn’t care. He is using you like he used us!”

“So what?” Blaise chimed in bluntly from behind them.

“And these are the imbeciles my son has been coinciding with all this time?” Narcissa gave them a disgraced look; disregarding the ‘gay’ comment from before she grasped her husband’s arm and tried to pull him away. Lucius merely slipped out of her grasp, not meaning to offend his wife but simply unable to put the fools back in their place. He approached the cage. “Well get used to it, and just remember who will be feeding you – if you do try anything, we can make your lives a living hell.”

Pansy laughed bitterly. “Like father like son!” She spat.

“What do you mean by that?!” Lucius snapped back. A high-pitched shriek of bitter joy left Pansy’s lips, Lucius Malfoy’s lips hardening into a tight line.

“Your prissy son betrayed his house!” She snarled, despite the way she was bound in her prison.

“He betrayed his blood for the sake of bumming the bloody Chosen One!” Crabbe guffawed, “or maybe it’s the other way around. But your son is a dirty little pouf

either way!”

Narcissa remained unfazed, merely glancing from the offending brats to her husband who was rigid in his silence, his lips curled in tightly at their words.

Lucius hadn't really dwelled on his son's relationship with Potter a great deal, mainly because with all the chaos around them, he just didn't have the time. But he had never really felt ashamed of him, he, like any father (despite his bowing and scraping to Voldemort) did want the best for his son, and he wanted to protect him, and his family. That was all that really mattered, whether he was fucking another man or not, and whether it was Potter or someone else – did it really matter?

Though with the allegations, it was slowly beginning to sink into his skin now and he did feel rather agitated about it. Not yet having had the chance to even talk to Draco about it either was incredibly frustrating. Did he even know what he was doing after all? “Whatever makes my son happy makes me happy, and it is good enough for me,” Lucius stated. Narcissa seemed to beam at his words, he had never really expressed his feelings very well – even his feelings for her or Draco, but that simply meant that those words coming from *him* meant a great deal.

“Indeed,” Snape murmured dryly, flicking his wand over the wards to ensure they were secure. “As long as your son's happiness keeps both Potter and himself from copulating all over the school...”

“Nevertheless,” Narcissa cut across him, her tone slightly affronted. Her son was a healthy teenage boy, of course he had a sex life but she didn't want to hear of it, even in jest. It wasn't proper. “Please tell Draco not to send word to us any longer,” she said, abruptly changing the subject, “owls, other means of communication keep trying the wards and whilst I long to hear from him, our whereabouts may be discovered if we are not more discreet. Charms and wards can only do so much.” Her voice, her eyes carried an air of despair that her practice in etiquette only barely disguised as indifference.

“Of course,” Severus replied blankly, seeing through her vacancy. Just as any mother, Mrs Malfoy wanted her son and she wanted him with her, to make sure she could protect him – whether that was rational or not.

“And—” She added hastily as the Potion’s Master headed for the door. “-Give him our...our love?”

Severus merely nodded, meeting Lucius’ eyes a final time before disappearing through the door once more.

* * *

Warmth, that was what touched his every pore as he awoke slowly without opening his eyes. He felt the sun on his closed lids, his body aching in just the right places. Draco must have left the curtains open because the morning light was bathing their bodies, and Harry stretched blissfully, before snuggling closer into the arms locked around him. He pressed his cheek to what felt like his lover’s chest, the soft tingle of the Sectumsempra scar buzzing gently against his skin as he felt that heart beat slowly against him.

He had never been this close to someone or something so beautiful and warm, of that he was sure. No moment could have been more perfect.

A heavy exhalation of breath ruffled his hair, and he felt Draco yawn above, smiling at the blond’s awakening. “Morning,” he murmured sleepily against Draco’s skin.

Draco’s face crinkled at the image of Harry cuddled up to him below. “Oh, Merlin, we...?” He started, sitting up suddenly in his bed. He recalled last night’s images, all too vividly. He flushed at the memory of him begging Harry to fuck him, to have him.

His hand shot up quickly to hide his reddened cheeks and he bit on the side of his lip.

“Morning,” He groaned, unable to look at his lover. Harry seemed to draw him in deeper, pulling him further into his arms – to Draco’s slight discomfort. He had always been an expert in bed, but when it came the romantic and loving stuff that came with *this part* – with the aftermath, he froze. But he had always been this way. Back then, he would have just spirited the other occupant from his bed but this was Harry, he was different. And Draco was never sure of how to react.

He tried to stop his heart from catching in his throat as he attempted *something* – for the first time. His hand slowly ghosted over Harry, brushing tenderly through his hair, along his neck and feather-light across his cheek. He flinched, knowing this feeling that coursed through him, this bliss. This was...romance? “S-Sorry...I-?” He halted as Harry tilted his head to look at him.

“Every morning should start like this,” Harry hummed dazedly, but clearly happy. Yes. Saying something incredibly hazy and romantic would certainly make Draco feel less foolish for what had been so intense, so *amazing*. And those hands, caressing him so dotingly, *lovingly* – he didn’t want to lose that closeness. “Don’t be sorry – everything was perfect.”

Wriggling up on the bed, he set his forehead against Draco’s, inhaling his musky, soothing smell before letting his lashes flutter open again, the sunlight catching those eyes in just the right way to make them shine as he stared into them. But neither of them said anything. No words were needed then. There was nothing but silence, the sweet, uninterrupted sound of their hearts thudding and their breaths mingling rhythmically. And he smoothed his hand up the plains of Draco’s chest, holding his hand over the humming, iridescent scar (over his heart) as he leant in, smoothing their lips together.

“I love you,” he breathed into that mouth, before sealing it with another soft yet ardent

kiss.

Slowly, Draco leant into the kiss, but it didn't deepen, it remained chaste and light and he flushed as Harry pulled away. "You – *you said* you love me?!" Draco gasped, eyes wide, his heart caught in his chest. For a moment, he couldn't breath. Harry hadn't spoken those words since before he had lost his memory. Draco dove forward into Harry and clung to him, entangling him in his arms, in a crushing hug. He felt suddenly overwhelmed with emotion. "I – I love you too!" He cried, fingers now clawing desperately into Harry bare shoulders.

He held Harry for a moment, just a moment, before reluctantly releasing him and sitting back. He flicked his head aside, he knew the colour on his cheeks had probably consumed his entire face by now, and Harry's eyes seemed wide as they watched him.

Harry smiled through his surprise, reaching forwards to rest his head against the juncture of the Blond's shoulder, inhaling him again. He felt every muscle in his body ripple as Draco slid a hand down his back slowly. "We're equal, then, whoever is the top or the bottom, it doesn't matter," he murmured, without really intending to, "Last night – it felt like I was so close to you that I could nearly read your thoughts. Everything you were feeling, everything was...amazing," he whispered, drawing back to consider the violent flush gracing those cheeks. He suddenly felt very light-headed and embarrassed himself...

"After we make everything right again – after we...*kill him*... What kind of things do you want to do? What places do you want to visit?" He watched Draco consider him as if trying to decipher where the random question had come from, and so Harry added, "Is there nothing that you thought you'd always want to do when the world was saved?"

He watched Draco's lips tip up at the corners in a knowing smile and his chest fluttered a little. Bond or no bond, he didn't think that nervous, blissful flutter would

ever go away. Draco leant back on his arms, seemingly thinking of an answer, but he was taking his time. Harry shifted uncomfortably, his legs crossed and his hands in his lap – waiting, and not patiently. Finally, he could wait no longer...

“Am I with you?” He asked curiously, his eyes focused on the rays of light gushing in through the window. “I mean...are we doing anything spectacular or...is there anything you’d like to do, together?”

Draco's cheeks were still a little cherry-hued, all the questions falling from Harry's lips so quick and out of the blue they had him stunned. Their relationship had come so far in such a short period. It had even surpassed what they had before. Slowly drawing back out of the close embrace, he stared at Harry thoughtfully. Truth was, he hadn't really thought about it, *everything* was Voldemort, sometimes it felt like there was nothing else. There was nothing past that, he hadn't even ever *had* the time to think about the future – especially one for himself and Harry. It suddenly seemed quite maddening, like he had wasted so much time worrying. He hadn't spared a moment for simple daydreams, thinking about what they could have if they reached their goal.

“I suppose I never thought about it, because I...I didn't want to be disappointed when I couldn't have what I dreamt of.” Draco felt the need to elaborate when Harry's smile faded. “What I mean is, the Dark Lord, he has just been such a big obstacle between us and our future that I...I never *dared* to hope – to think beyond it.”

“So you don't think we stand a chance of beating him?” Harry demanded, jumping down his throat at this new sudden change of attitude, and the stream of Draco's anxiety buzzing disconcertingly through his own skin.

“No, that's not it! I have always thought, always *known* you can do it. That's *why* I'm a little confused myself as to why I haven't contemplated a future before now,” He explained and Harry seemed even more confused then before. Draco sighed. “I just can't imagine a future for us that could possibly match up to reality, it seems too much like...well like a dream, I suppose.” Draco found himself flushing redder then Harry! Suddenly a stream of images filled his head: he and Harry, their own house, own life,

waking up to Harry making him breakfast and serving it to him in a debauched and sexual little outfit. Images of them just talking, watching the skies change and laying beside one and other in the grass like that day on the riverbank when Harry had given him back his ring.

It stopped there.

“I never really imagined a life like that for me, to be honest. I have never thought about my future,” Draco informed him. “But that doesn’t mean I don’t want to spend it with you. I... You *know* how I feel. You can feel it...”

Harry flushed darkly, looking down to the ruffled bedspread. His fingers tingled in anticipation at the sight of Draco’s pale hand, lying there on the sheet and he reached forwards, tracing in between those appendages, so lightly, so tenderly he saw a tremble move up the blond’s arm. It should be impossible, that such a small touch affected them. Was it just the bond? Or was it because of *them*?

“I know how you feel,” he breathed, smiling, always smiling right now. But as he leant in, his mouth skimming Draco’s slightly parted lips, a swift, abrupt knocking sounded on the door and before they could even fully draw apart to look at it, it swung open, their ominous Potion’s Master standing on the threshold. He raised a brow at their predicament.

The boys froze for a moment and then Harry yelped, dragging the sheets up around himself to protect his modesty.

“Do not concern yourself, Potter,” Snape sneered, “I have no desire to leer at your scrawny body. I merely came to find out where you were, since the monitoring spells alerted me to the fact that you were not in your bed – they are for your protection, you

fool,” he added when Harry glared at him like the notion of having monitoring spells around his bed were an act of perversion on Snape’s part. “Professor McGonagall placed them herself! Of course, I told her that I had a pretty good idea of where you were...” His eyes flicked to Draco.

“Well at least he is safe here with me,” Draco spat, referring to the sytherin students, and Snape’s (among other teachers’) poor attempts at protecting him. Draco was still mad, it seemed. He removed himself from the cover of the sheets, unconcerned of his nudity and paced over to the chest on the other side of the room, pulling some clean clothes from it.

Harry blushed as he walked by, making the Professor feel awkward in their presence.

“So is that all you wanted, Sir?” Draco asked rigidly, each hand holding out a garment while watching the Professor remained still and un-amused. “It’s just...” Draco moved closer to Harry with a smug smile and leant over him. His hands ran over those shoulders and rushed passed his sides provocatively. Harry winced and shuddered, but could not pull away – he never could from Draco.

“I have some unfinished business here with Harry and I can’t exactly *finish up* with you in my doorway.” He had only just realized that flaunting his and Harry’s relationship could possibly be the best tool he had – not to mention amusing, and he smirked devilishly at the expression that changed Snape’s features. He giggled slyly. Hopefully Snape would see this and leave!

“Of course,” The Professor answered with a sneer rolling his lip, “There is a final matter, Draco – your parents.”

Harry’s eyes darted to Draco, who froze in the motion of doing up his trousers, grey

gaze wide with apprehension.

“They are fine, they...they send their *love*,” he stated, his eyes rolling with disdain. “They merely wish for me to communicate to you, the importance of their location remaining secret. Whilst they appreciate that you are trying to contact them, sending owls and other means of contact to their safe house – it puts them at risk of being discovered. You must not try to contact them anymore, Draco.” He froze, however, his face paling (more so than usual) and his breath stopping in his chest as he saw the hesitant confusion cross the young Malfoy’s features.

“You haven’t been contacting your parents, have you, Draco?” The Potion’s Master asked, his voice quiet and wary.

“Well, no one tells me anything! You haven’t given me any information at all, all you ever say is that they are fine or not to worry. Nevertheless, I have not tried contacting them at all, though there have been numerous occasions where I have been tempted!” Draco snapped, in quite the aggressive tone, but then he paused. “So if I haven’t been trying to contact them, then who has?”

Snape considered him a moment, Harry naked and forgotten on the bed.

“Your parents and I believed that it was you sending the owls, and also the *other* attempts at the wards. Attempts at the floo, apparition, location charms. We had no reason to think security had been breached however...it seems that *someone* is trying to ascertain whether the occupants are truly your parents or not.” He stopped there, watching the Blond carefully.

“It’s Voldemort,” Harry murmured, his voice quiet and contemplative, but even still, Snape nodded in agreement, never tearing his eyes from Draco. “What does that

mean?” Harry asked.

“It means, Potter, that for some reason, Lucius and Narcissa Malfoy’s capture has become more important than the capture of yourself, for some reason unknown to me. Mr Malfoy, Mr Weasley, Miss Granger and yourself are the cause of his near-failure *again*. He is weakened, without a wand and without almost *all* of his horcruxes. For him to chase another...it makes no *sense*...!”

A frown creased the Professor’s brow, and he seemed to be talking to himself now, his attention turned inward, no doubt on his theories and thoughts. He seemed to snap out of it suddenly, considering Draco’s face and approaching him slowly. He stood there, unmoved for what seemed like forever, scanning every darkened millimetre of Draco’s eyes. “I will find this out – I will stop whatever he has planned for them. They will be safe. I promise you. Draco, have I ever made a promise, a true promise I have not kept?”

Draco remained still. No words fell from his frozen lips. His stomach seemed to take a dive towards the floor with worry. He looked at Harry from behind a darkened veil of long, fluttering lashes. The glassy tint that had overcome his eyes gathered to liquid in the corners, about to fall. A hysterical smile and nervous laugh escaped him.

“Right...!” The silence was consuming him, both the Professor’s and Harry’s attention solely on him – it felt too much! “I wanted to know something, and now I do...” He finished, making it evident that he had not much else to say on the matter. His feelings were obvious. And Harry could practically taste his fear through the bond.

It was a vile bitterness on his tongue.

“I am sorry that I had to lumber you with this when you already carry so much on your shoulders. And I am sorry you have to bear such distractions during your exams

today,” Snape murmured, his tone mournful. He cared about Draco after all, had watched him grow and mature, had looked after him where he could...

“Exams?” Harry asked, confused, as if something completely irrelevant had been snuck in there. “What exams?”

Snape finally tore his eyes from the Blond, setting a heavy, comforting hand on his shoulder, but looking at Harry to answer him. “The NEWT examinations begin earlier than the OWLs. Certain ones at any rate. Your friends will be sitting their exams today.”

Harry frowned. “But Draco – you can’t! You cant, not after what you’ve just heard, how could you be expected to–”

“His *parents* would expect him to, Mr Potter,” Snape explained impatiently, his teeth grinding together slightly at Potter’s tactlessness. “Draco does not care for his results but he cares for his parents’ view of them. They want him to succeed; he is their only son and heir, after all.”

“But he–”

“I will let you know if there is any change in circumstance,” Snape said to Draco, completely disregarding the Chosen One’s attempt at speech. “Good luck today, Draco.” And with that the Potion’s master departed, without so much as a backward glance at Harry, who stumbled to his feet, holding the sheet to his body when the door closed behind the professor.

“Draco,” Harry said at last, breaking the silence that had fallen over the room. “I...I’m sorry about...about not knowing. I just,” he approached him slowly, trying to catch those anxious eyes to make sure he hadn’t ruined the whole night and morning by not understanding Draco’s desire to please his parents. He’d reached Draco now and he leant in, pressing his forehead to the side of Draco’s neck and closing his eyes, breathing softly.

“I have to sit the exams, whether I have things going on in my head or not. If it wasn't this, it would surely be something else,” Draco explained with a smile, trying to reassure Harry that he could deal with it, but in turn making it worse.

“Is there...? I know there is nothing I can do to help but...maybe I can help make it a little quieter in there?” He gestured to Draco’s head, running the fingers of his hand *not* holding up the sheet along the side of Draco’s face, tickling the blond tendrils at his temples soothingly. “It’ll be alright,” he whispered gently, like a breeze easing the crumbling branches of a tree.

Draco stepped back from Harry for a moment. “Honestly, it—it's okay,” He said, grabbing his robe and putting it on at last. “You should probably get dressed, I know you don't have to sit the exams, but I won't have you sit naked in bed all day while I'm *working* hard,” Draco smirked teasingly.

What was this sudden change in mood? It was so obvious Draco was trying to make it so Harry wasn't worried. It was so...*selfless*.

Harry's features remained knotted in a frown. Apparently he was still feeling bad for Draco, and the fact that he was trying to lighten the situation, even now, so he, Harry, felt better about all this – it wasn't working.

“You're... You're so...”

”I'm *so*?” Draco prompted, watching as a tear trickled from the corner of Harry's eye and under his glasses.

“You try so hard to play the arrogant wanker, but you’re so...*selfless*! Right now, you’re just thinking of what your parents would want, what I need and...!” Harry’s already quiet voice drew off into silence and he shook his head, blinking back the

glassiness that had reached his eyes. His teeth grinded together – he was frustrated with himself. Why was he near tears if *Draco* was bearing it?

Walking over to the bed, he picked up his discarded pyjama bottoms from the night before, yanking them on, his back to Draco and wiping the single tear leaking down his cheek away defiantly. He was stopped then, however, as a soothing warmth slid over his back, wrapping around him and he looked down, seeing pale arms enveloping around his middle. He leant back into that heat, turning his head to look over his shoulder at Draco.

“Just shut up,” Draco said with a light tone and slight giggle. He felt slightly embarrassed when Harry put it like that. Lightly, he leant in and pressed his lips to Harry's forehead, brushing his mouth over it with a feathery kiss. “When we defeat him, defeat...*Voldemort*, we can...can go out – on a real date?” Draco choked, it was difficult to say those words but he felt relieved he had. The smile that had suddenly spread across Harry's face was filling him up with that soothing warmth.

“Really?!” Harry asked, his face beaming. Just the promise, the mere thought of it tugged his lips up into a smile that made his cheeks ache. He was shining with such childish enlightenment, but it made Draco smile in turn, so it could only have been something good. He turned fully in Draco's arms. “I can't wait!”

Draco smirked wider, surprised by Harry jumping against him to press their lips together with bliss. Why, amongst all the chaos of pain, was he so giddy happy?

“I'm definitely going to kill him soon!” He exclaimed, still grinning, and keeping that smile on Draco's face. He loved how he seemed to be shining with it. “Good luck with your exam – you'll ace it, I know you will.” With that, he kissed the Blond gently on his flushed cheek and, looking back at him over his shoulder every step of the way, he disappeared out of the door.

* * *

Theory of Defence Against the Dark Arts,

N.E.W.T Examinations!

Professor McGonagall watched as the invigilators moved up and down the aisles between desks, handing out the parchment and anti-cheating quills to every student. Her back was rigid, her eyes tiny behind her spectacles, and settling on two heads in particular. “They will do well, even with the missed lessons, they are the best students in the subject aside from...” her voice trailed off as if she realised what she was saying.

“Potter has not been a student of this subject for a while and is not sitting the exam,” Snape corrected her stiffly, trying not to derive some sort of pleasure from depriving James Potter’s arrogant son from passing his favourite subject.

“He was always the best, Severus, and you are perfectly aware,” she replied.

“Be that as it may, he is not sitting the exam so it is a moot point.” He glared at the Headmistress, before moving to the front line of the exam students and surveying their mixture of apprehensive, tired, stressed and bored faces carefully before taking the magical hourglass in hand.

“No talking, no glancing around, no communication whatsoever. If you need something, you may hold up your hand and someone will come to you. You will not be assisted in any way with the questions, however. You have two-and-a-half hours, you may begin.” And with that, he tipped the hourglass and the golden sand began to run from the top to the bottom slowly.

Harry sighed heavily. The heat of the summer air stole any chance of breeze and he flicked his wand lazily at the leaf he had chosen as his victim, making it float in precise, tight patterns in front of him. He had learnt a great deal in the last few weeks – especially with his extra duel lessons against Draco, Hermione and (although he was loathed to admit it) Snape.

He wondered when Draco and Hermione would be done. He could feel the Blond's anxiety but that was normal under the circumstances and he would get everyone into trouble if he walked in there for such a pitiable (not to mention unexplainable) reason as: *'I felt my boyfriend was upset.'* Laying on his stomach on a bench in the courtyard kept him quite close by and he was alone here anyway, thanks to most of the students studying for, or taking exams...

As Severus Snape stood back from the hourglass, (now floating midair) his eyes moved solely to the Blond head that bowed over his parchment, the feather of his quill brushing against his locks as they curtained his face slightly.

Draco frowned as he stared down at the first question, making a show of writing his name in the correct box elegantly to delay the time when he would have to attempt the question. But now he was faced with it again. There was no escaping it.

The hands on the clock chimed throughout the hall, they seemed to slow and echo ominously over Draco's ears, like a gong signifying his doom. Draco glared down at the paper blankly and turned the first page, he read over the question, and just stared, his mind was elsewhere.

1. Explain (points awarded for detail) the aesthetic traits of a successfully executed **Patronus Charm**. List at least **one** task it can be useful for beyond that of warding away **Dementors**.

He couldn't shift his underlying worry for his parents, he felt like something was *wrong*. He read over the question again. But it wasn't sinking in. He gazed up again at that clock, before clearing his mind and answering. Even the scratch of his quill on the paper seemed to him as nails scraping down a chalkboard.

See, he thought, trying to appease his worry, *you can do this. You know these answers, stop worrying about things you cannot control*. But he could not help himself. His vision blurred as he stared at the second question and he felt his quill shake lightly in his hand. He tapped the feathered tip agitatedly on his chin to distract himself from the unease that was finally catching up to him. He had been numb before, desperately striving to ignore it and do the right thing by his parents. But that was failing fast now...

I hope Draco and Hermione are alright, Harry thought, rolling his head on his neck to look up at the clock tower. Surely they would be out soon?

"*Reducto!*" He chanted at last, and watched the leaf he had been practicing on explode into nothingness. A final sigh left his lips and he dropped his head on the bench, closing his eyes against the startling light of the sun, and remembering the moments from that morning. Everything had been so perfect.

He felt his mind drift slowly, the light of the sun against the back of his eyelids fading against the dream-memory of Draco's face, his warmth that morning. His body squirmed nicely on the bench; he could almost feel his body against him still...

Suddenly, the gentle, calming light faded, swallowed by an abyss that formed there against his will. Against his *mind*. It was his dream, but he was not the one conjuring such images. His head felt heavy, as if there were something pushed in there where it didn't belong, stretching his skull out of shape and melting his bones. He groaned in pain, but could not move – paralysed by the total darkness he was left in, while the abyss swallowed everything.

He felt cold, shivering all over although the outside world was warm. If only he could reach it...

"You thought you could hide from me, fools," a low, serpentine voice hissed, and Harry screamed, his body arching back as if a red-hot poker was *slithering* through his body with that voice. "No one has ever escaped me, there is no hiding from your *master* – I would have thought you of all of my *once-servants* would have remembered...!"

Then, suddenly, there was image with that cruel, cutting voice, as spiteful as a snake's venom and just as deadly. Harry swore he felt his limbs dying one by one. His toes, his fingers were turning blue with the chills that swamped him, of that he was sure. Then, like a whiplash, he realised that was the least of his problems. Before him, knelt Lucius Malfoy, bound with his head bowed forwards, hanging limply on his neck, his perfect curtain of blond hair stained with blood. At his knees, on a floor of cracked stone and biting rock, Narcissa lay, her eyes wide, mouth moving soundlessly as she writhed rigidly with pain.

“You have...disappointed me, Narcissa, and you, *Lucius*,” Smooth, almost *grey* skin slid from the shadows, eyes, red and glowing in the dark. The eyes of death. “You should have known better. And you will die now, for your betrayal but not quickly and not without making use of my *loyal subjects*’ imagination.” His words were punctuated by shrill, piercing laughter and a handful of ominous, hooded creatures flickered in the shadows.

On the ground, Narcissa gave a particularly violent lurch and then, she screamed, she screamed until Harry felt his body knot with the fear that her vocal chords would tear but then, before he could see any more, he was jerked free by his face smashing hard into the stone floor of the courtyard. He’d rolled off the bench. He gasped for air, choking and spluttering as if he were drowning and his back arched from the unforgiving ground.

2. **The Dark Arts** differ from other magic, which is generally neutral. Simply casting a curse, even one that will harm an opponent, is not necessarily Dark Arts. Therefore, what is the **main** deciding factor that places a ‘curse’ as **Dark Arts**?

You Know this! Draco told himself, his mental voice almost scolding. He *did* know this. It was so simple and yet the words didn’t want to slide out of his quill...

It was that precise moment that Snape passed through the aisle beside him, and he swore the professor glanced down at his all-but blank parchment, swore he felt that frown, that concern. He bowed lower over his parchment, but Snape didn’t move on, merely stood there, pretending to be scanning the hall for wandering eyes. Draco knew it was to watch how *he* was doing. He glanced up and two rows across

Hermione was bent over her desk so that her face was completely hidden by a curtain of bushy hair. The scratching of her quill on the parchment was audible even from where he sat.

He turned his attention back to the question again. But his anxieties would not go away...

Draco's head fell into his hand, he couldn't relax, everything was just so distorted. *Concentrate, dammit!* It was just no use. He couldn't. By the time he reached question eleven he felt his brain turn to mush, he had only answered a few of these questions because everything was just...well, *blank*. This must have been how Harry had been feeling, blank, annoyed, and frustrated at not being able to remember anything.

No, Draco wasn't selfless, he was anything but. He had put so much pressure on Harry to remember him, without even realising how he felt. He mentally scolded himself and forced that quill back to the paper. *I must do this!* The professor was still looking over his shoulder.

Hermione inhaled sharply, her hair frizzing with the stress it seemed and her neck ached from the reflex of her head shooting up to gaze at the sand, the time running away from her in the hourglass. She stared at the questions she had answered already, doubling through them to check points she may have missed. It was then, however that she caught a black shape out of the corner of her eye and she turned her head a little more (her neck cracking in protest as she did so) only to see why Snape was hovering.

It was well into half of the test now and Draco's knuckles were white where they knotted in his blond locks in frustration and anxiety. Ink had splattered around the inkwell he was using where he overloaded his quill. She sucked in her lower lip, crossing her heels under the table agitatedly. What was going on? Was Draco alright?

Releasing his hair from his grasp, Draco sighed deeply. He started to fill in the answers, and for the next ten minutes his quill didn't stop moving. The answers seemed to suddenly flow through him. He smiled as his anxiety eased and he was able to at last concentrate on the test. He flicked through the pages quicker now, and Snape glided on, smirking proudly at his intelligence, he whizzed through.

Then he came to question eighteen and stopped, there was that feeling again. But this time it was different. He looked over his shoulder then back at his paper, the feeling was getting stronger.

Something's wrong, I can feel it – Harry? Draco's head whipped around to glance at the door, but there was nothing there, not even Harry, though he felt his fear bolt through his veins like a thousand volts through his blood.

If either Draco or Hermione had had the *luck* to turn at that point, they would have seen their Potion's Master lingering at the back of the hall stop in his patrol of the hall, clutching his left arm as it burned. There could only be one reason for that. He looked up, seeing Draco rub his own forearm absently, but it had been hurting Draco so much thanks to the Dark Lord's punishing him that he probably didn't recognise it for what it was. Snape watched him carefully, making sure he was still focused on his test, before he slipped out of the side door.

* * *

Those images replayed painfully in Harry's mind, like a broken record except far, *far* more vivid. Narcissa, Lucius – Draco's parents? He swore he had heard Snape say *something* about them in one of their sessions. He froze then, quivering still but falling silent as he realised. Voldemort had Draco's parents. Pocketing his wand in his

school robe (having gotten into the habit of wearing it to blend in with the other students) Harry scrambled to his feet, his hands and knees scraped by the cruel ground in his haste.

He caught his foot on the step and his body jerked, nearly colliding with the floor again, were it not for his grasping hand catching the wall, just in time. Blood dripped onto the grey stone and he brought his hand to his mouth. It was bleeding from where he had rolled off the bench it seemed, but he didn't have time.

The door groaned in protest, in unison with his body as he threw himself against it, darting into the main foyer and nearly skidding on the glossy floor as he bolted for the doors of the great hall. His heart thudded madly in his chest and in the split second before he reached the doors, he felt a prickle of Draco's awareness disturb the hairs on the back of his neck and he shoved the doors open. They swung wide, announcing his presence with a loud creak and he stood, panting and breathless in the doorway, every head in the room swivelling round to look at him.

Draco shot to his feet, eyes wide and the entire room seemed to still.

“Draco! W-We have to leave! *Now!*”

For a moment, time slowed down, every single student gazed round at Draco. But their stares, as heavy and petrifying as they were, they just didn't seem to register. His heart beat wildly, like a stampede through the thicket and he felt his blood stop, he couldn't *breath* and then it all exploded. He felt his hands start to shake, and his knees wobble. Slowly he started to move, and then he started to run – never so much as throwing a glance back to the others as he flew towards Harry on the threshold.

“Mr Potter!” McGonagall declared, surging forwards as she watched Draco and

Hermione both leap from their desks and move towards Harry. “This is an official examination! How dare you disturb it?! Leave at once!”

“What’s wrong?” Hermione breathed, reaching him just as Draco did.

Harry shook his head, gasping for breath. “A dream – but it wasn’t a dream!” He insisted, and McGonagall was approaching fast, her eyes blazing with anger so he stepped back into the foyer, urging Draco and Hermione to follow.

The doors to the great hall shut behind them and he marched quickly to the grand staircase, Draco and Hermione shadowing him as he lead them down the first flight of stairs and under them. If McGonagall found out what was wrong, she would never let them do what must be done. He just knew it. *They’ll think I am mad, charging after a dream, but it is real, I know it is!*

“Your parents!” Harry gasped out, falling against the wall, wiping the blood leaking from his mouth away again, and closing his eyes as his pounding head and frantic chest clawed against the panic and chaos whirling inside him. He saw Hermione and Draco’s eyes widen and they leant in closer, as if struggling to understand his stammering, breathless words.

“I saw them, Voldemort has them! I–” He stopped, wincing as flashes of it came back to him, only clearer than before. He could see where they were now. “A...A clock face! A huge one in the background!” the blackness of before cleared and he could see it now, and this time, when the screeching, malicious laughter echoed in his ears a deafening, gong of the towering clock chiming twelve overwhelmed him.

His eyes watered with the intensity of it and his hands slammed over his ears, trying to make it stop.

“Where, Harry? Where is this clock? Think!” Draco insisted. Urging Harry in his

fright to think about what he had seen. Draco *knew* there was something wrong; he *felt it*, even before Harry had come to him. “Harry please?!” Draco demanded again, gritting his teeth as Hermione spoke and raised her hands to soothe them.

“Calm down, everyone, just *calm down* a minute.” They all stopped suddenly and she allowed a moment to breathe before continuing in a controlled, steady voice. “We need to work out what you saw, we need to know. We can't keep walking if we don't know where, just breath, Harry and think.”

In Harry's head, the gong of the clock was chiming still, echoing through streets, through the country and through his ears, all the way to reach him...

“It's a big clock,” He murmured out, his explanation sounding stupid even in his temporary madness. He closed his eyes, chasing the sound of the clock through his mind. His scar burned, ached as if his skull was going to split open as he followed it, as he drew nearer and nearer to Voldemort. He rubbed the heel of his palm vigorously into his pounding forehead, trying to find it, to cling to a distinctive image before the echoes of the chimes finished at twelve and it disappeared from his mind forever.

His every limb felt strained as he tried with all his might to see. And when the 7th chime sounded he hummed with each strike of the clock. Outside his temporary realm of insanity, Hermione's eyes flared at the sound of his imitation of a clock chiming and beside her, Draco moved to reach him, but Hermione caught his wrist before he could touch so much as a finger to him. She shook her head slowly, not making a sound to distract Harry.

She knew what this was. This was Voldemort and his mind games, his abuse of the connection between them, which this Harry (without the memory of how to properly occlude) was powerless against. *So we must use it to our advantage*, she thought, swallowing hard as Harry imitated the 9th chime.

The 11th chime.

Harry's eyes flew open and his head shot up as he stared at them both startling. "They stand by huge bells. The clock, it's a tall, pointed tower, and it's night – the tower is lit up and there are hundreds of people below..." He trailed off quietly. He could see the lights, so dazzling and yet so beautiful amongst a sea of soot and city chaos. "A huge wheel?" He suggested, as if he didn't really understand why it was there in his head. "And a bridge! It's really close to both and it's glaring with light as the sunlight fades!" He surged towards Hermione then, seizing both of her shoulders and shaking her lightly, frustrated that she couldn't see it too.

"There's water! A lake, a river *something* but it's vast and I can see the reflection of the bridge in it!"

The 12th chime. And Harry's body jolted suddenly. He shook his head, clearing it of the fog that had clogged up his mind moments ago, and he stared, back and forth, from Hermione to Draco, as if not realising why they were there. Harry swallowed audibly, releasing his best friend's arms and stepping back a little, watching her face and Draco's dawn with comprehension. But Hermione voiced it first.

"Big Ben," she whispered, as if uttering it aloud would bring the most fatal of misfortunes down upon them. "He showed you it. Whether he has Mr and Mrs Malfoy or not, he wants to lure you, *us* there—"

"I don't care if it's a trap!" Harry hissed, making her jump. "There's still a chance he has Draco's parents, we can't leave them there!"

"I am not suggesting we do!" Hermione retorted shortly, her brows furrowing with irritation. "I am merely..." She paused for a moment, looking at both of her companions, and wishing more than anything that Ron was here right now to lighten the tension between them all the way he always managed to...

Always eating even when it was most inappropriate, she thought fondly with a sad smile. She missed him so, but had no doubt that, given what was about to happen, she would be with him soon.

“He has lured you with people before,” she said simply, “And it seems now that after the slytherins failed to bring you to him, he is tired of waiting, tired of letting others fail at his demands. He is calling you himself, Harry.”

Harry felt his mouth go dry at her words, that evil, ominous laughter filling his ears from his dreams, from his *visions*. He could almost *taste* the dirt of his grave in his mouth.

“To Big Ben?” He asked, his voice raspy with fear and confusion, “What is Big Ben?”

Hermione seemed not to hear him, and looked to Draco instead. “Of course – it’s one of the most iconic places in the country!” She declared, unwittingly answering Harry’s question also. And he shivered at the sight of all those people walking below the Clock, the big wheel, all the vehicles sweeping across and under the bridge. They would all be killed in the crossfire.

“He *wants* it to be seen,” Hermione continued, “He wants *all* of the United Kingdom at his mercy. Wants his great *victory* witnessed by muggles and wizards alike. He wants it all to end in a big, chaotic show. With plenty of casualties – starting with us...”

~To Be Continued...

Chapter 32: Chapter Thirty-Two

(Bound By) Clandestine Addiction

[Chapter Thirty-Two]

Draco stood riveted to the ground; his heart just wouldn't seem to start. Everything was...*still*. He felt so torn, part of him desperately wanted to follow that call and walk straight into the trap because they were his parents. But coherency and his rational mind *knew* that that's all this was, a trap, *another* one of the Dark Lord's games. He felt the fear clog his throat. He choked on it, struggling to find his voice.

"I don't know about the both of you, but I...I *have* to go to them, dream or no dream, risk or none," Draco said simply, sadly.

"But Draco, you know as well as I that it's just—"

"Maybe so, Hermione, I just...I can't afford to *not* go!" With that, Draco turned and walked ahead up the corridor.

"And I'm going with him," Harry added, a shaky smile touching his lips when he offered Hermione his hand. "Will you come?"

Hermione sighed heavily. "I never said we shouldn't go, but we should be careful, Harry – I know we have to go and go now, but that doesn't make this any *less* of a trap." She surveyed him carefully, and then Draco's retreating form, before taking his hand. "Let's at least contact Professor Snape – if no one else?" But before he could even *think* to answer, her eyes widened with horrified realisation and she tugged Harry by his hand to catch up with Draco, who (unsurprisingly) was heading for the dungeons.

“Professor Snape wasn’t there when you came in,” she whispered to Harry, “He must have slipped out beforehand—”

“The Dark Lord summoned him,” Draco interceded distractedly as they bypassed the other students, descending the stairs into the dark dungeon corridor towards Snape’s office. “I felt my mark burn but it’s been doing that so often lately, whenever he feels the need to punish me from a far, that I didn’t even *think* that it was a summons.”

Harry looked between them both silently, he knew random snippets of information, such as Draco carrying the mark and Snape playing a spy for the good side, but it was still overwhelming when presented in one foul swoop like that.

“Professor?” Hermione called as she rapped her knuckles on the dark, oak door they all recognised. No answer. Her brow furrowed and she knocked again.

“He isn’t there,” Harry said at last, “Obviously whatever he has been summoned for, he isn’t back yet – maybe they won’t let him go until we are there?”

Hermione worried her lip, watching Draco out of the corner of her eye. He was being worryingly quiet. “I can apparate us to London, but we need to get out of Hogwarts before I can apparate.”

“Apparate?” Harry asked, but Hermione merely shook her head.

“Don’t worry, I just... We’ll have to get across the grounds without being seen, we need to get to the Whomping Willow and the passage underneath it.”

Harry shook his head; it still felt hazy from the possession of his nightmare. “I have no idea what you’re talking about!” He declared, “I can’t remember what any of that means!”

Instead of addressing his outburst, Hermione looked to Draco, again. “That pouch Harry was carrying the last time we...” She swallowed audibly, unable to say it, to

relieve that time, when there had been four of them, and not three. “You need to bring that bag; it has everything we could possibly need inside. Find it and the invisibility cloak and meet me by the Whomping Willow. Three of us can’t fit under there and it’ll be easy for a single person to sneak up there under a disillusionment charm.”

Harry made to open his mouth again to declare that he still had no clue what she was ranting about, but Draco had already caught his wrist and was dragging him off up towards the stairs. Harry felt his insides plummet. Hermione was planning, he knew that. She was probably planning their entire attack while she followed close behind them. But didn’t he need to understand the plan too? *I’m the one that’s going to have to kill him after all*, he thought, not caring much for being kept out of the loop of a plot that involved him. Did he remember someone doing that to him before?

But then it struck him, as sudden as Draco throwing open Harry’s bedroom door, (Harry hadn’t even realised they’d reached it) as abrupt as a slap in the face. It came to him all at once, the true horror and magnitude of what he was about to do. He had to take someone’s life, had to draw blood or destroy something living...*breathing*...

He stood, transfixed in the sudden shock as Draco tore open the chest at the bottom of his bed, pulling out the pouch and checking everything, including the cloak which was inside before turning back to him. That was when he must have realised how still Harry had become for a confused frown reached his pale brow.

“Harry, are you alright?” Hermione asked as Draco continued to search through the chest, though of course she knew it was a silly question to ask *now*. Harry’s face was ghostly white. “It’s just...I mean...you really don’t look yourself.”

Harry shot her a glare that suggested, no, he didn’t and if she were in his position, she probably wouldn’t either.

“We need to get out of Hogwarts, and quick!”

"We'll fly," Draco said blankly.

Hermione sighed. "Harry doesn't know how!" She stuttered, rather annoyed that Draco had even suggested it.

"He can ride with me," Draco continued, still shifting through the chest, gathering a few things and shoving them into the pouch. Hermione remained wide-eyed at the suggestion of *sharing* a broomstick. It was so...well she didn't know what the word was. It was dodgy at any rate.

"Be that as it may," Hermione stated, "You can't just shoot over the gate. If it were that easy everyone would do it," she reminded him, wondering (not for the first time) if anyone besides her had read *Hogwarts: A History*. "We have to get out of school grounds through the passageway first."

Harry looked at them both quietly, avoiding Draco's eyes when the blond finally looked his way. "Shall we go then?" He prompted stiffly, turning and heading out the door. He stopped just past the threshold when he realised – he had no idea where he was going.

"Are you alright?" Hermione asked, as she and Draco returned to his side. Harry just glanced at her, saying nothing. "Come then, under the cloak both of you." Draco reached into the pouch for the cloak, it would be a squeeze to get all three of them under it, but none of them were as tall as Ron and he had managed under it with both Harry and Hermione.

Ron, Hermione thought again, her thoughts straying a little.

The cloak expanded from the pouch in Draco's hand and he shook it twice to expand it. "Come on then, let's go," Draco said, cloaking them with invisibility to defend

them against darkness ahead. Slowly they crept through the corridor and over the grounds of Hogwarts, the uneven earth made it hard to run fast anywhere without the fear of falling flat on your face and exposing you and your friends. So it was with a frustratingly steady pace that they made their way to the entrance beneath the Whomping Willow, before coming to a halt.

“Maybe we should have figured out a plan as to getting in quickly before we began?” Draco suggested with a slight hint of sarcasm. He felt anxious about his parents, and he couldn’t contain his annoyance at the stupidity of someone who claimed to be such a brain. Looking back at Hermione and Harry from underneath the cloak, he frowned. “And, if I remember rightly this tree will know we are here, whether we’re invisible or not, it will know, right?”

“That broom ride sounds good right about now,” he tipped his head to fix Draco with a suggestive look then. “Do you reckon I’ll like the feel of wood between my legs?” He joked goofily. Draco’s eyes widened.

“Harry!” He grumbled in disdain, throwing him a fairly self-explanatory look.

Hermione cleared her throat, not looking at either of them, shifting their attention back to her hand as it delved into her robe, retrieving her wand. “I hadn’t forgotten the details about the tree,” Hermione assured him simply, aiming for the nearest twig on the ground. “*Wingardium Leviosa!*”

Harry watched as Hermione levitated the stick, through the furious swiping of the tree’s branches, Harry and Draco tensed beside her to move out of the way, should they have misjudged the safe distance from the tree-limbs. “I think you should hurry up, Hermione,” Harry urged her, still remembering the wicked, ominous sound of the final chime of that clock...

“I don’t see *you* playing chicken with a twig and a temperamental tree,” Hermione

huffed, navigating the branches until it struck the knot in the tree's bark, immobilising it's body mid-swing. Their girl companion gave a sound of triumph, casting an odd glance back at them, before moving forward without a word.

"She doesn't like it when people think she's made a mistake, does she?" Harry murmured, forcing a smile that didn't quite reach his eyes. Draco needed him to be strong, supportive right now not lose himself in apprehension for what was to come. What was coming was inevitable, there was no way he could avoid it. It had to be done, and he had to do it. *There's no point in crying about it*, he thought, *there are people who are depending on me...*

"Are you coming?" Hermione called back to them when they still had not followed. Harry glanced forwards to see Hermione shimmying down by the tree's roots, her feet disappearing beneath them. It was Draco that moved first (remembering his parents and their plight no doubt) and Harry was close behind him. He watched Hermione vanish through the tunnel that was suddenly visible now he was closer, and Draco dropped down to slide through after her.

Harry frowned, slowly crouching onto his backside, his feet hanging into the abyss of darkness he had just seen his closest companions vanish through. He inhaled deeply, closing his eyes. Blood-red, snake-like slits flashed across the darkness behind his eyelids. This probably was a trap, but that didn't matter. Draco's parents were probably caught up in it, and even if they *weren't* – he had to do this sooner or later, and he was sick of waiting for Voldemort to bring the fight to him.

Slowly, he released his grip on the school grounds, and let the inevitability of gravity drag him down into the darkness. Where he stumbled into Draco, nearly stumbling clean over in the dimness of the tunnel, had the blond not caught him at the last second.

"You okay?" Draco asked immediately as Harry crashed heavily into his arms. He

saw a sudden flush brush over his boyfriend's face and he smiled, it felt nice in all the chaos to just have that *closeness*, that warmth, if only for that moment. Almost immediately, Harry was standing himself up and brushing away the dust and debris from his clothes.

It was apparent Harry didn't remember the Shrieking shack, especially considering how much his eyes were darting around to scan every inch of the shabby building. Hermione had already hurried ahead and was calling them from another room to hurry up.

They both scurried down the stairs and met with her.

“So now we’re out of the grounds...” Draco began

”Yes, you can get your broom ready,” Hermione sighed, noting Draco's eagerness to do something, *anything* to speed things along. “Gather around me,” she instructed (mostly for Harry’s benefit). “I will apparate us as close as I can without risking exposure. After that we’ll use the brooms to our advantage if need be. I suspect he must have cut off the public access to the tower after all...”

Harry watched Draco and Hermione check the place of their wands, and mimicked Draco’s movements toward their female friend. He took hold of the opposite arm to Draco. He felt (more than saw or heard) Hermione breathe deeply, as if silently preparing herself for what was to come. He could practically *see* the cogs in her head turning frantically, plotting from every possible angle. One way or another, it was all going to be over today. They were walking towards the end, or the beginning...

“Don’t let go of me, Harry,” Hermione warned him, “this may feel a little...disorientating.”

Harry opened his lips to answer, but his speech jerked into a yelp of surprise as he felt a sharp tug behind his navel and he was thrown haphazardly into a swirling, chaotic twister of light and sound. Visions of places (or at least that's what he thought they were) flashed across his eyes but just as he felt a wave of nausea rise in his throat his feet landed on solid ground and though the world was still spinning, it was a place of solid grey stone and concrete. Yes, this was the path the clock – no, *Voldemort* had called him on.

“We’re close,” he murmured quietly, not able to look at his friends just now. He hoped he had not lead them into death’s arms. *No, only Voldemort will die tonight, and perhaps me*, he thought, remembering the horcrux, the slice of Voldemort’s soul still burning in his being. *But they will live.*

“Look,” Hermione called to them, leaning out of the alley they had arrived in to point at the clock tower. The sky was darkening slowly, the sun setting on the horizon. Would it be the last they saw together?

“That’s it,” Harry confirmed, moving forwards, only to feel Draco’s hand at his wrist, stopping him. Harry’s gaze swept up the arm belonging to that hand, and then his face, the face that made his terrified heart stop in his chest. “A-Are you ready?” He asked, his voice husky and swamped with emotion. The words could have been *‘I love you’* for all the emotion in them. But he couldn’t bring himself to say that, that would make this feel like it really was the end.

“The tower entrance is cordoned off with magic,” Hermione whispered, distracting the two from their silent tryst. “Look, you can see, everyone who approaches just randomly walks away as if they have forgotten why they are there. Typical common variety anti-muggle charms. It’s the same that is on the entrance to the Ministry of Magic and the Leaky Cauldron. That means we have to find another way up—”

“There,” Harry cut across her, indicating the dark, shadowed recess on the right-hand side of the top of the tower. It wasn’t meant to be there, it looked and felt *wrong*. It

looked unnatural, caused by magic means. It was a doorway just for them, beckoning them forward.

“Looks like you can use your broomstick after all,” Hermione said, turning to Malfoy with a small smile. They had all come together in the end, hadn’t they? When it meant the most. “Disillusionment charms will fool the muggles, but I’m betting that doorway will alert them to our presence and most likely strip any such charms away from us. Once we’re in there, we’re as good as naked,” Hermione explained.

Harry smiled despite himself, as Draco pulled two brooms from the pouch, magic returning them to their normal size. “Are you comfortable with Voldemort and a handful of his minions seeing your boyfriend naked?” He asked, his voice quivering with fear as it attempted humour. Hermione gave them an odd look, casting the disillusionment charm on herself as she set astride the broom Draco had brought for her. She was leaving them to their last, fleeting moment of intimacy. Perhaps she had had such a thing with Ron? Nevertheless, her gift was a confusing one for Harry, who merely lowered his head as he watched Draco climb onto his broom, *feeling* those grey eyes considering every inch of him.

Say something! He thought desperately, every inch of him tight with dread for what they were about to face. *Say anything!* But were his thoughts directed at Draco, or himself?

Draco mounted his own broomstick carefully, smiling at Harry as he held his hand to invite him on behind him. “I...*believe* in you...”

Draco had meant to say he loved him, but it hadn't quite come out right. Regardless, Harry smiled and his fingers met Draco's. Electric surged through their fingertips as a brutal wind rushed passed, tousling Harry's dark locks, revealing his lightning scar that had been covered by his fringe. Draco's heart plummeted, but he remained strong as that familiar scar was displayed, reminding him just *how close* they were at this

very moment – close to death.

“We can do this!” Draco assured Harry as his Chosen one side-stepped over the broom and pressed in close to his back. “Keep your hands on my hips, Harry, and don't let go!”

Hermione clenched her teeth together tightly; determination and something very close to hate settling on her features. “I don't know about you two, but Ron's murderer is in there and I'm not giving in until he is destroyed!” She declared, her eyes narrow. She grasped her broom firmly between her hands now – and considering she was always so hesitant when it came to flying, this was certainly change of mood.

“But don't lose sight, Hermione, don't let him manipulate you,” Harry said, not knowing just *how much* she needed to hear that right then, and how strange it sounded from someone who barely remembered anything...

“Harry is right, we know first hand what he is like. He knows no limits – we must stay focused!” Draco added, smiling at Hermione who nodded gratefully. She waved her wand over them both in turn, an ice-cool *liquid* sensation sliding down the backs of their necks. When Harry looked up at Draco, he was now the same, camouflaged outline that Hermione was. Nearly invisible!

“Whatever happens tonight, I want you both to know, I...I really love you, dearly,” Hermione said, offering an anxious smile to both Draco and Harry. So much had happened since this had all begun. She would never have imagined she would come to care for Draco as much as Harry, but over the past few months, he had been Harry's rock, just like Ron had always been hers, and she couldn't help but love him for that if nothing else.

Harry wrapped his arms around Draco's waist, his cheek pressing into the warmth of Draco's back. He wasn't sure he liked the idea of flying, but Draco wouldn't let him fall. "I love you both too," he answered softly, seeing but another fleeting glimpse of Hermione's smile before a sharp jerk of Draco's foot on the ground shot the broom into motion and they hurtled up into the sky.

Harry resisted the urge to yelp as the biting wind sliced across his skin, ruffling his hair and whipping it around his neck. He saw the buildings fall away beneath his feet, and clamped his eyes shut. The world was rushing past him, and for a moment, he swore the violent breeze that was forming in the skies was tearing away the bone-deep fear, the terror from his soul. He was flying! He leant into Draco's body, holding tighter to him and even as Draco steered them towards the clock – the ominous beacon of their fate, he felt some shred of hope swell in his gut.

They slowed gradually, hovering hundreds of feet above the ground, concentrating really hard on the air around them. If you squinted, you could see the chameleon-like shadow of Hermione beside them. "There's the doorway," Hermione called over the screeching winds, and Harry and Draco looked to the swirling void of darkness. Up close, it looked like it had some flecks of purple in it, but there was still the flicker of the space beyond every now and then as the blackness moved.

Harry's head was throbbing now, his scar searing with agony. Voldemort was in there. Only the wall separated them.

"Do you think it's safe?" Hermione asked, clearly meaning the magical doorway. Harry shrugged, not that she could see the motion.

"He wouldn't kill us like this, he wants to do it with his own hands – and besides, we have no choice," Harry replied, feeling Draco nod in agreement. There was a moment where time stood still and Harry's tongue swept across his suddenly dry lips, before he gave Draco's waist a squeeze. "Come on," he said softly, "let's end this now." Draco's wrist pressured the broom a little and it glided through the oval doorway, which grew to accommodate them.

Harry felt his breath hitch, unconsciously trying not to make too much sound with his breathing. He felt Hermione close behind them, and heard Draco's panic so loud and potent in his ears that it was making his blood *hum* in his veins. "Keep quiet," Harry said softly, "We want to stay hidden as long as—"

"Finite Incantatum! Flipendo!"

The two spells were cast so quickly that Harry barely had time to register that Draco and Hermione were both now visible, before all three of them were knocked flying backwards, crashing painfully into the wall. Harry groaned in pain, watching their brooms roll off across the floor uselessly, forgotten. Rubbing the back of his head, he scrambled to his knees, feeling his two companions rise shakily beside him. The wall behind them had felt solid enough when it had cracked his already aching skull and a quick glance back confirmed his suspicions – the door had vanished. They were trapped.

"So glad you could join me, Harry," that dark, spine-chilling voice *cooed*. Harry straightened, lifting his chin defiantly as the sight of that face, the monster of his nightmares sitting on the steps leading up to the bells. The crooked creature leant against the balustrade casually, a wand that Harry *knew* not to be his own in that spindly hand. "Recognise me, Harry?" It asked and Harry nodded with a sneer. The creature sounded strained, but he was still strong enough to kill them before he faded completely, no doubt. They couldn't let their guard down.

"And I see you have brought your friends with you – oh yes I recognise the mudblood and the traitor," Voldemort hissed, rising slowly to his feet and moving towards them. Harry side-stepped to cover Hermione and Draco. He wouldn't let Voldemort touch them.

Draco hissed at the remark. "Call me what you like," He grumbled, though admittedly, not loud enough for the Dark Lord to hear through his frustration and fear. He glanced sideways at Harry and Hermione, who both had their wands aiming for Voldemort, and he quickly drew his a split-second later.

"You could not beat me before, even with all the hate you harboured for me, Harry. What madness deludes you enough to believe that you can kill me now you have no memory, no *feeling* to drive you," The snake hissed coolly.

"Harry never hated you, he pitied you...something you won't *ever* fully understand!" Hermione interjected hotly. Though it was wise *not* to argue with him, or make him angry, she couldn't help herself.

"The *Mudblood* spoke," The voice hissed, the sound ricocheting off the walls and mingling with the echo of his accompanying laugh. "She actually spoke to *me*."

Harry ignored their enemy's taunts in favour of scanning their surroundings. It was oddly dark inside, which didn't seem fit for such a popular public attraction. But then, it had been cordoned off from the muggle world. A few masked figures lingered at the edges of the clock tower, just within sight, but then, the sixth masked follower tipped his head silently, for Harry only. Harry's eyes widened with horror as the man stepped aside.

"Draco...!" Harry gasped, his hand closing tightly around his lover's wrist. Those grey eyes followed the direction of his gaze, to the crumpled couple suddenly in view, silent, unmoving and flecked with crimson splashes. *So much blood*, Harry thought, glancing to Draco warily. How much blood could one person lose before they...?

"Let the Malfoys go," Harry ordered, feeling Draco quiver with a mixture of fear and fury beside him. "You got what you wanted. I'm here, so let us take them to safety,

and then you can deal with me!”

A wicked, cutting laugh pierced the air, making him wince. Voldemort’s malevolent features knotted with a derisive sneer. “You do not seem to comprehend your situation, *Harry Potter*,” the Dark Lord hissed, “you are at *my mercy*, little boy!”

“Mother! Father!” Draco cried out, eyes wide. The indescribable need to go to them, to try to help despite the odds was boiling like acid in his stomach. He stood firm. He couldn't go to them yet. He had to stay still, focused. He had to.

But they...

He could see the blood, pouring from them, the crimson colour staining their skin, their usually glistening locks. It was sickening, his stomach lurched forebodingly. He breathed slowly, struggling to calm himself. They were still alive.

He turned his wand on them – quicker than he could think so that Voldemort could not see it coming. It wasn't part of any plan he had discussed with Harry or Hermione, but he had to do something! The healing spell sparked, bursting from his wand tip and the ropes that bound around his parents’ hands and legs loosened. But then a nameless death eater emerged from the darkness and stood in his path.

“What do you think you're doing, traitor?” The wretched voice demanded gruffly. Draco's eyes were glassy and he felt his heart clench inside his chest. “Please, just... Just let them go,” He asked, almost begged. He couldn’t help it.

“Draco!” Hermione yelled out her warning. This was no time to start pleading, or

showing any sign of weakness. But it was already too late, Draco's parents were *known* to be one of his weaknesses. They may not have always been the perfect family, or admittedly taken the right turns, but then who was perfect? Everyone was a little bit distorted in terms of perfection.

“It is *my* battleground you were called to, *boy*,” Voldemort began, his voice eerily soft. “These are my death eaters, your parents are *my prisoners*. I command what will or will not happen. There is nothing can plead to me. Nothing can you offer me!”

“If you let them go,” Harry began, a confidence that he didn’t feel at all swelling in his voice as he stepped forward, his wand pointing straight at Voldemort’s heart. “I will let you live.”

A piercing, shriek of laughter filled the air and Harry did his best not to flinch.

“The same arrogance of the Boy Who Lived. Well, let us see how inaccurate we can render that title... *Crucio!*”

Harry’s body jerked backwards, smashing into the unforgiving floor. And there he writhed, screaming in unbridled agony as sheer pain seared his body, as if his veins were full of the blistering flames. He felt Draco and Hermione move somewhere above him and his voice clawed desperately at his throat to be heard. “N-NO!” He choked, “Stay...back!!!”

“*Reducto!*” Draco shouted, the spell flying into the sheer darkness, Voldemort vanishing into the abyss as he was sent hurtling backwards – a loud *thump* signalling his collision with the wall. Harry had stopped wriggling, spluttering and choking for breath that didn’t want to come as he struggled to his feet. A deadly silence filled the room, looming over them. The explosion was coming.

Hermione looked warily from Harry to Draco and they aimed their wands at the worrying dark once more. All-but shaking with fear, she took a step towards Harry. “Harry?” Clearly she was concerned for him, but her only answer was a fleeting, reassuring glance.

The walls around them groaned menacingly. The Death eaters hissed with malice, moving in around them, closing in like hyenas to a fresh kill.

“*Stupefy!*” Hermione screamed, the closest figure flying backwards with a screech, unconscious.

“*Lumos Maximus!*” Harry chanted, swiping his arm through the air, a glaring, dazzling light erupting from his wand tip and bursting in the air, filling the room with a clear glow. There was Voldemort, rising to his feet slowly from the wall he had slammed into. He was weaker, yes, and slower than before. But he was still strong. Four death eaters stalked them now, closing in around them, but Harry’s eyes remained focused on the figure that lingered beside Narcissa and Lucius Malfoy, as if to guard them from rescue.

They really don’t want us to get out of here, Harry realised. “Hermione, we have to get rid of some of these death eaters, once we do, get the Malfoys out of here, alright?” He commanded, “We have to—” His voice was cut short into a scream as blood burst from his right thigh, erupting in a thick gash of crimson agony and his hands flew to it. “Shit!” He cursed, his leg giving way beneath him. Draco hooked his arm over his shoulder to pull him back up. Harry winced in pain, breathing sharply through his teeth.

“*Expelliarmus!*” Harry gasped out, the man who had cursed him crying out as his

wand was charmed away from his grasp.

“*Petrificus Totalus!*” Draco snapped, and the man’s arms went rigid at his sides, sending him toppling backwards, rigid as a board.

“The death eaters!” Harry gasped, “Get rid of the death eaters!”

Voldemort had already recovered; it had been but a matter of seconds!

Suddenly, a shrieking, female cackle filled the air. “*Crucio!*”

Harry dropped to the floor again, snatched from Draco’s support by the torture curse and he jerked, convulsing with such agony that made spittle gather at his lips, parted in silent screams.

“Your sister!” He heard Hermione scream at the female death eater, “He was torturing your sister!”

“No sister of mine,” the woman snarled, “She made her choices and they were the wrong ones. The Dark Lord is almighty. She deserves to be killed...!” Something about the way that *‘killed’* sounded on her serpentine tongue, it sent a flash of recognition so powerful through Harry that he was thrown flat onto his back in convulsions.

“I killed Sirius Black! I killed Sirius Black!!!”

“Stay where you are, Draco!” Bellatrix hissed, “I’ll kill you too, don’t think I won’t!”

Harry gasped for breath, choking on the very air as his torturer turned her wand on Draco, relieving him of the torture curse. Still he shook and trembled in aftershocks. His hand slammed flat on the ground, groping spasmodically for his own wand...

Bellatrix stalked forwards, the wicked fingers on her free hand caressing Draco's face unnervingly, but he dared not move, there was no way he could dodge a spell this close. "Kill you, right in front of him, just like I killed Black, that's what I should do..." Her words were icy and they made the hairs on the back of Draco's neck stand on end. "So heartbroken he was, you should have seen his face...!"

The rage pulsed in Draco's veins. He felt his hands tremble. He had never felt anything like this before. Such rage, such hate, such desire to kill this woman for the things she had done to the people he loved. This woman, his *aunt*!

As his lips parted with an attempt at speech, she raised her finger to stop them. "No words should come from these lips, Draco, not if you want to live," She warned. But that didn't stop him.

"If I die tonight, I don't care; I'll go with no regrets. You think I'm a traitor, a coward for the things I have done? Think about it, you're more of a traitor than me, or any of my family, because *you* chose to coincide with evil instead of your *own* blood!"

The woman's eyes widened, but before she had even a chance to blink, Draco had ducked beneath her arm, pelting forwards. He skidded across the floor and into the darkness, dropping to his parents' side. But the light from Harry's spell was starting to dim...

"*Stupefy!*" Harry gasped, pointing his wand at the nearest death eater. Two down three

to go. “*Incarcerous!*” The second squealed, but not before throwing a hex wildly in the air, the unnatural flash of light slicing through Hermione’s cheek. She screamed, cupping her face and Harry stumbled to his feet, jerking backwards when Bellatrix lunged for him.

“I’ll kill you for him, Potty!” She hissed, her fingers like talons groping for him. “I’ll hand your dainty little head to him on a plate!”

“Draco watch out!” Hermione cried, bolting across the room, to where Draco was stooping over his parents, to where the final masked figure still loomed like a phantom in the darkness. “*Expelliarmus!*” Hermione chanted, the golden light flying towards the creature towering over Draco. Draco turned at her call, just in time to see the shadow bat Hermione’s spell away as if it were a tiresome insect.

“You would do well to look, not only with your eyes, Miss Granger,” came a cool, husky drawl. A large, white hand shot out from the death eater’s sleeve and locked around Hermione’s wrist as she made to raise her wand again. They were frozen there for a moment, Draco not sure what to do and remained stooped at his parents’ side. The shadow whisked his own wand across his mask and it faded in a furling, grey wisp of smoke.

“Save your strength for more important enemies, Granger,” Severus Snape murmured darkly, before turning to gaze over Draco and his parents. “I have done all I can to stabilise them, Draco, but they need to be taken to St. Mungo’s as quickly as possible. So much blood is....” He trailed off as Draco’s pale hand reached out, slowly, hesitantly, to brush the white-blond hair from his unconscious father’s face. The man did not even twitch at the touch.

“Hermione, I... I need to stay here and fight, could you – would you, help Professor Snape get them to safety?” Hermione looked wary but nodded all the same. Draco gave a final glance to his parents (whom were near to unconsciousness) when his

mum reached hazily for his hand, smiling silently. Draco committed that last emotion to memory before revisiting the growing dark. He had to get back to Harry.

The light of Harry's spell had died completely now. Tearing forwards through the darkness, Draco caught glimpses of the deranged Lestrage (to whom, he was related). Her voice cut across his path, echoing around him, confusing his sense of direction. Where was Harry?

I – I can't see anything! Draco panicked. Feeling it swell in his throat until he was choking on it. That was, until he stepped backwards into another figure. Harry was behind him. *Thank Merlin...*

Back-to-back they stood, armed with their wands but without sight. There were still death eaters left – Bellatrix and Voldemort were close, they could feel their presence, but they could not see them. And they couldn't risk illuminating the room again yet, not until they were certain that Snape and Hermione had safely taken his parents to safety somehow.

Harry closed his eyes tight as the rest of his conjured light died, and they were in complete darkness, even worse than before, when they had first entered this chasm of madness. He could vaguely make out the pearly, glowing shape of the clock face just up a little, but he couldn't see much else, much less his companions. Could the enemy use some sort of 'see in the dark' spell? He wasn't sure, his memory of magic was limited, but in the darkness, there was still that distant, yet comforting *hum* he had always known since the moment he had awoken and known not even himself.

Draco, he thought, leaning back into Draco's shoulders and holding his wand out before him. Trying to see without seeing. But just as his brain was aching with trying to decipher the Dark Lord's location in the room, a soft, eerie laughter shuddered through their ears.

Suddenly a *whoosh* of air rushed past them and Harry's eyes followed the direction of the sharp disturbance when suddenly the giant clock face erupted into thousands of dazzling shards, breaking the spell of darkness on the room.

The ragged shards of the iconic clock crumbled inwards, raining down on them and out onto the street below. Screams of the muggles below signalled the beginning of destruction and Harry stared up at the gaping hole where the clock had been, panic racing with frantic palpitations through his chest.

The last dying rays of the sun streamed in, bathing them with blinding light and Harry winced, just making out the shape of Voldemort and Bellatrix flying out into the darkening sky. "Is everyone alright?" Harry called back to them, spying Hermione and *Snape* of all people crouched over by Mr and Mrs Malfoy's fallen bodies.

"We're fine, Harry, go after him!" Hermione insisted, and Draco's hand gripped Harry's wrist tightly, beckoning Harry's attention back up to his face, which was set with determination.

"Draco?" Harry asked him, though not entirely sure why. His heart was still hammering, his eyes still stinging from the sudden burst of light.

Draco released his wrist slowly, heading back over to Snape, Hermione and his parents. Kneeling down, he struggled not to fall prey to tears as he gazed at their almost lifeless bodies. It looked hopeless that they would all survive this – too good to be true. Which of them would join Ron tonight? If not all of them? He didn't want to feel like this, knowing Harry would be feeling his emotions too, but seeing them like that, so in pain was *shattering*. He turned to the professor he had admired for so long and forced a sad smile. "T-Take care of them."

He gave a last, brief look at his parents, then back at Harry before swallowing hard and choking on his following words. "Let's go!" He said suddenly, hurrying to where his broom seemed to have ended up earlier and grasping it in hand.

Harry gave a small nod, standing astride the back of the broom and wrapping his arms tightly around Draco's waist. "I'm ready – let's go." He gave Draco's middle a reassuring squeeze and pressing his cheek into the nape of his neck he inhaled his blond hair deeply. It could be his last chance to do so.

Draco pushed the broom off from the ground and he and Harry soared through the shattered, oval remains of the clock-face. The sky outside was falling dark. The bridge ahead and the circular wheel filled with people, screeching in delight were all alight in preparation for evening. Harry swallowed hard. This was exactly like his dream.

"Down there!" Draco's voice tore him from his reverie, and he stared down at where Draco had indicated (where they were headed). The huge wheel, glistening with light in the growing dimness, he squinted and as they drew nearer he saw them. Voldemort and Bellatrix (the latter practically salivating at being her Lord's one and only) were down there, but before Harry and Draco could even decipher what they were up to, the deed had already been done.

One of the compartments rattled on its hinges. The metal, the whole structure groaned as the light from Voldemort's wand made it shudder free of its place, sending the carriage, filled with innocents down to the ground, hundreds of feet below.

"NO!" Harry screamed, one arm tightening around Draco's waist as he drew his wand. "*Wingardium Leviosa!*" The carriage jerked to a halt midair, the occupants screaming for their lives. Sweat dashed across Harry's brow and he felt his arm ache as if he were physically holding a great weight. "Easy does it," he said to himself, humming it like a mantra as he lowered it as carefully as he could to the ground. It landed with a clunk but even from above they could see the passengers running to

safety. They were alright.

“That thing—”

“The London Eye,” Draco corrected him distractedly, his grey eyes set on Bellatrix, who was hovering a few feet from the attraction, her Lord standing on one of the carriages.

“We need to get them away from it,” He declared and Draco nodded, steering the broom towards the wheel. “Okay, now if we just—”

“*Flipendo!*”

Harry screamed as the light from Bellatrix’s wand hit him square in the chest. He felt Draco’s arm swing round, swiping through the air to get him, missing him by inches and Harry fell. The sound of his scream was knocked clean from his lungs as he slammed *hard* down on the roof of the carriage below. His ribs cracked as they made contact and he choked on a shocked cry, his fingernails scraping on the unhelpful flatness of the roof for purchase. Above, Draco was calling him, below, the occupants of the carriage he was in were screaming, shuffling in their panic and Harry struggled to stay on with all the disturbance their movements were causing.

“Draco! Help me!” He called up to him, trying to swing his leg up onto the roof, his grip failing.

“Not so fast, *nephew!*” Bellatrix hissed, swerving into Draco’s bath, separating him from Harry.

Draco attempted to swerve sideways but failed when Bellatrix shot into his path. He

couldn't get to Harry, not without getting her out the way first.

“What’s the matter, Draco? Can you not get passed?” She howled – a high-pitched caterwaul. Playing on Draco's frustrations, she cackled manically.

“You want a fight? Well you’ve got one!” Draco spat, with all the venom he could find in his veins. With everything else building up inside of him, he felt fury rush over him; he hadn't felt this pissed off since...he couldn't remember when.

“*Flipendo!*” He shouted, turning his wand directly on her. The spell flew forward, clipping the edge of her broom, making her unbalanced for a split-second.

“Don't mess with me! I'll kill you, you traitor!” She bellowed.

“*Expelliarmus!*” Draco cried out.

“*Protego!*” She countered the spell with such ease.

Draco bolted sideways, then forwards, soaring through the sky, the spiteful air tearing his lips and face at the intensity of the wind at this speed. He fired spells over his shoulder frantically, he wanted to look over at Harry, to get to him as quickly as possible but there just wasn't any time to so much as look, not even a second. He couldn't take his eyes off her.

“*Incendio!*” She shouted, her wand pointing at the tail of Draco's broom. But not quickly enough.

“*Protego!*” He countered, the force of the rebounding attack flying right back at her and almost knocking her from her broom, which had burst into flames with the passing spell. With a sudden dive, Draco plummeted downwards, quickly enough to get ahead on his broom and swerved underneath her towards Harry. But she wasn't about to give up. She was tailing him, he could feel her drawing in again – catching up!

“Stop bloody moving!” Harry spat to the people inside, not even sure if they could hear him. The grip on his shoe caught the window and he pushed himself up the slippery surface, throwing himself flat on top of the roof. “Argh!” He snarled, rolling over onto his back, pain blooming where his ribs had cracked.

“On your feet, Potter boy!” A voice called from above and Harry rolled tentatively onto his knees, nauseated and unsettled at the movement still. Why hadn’t anyone below stopped the wheel from moving? He glanced down (at his peril) swallowing at the great height he was climbing to and how unsteady his platform was. Chaos had erupted down below; the non-magical folk were running in all directions. There was nobody left manning the wheel’s controls?

“ON YOUR FEET!!!”

Harry screamed as he raised his head at that voice, just in time to see another light shooting towards him, he flung himself into the joist holding the carriage, narrowly avoiding the spell which singed the roof of the compartment disturbingly. Harry glanced up. His side of the wheel was steadily climbing!

Voldemort stood, with surprising ease on the carriage opposite. It was impossible. The wheel was so vast and ever-moving.

“Kiss the ground when you reach it won’t you, *Harry?!* ” Voldemort hissed, raising his wand. “*Avada Kedavra!*”

~To Be Continued...

Chapter 33: Chapter Thirty-Three

(Bound By) Clandestine Addiction

[Chapter Thirty-Three]

“Kiss the ground when you reach it won’t you, *Harry?!* ” Voldemort hissed, raising his wand. “*Avada Kedavra!*”

Harry ducked, sprawling flat on his stomach, groaning in pain as his ribs made itself known. “*Sectumsempra!*” He snarled and watched as gashes exploded over Voldemort’s body, blood bursting into the air. The Dark Lord wavered on his feet, just as Harry did when he tentatively rose to his feet again. But the Dark Lord did not fall. Then, Harry looked to Voldemort’s feet and he knew why.

“*Waddiwasi!*” He snapped and he *saw* Voldemort’s feet *slip* from their previously firm purchase, watched the Dark Lord scramble for purchase as his feet were unstuck from the roof of his compartment.

“Enough of these games, little boy!” Voldemort screeched, “I will end this *now!* Follow me if you *can!* *Reducto!*”

The surface beneath Harry’s feet burst open, the people inside the carriage screaming as the ceiling was blown off and Harry sent flying backwards with it. His fingers caught the circular edge of the structure and he winced as he clung on for dear life. Above him, Voldemort cackled madly, disappearing from the compartment roof in a whirl of dark mist and soaring upward. The sight of the mist carried over in the

direction of the great bridge, but Harry had more *pressing* problems at hand – literally.

Once I get to the other side of the wheel, he thought, seeing how he was at the very top now. Once it starts to decline, I'll slip!

He craned his neck, searching the skies frantically for Draco. “Help me!” He screamed, unable to see him from his perilous position.

Harry's fingers were peeling away with sweat one by one from the surface. He was going to fall, going to die, he just knew it. Then it happened, the carriage reached that point and he was falling, lower and lower, plummeting towards the earth. Then higher, and upwards, he was...he was flying?

“Hold tight!” Draco grunted tearing through the air like a bolt from a crossbow. He had caught Harry just in the nick of time, but Bellatrix was still on his tail and Lord Voldemort would no doubt be back on them soon. “K-Kill her!” Draco gasped out with a struggle, as Harry held onto his robe, the force of the wind making his voice tremble. “I-If you can't we have to switch places and you can fly the broom? This has to end!”

“Don't flee you wretched cowards!” Bellatrix screeched from behind. They were soaring so fast now.

“But I can't fly!” Harry protested. “Then kill her!” Draco choked out, his words almost lost to the sound of the air assaulting his eardrums. “I don't want *you* to die, Harry! And she is on top us! If I stop, we'll be finished!”

Harry fidgeted on the broom, trying to find stable seating on it, wrapping his arms around Draco as stronger purchase than his robe as he glanced back over his shoulder. Bellatrix was almost close enough to touch them! He glanced forward. Draco bowed low over the broom, weaving through the city obstacles and off towards the bridge. They were moving too fast, they couldn't switch places at this speed and even if they did slow to allow it, Bellatrix would reach them.

Harry felt a strange weight cling to his lungs, his battered ribs – he *tasted* it in his throat. Could he really kill someone?

Then, he saw her steady herself on her broom with one hand, raising her wand with the other. She was going to kill them. His decision was made within seconds for him, although the seconds felt drawn to their limit, longer than any singular event he could remember...

“*Avada—*”

“*Expelliarmus!*” Harry cried, cutting her off, he heard Draco snarl in protest of his choice of spell, and Harry watched as the witch's wand jerked from her hand, that insane grimace still touching her (no doubt once beautiful) face. She lurched off her broom then, taking hold of the tail of Draco's broom and dragging it down until it was vertical with their combined weight.

“Get off!” Harry snarled at her, watching her long fingers reach for him up the broom, desperate to drag him down into the watery depths of the Thames.

Draco forced the broom upwards but her weight was pulling them down, Harry felt heavier holding him this way, and he knew he only had one choice. He quickly pulled his wand from his robe and gripped the broom tightly as he turned his wand on her. “I'm sorry, *Avada Kadavra!*” He screamed. The chaos of the city seemed to silence for a fleeting moment. The world flashed an ominous green and her grip unhooked

from the end of the broom, sending them jolting forwards with the sudden lack of weight. They righted their position, horizontal once more, but their eyes remained on the woman falling.

Slowly she fell, plunging heavily into the river below. A wave of water crashed up towards the sky, spraying the two wizards as she sank beneath the surface. Then time returned to normal, Bellatrix was dead. Draco watched the place where she had last been seen until it was nothing more than a few ripples on the (once again) calm surface. "I never wanted to kill anyone either," Draco murmured, "But she would have killed us, Harry, and she wouldn't have stopped until she did. Voldemort is the same!"

"I know," Harry agreed, loving Draco all the more for the blond taking at least one death off of his hands. "I know, Draco. Let's go and...get this over with?" He leant in, this time pressing his lips to the side of Draco's neck as he held onto him tightly, Draco righting the broom and steering towards the Tower Bridge.

"I...I don't think I said...said I love you...anywhere near enough," Harry whispered softly, his eyes on the dark figure illuminated by the lights of the bridge. Dusk had fallen now and the bridge looked so beautiful, its lights reflecting back up at them from the water. He felt Draco stiffen before him, and he leant in closer, not able to get anywhere as close as he'd like. "Whatever happens, I wouldn't have wanted any of it to change. What I – I've had with you is worth *anything* that follows it."

Draco felt his throat tighten, when Harry spoke like that, it made him think this was the end. That he was going to...

"Be quiet! You fool, tell me that *after* we beat him!" Draco grunted, a light smile contradicting in his tone. Harry knew that was Draco's way of saying he loved him too. He had come to know a lot of Draco's reactions, and he knew that Draco didn't want to hear him say anything that may signify *the end*. No goodbyes, no confessions

of love – he just couldn't handle it.

Faster and faster they approached it, now only metres away from the tower when Draco murmured, "But just for the record, I love you a hell of a lot to."

Harry chuckled softly. "I want that in writing when we're finished here," he laughed, clinging to the sight of that dazzling smile on Draco's face, feeling it fill him up completely as Draco landed them both on the roof of the right-hand walkway. Voldemort watched them with a menacing smile from the other side, and Harry glared back at him, his wand aloft and tracking their enemy as Draco stowed the broom inside the pouch.

This was it.

"They are all dead," Harry said, again, his voice braver than he would ever feel facing the creature who had killed much braver, stronger wizards than he. "All of your followers, anyone who is mad or afraid enough to follow you. Give up now." Beside him, he heard Draco hiss through his teeth and he knew why. Draco didn't trust his moral sensibilities, and rightly so. *But how can I kill a man who's staring me straight in the face? No matter what he is?* Panic rose in his throat like vomit, and he choked on it. *How can I take someone's life?*

A low, rumbling laugh rolled off of those thin, white lips. "Whether I surrender or not, Potter," Voldemort hissed, "I will see you fall before I go." Those snake-like eyes flickered to Draco and then a cruel smile spread across his ghostly face. "Kneel before me, Harry Potter, and I will let your precious lover live – and the world with him."

Harry's eyes widened and he glanced to Draco, confused.

“D-Don't let him manipulate you, Harry! He would *never* let me live, even if you offered him your life on a plate he would not! Draco hissed, his insides hurling at the sight of the grotesque snake-like murderer before them.

“*Crucio!*” Voldemort cried, hitting Draco in the centre of his chest. He rolled onto the floor in agony, but he was still shouting to Harry through clenched teeth.

“You can do it Harry – *do...it!*” The sharp pain cut into his chest like the blade of a knife piercing him, the sheer power of the curse electrifying him. It felt like his insides were liquefying! Almost in tears, he cried out again. “You're my – my *sun*, Harry! You can do it! You *have to* do it!”

With the speed and force of an explosion, Voldemort's wand broke from Draco's body, shaken with spasms and turned on a distracted Harry.

“*Furnunculus!*” Harry snapped, breaking Voldemort's concentration on Draco as their enemy's face erupted with blistering boils. Voldemort laughed maniacally.

“You think the Dark Lord concerns himself with his face? I am not your simpering *boyfriend*, Harry, fawning over my appearance. Looks do not matter; nothing matters only power, only the strong, and the strong will conquer the weak *always* in the end.”

“I agree, the strong will always conquer the weak, and to be strong you need to learn to love, and to respect life.” He murmured darkly, fighting the urge to step back as Voldemort approached, slowly advancing down the long walkway, evidently unbothered by their great height, using the roof as his red carpet.

“You're no *lord*, you are not strong,” Harry spat, stepping forwards tentatively

towards Voldemort, keeping Draco behind him. “Killing people doesn’t make you all-powerful; it makes you the weak one. You had to harm others to feel invincible, that is nothing but *pathetic*.”

“Brave words from so small a hero,” Voldemort chuckled darkly, stopping but a few feet from Harry. “You think whimpering like a child and turning your backside up for a pretty boy makes you fit to be their hero? Harry?” He gestured out across the waters with his free hand, to the city, to the people there and beyond – the people all depending on him to save them, whether they knew it or not.

“I’ve taken more pain than you could imagine,” Harry spat, straightening up and turning fear to fury on his tongue. *Voldemort* would not see him tremble. “I’ve survived it, I’ve lost everything and I am still here. I’m a man facing the monster *greed* and *fear* can make you become, if you let it rule you. Because that’s all you are, you’re afraid and you’re greedy for a life you don’t deserve so you take it from others in hopes you’ll cling a little longer...

“I took nothing, and I have suffered as much as any one person could but I’m still a good person, and I’m still here, and I didn’t have to *take* from anyone to do it. You cause pain but you can’t handle it – you’re the weak one!”

“ENOUGH!!!”

Voldemort swiped his wand through the air, a flash of brilliant, crimson blood flying from Harry’s cheek as a gash ripped across his skin.

“Silly, silly little fool!” Voldemort spat, fury burning in his eyes, veins standing up beneath his pale flesh. “You think it brave to face me? You *had* to! It is not bravery to stand and spit at a fire you *know* will consume you anyway. This façade is not

bravery, not power, it is despair, the same despair you will feel when I blast the life from your wretched, useless body!”

“As long as the people I love are alright, there’s nothing to despair over,” he replied simply, his aloof tone driving Voldemort to madness. He wanted Harry quivering at his feet, like he had that night in the Graveyard!

Harry was quivering. His insides shook with fear and tears pricked at his eyes but he could not let them fall. “Being strong is overcoming fear,” He said softly, more to himself than Voldemort, “It is overcoming pain and sorrow and coming out of it stronger than before.”

“Pity for you that you will *come out* of nothing this time, Harry Potter,” Voldemort snarled, “*Avada Kedavra!*”

“*Expelliarmus!*” Harry screamed, a split second before Voldemort had finished, and as his own, golden light struck Voldemort’s wand arm, the last syllable left the Dark Lord’s lips.

It happened slowly; Harry watched the creature’s wand soar into the sky. He watched Voldemort dive forwards to catch it, not realising that his own spell had been cast before the wand was taken – not only that, but that the spell had started its travel just as the wand had been taken from Voldemort’s hand. Harry tipped his head, frozen to the spot as he saw that startlingly vibrant, emerald light (more dazzling than the ones that surrounded them) headed straight for him. A coldness that felt all too familiar burst in his chest as it struck him, and the Dark Lord both.

Voldemort went rigid, slamming down, face-first into the steel beneath them, his eyes wide, his body withering as if his years were finally catching up to him. And as his body rotted into a corpse, his blinking eyes indicating he was still alive as he did so, Harry toppled forwards onto his knees. Draco’s voice filled his ears, and the blond’s warmth surrounded him when he finally fell back into those waiting arms.

“Don't you *dare* die on me, Harry! *Please! Don't* – don't die on me! *I need you!* Don't die, just...” Draco sobbed; his throat was constricted with misery and he choked on it. He could barely breathe at the rate his heart was hammering in his chest. His eyes stung with an unbearable hurt and his voice was shredded and husky as the words struggled out of his tight throat.

He gazed down at the lights in Harry's eyes, the eyes that seemed to be fading, and the glow of life from moments ago seemed to be darkening. It was all happening too quickly. He was losing him!

His vision swam with tears as they erupted into his eyes, and his fingers twitched, desperately wanting to raise them to touch Draco's face one last time. But his body wasn't obeying him. The coldness was spreading through all his limbs, slowly creeping towards his heart. Yes, it felt very slow, death, and painful – agonising in a way he could not describe but for a thousand icicles piercing his every pore. Was the killing curse always this slow? Or did it only feel slow because it was his final moments?

He stared up at Draco's rivulets of tears overflowing his lashes and yet he felt his lips frozen in a subtle smile. Draco was talking; he could see his lips moving, see his distress but could hear nothing. It was all fuzzy, his world was fading and he blinked slowly, savouring Draco's...*everything*. This was what he wanted, to die in those arms if he could not live. But how he wished he could say something, *anything* right now, how he wished he could have his voice if only to say he loved him one last time. And that was Harry Potter's last conscious thought before the waiting, icy whiteness stole the last borrowed warmth Draco offered, his lashes dusting his cheeks as his eyes closed.

Across from them, Voldemort lay frozen in death, and the last thing he saw was Draco Malfoy's head bowing into the *Chosen One's* chest, before his last breath was whisked from his lungs. The Dark Lord was gone. Forever.

Draco held Harry close, and Harry seemed to be glowing strangely. Trembling, he ducked his tear-stained face into Harry's chest, everything was heavy, fuzzy, Harry was about to die! He just – he couldn't, he...

“No – no! I can't – I can't...you, HARRY!” He cried harder, louder, his lungs exhausted but still struggling through his sudden crescendo of emotion, shouting to the sky above. He clung tightly to Harry's body, pulling him closer than he knew he could. The busiest city in England seemed silent around them and the bridge's lights glittered like stars when that body he adored started to lose its warmth. Draco's eyes shimmered with the dazzling lights, glassy with shock and stinging pain. He had never cried so hard in his entire life, never felt more helpless.

“I don't want you to die! Don't die on me, d-don't leave me, Harry! No – n-no...” His cries were incoherent, shaky and jumbled, so intense that they were stumbling from his lips in stutters. It hurt – it hurt so much.

“Harry?” Draco breathed.

Suddenly the gentle light that illuminated Harry's almost lost body sparkled brighter than before, smothering the entire bridge with a blinding flash of white. He felt it then. Memories, feelings, knowledge – *everything*. His eyes widened.

Magic swept through his body and he closed his eyes, clinging to Harry's cold form tightly. His entire *being* tingled, his very fingers going numb with the intensity of it. It was as if the blinding light were sweeping through his soul, plucking minute pieces of...*something* from his core. Something that needed to be elsewhere.

A sharp gasp left him then, and he winced, the hand not cradling Harry's precious, limp body to him flying up to his heart. It felt as if the old scar had been ripped open. His nails bit into the flesh around it. He could feel his heart hammering in his chest, sweat dripping down his nose as if he had run a marathon. He felt exhausted all of a sudden, and not only because he had lost the one thing he'd been fighting for.

Clenching his eyes tighter, Draco let his head fall back into Harry's chest, breathing his lingering scent in, committing it to memory. His hand clasped tightly at his own scar. How it hurt, blistered as if it was fresh! And Harry, he was gone. Just what was he meant to do? How was he meant to survive without him?

Suddenly, the blinding light swelled until it blocked all else from his vision. He saw it then, and felt it, every single memory, every feeling, every *anything* Harry had ever experienced. He knew it, for the very first image, the first sounds were the Potters dying.

Harry's first memories, he thought.

It changed; times with that wretched muggle family he must have lived with, meeting that half-giant professor of theirs, Hogwarts, Hermione, Ron...

Their first real kiss.

Draco choked on his own spittle at the sight of it. He had heard of your life flashing before your eyes, but he wasn't dying (it only felt like it, he only *wished* it) and they weren't his memories!

Another gasp was yanked from him as Harry's memories played inside his head, and were Harry not wrapped tightly in his embrace he would have doubled over with the pain in his chest. As it was, he merely clawed as his heart venomously, little flecks of blood staining his shirt from the fresh gouges.

Suddenly, he felt a shocking *chill* touch his right hand where it clasped his pained *Sectumsempra* scar, and he jerked back into reality, eyes fluttering open. He looked down, to see a hand over his own – a hand subtly different to his own skin, a hand marred with a faded but ever-present '*I must not tell lies*'. Fresh tears reached his eyes as he felt those fingers clench around his palm. Never, would *anyone* be so happy to see such a bitter scar.

The white light around them faded into the night.

“D...Draco?” A voice gasped out huskily from beneath his face and he lifted his head to stare down into those green eyes, dazzling with the lights of the bridge, and with life.

“H-Harry?” Draco choked, coughed, his eyes wider than ever. “Harry?!” Draco gasped again, his throat was still sore and raw but he couldn't stop saying that name, and he couldn't stop crying while he said it over and over. He pulled Harry into his chest, squeezing him tighter than had ever squeezed him, holding him closer than he had before – even in death. That warmth had never felt so good.

Draco's eyes began to overflow again, his lashes soaked with the streams that cascaded over his cheeks. “I thought you were dead, I thought...I lost you. I thought...”

“You saw them? My memories?” Harry asked shakily, still holding Draco's hand tightly. “Draco, did you feel it? Y-You, it was all you – the bond pulled me back to

you, like *gravity*, like...like you always pulled me back, even when I thought I hated you..."

Draco heart stopped in his chest. "Harry, you...?"

Harry's eyes glazed over and he smiled warmly, tipping his head into his lover's throat. "I remember," he assured him, breathing softly over Draco's collarbone, and Draco didn't think he'd ever felt anything as precious as Harry's breath on his skin. "They all came rushing back when I breathed again for the first time. I remember...I remember you offering your hand to me in friendship in our first year, that little brat you were in the robe shop. I remember using *Sectumsempra* on you – I remember realising I loved you..."

That aching sincere smile set Draco's tender expression *glowing* in the dim light. Harry returned the exhausted grin, lifting his hand weakly to caress Draco's cheek. His thumb traced his eyelids gently, those thick lashes, the ridge of his nose, his lips. Draco's cheeks flushed a little, his perfect mouth still tipped up with a smile, but Harry's faded a little as the realisation struck him...

"The horcrux inside died with me, but the bond... I *felt* it Draco, clinging to me. It was like...it was like there was a piece of you in me, and a piece that was calling me back. You...you held me there, like gravity, it was..." He swallowed hard, shaking his head a little, his fingers knotting in Draco's robes. He didn't think it would be possible for him to let go of him again.

Slowly, Harry drew back, but only enough to look up into Draco's glistening, stormy gaze. "But the bond is spent, used up like...like you gave the little piece you had of me back to my body, so that I could come return..." He trailed off slowly, his tongue swiping across his suddenly dry lips. What did that mean? That the bond was completely gone?

Hadn't that always been the question? Would this ever have happened – would they have ever really been together if not for the ever-present call of their connection? Harry studied his hero's face carefully. Nothing was changed. He still felt that tingling in his chest, still felt his stomach flutter at the look in his eyes – still loved him, but the static had faded. It felt good to touch him still, perhaps more so, after regaining the precious memories they had shared, but the electric shock was gone.

Draco hadn't seemed to notice.

Draco *making love* to him for the first time, Draco staying with him, *saving* him in Gringotts. He saw them, felt them all anew as he breathed in his new life. Handing Draco back his slytherin ring, (which now sat neatly on the blond's finger) their only real 'date'...

He winced, biting the inside of his lip as he braved the words aloud at last. "The bond has gone," he said simply his voice husky with apprehension and he stared up at Draco intently, waiting for his response. Was Draco still drawn to him, the way he was still drawn up to those lips, that body? Draco seemed confused, his pale brow creasing with bewilderment and Harry choked on the silence, unable to take it any longer.

"I want you!" He gasped out, emotion rising in his voice, "And I remember everything, every right and wrong – I remember every touch, every *kiss* and every single memory with you is precious. They make me love you even more!" His cheeks coloured with furious embarrassment, but his mouth was running away in the heat of the moment, the height of emotion. "Tell me that you want me still for goodness sake!"

Draco's eyes began to tremble warningly again as he brought his hand up to cover

them. He had his Harry back. All the emotions were swelling inside, he felt like he would explode any minute.

“Are you some sort of an idiot...? Of course I still want you, that is if you...still want me, after all of the things I’ve put you through?” The blond said carefully, the trails of his tears still gleaming on his cheeks. It may have been the bond that started this between them, and at the beginning it may have been the key, the only thing constantly drawing them back to each other, but in the end, Draco kept going back because of his own feelings, not the bond.

“Don't get me wrong, I'm thankful to the bond for bringing us together, but it wasn't the only reason that I kept coming back to you. Part of me fell in love with you, even at the very beginning when it was faint, even when I... When I tortured you, pushed you away, and – and when I didn't want to admit it. Magic, Harry, as powerful as it is, it could *never* make me feel this in love with you, it has only ever been a small percentage of what I feel...and I'm sorry that you had to wait so long for me...for me to say these things to you.”

Harry flushed darkly, liquid globules of relief bursting over his lashes and painting his cheeks. “You-You didn’t hear me – the memories, even the worst of them, they...they make me love you even more. The bond brought me back in a magical sense but in reality it was you – only you that breathed the life back into me...!”

Harry’s fingers slid up the soft skin of Draco’s neck, caressing the wayward strands sticking up at the back before clenching them tightly, pulling that mouth down hard to his lips. He gasped into his kiss, the tears falling faster as he hummed deliriously, arms squeezing him so tightly his breath was leaving him. But he didn’t care, as long as Draco didn’t leave him.

“Y-You’re...you’re my everything too! H-How could I...*ever* come back to a life where you weren’t with me?” He panted into those sloppy, open-mouthed kisses.

Draco grinned exhaustedly and pressed into that kiss. He felt the same, the blast of emotions shot through him as he held Harry in that blissful moment. They had done it. Voldemort was dead and they were together.

“I’ve never felt so happy to be alive,” Draco said huskily, reluctantly pulling from the hug and rising to his feet. He reached down, offering his hand to Harry sheepishly. “Come on, let’s go home?” The slytherin’s smile had never seemed so sincere. Was this really the same Draco from before, his Draco? He had grown so much. They both had.

Harry nodded in agreement, the smile that touched his face beginning to hurt it felt so good, and he glanced back over at the withered, lifeless body of their enemy. He remembered him now, remembered every vile thing he’d done and the pain that had come with it, and still he was glad that he had not taken a life.

“Harry!”

Both of their heads jerked up to see two figures descending from the dark blanket of sky above. Slowly, the figures came into focus and Hermione and Snape, followed by what could only be a handful of aurors landed gingerly on the walkway.

“Thank heavens you’re alright!” Hermione shrieked, her voice shaken with worry as she threw herself at them both, kissing their cheeks with ardent relief. “Thank goodness! I was so worried you—”

“Her-mi-one – can’t – *breathe*!” Harry gasped, wincing from his injuries and his friend leapt back at once, looking over their wounds, especially his leg which was leaking blood like a runny tap. “Goodness! Harry! I’m sorry, we’ll get you back to

Hogwarts and Madam Pomfrey right away!!!”

Harry just nodded wearily, that familiar old castle sounded really good right now and then perhaps, he and Draco could be alone...

“Wotcher, Harry!”

Harry looked up to see Tonks and Remus amongst the aurors gathered at Voldemort’s corpse and smiled exhaustedly. “Tonks, Remus, it’s nice to see you,” he murmured happily.

“And to see you, in one piece,” Remus said with a knowing smile, reaching over to set a hand on Harry’s shoulder. “We’ll take it from here, I imagine the *Prophet* will want a word with you at some point but well...that can wait, you have the rest of your life to live now.” Harry nodded, it felt good to see Remus and Tonks alright, he hadn’t heard from them since little Teddy was born and he had wondered...

“Ron was the last to die by his hands, I think...I think he’d be proud of us,” he murmured, mostly to Hermione who choked on a barely concealed snuffle but nodded vigilantly.

“Of course, so proud of *you*, Harry,” she said and then Harry looked back up to the aurors, who were performing some sort of spell over Voldemort’s body that gave it a white, deathly glow.

“What are they doing?” He asked Remus warily, and the werewolf inclined his head to glance briefly at where the others were examining the corpse.

“Checking he is really gone, no other-worldly attachments, no spells to keep him here,” Remus explained, a warm, proud glow in his eyes that Harry didn’t quite understand. The last time he had seen that look was...

Dumbledore, he thought, remembering with bittersweet knowledge what that pride was now.

“They are also casting the necessary spells so that no aspect of the body can be used in any dark rituals or potions. He will not be coming back this time,” Remus finished, his arm entwining with Tonks’s subtly as he stared at him.

“He’s really gone,” Harry said, but it wasn’t a question, he *felt* in within every inch of his being. It was really over. He tilted his head then, regarding the couple with a warmth in his chest, they looked nice together, and it *felt* nice to know that the last marauder had found someone to make him happy. But the way Tonks rubbed Remus’s forearm stirred him into the realisation of what he was forgetting – his arm was still wrapped around Draco.

“Err, Remus,” he began gently, feeling the tension in Draco’s body as he squeezed him reassuringly, “This is Draco.” There was a distinct air to his voice that explained *exactly* what Draco was to him, with no room for interpretation. Remus regarded the silent blond for a moment, before offering his free hand to Draco to shake. Draco looked at it, as if not sure whether to take it.

“Draco Malfoy, am I correct?” Remus Lupin prompted, “I taught you, of course, but you have endured a lot since then, and it has changed you. You’re a very brave man, Mr Malfoy.”

“Err, thank you,” Draco said quietly, taking the man’s hand and shaking it. This was all very weird. He shot a half-hearted glare sideways at Harry and under murmured, “So what is this? Am I like part of *the family* now?” Harry seemed to blush, though he had only been joking. Draco chuckled lightly. “I suppose I’d be okay with that...”

“I must say, I never thought you would go *that way* Harry, but whatever makes you happy!” Tonks said cheerily. She was just being friendly and though it did make both of them a little uncomfortable, they both knew she didn’t mean anything by it.

“Yeah,” Harry laughed softly.

“You’re my cousin,” Draco acknowledged Tonks, who considered him thoughtfully for a moment, before answering.

“I am,” she said simply, “My mother is your aunt, Andromeda Tonks.”

“The Black family disowned her for marrying a muggle,” Draco said, again, his tone unreadable. Tonks frowned.

“My Father,” she replied, evidently not sure whether to be offended or not.

“I’ve never even met you before because of that,” he said and Harry looked at him now, wondering where he was going with this. “It was wrong. That way of thinking is wrong. I see that now.”

Tonks smiled easily at him. “A slytherin (and a Malfoy to boot) who found his way, eh? That’s a pretty amazing feat in itself, we know you guys have a reputation of being...well, *bad*, but after all you have done, I can be certain that you’ll take good care of Harry!” She said, joyfully patting his shoulder.

“Right!” Draco smiled slightly, not really sure what to make of her.

“Is it true? Has Harry truly gotten his memories back?” A rather plump woman cried out, shuffling through the aurors towards them.

“Word certainly gets around quick,” Draco joked under his breath.

”Mrs Weasley, Mr Weasley, what are you doing here?” Harry asked alarmed at those familiar, caring voices, here on the battlefield.

He hadn’t realised they were among the few Order members that had arrived. He was

definitely too tired.

“We were all that was available as your cavalry at such short notice,” Mr Weasley replied, as Mrs Weasley looked Harry over, turning his head this way and that, as if checking the extent of the damage. “Severus sent word to the Order, but it appears we’re only needed for the big tidy up,” he said warmly. “Well done, Harry and Hermione, and Draco of course.”

Harry smiled at Mr Weasley’s mention of Draco’s name. Draco had done a lot more than Harry had; he had saved his life, if he hadn’t been there...

“Well done?!” Mrs Weasley shrieked, “Well done? They could have died! They’re hurt! They need to get *straight* to the Hospital Wing and no two words about it!”

Harry smiled at her fussing, it was good to hear her defence of them. The Weasleys hadn’t abandoned him after all.

“Thanks Mrs Weasley,” Harry murmured as Severus Snape approached them, taking hold of Draco, Hermione and himself, ready to apparate them back to Hogwarts. Mrs Weasley smiled warmly at him.

“It’s good to have you back, Harry dear, and of course, Draco is as welcome at our home as you are.” Once again, Harry felt Draco stiffen with uncertainty beside him.

“Thanks,” he repeated softly, before looking over to Remus and Tonks. “See you all soon.”

And with that, a familiar jerk behind his stomach sent him soaring through that familiar whirlwind of chaos. Nausea swept through him, like every other time and he winced in preparation for the heavy landing. He wasn’t disappointed. He landed on his feet with a thump and his wounded leg groaned in protest, saved only from falling by colliding with Draco’s back. They had landed outside the gates to Hogwarts and that long walk back up to the castle looked less than inviting with how tired he felt...

The silence in the slow walk up to the castle seemed to be almost unearthly, Draco didn't seem to be saying much and he seemed to be further away from Harry than he usually would be when they walked together. Harry stopped dead-still then, causing Draco to turn and face him.

“Draco, I... Are you alright?” The silence seemed to force realisation to dawn on him. He wasn't saying anything for a reason beyond simple exhaustion. “Draco?”

“Sorry, it's just, well, on the tower, I could feel your emotions, even though the bond was gone. You seemed to be basking in the fact you didn't have to kill anyone, I'm happy for you, but maybe I...I'm not sure if I *had* to kill Bellatrix too. I just felt so angry that I – I wanted to kill her, I was so furious at what she had done to my parents. When I saw them, something inside me shattered, I felt as though I were falling apart.

"I hated her, I still do, even now. I felt the feelings rush over me, so much darkness... And then you... I just think that maybe I let my anger get the better of me. Maybe I didn't have to kill her. Maybe there could have been another way – you found it, Merlin, that man killed your parents, killed so many people you love and you still–” Draco cut off with a low, sharp hiss through his teeth. “I have done some really bad things, but I didn't want to do them, I was forced and this...this I did on my own.”

“But it was easier for me, I didn't remember him, when I killed him,” Harry explained, “I didn't really remember my hate for him, I...I couldn't kill someone so easily because I didn't have anything but what I was *told* to drive me, you did. I know if I had the memories I have now, I well... I'm not sure I'd have been able to kill him using the killing curse, but I'd give it a damn good try.” Harry paused then, caressing Draco's shoulder comfortingly. The pressure on his leg was aching, and his ribs hurt – he was also keenly aware of their potion's professor and Hermione nearby, but that didn't matter right now. “I know how you feel, I know what it is like to lose the people you love...and...I...”

“I’m sorry, Harry, I just – I’m not sure what I should do... Was it really okay for me to kill her?”

Harry glanced up to Snape and Hermione walking in front and slid his hand around Draco’s, squeezing it gently. “There was no other way. I gave her a second chance, I disarmed her. She could have fled but she didn’t – if you hadn’t have killed her she’d have dragged me down with her – you saved me!” When Draco turned away, seemingly unconvinced, Harry merely squeezed his fingers a little more firmly, trying to meet his eyes.

“I disarmed Voldemort, and I didn’t know the killing curse then – you never taught it to me and without my memories I had no way of knowing it. Not really. But if...if that wand had been aiming at you instead of me...” He trailed off thoughtfully. What he was about to say was right, he just knew it, he could feel it in his soul. He *would* have killed Voldemort, if it had come to it. He would have preferred not to take a life, but if someone he loved were in danger, he would have done it.

“Draco, if that wand had been aimed at you at that moment, I would have pushed him off the bloody tower!” He declared, seeing his Professor and best friend glance back at them as his voice raised a little. “You saved me, more than once, you’re a hero, she was a murderer. She would have killed her own sister – your mother, if Voldemort had ordered her to. She killed Sirius! If I had had my memories of how much that murder had hurt me right then, I would have probably killed her myself. If ever it’s okay to take a life, it’s to protect the lives of innocent people, to protect the people you love. I would have killed her in stone-cold revenge, Draco, but you were *protecting me*.”

Draco smiled at last, still sadly, but a smile nevertheless. “Okay,” He said simply, not even attempting to argue his point. He really had grown. “When you put it like that, it doesn’t seem quite so bad,” He said softly. “Thank you, Harry, for – for everything,”

Draco breathed, taking hold of his boyfriend's hand softly and caressing it with his own.

“But you *know*, now that you have your memories back, I can tease you, and torture your little tight hole without holding back,” Draco hummed sexily. Harry's hand tensed in his as he walked back along the path to the entrance of the castle, after Hermione and Snape. This part of Draco, it would never leave. However, strangely Harry was glad for that.

“Come along you two, we need to get you to the hospital wing!” Hermione shouted from up ahead. *And she'll never change either.*

The great doors opened for them as they reached it, and there were a haul of people waiting as they stepped over the threshold. McGonagall and the other teachers greeted them, a large cluster of eager students all in their pyjamas gathered behind them, clinging to every word spoken. *Naturally*, Harry thought with another tired smile. *The whole school knows...*

Madam Pomfrey seized them then, steering the teens and Professor Snape (much to his disgust) off towards the Hospital Wing. Harry was pleased in many ways, that Professor Snape was not injured but for a little aftershock of the Cruciatus from Voldemort. He could understand and even perhaps *appreciate* the potion's master, but he didn't want to be condemned to the Hospital wing (which he, Draco and Hermione *were*) with his grumpy professor present.

“Do sit *still* Mr Potter,” Madam Pomfrey instructed as she tended his cracked ribs with her wand. Apparently it was a precise art when the fractures were so intense. “I think I've seen enough London attractions for lifetime,” he grumbled to Draco, who was on the bed beside his, smugly drinking down the potion he had been handed for his internal injuries, a plaster neatly covering the gash across his face. It would take time to heal the cuts they had sustained from dark magic, natural healing took forever

when you were a wizard and were used to *whisking* your pain away. The blond snorted, having delighted in Harry's being fussed over, especially since he knew Harry hated it.

"You laugh now," Harry griped, "but she'll be back to force a three-course meal down your throat once she's done with me."

"*She* is right here, Mr Potter, you are wounded, not mentally damaged, now mind your manners," Madam Pomfrey complained, standing back and looking over him once more. "That leg needs tending to now, get your trousers off, Potter."

Harry flushed darkly, it was his punishment for talking without thinking, he supposed, and he gave Draco (who was chuckling quietly into his vile-smelling potion) a glare, before struggling out of his trousers.

Harry winced as the fabric clung to the gaping wound, falling back onto the bed after kicking off his school trousers. Thankfully, the *Chosen One* didn't go 'commando' and he was wearing briefs underneath.

"Oooh, Harry, you are brazen," Hermione teased from across the room.

"Piss off," Harry snarled, stumbling to his feet and yanking the privacy curtain around his bed roughly.

"Do sit back, Potter," Madam Pomfrey demanded, beginning to dab lightly at the wound with a swab loaded with a thick, yellowy substance.

Harry flinched. It stung like a whiplash over the vulnerable skin, worse than when it was actually *done* to him and his fingers knotted into the sheets, his teeth grinding together in relief of the pain.

Suddenly, a warm hand slid over his own on the sheets and he inclined his head to see Draco beside him. "It's going to take some getting used to, you know," Harry

managed out through a wince, “Not being able to *feel* when you’re getting closer to me – feel where you are.” He looked down at where Draco was twining their fingers together then, smiling subtly when the blond’s thumb slid over the back of his hand.

“It’s odd though, I still feel...kind of...” He flushed impossibly dark, whispering the last part so Madam Pomfrey couldn’t hear, “*Tingly* when you touch me. Not the static of before but...the touching still feels nice, you know?”

Draco smiled deviously, "Of course you would, *it's me*," He joked. “But I know what you mean.” Truth was he felt it too. But it was nice to touch Harry with a new freshness of sensation, without the hyper-awareness of every movement. Every touch felt almost spontaneous, so raw and...*magical*.

Draco noticed the cherry-tinted blush painted on Harry's cheeks and leant in to his ear when Madam Pomfrey turned her back for a brief second to get a clean cotton bud. “Don't get a hard-on though, Harry, I don't think Madam Pomfrey has the medicine for that!” He whispered hotly against his lobe.

“Sod off!” Harry hissed, but with a smirk gracing his lips. It was nice to have this back again, the easy, teasing banter they had possessed back when they had just fled Hogwarts together with Hermione and Ron.

“Mr Malfoy, please return to your bed,” Madam Pomfrey ordered, sealing the wound shut now that Harry’s wound was clean of dark matter and dirt. “I am quite aware of my students romping about the castle but there will be none of it under my supervision. You’re both confined to bed, now shoo!”

Harry laughed quietly, holding onto Draco’s hand as long as he could before the blond drew away and out of his reach. “Don’t worry, we won’t be in here forever,” Harry called to him when the blond disappeared beyond the privacy curtain and back to his own bed. “And you still owe me a date when we get out of here. Somewhere nice,” he

reminded him, “somewhere where all the waitresses are either ugly or gay.”

“You forget *we’re Gay*, what if it were gay *male* waiters?” Draco teased from the other side of the curtain, to which Harry scolded him again.

Hermione smiled from beyond the other curtain while Snape shooed her out. “Just for tonight,” he said, “You can sleep in a private room, the students will not leave you be otherwise, and I realise, we all need time to simply breathe.”

Hermione smiled, but refused politely. “Thank you, Professor, for the offer, but I – I don't want to be alone tonight. I think I...” She smiled sadly. “I think I want to see Ginny, and the others. I have so much I need to talk to them about.”

Snape nodded, knowing not to ask her again if she was sure. She needed people around her, and he supposed that should have been obvious.

Harry and Draco's banter went on long into the night, the night that seemed blissful and free – the night that signified the beginning, the night before waking up with fresh eyes, to a fresh start, a new life, and hopefully one with Draco.

~To Be Continued..

Chapter 34: Chapter Thirty-Four

Notes:

Thank you everyone who has read/reviewed this story, everyone whose stuck with us and loved every minute. Please review one last time. Thanks all!

Please check out my other Harry Potter stories if you have time.

(Bound By) Clandestine Addiction

[Chapter Thirty-Four]

Harry's eyes drank in the room, soaked with midday sunlight. The greens of the bed-dressings and the walls were rich with the light and Harry approached the bed slowly, running his fingers over the still blossoming petals of the flowers that sat on the side-table. He smiled warmly, it was so wonderful to remember everything, every little detail of how Draco would look or sound when Harry did something romantic, it made this simple (secret) gesture *that* much more meaningful.

Draco had kept the flowers he'd given him.

Glancing over to the door across the room that lead to the toilet, Harry could hear the shower running still. Draco had been released from the Hospital Wing earlier than him, last night in fact, while Harry had only been released a few moments ago. It had been three days since Voldemort had fallen, three days since the end of the war and Harry, Draco and Hermione had been hounded by their school friends, by their teachers and the general public (including the *Daily Prophet*) for their accounts of what had happened.

It had been a tiring three days, despite the fact that they were *supposed* to be resting and recovering from what had happened. After their fourth interview with the wizard press in two days, Madam Pomfrey had declared the ward shut to visitors until Harry and Draco were released. He had no intention of doing any more interviews. The world knew what had happened now, he had done what they had deemed *his duty* and now he would live his life as he pleased. *With whom I please*, he added mentally, glancing over to the closed bathroom door.

Because of their chaotic *bed-rest* period, Draco and he had had little or no time to themselves. There were so many things he yearned for, a desire so powerful now that he had his memories back. Like that first kiss when Draco had brought him back, he needed that passion and the fire again, but most of all he needed to touch him, before he went completely insane.

Slowly, Harry rolled the green coverlet and duvet to the end of the bed, neatly folding it at the bottom before taking the bouquet out of the vase. Plucking each of the petals in turn he spread them over the white bottom sheet, a bed of flowers that he'd made for them perfectly before stripping off to his briefs and crawling carefully to lie back on the bed, waiting...

The sound of the shower slowed. Draco reached for the handle and twisted the knob, the water whisked away and carefully he stepped out with his left hand reaching for the towel. He set aside his smart clothes on the table and tied his towel around his waist after drying himself. He spent nearly ten minutes magically drying the golden strands of his hair then, before finally leaving the bathroom.

"Harry?!" He gasped, seeing his lover spread-eagled (naked) across the bed, flower petals surrounding him. "You *bastard*, do you know how hard I tried to keep those flowers alive?" Draco grunted. But a second later, he flicked open the knot holding his towel shut over his own naked body until it dropped to the floor, leaving him exposed.

The iridescent scar over his heart twinkled like diamonds in the remains of sunlight, dazzling his lover to speechlessness. He softly swerved over to Harry, his knees touching the sheets, their naked skin tingling as their bodies slid together. "Let's make love..." He teased.

"Waiting for me to break out were you?" Harry smirked, running his fingers down the smooth plains of Draco's chest, caressing the soft line of that collarbone before ghosting over the scar. The scar that was proof of how they had begun this in near-hatred and ended up somewhere so far from that...

Staring up into those darkening silver eyes, Harry felt Draco's naked body slide along his and he smiled distantly, drawing back when Draco dived for his lips so that their mouths were but a hairsbreadth apart. "You kept the flowers?" Harry breathed with a teasing smile, hooking his legs over the backs of Draco's knees, his flimsy underwear the only barrier between them. "One might dare to say that *romantic* of you, Draco Malfoy."

"Well I'm full of surprises, you know," Draco replied, running his hand down over Harry's chest slowly and making his fingertips dance over the flesh tenderly. Bringing his fingers up, he playfully flicked Harry's left nipple. His lips tipped into a smirk when he felt Harry's body arch upwards and his cock jerk into his stomach.

"Merlin, you're addicted to me...*aren't you?*" Draco asked seductively – smugly (though his own cock was so hard it *hurt*) making sure Harry was watching closely when his tongue rolled over the shape of his lips.

"I've missed you," Harry breathed, his naked chest heaving with anticipation. "I want you, don't make me wait you arse!" Harry ran his nails gently over the skin of Draco's back, tugging on his hair impatiently, trying to pull those lips down to his own. But Draco resisted.

Harry's jaw clenched and he arched his hips up into Draco's body, grinding his clothed erection into Draco's hardness. He groaned deep in his throat, such relief to touch him, to be so close after what felt like *forever*. This would be the first time they'd been this close after he was... *complete* again. He couldn't get close enough. He needed more.

"Don't start being a cock-tease now!" Harry gasped out, grinding into Draco hungrily.

"Am I ever a cock-tease?" Draco joked rhetorically. Yes, of course he was. And he was revelling in it. "You have never complained when I've teased your cock before," Draco breathed, trailing a single finger down the line of Harry's sternum, across his pecks, over his belly and along the dark little trace of hair leading down underneath Harry's underwear. He leant in and flicked his tongue deviously over Harry's already erect nipple, dabbing the nub with a wet kiss before teething it gently, swirling his tongue around it. "Hmm, talk to me, Harry," Draco prodded, "Tell me how I make you feel?"

Harry tossed his head to the side, writhing in the flower petals. "Don't...!" He gasped softly, he didn't have enough patience or restraint to be teased, he needed him now. But it felt so good at the same time. The most wicked kind of torture. That tongue circled his perked bud gently and he arched up into the touch, rutting eagerly into Draco's hips as he did so.

"So...*good!*" He groaned. "You make me feel so good! My insides – they're so hot they're on fire! *Touch me!*"

Draco suddenly grasped Harry's wrists and flung them back over his head, pinning them into the pillow. He leant in close, nose-to-nose, almost kissing, their lips ghosting over one-another's delicately. Draco glared into those emerald orbs, his eyes

dark with seduction. “Touch you, hmm? Where? Touch you where?”

Those blond strands hung sexily into those silvery eyes. This was so intense! And it was only heightened by a pulsing feeling radiating not only through his own cock, but through his whole body. It felt like he was *buzzing* with the rush of delight

Harry writhed hungrily in the flowers, throwing his head to the side to expose his throat. “My neck!” he panted wantonly, spreading his legs in invitation, hoping to draw Draco deeper. “Kiss my neck!” His cheeks flared with embarrassment, but the lingering flicker of shyness that would stay with him only heightened the pleasure now. How embarrassing to ask for something Draco knew he wanted very well, (since Draco knew every inch of him) but how thrilling at the same time.

Draco’s head dipped to the juncture of his neck, his hot breath fogging over Harry’s skin, causing Harry to twitch and bare his throat a little more. Then those lips touched him, gently mouthing his flesh at first, and then more ardently, with open-mouthed, hungry caresses. “Yes...!” He hissed, “M-More! Touch me!”

Draco's kiss grew deeper, he began to suck gently, teething the wet flesh and running his tongue all the way up to his ear before sliding it sleekly back down again. It sent billions of searing tickles over Harry, whose body shuddered in sharp, flinches, but this only made Draco continue.

“What do you know, I gave you a love bite,” Draco teased, and Harry diverted his gaze sideways dumbly, before realising he couldn’t see the evidence his own neck. “What do you want me to do now?” Draco hissed tenderly, his lips curving round the tip of Harry's ear lobe while his free hand (the one he wasn't pinning him with) danced over his hip, making Harry to jerk sideways as if to escape the touch. “Hmmm, you like that?”

The possessive, predatory sound of Draco's voice, it made him shudder with anticipation. "I...I like it," Harry agreed, struggling in Draco's hold to reach him, craning his neck to capture Draco's earlobe in his mouth. He felt the blond gasp at the touch and wrestled his hands free, cupping the back of that neck to pull him hard down into his mouth. Worrying that tender flesh between his teeth, Harry rolled them over, sliding his imprisoned prick into Draco's thigh. "Hmm," Harry hummed eagerly, the hand not caressing the back of the blond's neck reaching down to tickle the soft trail of hair leading down to Draco's neglected hardness.

"You saved my life today – more than once," he reminded him huskily, shoving Draco more firmly onto his back and slithering down that body, pausing to dip his tongue into the shape of his navel. That pale body arched up unwittingly into the touch and Harry smirked. "I think I owe my *saviour* a kiss?"

Before Draco could say anything, Harry slid a little lower, bending his head to touch the tip of his tongue to that weeping slit.

"F-Fuck!" Draco gasped, his head crashing back into the sheets and his fingers clenching in Harry's hair. He shot forward, so he was now sitting up and pulled Harry from below, forcing him up until his lover's hands were on his shoulders. Their lips met again then with a sloppy, full-on kiss. Draco pushed his tongue deep inside the open mouth, mapping the sweet cavern diligently and his heart leapt in his chest.

"W-Who said you could...could take control...?" He asked impatiently into those lips. Reaching his hands over those hips then, he pulled Harry on top of him, so that he was sitting on him and grumbled, "*I'm going to fuck you, Harry Potter!*"

His tongue swiped across his own lips while he held Harry on top of him and he looked up at the boy (who seemed slightly higher than himself whilst sitting on his lap) and gazed dotingly upon him for a moment. *Mine, really...truly mine*, he thought,

dipping his tongue slowly along the shape of that collarbone, licking ravenously and devouring the boy as much as he could. Harry wriggled above him, and he could have sworn his cock was throbbing harder at each sudden movement he made.

“Hmm, *want you!*” Harry agreed, pressing his clothed hardness into Draco’s cock, basking in the delicious friction but far from satisfied. He pushed Draco’s head back again, plundering his mouth, sweeping over every moist inch with his tongue and moaning into the sweet place. He felt Draco’s hands on his forearms push him back then, obviously he wanted to top this time.

Harry smiled devilishly, reaching down to brush his thumb over Draco’s pink nipple. “D-Don’t...get all *affronted*,” Harry panted, humping Draco’s body frantically. “Don’t you remember? You *begged* me to fuck you...”

Draco's eyes quickly narrowed as he reached for Harry's wrist, flinging him sideways until he crashed face-first into the sheets. “That was a one-time only deal; I didn't like it *that* much!” He hissed, always the same arrogant asshole who couldn't accept he too liked *bottoming*, if only for Harry.

One hand on Harry’s back held him to the mattress, while the other slid down and under the waistband of his underwear, pulling it away from his body impatiently. He tugged the garment over that raised arse quickly and flung it aside. Spreading Harry's cheeks wide apart, he gave a single lick over that twitching hole before pulling away. “Don't forget who it is you're getting cocky with!” Draco snarled, hot breath steaming over that place he had just licked.

Harry wriggled on the sheets, spreading his legs wider and pressing his face into the sheets to hide a grin. This was probably the most (oddly) exciting aspect of Draco’s pride. It made sex so undeniably delicious. And Harry, he was insatiable right now.

“How could I forget?” Harry murmured into the sheets, relishing in the feel of his cock hanging openly between his legs, vulnerable to anything Draco wanted to do to him, while that mouth ravaged his twitching hole. “*Oh Merlin*, that feels amazing!” He whined, reaching back to held open himself with one of his hands, “Hnn, have I pissed you off, Malfoy? Are you going to punish me?” If Draco had been in any doubt that Harry wanted to play, that doubt was thoroughly quashed by those words, and the husky voice that had spoken them.

The slytherin grinned, a devious smugness that twitching at the corner of his lips. Grinding forwards into that arse, he grazed the crease between those buttocks with his burgeoning arousal. “Hmm, yes you have, and I'm going to teach you a lesson,” Draco hummed, rubbing himself along Harry’s crack, twitching each time his foreskin caught in just the right place. He threw his head around dizzily. His purpled head was swelling, wanting more.

“Fuck I want you!” Draco admitted, glad that Harry was unable to see the flush he *hated* knowing he had. “I want you so bloody bad!” He growled out, each hand on a bum cheek and he pulled Harry back with a sharp slam, his balls crashing into his leg, making tasty slapping sounds. “You want me to rim you, hmm? You want my slippery tongue in your tight little bum, Mr Potter?”

“I love it when you eat my arse!” Harry growled, pushing his backside up higher under Draco’s touch. He reached down, wrapping his hand around his own cock impatiently, and tugging the foreskin back. “Hmm,” He murmured, rubbing his flushed cheek into the petals, only to have Draco swat his hand away with a ‘*tut*’. Harry hissed in disappointment.

“Take me!” He demanded, unable to take this leisurely pace. He needed more or he’d simply burst with frustration. His cock jerked furiously and he rubbed himself into the sheets, Draco’s palm crashing into his arse *hard*, putting a stop to that movement also. “Touch me! Bloody hell, Draco, I can’t *stand it*!”

“You have no idea how much I like it when you beg, do you? When I *tease* you and make delirious – senseless, it makes me *so hard*. So hard that I just want to *fuck* you more, and fuck you *harder* than I have ever fucked you before you prissy little slut. Look at you with your needy bum in the air, wiggling it for me like a bitch in heat.” He inhaled sharply, maddened by the effect his debauched words were having on Harry.

He had forgotten how good they were together, like this, together, *complete*. Passionate. “Merlin, I want you. You have no idea how fucking much I have wanted you, every night since the beginning – how I have longed to tell you how much I want you and feel okay to do so...”

Malfoy ducked his head lower, darting his tongue forward into the twitching crease he stretched far apart. He dived in, swirling his wet muscle at the opening before fighting through the little, clenching hole. His saliva dripped down his chin, coating Harry’s crack, almost sizzling with the heat of their bodies, swearing his submerged appendage would melt like butter inside him. Inside the tight ring that was stretching open willingly for more.

“Hot! You’re so *hot* inside...!” He choked out, drawing back as he saw Harry’s hand reaching down desperately again. “I thought I told you that you don’t touch yourself, hmm?” Draco reminded him, swatting Harry’s hand away again. “Be patient, it will feel better that way.”

“It already feels too good!” Harry panted, pushing back into Draco’s talented mouth. His walls clenched around the invading tongue when it pillaged him once more. He shuddered at the feel of the blond’s saliva trickling down his crack and dripping over his balls. Obediently, he brought his hands up out of the way, crushing them between his chest and the duvet to resist temptation. His cock spat out pre-emission as that wet muscle circled his opening torturously each time before diving back in to devour him.

“You’re so - *perfect*, and you’re *mine*!” He groaned, trying to relax his hole to allow Draco deeper, but finding it impossible. “I want you, *please*!”

“Hmm, you're so *tense*, Harry,” Draco said smoothly, reaching one free hand under him to grasp his neglected organ. “Let's see if I can help you out there.” The blond purred huskily, grabbing his swelling prick and slowly stroking it. The red end burst through his fingers, throbbing with need as he drew the foreskin back from it and Harry cried out.

“Yes! Merlin, yes!”

“You like that, hnn? And look, your arse has started to *simmer*, you’re burning up – crushing my tongue. Let me help you to relax a little more?” The blond whispered, his tender tone ghosting over Harry's sac as he tongued the fragile skin with ease.

“Yes!” Harry groaned, wriggling his hips and rocking into the hand that fondled him, Draco’s breath whisking over his entrance that clenched tightly, so eager to be filled. He remembered every single time now, as clear as day and it made his insides hungry for it. His cock pulsed in white-hot pleasure as Draco’s finger pressured the tender line of flesh under the head of his cock, rubbing his sensitive, swollen head.

“Hmmm...yes! I love you, the way you touch me – the way you talk to me, *everything*!” He heard Draco chuckle behind him.

“You must love me; your little hole is winking at me.”

A low, embarrassing keening sound left Harry’s lips and his eyes clenched shut, his arse tensing at Draco’s words and his balls tightening at the huskiness of them. “More! Talk more! I love it when you talk...” He shifted his arms under his chest,

rolling his nipples gently between his fingertips. “So close...Draco...”

“Hmm, *not yet*, Harry,” Draco teased, drawing his tongue back and loosening his grip on that throbbing, purple-headed prick, that was spilling pre-emission over his fingers. Harry seemed to go rigid and uptight again, letting out a deep sigh of sexual frustration.

“Heh, you know, the more you complain, the longer it's going to take,” Draco chuckled, pulling his wand from his beside table and lifting it up to that twitching hole. He poked it at the wrinkled flesh of Harry's hole a couple of times, sending Harry crazy with the sharp, magical jolts. “How much do you want my wand in you, hmmm?”

“I don't...I just want you, *you*, not lube. Fuck me, fuck me raw, *please!*” Harry growled, spreading his legs painfully wide. The blond's eyebrows jerked up in surprise then, before his face merged into a playful sneer.

“Dirty little Potter, what *would* the teachers think? Tut tut!”

Draco pressed the tip of his penis into the crinkled opening, still damp with his own saliva. It was so tight, no matter how many times they had done this before. The slick, hot wetness of Draco's saliva cocooned the head of his penis as he slowly began to press the head into the already taut skin. Harry winced in pain a little, causing Draco to stop. “Don't stop, I'm alright! Please, do it now!” He begged and Draco smiled.

“Hmm, alright...”

Harry groaned deep in his throat, the sound drawing out as Draco slid in slowly. The stretching feeling burned but it was the most delicious kind of friction, as his body opened the way it remembered how to. “Uhhh...*so good...*!” He panted, relaxing his lower body all he could to accept it. “Deeper,” he begged, feeling Draco kneel up

flush against his arse sliding deeper inside him.

And then those thighs rested against his, that cock pressed as deep as he could go. Harry winced at the burning but the way Draco's hardness slid so perfectly over that hot place inside him made him squirm around him. "Spit on it for me," he whispered out into the room, closing his eyes and rubbing his cheek into the pillow once more, his whole body wound so tight he swore he would snap. Nevertheless, he made a sound of complaint as Draco drew back, a globule of saliva dripping down onto his stretched, clenching ring of muscles as well as Draco's cock before the blond slid back in easier this time.

"How's that my needy *boyfriend*, hmm?" Draco teased, running his hand lovingly up Harry's back and clawing back down over his buttocks. Harry shuddered as his nails graced him gently. He bit on his lip and moaned through his clenched teeth.

"More, that was...*ah!*"

"Heh, Potter, your cock is spilling all over the place isn't it? Maybe you should put this on the end?" With a gesture from his wand and a murmured, incoherent charm, Draco whipped out a round, blue cock ring and handed it to Harry, who instantly flushed at the sight of it. "Well, *go on*," He probed, moving slickly inside his lover's tight body. Harry took the toy and slid it awkwardly over the head of his penis – it automatically switched on. Harry's backside tightened instantly as the tense object began to hum around the head. His cock jerked forward into his belly and he found himself biting harder on his lip than before.

"Ahh! *My cock* – you're arse is squeezing my cock, Harry! Merlin, that's – it's hot! So tight! Hmm...turn it up, turn the vibration up to full!"

"Ahhh!" Harry gasped. His leaking erection shivered under the intensity of the vibrations when he turned it up, his hips wiggling, not knowing whether to push back

into those thrusts or hump into the sheets. “Hnn, you always give me such nice toys, Draco,” Harry panted with a breathless smile, tilting his arse up as much as he could to improve the angle for Draco’s swollen cock-head to swipe over his prostate.

“I’ve missed you!” He gasped, “Missed being this close!” He felt Draco bow over his body, and moaned aloud at the deliciousness of that sweat-slicked skin pressing over his back, completely covering him and filling him. They couldn’t get any closer. That hot breath disturbed the dark hair at the back of his neck and he squirmed, a low whine leaving his throat. “Hnn-nh...too – so big today,” he groaned, “So full...and deep!”

“Hmm, what was that – *so big?*” Draco slowed his movements as the words sank in, cock pulsing with the steady movements when his eyes narrowed darkly, passionately. “How big?” He asked, flushed with arousal and smug at Harry’s compliments. His smirk brushed over Harry’s skin, letting his lover know that he knew *exactly* how big. *Arrogant arse!*

“You like it when my fat cock stretches you open don't you? When it penetrates you deep?” Draco asked dazedly, that toy was tensing up Harry's arse like mad, making the hot chute squeeze his swollen prick tightly. “God, Harry Potter, I–I'm melting! You're arse is eating me so...*bloody hell!*”

Draco moved faster now, as inevitable as the tide, jerking forwards hard so that his balls slapped against the *Chosen one's* flesh loudly. The sounds, the smells everything about Harry was irresistible, like a magnet pulling him in deeper and deeper every time – beyond rescue. He couldn't stop this crescendo of ecstasy. “*Merlin*, your cock, I – fuck... Harry, I'm so...*ahh!*”

Fuck the bond, Harry thought, lost in delirium, it still feels like his touch is electrifying.

Harry turned his head, gasping as he looped his arm around Draco's neck, dragging his face down to his mouth. He sucked that lower lip, before skirting inside that hot mouth with his tongue, groaning into him as his cock swelled painfully. "L-Love it – love it when you talk like that," he hissed, "Going to – cum if you're not careful...!"

He reached down, rolling his balls gently, his body jerking forwards into the bed of petals with every thrust Draco made into his body.

The hot, musky walls were swelling around the blond's cock, he felt a rush of maddening pleasure shoot through him, like a thousand echoes of every time they had every touched radiating through his prick. "I-I can't stop though, it's...just..." He cut himself off again, lost in the heights of pleasure where all words fled from him. His hands grasped Harry's hips firmly as he crashed forwards into them. "W-When you feel like you need to cum, t-take the ring off and rub yourself for me!"

Every limb was starting to feel tense. Draco brushed his fingers over Harry's hips lovingly – obsessed with every inch of him as ever, and traced the soft plains of his body around and under him until he reached his hard nipples. He circled the nubs slowly with the tips of his gentle fingers then tweaked them. Harry's body shook with uncontrollable spasms at every little touch Draco inflicted.

"Talk Harry, tell me how this feels. Tell me how my cock feels in your bum, please – *Merlin, please!*"

Harry groaned lowly, his body jerking into every point of pleasure in confused rapture. "So good!" He cried out, his eyes watering with the intensity of it all. "Your cock feels so good, so big like it's going to split me open! So stretched...and *full*. My body feels so hot!" Draco's hips slammed into his noisily, their skin sticking with sweat and spit and Harry gasped again, his hand flying down to tug the cock ring off

his damp prick and jerk himself frenziedly.

“Close! Draco...*fuck me*...I want to – with your cum in me!”

“I'm...I'm fucking you – I'm *fuck*, I'm *close* to it's ahh, *I'm*...!” Draco's mind burst open into foggy, white confusion, his cock seemed to be moving in Harry of it's own accord now. He gazed down and watched as his cock swelled and gyrated into that arse. So hot, so close. So good, so tight!

“Hmm, Harry stroke it. Stroke it – pump your cock, spill it over the sheets! I want to feel you, I ahh... I'm – I can't...!” Draco's words were smothered by the intensity of sensation again and his head flew back. Something was happening inside his stiff prick, like the rise of fire in his veins.

“You want it hmm? You want my fluids in your bum? My hot, sticky cum, you want it? I'm, so close – so *close*!”

“Yessss!” Harry hissed, feeling his balls tense tellingly, “F-Fill me up – with your cum! Flood my arse...! Ahh!” He felt himself burst then, his every tendon pulled tight, like they would snap. His jaw clenched and his groans of ecstasy carried out as his liquid climax burst from his swollen erection, splattering over his fingers and the sheets. “Yes...Draco, cum, *cum inside me, please*...!” He kept stroking himself, his bum clenching in the aftershocks of his orgasm, his sensitive prick jerking as if to escape the maddening touch.

Harry rubbed himself into the sheets like a cat in heat, his every pore tingling as if they had been struck with electricity. Draco did this to him, not any consequence of an unintentional spell.

“Yes! I'm going to cum soon, going to – Hmmm!” Draco dipped his head forwards suddenly into Harry's back, resting it there as he pounded faster and faster into the tight, inviting hole that twitched in the aftermath around him. Everything felt too bright and his eyes clenched shut, lashes fanned across his cheeks as that blissful ascension into chaotic pleasure burst in the pit of his stomach.

“Here it comes! Ah, Merlin, here it... I'm cumming!!!” He moaned at the top of his lungs, raw with emotion when the white substance shot up through his cock and spilled deep into Harry's quivering body. The hot substance hit Harry deep and his walls were stained with the sticky whiteness from where his feelings, his desires had burst with intensity. Draco fell forwards as that member continued to spurt every last drop into Harry's waiting body, panting, breathless, spotted with drips of sweat.

“Hmm...*perfect*...!” Harry gasped out, breathing frenziedly as Draco rolled off his back onto the bed beside him, pulling him tightly into his chest. Harry smiled deliriously, still lost in the hazy cloud of his post-orgasmic bliss, pressing his head under Draco's chin and inhaling his musky smell of sex. “I – I love you,” he panted his eyes closed against the room, so that there was only Draco there, wrapped around him so completely, almost protectively. “I really love you.”

He heard Draco chuckle softly above, the soft rumble of it against his own body broken by those gasps for breath. His eyelashes fluttered and he looked up as Draco swept his fringe back from his sweaty forehead, all the better to look at him, to look in his shining eyes and flustered face. Harry blinked up at him as he felt Draco's thumb trace the faded scar on his forehead gently. It no longer ached as it had always done, but it was certainly sensitive to touch and he squirmed slightly under the delicate touch.

“I sort of hoped it would vanish when he died,” Harry said quietly, examining every perfect inch of Draco's flushed expression in the dying sunlight.

“I like it,” Draco said plainly to Harry's surprise. Harry's wide emerald eyes seemed to be enough to distract Draco from his blush. “Well it...it's part of what makes you *you*, it's a part of you, and even the bad and good memories that come with it. It's what makes you who you are, and you're an amazing wizard and well...it's also sort of...*cool*. A lightning shaped scar is so unique, how many others have one of those?”

Harry smiled at him. He always said the right things at the right time, always said it as it was and so his words meant that much more. It was as if they were in sync with one another, like they could feel the other's next reaction, and no, this wasn't because of that bond, this was because of something far more powerful and *deep*.

“I... I sort of hoped mine would disappear too until I realised that this one here on my chest is also a part of me, as is this one on my arm.” Draco gestured where his dark mark had been, yes, the mark was gone, but the scarring of his attempts to cut it away remained.

“I love you, with or without your scar, Harry, but I don't think that we should wish them away, not ever! Because it's one of the things I love about you, because it's iconic, and it makes you Harry, *my Harry*.” Draco smiled, holding Harry close for just a few moments longer.

“S’pose we should think about getting ready, there's only an hour until it starts...”

Harry gave a sigh of feigned annoyance, rolling over onto Draco's chest so that he was lying over him. He huffed loudly, disturbing the blond hair from Draco's face, and the slytherin smiled warmly at him. “We've done our duty, why should I have to suffer by dancing around with half the wizarding world watching me?” He griped, silenced by Draco taking his chin and drawing him up to press their lips together chastely. “I can't even dance,” Harry breathed as he drew away.

“But I can,” Draco replied softly, his eyes glowing with mischievousness as he gently pushed Harry back, sliding out from under him. Harry watched him get to his feet and cast the necessary cleaning and refreshment charms on them both, before moving across the room to snatch his clean underwear off the top of the pile he had set out earlier. His dress robes.

“I thought I might just stay here, you know,” Harry murmured teasingly, tilting his head to watch the curve of Draco’s bum as the Blond slithered into his underwear, “Enjoy the view.” He smirked as Draco looked over his shoulder at him, seizing the underwear off of the top of Harry’s pile and hurling them at Harry on the bed, so that they hit him in the head. “Fine, throw me to the wolves,” Harry complained, getting to his feet and pulling on his underwear before crossing the room to where Draco stood dressing himself in front of the mirror.

“I’ve already defeated Voldemort, you’d think that would be enough, but apparently a celebratory dance that makes the Yule Ball look like a child’s tea-party is my final task – I’d rather take on the death eaters again...”

Draco whirled to face him, now half dressed from the waist-down, taking Harry’s shirt off the side and dressing him in it, caressing his honey-hued skin slowly as he did up each button. “One death eater is enough for you,” Draco teased in a low, husky voice, evidently meaning himself. Harry sighed, resigned to being clothed in dress robes similar to that of the Yule Ball three years ago now and studying Draco’s face as the blond fiddled with his bowtie.

“I really can’t dance, you know,” he reminded Draco, “The Patil sisters never spoke to me and Ron in the same way again after the Yule Ball sham. Dragons were easier than leading a girl around the dance floor with all those people watching...”

Draco continued to push the buttons on Harry's shirt together, then handing him the short black waistcoat with the blazing Gryffindor emblem crested on the left hand side. "It doesn't matter when I can dance and I can take the lead, Harry, all you have to do is follow me and look cute," Draco assured him with that wondrous smirk, pulling at his bowtie again.

"Besides, I have a little...gift to give you, to...congratulate you. You liked this, didn't you? My ring?" Draco said almost awkwardly, pulling his silver snake ring from his finger and placing it in Harry's palm, making sure to wrap his fingers over it. "Have it?" The blond smiled at him, flushed at the tingling swell of romance tugging at his core. "Just...you like it, so you can have it, that's all."

"I liked it because it was yours," Harry explained, his face twisted in a state of awe. Maybe it was good his boyfriend wasn't always terribly romantic, because when he *was* the moments were so astounding they rendered him speechless. He flushed darkly, remembering how he had so foolishly taken it, back when he'd thought he needed such keepsakes to remember Draco by. Because he'd thought it wouldn't last. Ironic, he thought, that now Draco was giving it back to him as a symbol that it *would* last.

"Thank you," Harry whispered, his voice drawn husky with emotion, leaning up to kiss Draco's cheek as he slid it onto the finger closest to his heart. "Draco Malfoy," he murmured softly, "When did you become so sweet?"

"You're the one who just put it on your bloody *wedding* finger!" Draco blurted out, not quite sure how to react to that. "We aren't *married* yet!" Draco groaned, he had *not* just said 'yet' – implying that they would at some point. "And I wasn't being *sweet*, I just..." Harry seemed to be smiling at him dreamily, regardless of whatever he said. Draco frowned. "Just get that smirk of your face, Potter!" He declared with false anger, his expression soon softening as he offered his hand to Harry. "You ready to go?" Harry nodded, slowly stepping across the room hand in hand.

“It’s the only finger it would fit on,” Harry lied, pressing another kiss to Draco’s cheek as they departed the room. “I’m going to go up and check on Hermione, I’ll meet you down there, alright?” He frowned when Draco raised a brow at that. “This ball is in our honour, really, I promise I’ll be down in a minute. Until then, you can entertain yourself by disappointing all the pretty girls by telling them you’re mine.”

He jumped with surprise as Draco pulled him in by his waistcoat, dragging him up into a fiery kiss. Harry groaned, his stomach fluttering furiously as Draco’s tongue swept through his mouth, leaving his lips bruised beautifully from the kisses. “See you down there,” Draco breathed huskily in his ear, before drawing away and heading down the corridor.

Harry swallowed hard, glaring at Draco’s retreating back. “Wanker,” Harry murmured in amusement, before turning on his heel and heading up to Gryffindor Tower.

Every inch of the castle was hung in beautiful, tiny lights, woven through the tapestries, along the stairwells, everywhere with the celebrations. But despite their victory, the beauty of the castle that had been his home, he could not quash the feeling of anxiety in his gut. *With Draco leading me, perhaps this will be less painful than the Yule Ball*, he thought as he moved through the common room and towards the separate room Hermione had been given when they had first returned to Hogwarts. *Hermione seemed to have a good time at the Yule Ball, so it must be possible to enjoy a bloody dance...*

He leant his ear against the door when he reached it, rapping his knuckles gently on the wood. He heard a small sound permitting him entry and he stepped in, closing the door behind him. “You look amazing,” Harry complemented, looking his best friend over, her hair tamed back up in little curls, similar to the way she had at the Yule Ball. Her body, however, was dressed, in a simple azure evening gown. It wasn’t the ruffled, lacy ensembles he’d seen some of the other girls wearing on the way up

here, *ball-gowns*, he thought, this was much simpler, but suited his friend and her mood a lot better. And she still looked stunning – even to a man of his...*tastes*.

Hermione looked down at herself, patting down the dress needlessly before looking up at the mirror on the wall. She smiled awkwardly at herself, she never had been very confident.

“Thank you, Harry,” She said carefully. Her best friend walked over and stood beside her. “I’m...I’m really happy for you, and for Draco, you deserve each other, and you really deserve a bit of happiness after everything you have been through.” She seemed as though she was about to cry when she carefully brought her hands up to Harry’s shoulders and pulled him in to a gentle hug. He held her for a fleeting moment. Allowing her some of the human warmth she so desperately needed right now.

“I know I don’t dance very well, but...you owe me one of the first dances,” Harry said with a wishful smile as he walked over to the door. “Are you coming?”

“I’ll be down in a bit,” She promised with a reciprocating smile. Harry departed silently from her and shut the door behind himself, leaving her quite alone. Staring at her reflection, her eyes tipped up into a sincere, sad beam as she saw the portrait behind watching her, grinning. “You know, I remember when you were so jealous at the Yule ball because Viktor Krum asked me first...”

“That’s it, remember me for my good points!” The portrait of Ronald Weasley teased, before regarding her meaningfully. “Now go out there and have fun, you look lovely tonight,” he paused for a moment when she looked unsure. “Go on. Get a nice snog off some fit lad. Ginny is taking me back to the Burrow tonight.”

“I...I will visit, you know,” she said. She knew this wasn’t Ron, just a painting, a glimmer of what he had been, but it made it easier, made the hurt lessen to see how heartily he approved of her moving on. She liked thinking a part of him was lingering,

guarding her like a precious gem.

“Krum better show you a good time tonight or else,” the portrait joked, and Hermione grinned, blowing him a kiss and watching with a true, soothed smile as the redhead within the frame made a show of catching it. “See you soon, Hermione! And next time bring me the gossip on all the nice blokes you danced with!” He called after her.

Hermione laughed softly as she made her way down to the ball where all were dancing in celebration of the darkness dead, of the ones who had fought alongside them, but had been lost along the way, and of the lives that now lay ahead...

It wasn't ok, she wasn't ok. But she would be, some day.

* * *

“Ahh, so you decided to come back to me, Harry?” Draco joked. He seemed a little tipsy, but then again, his sarcasm always was rather dry.

Harry beamed at him as he descended the stairs taking Draco's hands eagerly as he reached him, feeling safer in front of the guests (not only students but wizards and witches from all over the world) pouring into the great hall. He didn't trust himself not to make a scene by falling over or something similar. “Hermione is coming down in a minute,” Harry assured his boyfriend, allowing Draco to steer him towards where the great doors to the hall stood open.

The same, tiny lights were wrapped around every column at the wall, draped like a thousands chandeliers while the sky shone beautifully above with a blanket of stars.

The music was already playing, hundreds were already dancing, but some were clustered at the side, sampling the beverages or chatting. They had not seen them enter, and Harry was grateful for that, the mere vastness of the ball was leaving him a little choked by his own nervousness. Draco however, seemed to be *revelling* in it.

He's more confident than me, Harry realised, allowing Draco to steer him over to the table along the side of the room holding the beverages. "Err...pumpkin juice," He said undecidedly as Draco offered him a drink, but as Draco moved to fetch it, Harry turned his head to the side, catching the sight of their old potion's professor standing quite alone just a few feet away at the wall. Casting a glance back to Draco, who was still busy getting drinks, Harry approached the grumpy teacher.

"This isn't my scene either, Professor," Harry said conversationally, the taller man tilting his head to look upon him, his expression the perfect picture of vacancy. The man looked him over before raising a brow.

"Very smart, Potter, now be gone, your date awaits you," he said stiffly. Harry frowned, that wasn't what he had meant to say.

"I meant to...to thank you, Sir, for everything. For saving me, even when I...I may not have done much to deserve it from you."

"It is not for you or I to say who deserves life or death," Snape answered, and Harry nodded.

"Yes but... I have been a spectacular git the last seven years – so have you, but I mean...I can't blame you, Sir."

"Indeed?" Snape murmured, "You refer, I presume, to what you saw in my pensieve in your fifth year?"

Harry flinched. They hadn't spoken of it at all since that night. And neither of them wished to, he wagered. "Sir," Harry said with another nod, "You've come out better

than most have after your mistakes, after the...the tortures you've suffered—”

“Don't pity me, Potter,” Snape spat with disgust.

“No, Sir,” Harry said stiffly, “Just...*appreciating* everything, all you've done, not just for me, but for the world. You had to...to sacrifice a lot to kill Professor Dumbledore, to play Voldemort's spy after how he...he betrayed you in regards to...to my *mother*...”

Snape's eyes went wide with horror, his face paling even more so (if that were possible). His mouth shot open – to deny it, to scream at him, whatever it was, Harry could not be sure, for he headed him off before he so much as uttered a sound. “I died – I think you know that by now, after all the times you've heard me relive the story of what happened... And when I...when I died I...” He frowned, struggling to find the right words. *Do this right, for heaven's sake, Harry*, his mind reprimanded him in a very *Hermione-like* voice.

“When I died, I saw things – well...more like I was *aware* of certain things...my mum and dad, and Sirius. And...and Professor Dumbledore too, Sir... I saw things, about you and my mother and... I...I didn't have time to realise it until I had some time to myself. But...I wanted to tell you that, Sir, that I know how hard it must have been to face me everyday, to even save my life, when I was nothing...nothing but a reminder of my Dad who...” He winced, this was so awkward, but it needed to be said, Snape deserved that much. “...who took her away from you. And Sir, I'm glad that you...you *loved* her so much. And I want to thank you, for all the things you did for me, and for her.”

Snape looked at him blankly, he had never been one for emotions, for over-elaborate reactions or explosive revelations and so, he simply nodded. And Harry smiled. Harry knew that was just his way of understanding, and for a moment, Harry thought he saw a tear swell over the rim of one of the professor's glassy eyes.

“So are we going to dance or what?” Draco asked, carrying two drinks in either hand.

Harry looked back to say goodbye to Snape, but he was already making his way through the crowd. *It must have really meant more than he could stand to show in public*, Harry thought, but he was glad of the confrontation. It felt...right and he made the decision then to talk to the professor again in a few days when he was ready – when they were both ready. It was a delicate matter after all.

Harry smiled, taking one of the drinks from Draco's hands and sipping at it to dull the nervous fire in his throat. Draco looked around at his lover's renewed uneasiness, the ball was rather grand. It wasn't only for students, everyone was here, Hagrid, Filch and his cat, the Weasleys, a lot of familiar faces from when the Triwizard Tournament had been held, even half of the order! And then Mr and Mrs Malfoy, whom were recovering well, especially at the sight of their son so happy.

It was nice to be in such a warm place for the first time in his life, knowing which direction things would go, not being afraid of losing it all. Draco too, had also often felt unsure whether he would reach adulthood or not, especially with his ties to the Dark Lord, and his expectations as a pure blood prince. A slytherin.

“*Merlin*, this pumpkin juice tastes awful!” Draco hissed, slamming the cup on the side. “Maybe they should find someone else to brew it, instead of relying on people whose skills are evidently inadequate!” With that, he moved forwards into the crowd, inviting Harry after him with his finger. “Come, let's dance?”

Harry swallowed nervously, meeting his lover's eyes and feeling his insides tremble. When he didn't move, Draco took his hand, tugging him gently from the safety of the beverage table and onto the dance floor. The twinkling brilliance of the decorative lights reflected in those grey eyes, the starlight above and the warm, orange glow of the room casting a gentle glow in that blond halo of hair. Draco was still smiling, as if this was what he had been waiting for his whole life. When he pulled Harry into the centre of the dance floor (just as the song changed to something rhythmic but slow) the crowds parted, stalling in their own steps to stare at them, some craning their necks to see.

Harry and Draco had made it quite obvious that they were together – just as they had faced the Dark Lord together, though they had refused to either comment on their relationship or offer photographs for the Prophet, which had printed a ten page spread about them two days ago. *Suppose they'll have plenty of pictures now*, Harry thought drawing on closer to Draco's chest, one hand resting on the blond's shoulder while the other grasped his hand. He almost choked when Draco's other hand found his waist.

“Everyone is watching,” Harry mumbled unsurely, as Draco started to move, bringing him with him, guiding him gently through the steps.

”Are they?” Draco asked with feigned ignorance, the music swelling and Draco twirling Harry out from his body to arms length, before pulling him back in. Harry laughed despite his nervousness, colliding blissfully with his lover's chest once more. “Does it matter?” Draco asked, never ceasing to move, keeping Harry tight to his body. Harry blinked at him, shaking his head and with that, Draco's head tipped to bring their lips together.

Hermione inhaled deeply as she descended the stairs, unease swelling in her chest. She flattened her dress once more (needlessly) never quite comfortable in such...*girly* attire, but still, Ron wanted this for her, a new beginning, and she would take it. She reached the doorway, frowning in confusion at the sight of the crowds remaining still, the occasional flash of a camera in the background, it was only when she moved forwards that she saw them. Draco and Harry, wrapped around each other as they danced, their lips coming together chastely.

Hermione flushed, a grin beginning at her lips and spiralling down into her core, lighting her up with hope inside. Her hands clapped together as she applauded them, the sound echoing through the hall with nothing but the music sounding alongside it. If Draco and Harry, despite all they had suffered, despite what had stood in their way could be together then there was always hope.

Slowly, the applause she had begun swelled, the sound rumbling loudly through the hall. She beamed at Draco and Harry as they broke their kiss to stare at the applauding audience, catching their eyes. Everything was going to be alright, she could feel it. She watched then, as they continued to dance, Draco sweeping Harry up against his side as he swirled, whirling Harry right up off his feet. A tap on her shoulder, however, distracted her from the sight.

“Would you like to dance?” The deep, Bulgarian voice asked, his hand gesturing forward for hers as if she were a princess. Hermione smiled at the familiar face, moving a rogue hair from her cheek and tucking it slowly behind her ear.

“I don't think – it's just so soon and I really...”

“Just as friends?” Krum interrupted gently. Hermione smiled taking a hold of his hand slowly.

“As friends,” she agreed with a cheery smile as he guided her into the crowd beside Harry and Draco who had dominated the dance floor.

“Mind if we join?” Krum called to the couple over the music and Harry nodded.

“Not at all!” He assured him, bursting with bliss at his friend's first sincere smile he had seen in a while. With that more people started to take there partners' hands and join them in the dance.

Hermione smiled dizzily as she was whirled across the floor like a petal on the breeze by Viktor's arms, looking over her shoulder at Harry in between the movements. She couldn't stop smiling.

Harry laughed as Draco twirled him, again and again until the room spun and he whirled back into Draco's embrace. “I want to go somewhere with dancing for our

date,” Harry said as they danced, catching glimpses of everyone around them, even Hermione, being subtly waltzed by Viktor Krum. He couldn't help but feel like melting at seeing that smile still shining radiantly on Draco's face.

“Dancing isn't quite so...painful with you – you're really good!” When had he come to find that smug smirk endearing? Funny, he thought, how something akin to hate had blossomed into something this beautiful. Chaos and destruction and death had brought them together, he realised. If ever there were a reason for death and pain, finding love as a result or consequence must be it. They had lost many, as ever in war – in life, but that only made those who remained stronger, and more determined to be happy for those who were gone. Like them, like Hermione.

“Well, I *told you* I could dance, didn't I?” Draco replied, spinning Harry back on his heel. “I'll take you wherever you want,” he promised, fighting the urge to look away in embarrassment at his offer, unable to look away from Harry's face. Since when had he become the person he was today? It felt nice to be able to talk to Harry like this, say things that once had always been such a struggle to even contemplate.

Everything that had happened, the good and the bad, he didn't regret any of it. Without every moment, without even the smallest detail, they might not be dancing together right now. And he was sure they would be dancing, always from now on – the way it was right now, he never wanted it to end or ever change again.

He could feel it now, like a bone-deep understanding. There were still things that needed to be done. Nothing was perfect. His world would change, would fluctuate from good to bad every now and then, but it would all be worth it in the end.

“As long as we're together,” Harry said softly, leaning into him now as the music slowed, resting his forehead against Draco's and allowing his eyelids to close briefly. He breathed Draco in deeply, smiling still. It was as if he was reading Draco's mind at times, and the said blond beamed when he saw those emerald eyes come back into

view again from behind the veil of lashes. He didn't think any moment could be more perfect and then...

Harry kissed him.

~The End