

Title: The Veela Enigma
Category: Romance
Rating: NC17 for adult language and situations

Summary: What if some of Draco's ancestors, pretending to be pureblood, concealed the truth about their veela heritage? You'd end up with one very confused Draco Malfoy, who's fallen head over heels in love with Harry Potter and has no idea why. A Harry/Draco Romance.

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Author's Note: Please be aware that this story is 1) long; 2) a veela!Draco story, and 3) contains NC-17 rated Harry/Draco slash. If you are underage or have a problem with male/male relationships, you don't want to be here. For the rest of you, on with the show!

EDIT, ADDED JUNE 7 - Author's Note 2: JK Rowling has just revealed Draco Malfoy's birthday as June 5, 1980. This story predates this revelation, and has Draco's birthday mistakenly on December 16, 1979.

The Veela Enigma

Chapter 1: The Night Before

Lucius Malfoy sighed and fingered his drink, staring into the fireplace. It was the night before Draco was returning to Hogwarts, and he was sitting in his favorite armchair in the study at Malfoy Manor, doing some very serious thinking. He had been doing serious thinking ever since his arrest in June and his subsequent imprisonment in Azkaban for most of the summer. Luckily for him, being a Malfoy had some advantages, like not staying in prison due to a multitude of personal and political connections. Unfortunately, however, the Malfoy name was now tarnished, having come to be associated with Death Eaters, Lord Voldemort, Dark Magic and everything that is utterly evil to most good wizards.

"Ignore them, Draco," was Lucius's advice to his son when his son had bitterly complained about recent public opinion and being blacklisted from all the good Slytherin parties over the summer.

"But *Daddy*," Draco had whined, "Why did you have to go off joining You-Know-Who in the first place? Wasn't it *obvious* that he's off his rocker? Yes, he's right evil and powerful and all that, but honestly, Harry *sodding* Potter has beaten him almost every year for the past five years running. Doesn't that say something to you?"

Lucius response to his son had been to glare at him and throw back another shot of vodka. Draco had rolled his eyes and stomped off to complain to his mother about having fancy new dress robes and no place to wear them.

Ever since his arrest, Lucius had been mulling the whole Voldemort vs. Potter situation over in his head. He couldn't shake the feeling that maybe Draco was on to something. Harry Potter did seem to be foiling the Dark Lord at every turn. Lucius had so far chalked it up to coincidence but maybe there truly was something more.

It was a nagging thought that never really seemed to leave his brain. Lord Voldemort had been most anxious for Lucius to resume his services, but so far the senior Malfoy had stalled him, claiming he was under suspicion from the Ministry and he needed to keep a clean record until he was back in the public's good graces. He pointed out he was much more valuable to the Dark Lord when he was trusted and respected by the general public, and Lord Voldemort had grudgingly agreed.

He didn't dare think what would happen if he told the Dark Lord the truth; that he was stalling him because he was really having doubts about which side was going to work for because obviously he wanted to be on the winning side.

Because *winning*: that was really the big motivating factor for a Malfoy - not necessarily being on the dark side, or the light side, or the right side, or the wrong side. No, the big motivation was to be on the *winning* side, and loath as he was to admit it, a tiny little voice in the back of Lucius's mind was beginning to suspect that the winning side might be the one with Dumbledore and Harry Potter on it.

He needed to come to a decision, and soon. Lucius brooded into the fire, and his mind kept coming back to the same question: Why Harry Potter? What was so special about the boy? Why was he able to do what no other wizard had ever done, and defy Voldemort again and again?

And Lucius had an idea. The Malfoys, being an archetypal pure-blood family, had an extensive collection of wizard genealogical books. Every wizarding family since the Dark Ages had their family history well documented in the Malfoy library. This helped Malfoys figure out whom to marry. Why had he never thought to look up the Potters before? Their family line was almost as ancient and pure as the Blacks or the Malfoys.

Lucius threw back the rest of his drink and headed for his library.

I don't believe it, Lucius thought to himself, but there it was, plan as day, something so bloody obvious that he should have figured it out long before. *Well, that makes my decision much easier.*

He penned a quick letter to Dumbledore and explained everything, asking for the chance to meet and talk with him face to face. He rolled up the letter, put some anti-detection spells on it for safety, and called for his favorite owl.

Once the letter was sent, he steeled himself to talk with his family. He knew Narcissa would be thrilled - she had never really liked that "horrid, creepy Dark Lord" anyway. She had refused to become a Death Eater, saying she was much too pretty for such a horrible tattoo and wasn't too fond of the Crutiatius curse either.

He wasn't entirely sure what Draco's reaction would be when he told him that they were switching sides, although he rather suspected Draco had no intention of ever joining the Death Eaters anyway. He knew of his son's rivalry with Harry Potter and figured that might be the one hitch in getting Draco to agree, but he was confident that he could work around that. He made his way to Draco's bedroom and knocked on the door.

"Come in!"

Lucius opened the door into his son's room, which was surprisingly tastefully decorated for a teenage boy. Soft leather sofas with matching throw pillows, sparkling fountains that leant a soothing, almost zen-like atmosphere to the room, and the one touch that let you know it was a teen's room - posters of professional Quidditch players all over the walls by the bed.

Of course, the posters happened to all be of men, and some of the best looking men in the league at that, and most of them were posing in clothes that were quite a bit more revealing than their Quidditch robes.

Draco was currently sprawled on a sofa, deeply involved in a *Wizard Vogue*, a fashion magazine for men.

"Hullo, Dad. Did you need something?" Draco queried, not looking up from his magazine, and Lucius thought it best to come straight to the point.

"Draco, son, we're switching teams."

"Um, not to be rude or anything, but I switched teams *years* ago, remember? I've never liked girls."

Lucius blinked a couple times. "That wasn't what I meant."

Draco looked puzzled for a second, and then it clicked. "Ooooh, we're not working for You-Know-Who anymore. We're defecting to Dumbledore's side, is that it?"

"Well, essentially yes. Now son, I know you may be shocked by this but -

"Thank Merlin! I was so dreading the horribly clichéd 'but Daddy, I don't *want* to be a Death Eater' conversation and now we'll never have to have it." Draco turned back to his magazine.

Lucius was a little surprised. "Well, that was easy. I thought you'd put up a bit more of a fight. I know much you hate Harry Potter."

"Oh God yes, I *hate* Potter. Hate him like mad. But it's not like I have to like him to be on his side. And better him than You-Know-Who. Potter's at least passably good looking, if you're into that messy-haired, boy-wonder type look."

"Well...yes, I suppose that's true." Lucius really didn't know what else to say. Draco smiled charmingly at his father.

"So, is that it then?"

"You're not going to ask why we're switching sides?"

Draco shrugged. "Nah. I'm sure you've got a good reason." He flipped through his magazine until he found the picture he was looking for. "Look at him, Dad. Antonio Cassetti. Chaser. Played on the Italian National Team a couple years back. Gorgeous, isn't he?"

Lucius looked at the dark-haired Quidditch player wearing nothing but a pair of athletic shorts and winking at the camera. "Um...sure, son. Gorgeous."

"You're coming to Hogwarts with me," Draco said affectionately to the picture, and got up to place the magazine in one of his school trunks near his bed. Lucius watched his son for a moment. Over the summer Draco had become almost uncannily good looking. Lucius and Narcissa were both very striking people, but Draco really took things to a whole new level. His hair had lightened until it was nearly white, and shone with an unnatural shimmer. His skin almost seemed to glow, and his previously slate grey eyes had become metallic silver. The whole effect was...otherworldly, to say the least.

Lucius shook his head. So he had a preternaturally gorgeous son who also happened to be flamingly gay. Rather a loss for the witches of the world, but this was by far the least of his worries. Lucius figured this might be a good time to retreat back into his study. After all, he had things to do, people to see, Dark Lords to double-cross.

It was funny, really, that neither Lucius Malfoy nor Draco Malfoy had ever noticed that every single Quidditch player posted on Draco's walls had black hair.

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The Veela Enigma

Chapter 2: Back to Hogwarts

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Draco watched dispassionately as the house elves carried his trunk up the platform towards the Howarts Express. He was actually rather looking forward to being back in classes after a long, dull summer at the Manor. Oh, sure, he'd have to put up with taunts and such from the other houses about his dad's Death Eater status, but his dad was out of prison now and working to restore the family name, so that wouldn't go on for too long. Besides, he may as well get used to these people, he was on their side now whether they knew it or not.

"You can't tell anyone we've switched, Draco," his dad had admonished him during the ride in their town car to King's Cross station. "I'll be working as a spy most likely, and I cannot have my cover blown."

"Yes, Dad," Draco had rolled his eyes in exasperation. "We've been through this. I'm not going to 'blow your cover' like we're in some bad muggle movie. Give me a little credit here."

"Since when do you know anything about muggle movies?" his dad had asked curiously, and Draco had suddenly become very interested in his magazine (*Dragons and the Hunks Who Tame Them*). He wasn't about to confess his sudden, intense crush on Irish actor Colin Farrell. All that gorgeous, messy black hair and delicious, glowing skin. Now if he would just wear glasses then he'd *really* be hot.

Having said his goodbyes to his father, Draco could be found boarding the Hogwarts Express and heading towards the prefect's compartment. He was anxious to see his friends, whom he hadn't seen since June. He walked up the aisle, noticing the blatant stares he seemed to be getting from all the other students.

"Well, I *am* gorgeous," he thought to himself, shrugging it off. "Suppose they can't really help it."

He reached the compartment and slid the door open, revealing a mix of sixth year students from all the houses. Pansy Parkinson saw him and her jaw dropped.

"Draco! My God! What happened to you?" She was almost drooling.

"What?" Draco asked, aware that he had gone through a few changes over the summer but not convinced that they were all that big a deal.

"You look *incredible*," Pansy spoke in awe. "Did you take a potion or something?"

"WHAT? No, of course not, don't be daft," Draco huffed. He glanced around the compartment and raised an eyebrow. It seemed as if Pansy wasn't alone in her awe; every student in the compartment was staring at him the same way, with a mix of lust and awe, like he was seventy inch slab of the world's most coveted chocolate.

Draco thought for a moment. He *had* changed a bit, it was true. Both his parents had mentioned it. His hair was lighter, his facial features more refined, and his body...Draco had been thrilled to discover that somehow a summer spent lounging about eating massive amounts of sweets had left him with rock-hard abs.

He knew he looked really good, but even he, vain as he was, hadn't expected *this* reaction. He took a seat next to Pansy and smiled at her. She almost swooned.

"Guess I'm just growing up," Draco said, lazily stretching out, noting with pleasure that everyone was watching him intently. Even parts two and three of the Gryffindor Wonder Trio couldn't take their eyes off of him, something he found hilarious to no end.

"Granger, Weasel, I know I'm hot, but kindly stop ogling me like a piece of meat. I have feelings, you know," he smirked, and the two in question jumped in their seats. Hermione flushed pink and buried her nose in a huge book on her lap, and Ron opened his mouth to make some sort of angry retort but was saved by the arrival of Justin Finch-Fletchley.

"Oy, Ron, Hermione, Harry's just outside and he wanted a word." He did a double take. "Malfoy, what the hell happened to you? You're bloody *gorgeous*." Ron and Hermione dashed out of the compartment, sending glares at both Draco and Justin. The blonde nearly laughed out loud with glee. He could get used to this.

Hushed voices could be heard just outside the door, where presumably Potter was talking to the Mudblood and the Weasel. Draco was just pulling out his magazine when he heard it - the most beautiful sound he'd ever heard in his life. It sounded a bit like laughter, but it was so much more than that. The sound floated through the compartment and straight into Draco's blood, where a glow seemed to fill his entire body. He stood up, desperate to find the source of that sound. It had to be just outside the door, and he was certain if he didn't find it then he would just die. He stood to run into the corridor when something stopped him.

He whirled around to find Pansy gripping his robes. "Pansy, I have to go! Let go!" But the girl didn't seem to hear him.

"Draco, did I tell you I've been made Head Girl?" she asked in a dreamy sort of voice, batting her eyelashes. Draco gave her a funny look.

"No you haven't, we're only sixth years, and everyone knows that stupid Mudblood is going to be Head Girl, now let go!"

"And I've made a fortune through modeling, I've been on the cover of every wizarding magazine there is," she continued as if Draco hadn't spoken.

"That's a lie!" the female Ravenclaw prefect shouted. "But I've invented a new spell that can rid the world of evil in a single moment! It's made me richer than anyone other wizard on earth!"

"Ha, you wish! That's nothing! I took out a fully transformed werewolf just last week, and now I've just become the youngest Auror in history," Justin Finch-Fletchley retorted, gazing at Draco with a faraway, unfocused stare.

"There is something wrong with all of you," Draco sniffed disdainfully. "You've all gone stark, raving mad. I'm going." He could feel that warm glow the laughter had caused fading from his body and he wanted to scream in frustration. He yanked himself out of a dazed Pansy Parkinson's grasp and ran out into the corridor only to come face to face with Ron and Hermione.

"Where are they?" he demanded, too anxious now to care who he was speaking to.

"I'm sorry?" Hermione queried, looking confused.

"The person who was laughing! Where are they? They were right here, I heard them!"

Hermione shot a quick, puzzled glance at Ron. "You mean Harry?"

"*What?*"

"Harry. He was out here with us and Ron told him a joke and he was laughing. That must be who you're talking about. Look," she asked tentatively, "is everything okay?"

But Draco wasn't listening anymore. There was no way that sound could have come from Potter. No bloody way.

He sneered at Hermione. "It wasn't Potter. It couldn't have been."

Ron was getting angry. "There was no one else out here but the three of us, Malfoy. Now what the hell is your problem?"

Draco glared at the pair of them. "There was someone else, I heard them. But obviously you were too absorbed in your filthy mudblood girlfriend to see who it was."

Ron roared in fury and the monstrous oaf lunged at Draco, who quickly twisted out of reach. Hermione cried, "Ron, stop!" and ran to his side to try and stop him from attacking Draco again. At that moment, Pansy poked her head out of the compartment.

She saw Ron and Draco glaring daggers at each other over Hermione's head and rolled her eyes. "Are you guys fighting *again*? Honestly, you're like children. Now come on, we're trying to get started with the meeting here."

Draco waved her off. "You go on, I have to go."

"But Draco, you're going to miss the meeting!"

"I. Don't. Care!" he shouted, now dashing down the corridor, determined to check every compartment if he had to, to find the source of that beautiful, musical laughter.

Harry Potter was sitting by himself in the very last compartment, reading a book and waiting for Ron and Hermione to get back from their prefect meeting. It wasn't a very interesting book, and after a bit he yawned and stretched out his long limbs.

Harry noted with amusement (and a great deal of pleasure) that the seats on the Hogwarts Express seemed a bit smaller this year. He might not be quite as tall as Ron but he was taller than the twins and Charlie, and he was a very far cry from the runty, underfed midget who had started at Hogwarts five years ago.

He had just gone back to his book when he heard the door to the compartment bang open. "Wow, that was fast. Meeting's already over?" he asked, looking up and expecting to see his two best friends walking in. Instead he saw something that made his heart stop.

"Malfoy?" he asked incredulously, not believing that this flaxen haired Adonis who had just entered his compartment was really his rival of five years.

Draco was staring back at him.

"Potter?" he asked, just as incredulously.

The two boys just gaped at each other. Harry was completely stunned. He could have sworn that when he left last term Malfoy did not have those eerie silver eyes and moonlight colored hair, and he was *positive* that Malfoy had not been practically *glowing* the way he was now. There was something almost inhuman about Malfoy; something that made Harry want to do crazy things, spectacular things, just *anything* that would get his attention.

He was gorgeous; unearthly and beautiful. In that moment, Harry felt like he was falling in love.

Draco couldn't move; he couldn't speak, he couldn't breathe. His heart was thudding in his chest, and his entire body was on fire. Someone, at some point over the summer, had replaced the annoying git Potter with the most gorgeous being he had ever laid eyes on. Harry's messy hair had never looked so soft, and his eyes had never looked so green. Desire began to spread through every cell in Draco's body as he stared at the Gryffindor.

After several moments of rather awed silence on both Harry and Draco's part, Draco finally gathered his composure and cautiously entered the compartment. He casually sat down across from Harry, trying to ignore the thudding in his chest and the fire in his veins. To his relief Harry didn't seem to be spouting any nonsense like the other sixth-years. He just seemed to be unable to take his eyes off of Draco.

The sexual tension between the two enemies in the compartment was so thick you could have cut it with a knife.

"So..." Draco began, racking his brain for something neutral to say to this gorgeous creature across from him. For the first time in five years, he was not keen on antagonizing Potter. "Nice weather we're having."

Harry raised an eyebrow at him.

"Yes, it is," he replied carefully, as if he were also not keen on antagonizing Draco. The two boys studied each other warily, as one might a dangerous animal, unsure if they are going to retreat or attack. After a moment, being the brave Gryffindor that he was, Harry gave conversation another shot.

"So...how was your summer?"

Draco shrugged nonchalantly, aware that he was rather blatantly staring at Harry's arms and chest through his muggle t-shirt but unable to stop. "It was alright, I guess. Yours?"

"Alright as well." The two boys studied each other some more. Neither said a word. The inherent strangeness of the situation was rather lost on the two involved, as neither was really forming coherent thoughts anymore.

Mine. I want him. He's mine. He's gorgeous. He's perfect. Mine. Draco's thoughts swirled about his head; thoughts brimming with lust, and startling in their possessiveness. He was quite sure he had never, ever wanted anything as badly as he now wanted Harry Potter.

Suddenly, the door to the compartment slid open, and the two boys blinked as their trance was broken.

"Blimey, Harry, do you always have to sit in the very last com...part...?" Ron's voice trailed off, as he and Hermione walked into the compartment and found their best friend apparently having a staring contest with his schoolyard rival, who was still astoundingly gorgeous and almost seemed to be...glowing.

Harry blinked twice, then shook himself out of his daze. "Hey Ron, Hermione, how was the meeting?" he asked, forced home from the planet he had been living on where no one existed but him and Draco.

To his surprise, his friends weren't listening.

"Did I tell you I've been named Head Boy, Quidditch Captain, and the newest winner of *Witch Weekly's* Most Charming Smile Award?" Ron was saying in a spacey voice, his face oddly slack.

"What?" Harry was very confused. Draco rolled his eyes and muttered, "Honestly," under his breath.

"That's nothing," scoffed Hermione. "I've been recognized as the smartest witch of our times, and they're building enormous libraries in my honor." She gave Draco a flirtatious smile, and he managed to look both alarmed and amused at the same time.

"Malfoy, have you done something to my friends?" Harry asked, worried and upset at how his friends were behaving. Draco looked at him disdainfully.

"I didn't do anything, Potter. Maybe your friends have finally realized how pathetic they truly are and have decided to become compulsive liars to hide their inadequacies."

To Harry's surprise Draco immediately clapped a hand over his mouth, looking horrified at what he'd said. Still, it was too late, as Draco's offensive comment made all the reasons Harry hated Malfoy rushed back into his head.

"Shut up, Malfoy, and whatever it is you're doing to them, stop it. Stop it right *now*," he ordered in a very angry and authoritative voice.

"I'm not *doing anything*," Draco seethed, but at the moment Ron and Hermione seemed to come back to themselves. They gave each other and Harry some confused looks.

"What the hell just happened here?" Ron asked, looking at Hermione, who also looked completely puzzled. Harry turned to glare at the blonde.

"I don't know. Why don't you tell us, Malfoy?"

"I'm *told* you Potter, I wasn't doing anything! I don't know what happened, okay?" Draco might have seemed honest enough, but Harry knew Malfoy had an impressive track record of lying.

"Oh right, Ron and Hermione walked in here and just decided to start making things up for no apparent reason, is that it?" Harry was getting pissed off now.

"Hey, don't expect to understand how their wretched little minds work," Draco snapped back. "I'm sure that even if I tried I couldn't sink that low."

The moment the words were out of Draco's mouth the blonde winced, but Harry just narrowed his eyes response. All of the sexual attraction that Harry had been feeling just a moment ago disappeared in an instant as Draco insulted Harry's friends. Drop dead gorgeous or not, Draco was the same insufferable asshole he had always been.

"Bullshit, Malfoy. Were you using the Imperius curse on them or something? I wouldn't put it past you."

"And what exactly is *that* supposed to mean, Potter?"

"It means you're a selfish, arrogant bastard, and I wouldn't put it past you to use an Unforgivable on your own classmates." To Harry's immense surprise, for a moment Draco looked completely stricken. Then the moment passed, and Draco was sneering at him.

"Calling them classmates is a bit of stretch, don't you think? All I see is a worthless, dirt-poor weasel and a filthy mudblood *whore*."

Ron and Hermione whirled around in anger and leapt to each other's defense, going for their wands, but Harry beat them to it.

"Get out," he spat, jumping up from his seat, fists clenched, green eyes flashing dangerously.

"Make me," Draco snarled up at him.

In a heartbeat, Harry's wand was pointed straight at Draco's chest.

"I *said* GET OUT, Malfoy."

Draco could never really be sure afterwards if he had left because he was scared or if he had left because of something else. Either way, he didn't even take time to glare at the trio before he obeyed Harry's command.

He slunk away to find a compartment with some of the other Slytherins, a painful clenching in his chest. For the first time in his life, he cursed his sharp tongue. Insulting Harry and his friends was a force of habit; he really hadn't meant to do it. He hadn't wanted to make Harry angry.

Harry's words kept playing in his head: "*GET OUT, Malfoy...selfish, arrogant bastard....*" They hurt so much, and Draco didn't know why. Since when did he care what Potter thought about him? He spent the rest of the ride to Hogwarts staring morosely out the window, feeling hurt and rejected and wondering what the hell had just happened.

Draco didn't see Harry again until the welcoming feast. He knew that everyone in the Great Hall seemed to be staring at him in varying degrees of lustfulness, but he found he no longer cared. All he could do was stare at Harry. He watched him smile and laugh with all his friends, saying hello to all the new students in his house, tolerating the inevitable fans that swarmed around him like moths to a candle. He was friendly and caring and compassionate - to everyone except Draco. For some reason, he and Harry had never been anything but enemies, and it looked like things were going to stay that way.

Draco wanted to cry, and he berated himself for his weakness. *What the hell is the matter with me? Why the fuck do I keep staring at Potter? Why do I wish I hadn't insulted his friends? Why do I want him so badly?*

Want him? Draco Malfoy wanted Harry Potter, and the word "dead" no longer ended that sentence? This was bad. This was very, very bad.

Draco's sucked in his breath as Harry laughed at something Seamus Finnigan had said. It was getting worse. He could have lived with wanting Potter for his body, for a one-night stand, for just sex, but he wanted Harry for so much more. He wanted to be the one to make him laugh, to hold him when he cried, to see what he looked like first thing in the morning, to -

Draco had had enough. He couldn't take it anymore. Somehow, somewhere along the line since he crawled out of his bed this morning at Malfoy Manor and arrived here at Hogwarts the unthinkable had happened: he had fallen in love with Harry Potter.

He bolted from the Great Hall for the safe haven of his room, where he could be away from that presence at the Gryffindor table that was tormenting him more than he could bear. He knew that hundreds of hungry eyes were following him as he ran, but he didn't care. There was only one pair of eyes that he wanted, and that pair of eyes hated him.

Back in his room, Draco tried to get a handle on himself. *This is just a crush. A silly, schoolboy crush on the Boy-Who-Lived. Everyone gets one; it's nothing to worry about. It will go away.* Draco would not fall in love with Harry Potter. He was Draco Malfoy. He could beat this.

Besides, it's just today, he reasoned. Potter got tall, has a little more muscle, looks good. I'm just attracted to him because he's grown up a bit since last term. It's pure, sexual attraction and NOTHING ELSE.

Feeling a bit more cheerful, Draco decided to drive that thought home. He dug through his school trunk, pulling out all the pictures he had collected of Quidditch players over the summer to put on his wall.

Potter wasn't the only fish in the sea. He wasn't even the only man Draco fancied. Here was a whole *stack* of men he found just as fit as Harry. He wasn't in love with Potter, and here was proof. Right?

He looked at the first one and sighed. This was not good. Yes, he found the dark-haired man in the photo hot, but not nearly as hot as Potter. His hair was black like Harry's, but it didn't have that sheen that Harry's seemed to have.

He pulled out the next picture. Again, not quite right. He was good-looking enough, but he didn't hold a candle to Potter. He also had messy black hair, but it just wasn't messy in the right way. It was an "I couldn't be bothered with a brush" messy, versus Harry's delicious "post-shag" messy. He looked at his third and fourth pictures, and suddenly felt very nervous.

More black hair. *Messy* black hair. Oh God.

Draco quickly dug through his pictures. Black hair, black hair, *black hair*. Draco flipped through them all, panic rising in his chest. He hadn't picked only pictures of black haired Quidditch players, it was impossible.

Impossible.

He had not been secretly obsessed with black hair for ages, and by extension - Harry Potter.

He tore through every picture and then sighed in utmost relief. There, at the very bottom of the pile, was a picture of one of the Irish chasers from the World Cup. A red-head. *Thank Merlin*. He wasn't crazy and secretly obsessed.

He took a better look at the picture, which appeared to be sleeping. Come to think of it, the man was only marginally good-looking and Draco wasn't attracted to red hair at all. Why on earth had he kept this picture?

The wizard in the picture yawned and stretched as he woke up. His eyes fluttered open and he looked up at Draco, who dropped the picture in shock.

A pair of emerald green eyes, almost but not quite as green as Harry's, were staring up at him.

Oh *fuck*.

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The Veela Enigma

Chapter 3: Maybe it's Magic

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Draco spent the next several days in what could be termed "severe, complete, and total denial."

He completely refused to admit defeat. He was going to beat this crush. He was *not* going remain in love with one Harry sodding Potter.

His initial plan was to avoid Harry until the feelings passed, which of course was easier said than done. Harry Potter turned out to be a hard person to avoid. Everywhere Draco went, there he was, with his big, pretty eyes, his shiny black hair, and that tall, muscular body that drove Draco positively wild.

It was like living a nightmare. Every time he saw Harry, or heard his voice echoing in the corridor, he would get that warm, glowing feeling inside, feel that burning surge of desire, and then promptly fall into despair, because no matter how much he wanted Harry Potter, he was one thing that Draco absolutely could not have.

It hurt like hell.

He barely noticed that he had suddenly become the most sought after student in Howarts. Students stared after him everywhere he went. People said and did outrageous things constantly to get his attention. He got presents, love notes and even the occasional marriage proposal every morning with his breakfast. Through it all the only thing he could think about was Harry, Harry, *Harry*.

He thought about Harry when he ate his meals. He thought about Harry when he did his homework. He definitely thought about Harry when he took a shower, and he had started dreaming about Harry when he slept at night.

He grudgingly admitted that while the crush absolutely sucked, the dreams were rather good.

The absolute worst part of it all had to be the uncontrollable jealousy. He wanted to avoid Harry but every time Harry was out of his sight he began to have these weird mental fits about where he was, who he was with, and what he might be doing. And it would usually lead to a panic attack that Harry might be *with* someone else in a not-purely-platonic sense.

Draco found himself extraordinarily jealous of anyone and everyone who spent any time with Harry. He once saw Hermione peck him on the cheek and flew into a rage. He had to dash into an empty classroom to avoid hexing her, where he repeatedly kicked and punched the wall instead until he ended up having to visit the hospital wing.

He spent enough time watching Harry, and by extension Weasley and Granger, until he gradually came to accept that they were all just friends, and that neither Hermione nor Ron had designs on Harry. Still, he didn't like it when they got too close. And he didn't trust anyone else around Harry at all. Considering Harry' celebrity status and the fact that people swarmed around him constantly, this made life very painful for Draco.

It drove him crazy. Draco feared it was only a matter of time before someone got hurt. And by hurt he meant hexed to Hades and back with all the Dark Magic that he could muster.

Unfortunately, it seemed as if all this unrequited love for Potter was beginning to make Draco lovesick - literally. He felt drained and went about his days mechanically, barely speaking to anyone, with no will to do anything unless Harry was somehow involved. At night he would fall into bed, completely exhausted, unable to do anything but fight back tears and dream of Harry.

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Harry Potter sat at the Gryffindor table at breakfast, eating French toast and mulling over the whole Malfoy situation for what must have been the millionth time.

He was very annoyed with Draco. They had actually managed to spend a few very pleasurable minutes in each other's company on the train. Okay, maybe they didn't say much, but the chemistry was unbelievable. Harry had never felt anything like that for anyone else. It was so far beyond anything he had ever felt for Cho. And then Draco had to go and ruin it by reminding Harry of what an obnoxious git he really was.

And after that Draco had ignored him. The blonde hadn't spoken two words to Harry since their stilted conversation on the Hogwart's Express, and *that* was annoying Harry too. It wasn't that he wanted Draco to be insulting him, but he didn't understand why he was *ignoring* him. It was as if those moments on the train never happened, and that made Harry want to scream. Why couldn't Malfoy just apologize, and then maybe they could try talking to each other again?

Harry snuck a look over at the Slytherin table to watch Draco pour what had to be an illegal amount of syrup all over his toast. He never would have pegged Draco Malfoy as someone with a sweet tooth, but then again, apparently there were a lot of things that he didn't know about the Slytherin. He watched Draco take a bite and quickly looked away, a slight flush rising on his cheeks as his mind conjured up an image of himself pouring and licking illegal amounts of syrup off of something fit, blonde, and definitely not in the French toast family.

He sighed. Ron and Hermione had questioned him several times about what exactly had been going on before they got there, and Harry had no answer for them. He didn't know. All three of them agreed that something a little weird was going on with Malfoy, especially given their reactions to him that day.

"He must have used some form of the Imperious curse on us," Hermione had said thoughtfully. "And that's why it didn't work on you, Harry, because you can throw off *Imperio* like it's nothing." This train of thought had been followed by several hours of research in the library, but so far Hermione hadn't found anything to explain why she and Ron had gone all funny around Draco that day.

Harry finished up his breakfast and went to get his books, not wanting to be late for his first class and just hand Snape a reason to take points away from Gryffindor.

He didn't notice, as he left the hall, that two pairs of eyes at the Slytherin table, one silver, one blue, were watching his every move.

Harry had a bad feeling about this.

He was sitting in his Advanced, NEWT-level Potions, which had sixth year students from all four houses, and Snape had just announced that he would be pairing the students up with students from a different house to work on researching various healing potions. Harry knew, he just *knew*, that he would be with Malfoy.

Sure enough - "Granger, Zabini...Potter, Malfoy...Finch-Fletchley, Thomas..." Harry sighed. Life hated him. Well, maybe not life, but Snape definitely did.

He moved his stuff over to Draco's table, where the blonde was sitting with a sort of resigned, exhausted look, like he hadn't slept properly in ages.

"Hey Malfoy," Harry said, by way of greeting. Draco merely nodded and Harry resisted the urge to shout at him. Malfoy couldn't even manage to say *hello*?

They received their instructions on a sheet of parchment from Snape, and Harry wanted to groan. This particular potion was notoriously difficult, and the assignment would require him and Draco to spend some time in the library researching. He passed the paper to Draco, who took it without a word, scanned it, and handed it back to Harry.

As Harry took the parchment back, he took a closer look at Draco. What he saw made him slightly concerned. He looked terrible - well, maybe *terrible* wasn't the right word. He was still blindingly gorgeous, it was true; but before on the Hogwarts Express he'd been practically glowing, and his eyes had been clear and bright. Now his eyes were dimmer, closer to the grey they used to be. His skin was flawless but dull, and even his hair seemed a bit limper. He looked exhausted.

"Malfoy, are you...alright?" Harry asked tentatively. Sure, Malfoy was a vicious git who couldn't be arsed to say *one word* to Harry, but Harry didn't like to see anyone suffer.

Draco whirled around to stare at him in shock. Shock that very quickly became an angry glare.

"What do you care?" the blonde spat with venom.

Harry clenched his teeth.

"I don't," he replied coldly, and turned away.

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Draco stared at the back of Harry's head in bleak despair. He hadn't spoken to Harry, even after he said hello, because he couldn't trust what he might say back. He was deathly afraid that if he tried talking to Harry the words which left his mouth would be along the lines of "come here often?" or worse, "if I could rearrange the alphabet I'd put 'u' and 'i' together."

He shuddered mentally. Draco desperately hoped that if push came to shove he wouldn't end up spouting cheesy pick up lines like some Hufflepuff fourth year after one too many butterbeers, but instead would just throw Harry down on the floor and shag the living daylights out of him in a dignified manner as befitted a Malfoy sex god.

So he hadn't spoken, had tried to keep control, but then Harry had asked him if he was alright. Had asked him nicely, with genuine concern in his voice, and Draco couldn't take it.

As long as Potter kept acting cold towards him then maybe Draco could keep denying that he was in love. But if Harry was going to be civil towards Draco, or God forbid, act like he cared about Draco even the tiniest bit, then Draco would surely lose his battle.

But he hadn't meant to snap at Harry, and now Harry wasn't speaking to him at all. And that was even worse. Now he wanted to throw himself into Harry's lap and apologize until Harry forgave him. And then maybe Harry would say everything was okay, and give him a kiss on the cheek to prove it. And then that kiss would become two kisses, then three, then a trail of kisses down his jaw until they were lip to lip, kissing each other, tongue battling tongue and then -

Draco gulped and squeezed his eyes shut. He spent the rest of the class in complete silence, staring at his blank parchment in despair, oblivious to the stares of lust his classmates were giving him.

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After class, Draco fled out into the corridor. Before he could take three steps, though, he heard a voice.

"Malfoy, hold up."

It was Harry. Reluctantly, Draco stopped. He slowly turned and looked at Harry expectantly.

Harry was standing by the wall with an annoyed expression, arms crossed over his chest. "Look," he said briskly, "this is how it is. You don't like me, God knows I don't like you, but we have to work on this potion together so we're going to have to get along for the time being. I'm free on Sunday, can we do our research then?"

Draco's heart dropped into his shoes as Harry's words started a hot, burning sensation behind his eyes. Harry was so wrong. Draco *did* like him.

But Harry didn't like Draco.

The words *God knows I don't like you* floated through Draco's mind again, and he bit his lip. He hadn't cried since he was six years old, and he wasn't about to start now, *especially* not because of something Potter had said. He swallowed hard.

"Whatever, Potter. Just don't bring your filthy little friends with you," he snapped defensively.

Harry exploded in a whirlwind of movement, and in half a second had slammed Draco up against the wall. He held Draco's arms tight against his sides and leaned in menacingly.

"Watch your mouth, Malfoy," he snarled, tightening his grip on Draco's arms so that the blonde winced. "I'm sick of your shit. If you have a problem, you have it with me. Not with my friends, understand?"

The practical part of Draco knew he should be afraid. This was the Boy-Who-Lived, and he was pissed. And his arms were really starting to hurt under Harry's grip.

But Draco wasn't afraid, he was desperate. Harry was actually touching him, and even though it hurt it felt so good at the same time. *I am so sick*, Draco thought to himself.

He didn't answer Harry, and Harry must have taken that to mean Draco agreed. He loosened his grip on Draco's arms slightly.

Draco panicked. He didn't want Harry to go. This was the closest he had been to the Gryffindor in days, and he didn't want the physical contact, however painful, to end. So he opened his mouth.

"What, you don't like it when I talk about your sidekick, the poor, pathetic little Weasel? Maybe I should talk about his disgusting mudblood girlfriend instead."

That did the trick. Harry slammed Draco back up against the wall with renewed force, squeezing his arms hard enough to leave bruises.

Harry glared down at him. "What the *fuck* is wrong with you? Do you have a *death wish*? Leave my friends out of this!"

Draco felt his next words coming and oh God he couldn't stop them.

"Oh, I'm sorry, Potter, I forgot you don't like the word *mudblood*. Reminds you too much of your mother, does it?"

Draco instantly knew he'd gone too far. Harry's entire being went rigid and he stared down at Draco with a look of utter loathing.

"You listen to me, Malfoy," he said, his voice so cold it sent chills of fright down Draco's back. "You will never say that word again. *Ever*. Do I make myself clear?"

Draco shivered. As many times as he had seen Harry angry before, this was the worst. Draco clearly remembered Harry kicking his arse on the Quidditch pitch over a similar comment, and he looked like he was about to do something like that again.

But then Draco noticed Harry's face was only inches from his own, and that even pressed together in an angry line Harry's lips looked so soft, and he was so beautiful that Draco felt his eyes flickering shut and then he was leaning forward and then -

Oh *shit*. He had almost kissed Harry Potter.

Draco's eyes flew wide open, sheer terror evident on his face. The knowledge of what he had almost done sent adrenaline shooting through his veins, and wrenching himself away from the wall and out of Harry's grasp, he ran.

He ran all the way to the Slytherin dungeons, and paused outside the blank stone wall, one arm on the castle wall, panting for breath. He was horrified at what he had almost done. He was losing the battle for self-control. How much longer could he fight this?

Draco turned to the stone wall and went to speak the password: *Disgraceful mudbloods*.

"Disgraceful mud..." Draco blinked in surprise as the word caught in his throat. He swallowed. "Disgraceful mud..."

Again the word "mudblood" stuck in his throat, and no amount of effort or will allowed the word past his lips.

This was absolutely *bizarre*.

"Disgraceful mud...*mud*...MUD...what the FUCK??"

He tried over and over again. He tried shouting, he tried whispering, he tried waiting a couple minutes and then saying it all in a rush, but it was no use.

No matter how hard he tried, he couldn't do it. He couldn't say *mudblood*.

And Draco didn't understand it at all.

He slid down the wall of the castle and sat on the hard dungeon floor with his knees bent, elbows on his knees and head in his hands. Something was seriously, seriously wrong here.

He went over the events of the last few minutes. He had insulted Potter's friends, trying to egg him into a *fight*, of all things, and then he had called Potter's mother a mudblood.

And what did Harry say after that? Harry's angry words ran through Draco's head - *You will never say that word again. Ever*. Draco shivered. Well, it looked like for some unknown reason, his body was obeying Harry's command. Draco really couldn't say it, and that didn't make any sense. Was Potter somehow controlling him? How could he be? He hadn't heard a spell. He tried again under his breath.

"Mud...mud...*mud*...damn it!"

This wasn't fucking *normal*. Not even for an out-of-the-blue crush on the star-crossed hero of the wizarding world. It was horrible and terrible and just so fucking *wrong* that it was as far from normal as things could get.

And then it suddenly hit Draco like a bolt of lightning - it really really really *wasn't* normal. It. Wasn't. Normal. It was so *not* normal, in fact, that it absolutely, positively had to be caused by something abnormal.

Something *magical*.

Draco could have danced with joy. Of course it was something magical - why hadn't he thought of this sooner? Obviously he was under a spell, or a love potion or something. And that meant it wasn't his *fault* that he was in love with Harry Potter. In fact, that meant he wasn't really in love with Harry at all, it was just the effects of whatever horrible spell he was under.

This was sweet, blessed *relief*.

Of course, he had no idea what spell it might be. But he could find out.

Draco spent every spare moment over the next few days at the library. He avoided Harry even more studiously than before, terrified that the other wizard had some kind of power over him. He researched everything he could find about love potions and love spells and all about their effects. He even got a note from Snape to use the restricted section. Unfortunately, he found nothing that really matched his description. He was getting no where.

And the exhaustion was still there. He was sleeping ten hours a night and still falling asleep on his books in the library. He had to face the facts - he needed help. Help from someone who was meticulous, clever, and trustworthy, and that could mean only one person: Granger.

"Psst! Hermione!"

Startled, Hermione looked up from her notes in Arithmancy to see Terry Boot passing her a folded up piece of paper. She took it and waited until the professor's back was turned, and then opened it and read it.

Granger,

I need your help. It's research. Can I talk to you after class?

DM

Hermione stared at the note. It was almost polite. She thought about saying no - this was Draco Malfoy here - but one of the qualities that made Hermione such an excellent student was her insatiable curiosity. The fact that Draco Malfoy of all people wanted her help for something had her dying to know what was up, so of course she was going to say yes.

And truthfully, it probably didn't hurt that Draco was still absolutely the hottest guy at Hogwarts.

Knowing that Ron and Harry would probably give her hell for agreeing if they found out, she scribbled back '*Alright, we can talk*', and passed it back to Terry Boot to pass on.

After class, Draco came over to Hermione's desk.

"Granger," he said, rather politely.

"Malfoy," she said back, very coolly, but with restrained curiosity in her voice. Draco took a deep breath.

"Can you keep a secret?"

"Yes." Hermione stated this as a simple fact of absolute truth, which, of course, it was.

"Good." He paused for a moment. "Can we go to the library?" Hermione nodded and they made their way to the library.

Draco explained everything to Hermione, from his dad's decision to switch sides to his apparently undying love for all things Harry Potter to his current inability to say the word *mudblood*. This last one, of course, had caused Hermione great delight, and she had made him try at least three times before she actually believed him.

"So let me recap a bit, here," Hermione said some time later, after Draco had finished. "You and your dad don't work for Voldemort anymore?"

"Well, I never planned to in the first place, but essentially yes. And you can't tell anyone, not even Weasley and Potter, alright? I just thought you should know so you don't think that the rest of what I told you is one big evil ploy to give Potter over to the Dark Lord."

"The rest of it. You mean, the part where you're in love with Harry?"

Draco rubbed his temples as if he had a headache. "Yes, Granger! Gods, do you have to rub it in? It's not like I don't feel horrible enough already."

"And you think you're under a love potion or something?"

"Obviously. I wouldn't fall in love with Potter on my own, you know."

"I don't know. Harry's a wonderful person and very good-looking. A lot of people are madly in love with him and it has nothing to do with love potions, it just has to do with - Malfoy, are you alright?"

Draco was clenching his fists and grinding his teeth. "I *don't* want to talk about other people being in love with Harry!"

"You're *jealous*?"

"Granger, you are supposed to be the smartest witch in our school! What don't you understand about this? This is not a normal crush! I've been collecting pictures of black haired Quidditch players for months. I tried to get Harry to beat me up just so I could be close to him. I sleep all the time and I have no energy because I can't stop thinking about him. And I'm not just jealous, I'm *insanely* jealous! I almost hexed *you* the other day for kissing him on the cheek!!"

"Okay, Malfoy, get a grip. I see what you mean." Hermione gave him a small smile as he took a few deep breaths and got his feelings back under control, then she continued. "Actually, I think there's a strong argument for the Dark Arts being involved, as you can no longer say mudblood because Harry told you not to. That would suggest that some kind of magic is controlling your behavior. Not that I'm particularly sorry about this, you understand."

Draco gave her a wry grin. "Yeah, well, I only said it because I thought it might piss Harry off enough to hit me, and by extension, touch me. God, I'm sick." He buried his head in his arms on the desk.

"It's not your fault. Look, I'll do what I can, because this concerns Harry as well."

Draco nodded, but didn't lift his head. "I have to be honest with you here. This isn't just a sweet flowers and candy kind of crush, you know," he mumbled into his arms. "There's more to it."

"What do you mean?"

"I want him. And I mean, I really, *really* want him." Hermione was silent for a moment, so Draco reluctantly lifted his head off his arms. "Are all you Gryffindors so bloody innocent?" he asked derisively.

"I'm not innocent," Hermione protested. "I just don't under -"

"I want to fuck him, Granger. I want to drag him up to the Astronomy Tower and have my wicked way with him. I want to ride him like a Firebolt. I want to map every inch of his body with my tongue. And if we don't get rid of this spell soon, I promise you I that I will seduce him and debauch him faster than you can say *Weasley's Wizarding Wheezes*."

Hermione was rather pink by this time. "So you're saying we need to work fast."

"Exactly. Because I don't know how much longer I can fight this. He's been safe from me so far, because I was in denial about my feelings. Now that I'm convinced they're not my fault, that I'm under some kind of spell, it perversely makes the urges so much harder to fight."

"Makes sense, actually. Since it's not your fault you feel this way, it's not your fault if you act on those feelings."

"Very perceptive." Draco yawned. "I need a nap," he mumbled.

"Go take one. I'll work on this."

Draco nodded. "Hey Granger," he said softly. "Thanks. I know you don't have to do this."

"For Harry's sake, I do."

"He's lucky to have friends like you," Draco said, without a touch of sarcasm.

Hermione actually smiled a real smile at him, before saying thoughtfully, "Malfoy, have you considered just telling Harry how you feel?"

"Are you mad? Of course not. He'd be horrified. He hates me." Draco stared off into space dejectedly as he said this.

"He doesn't hate you," Hermione hastened to reassure him.

Draco looked at her sadly. "Yes, he does. At the very least, he doesn't like me. He told me so himself," he said miserably.

Hermione's eyes were shining with sympathy. "Well, insulting his friends and his mother is probably not going to help matters much, you know," she said gently.

Draco gave her a cheerless sort of half-smile. "Yeah, I know. But it made him get close to me, and that was heaven."

Draco stood up and stretched, his movements pulling his shirt tight across his body. His smile went from sad to amused as he realized that even though Hermione was determinedly staring at her textbook, her eyes kept flicking back to watch him.

After a moment, she spoke. "Hey Malfoy?"

"Hmmm?" he asked, resting his hands on the back of his head.

Hermione swallowed and didn't look at him. "When did you look start changing?" she asked hesitantly.

Draco's eyebrow quirked up. "Why Granger, I didn't think you'd noticed," he said playfully, amused by the slight flush that colored Hermione's cheek.

"Hush, I'm serious here. Could it be related to your feelings for Harry?"

Draco thought about that for a moment, then shrugged. "I honestly don't think so. I mean, it's not like I look *all* that different, and everyone changes a bit as they grow up anyway, right?"

Hermione looked as though she rather disagreed with him, but she kept it to herself. How gorgeous Malfoy had become and the fact that he was in love with Harry were certainly two entirely separate issues.

Or so they thought.

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The Veela Enigma

Chapter 4: Trouble

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"Malfoy? *Malfoy!* Damn it, hold up!"

Draco stopped and slowly turned around, both elated and terrified to discover Harry Potter currently running after him down the corridor.

"What, Potter?" he snapped, feigning annoyance.

Harry caught up to him and glared. "Why have you been avoiding me?"

Draco momentarily considered telling Harry the truth. "Well, Potter, I've been avoiding you because I'm madly in love with you. I was in denial about it but now I'm just afraid if we spend any time alone together I'm going to jump your bones and ravish you with hours and hours of mad, wild, swinging from the chandeliers, kinky monkey sex."

Hmmm. Perhaps not.

"I haven't been avoiding you," Draco lied unconvincingly.

"Yes, you have, and it has to stop," Harry snapped back. "Look, we have to get this project done for Snape, and we can't do it when you won't talk to me. So can we please get together? Not that Snape needs it, but I refuse to give him a good reason to fail me."

Draco took a moment to tilt his head back and study the wizard before him. Same messy hair, same bright green eyes, same *you are the biggest git to walk the face of the planet and I can't believe I'm stuck talking to you* glare on his face that he normally wore around Draco. And Draco felt the same rush of affection and desire he'd been feeling since the first moment he saw Harry on the Hogwart's Express.

The difference now, of course, was that since his revelation and chat with Hermione the night before he had become a whole lot more comfortable with his feelings for Harry. So he was madly in love with the Boy-Who-Lived. So he thought Harry was the hottest thing he'd ever seen. So he was dying to get in Harry's pants.

It's not like it was Draco's fault he felt this way. And now he had the opportunity to spend a few moments alone with Harry, and by Merlin he was going to seize them.

"You're right, Potter. You're absolutely right," Draco said easily. "I'm not doing anything at the moment, would you like to work on our project now?"

At Draco's words, Harry froze and stood motionless, stunned. He gaped at Draco in total surprise. His mouth opened and closed a couple times, but no sound came out.

"Something wrong?" Draco quiered, slightly anxious.

Harry shook his head 'no' very firmly. "No, nothing's *wrong*..." he finally said.

"Then..." Draco trailed off, his raised eyebrows questioning Harry's sudden inability to speak.

Harry cleared his throat and looked sheepish. "It's just...I wasn't expecting you to be so polite," he finally explained, still staring at Draco with enormous wide eyes.

Oh. Draco felt momentary embarrassment that Harry didn't expect him to be polite. He wanted Harry to think highly of him, and he was a bit annoyed that apparently he didn't.

"You don't have to sound so shocked. I can be polite sometimes, you know," Draco said haughtily.

"I know that," Harry replied, running a hand through his hair uncomfortably. "But you're not usually so polite to *me*."

Another angry retort rose instantly to Draco's lips, but he bit his tongue before he could say anything. Instead, he took another good look at Harry. The Gryffindor was biting his bottom lip and slouching awkwardly, watching Draco warily as if he expected the blonde to turn back into the monster he was used to dealing with any second.

Draco scowled. He didn't want Harry to think he was a monster. Not anymore. Licking his lips nervously, Draco gave Harry a small, insecure sort of smile.

"I guess I'll have to work on that, then," Draco said as politely he could.

Now Harry looked like he might actually faint from the shock of it all, but he managed to pull himself together enough to send his own small smile back at Draco.

"That'd be really nice," Harry replied hesitantly. And then, as if he couldn't help himself, he blurted out, "You know, you have a really nice smile."

Harry's cheeks immediately flushed scarlet and he looked mortified beyond belief, but Draco...Draco could have died at that moment and died a happy man.

"Thank you," he said, a bright sunny smile lighting up his face. At Draco's happy expression, Harry's flaming cheeks seemed to cool slightly.

"Don't mention it," Harry muttered, rubbing at the back of his neck in an embarrassed fashion. "And I mean that. I don't know what just came over me, and *please* don't ever mention it again."

Draco continued to beam at him. "Your wish is my command," he said magnanimously, and then considerably changed the subject. "Now then, Potter, shall we go? After all," he said, lowering his voice slightly, "you're the one who insisted that we have some quality time alone together."

Harry's cheeks, which had just begun returning to their normal color, immediately heated back up. "Oh, very funny, Malfoy," he snapped, though he didn't sound half as angry as he ought to have been at Draco's teasing comment. Instead he seemed to be having a hard time taking his eyes off of Draco's brilliant smile. "Shall we go down to the library then?"

At this, Draco's smile morphed slightly, from deliriously happy to just a bit seductive. "Oh, I'll go down anywhere you want me to," he purred, and had the pleasure of watching Harry nearly fall down the stairs in shock.

Harry Potter, get your mind out of the gutter! Harry scolded himself about thirty minutes later, as he and Draco shared a table in the library. He was trying to concentrate on their project, and failing miserably for two reasons. One, he kept sneaking sidelong glances at Draco, who was sitting right next to him and calmly taking notes. He couldn't seem to keep his eyes off of Draco's porcelain skin, or Draco's arched neck, or the way Draco's shirt collar gaped out from his neck slightly or the way his perfect pink lips glistened after he licked them or the way his fine, silky hair was tucked behind his cute little ear or -

Harry wrenched his gaze away, wanting to smack himself. Surely, *surely*, he was not sitting here drooling over Draco's *cute little ear*.

"Are you happy in this position, Potter?" Draco asked casually, not looking up from his notes. "Because you know I can twist into any position that you might fancy. I'm very...flexible," he finished meaningfully.

Harry closed his eyes and gulped. That was the second reason he couldn't concentrate. Draco kept *saying* these things that he *knew* they were just innocent comments but his raging 16 year old hormones were putting a sexual twist on everything. Hearing those comments slipping from Draco's perfect lips was driving him crazy.

Get a grip on yourself, he mentally scolded. "So...uh...how do you want to do this?" Harry asked, twirling his quill and trying to look for all the world like he wasn't incredibly turned on by Draco's offhand comments.

"I'll do it any way you want it," Draco said easily, and Harry dropped his quill.

ARGH! he mentally shouted. *Come on Potter. Be cool. Just...be cool.*

Harry and Draco leaned down under the table at the same time to search for the quill. Draco got to it first.

"Here, Potter, bend over just a little more and let me give it to you."

Harry jerked upright.

"OW!" he cried, smacking his head on the table above him. He quickly snatched the quill back and sat up in his seat.

"You okay?" Draco asked, quickly sitting up as well. His large silvery eyes were shining in concern.

"Yeah, I'm fine," Harry said, embarrassed. He snatched a large book off the table, opening it at random. He willed himself to focus on the text and not on the fact that Draco was leaning closer...and closer...and

"So what are you reading about?" Draco whispered into his ear.

Harry's entire body froze. Draco's mouth was only inches from his ear, and when the blonde spoke his breath ghosted over Harry's ear and neck, sending goose bumps down Harry's arms.

"Umm...oh, uh...umm...healing...umm...potions," Harry finally answered, tight as a bowstring.

"Oh," Draco said softly. "Sounds...*fascinating*." The way Draco's voice lilted over the word made Harry shudder slightly. With Draco so close he could smell the blonde's cologne, and Harry clenched his fists because Draco smelled so very very good and any second now he was going to snap and turn and then not even so much kiss Draco as EAT him and -

To both Harry's relief and utter disappointment, before he could eat Draco the Slytherin turned away and went back to his own book.

This will never do! Harry moaned to himself, collapsing onto his arms on top of his book. *You have to get some self-control here! Stop acting like some swooning little girl!*

But no matter how hard he tried he couldn't fight it, and he spent the rest of their study time covertly staring at the blonde next to him and imagining how that perfect skin would taste under his lips.

Finally, it was almost curfew, and Harry and Draco cleaned up their table and got ready to leave.

"So, same time, same place, tomorrow?" Harry asked.

Draco smiled at him. "It's a date."

Harry blushed slightly and looked away, making Draco's smile grow. Harry was so *cute* when he was embarrassed. Draco was preening under the knowledge that Harry had gotten no work done that evening because he couldn't take his eyes off Draco. Granted, neither could any of the other students in the library, but Draco didn't care about them.

Harry had stared at him, and Harry had blushed when Draco had flirted with him, and Draco was beginning to suspect that bagging Harry Potter was actually a hell of a lot easier than Draco had ever dreamed it could be.

"So, um...want me to walk you back to your dorm or anything?" Harry asked as they walked out of the library together.

Oh yes. Harry was so his. Now, why hadn't Draco wanted to be in love with Harry Potter again?

"What am I, your girlfriend?" Draco asked playfully, just to see Harry's blush deepen and spread over his face.

"You're right. I'm an idiot. Just put that comment in the same category as *you have a nice smile* and never mention it again, alright?" Harry looked absolutely humiliated.

"No, I understand, it's a Gryffindor thing," Draco said generously. "You lot are supposed to be chivalrous, right?"

"Yes, exactly," Harry said gratefully. "Chivalrous, that's me. Chivalrous Harry Potter. Can't let a bloke walk back to his dorm alone. That would be...un-chivalrous." Even as he said it, Harry seemed to realize how ridiculous he sounded and offered Draco a sheepish grin. "Or something like that. You know, I think I'm going to stop babbling and just head back to my dorm now. Night, Malfoy."

"Night, Potter," Draco said, grinning back, and watched Harry walk away.

Down in the dungeons, Draco collapsed on his bed in his Slytherin dorm in a giddy heap. Giving in to this potion or spell or whatever it was that made him love Potter was the best feeling on earth. He knew he had a big goofy grin on his face, and that Malfoys usually didn't wear big goofy grins, but damn it, he was happy.

Potter had stared at him like he was edible, blushed when he made flirtatious comments, and actually offered to walk Draco home. Draco had almost said *yes, yes damn it, and shag me while you're at it* but part of him knew that if he'd let Harry walk him home that he'd have ended up kissing him goodnight, and Merlin knows where that would have led. And that might have been too fast for Harry. He didn't want to chance ruining what they could have by scaring the Gryffindor off.

He smiled to himself. He would take it slow, and properly seduce Harry, leisurely drive him crazy with innuendo and flirtation until Harry was gagging for it and -

Of course, there was always a chance that Granger would find some way to get rid of this spell.

The thought made Draco frown. After this evening, he wasn't so sure he wanted the spell gone. He'd had so much fun flirting with Harry, and it looked like Harry wasn't at all immune to being flirted with. Maybe he should talk to Granger, tell her he kind of liked the spell now, tell her he loved being with Harry and didn't want to stop...

He shook his head. Best not to think of it right now. Better to think of a certain raven-haired Gryffindor with big green eyes and an incredible body, and to picture that look on his face when he stared at Draco as if Draco were made of candy...

Oh yes. *Much* better.

Harry was almost to Gryffindor tower, unable to stop smiling. He had just spent a *pleasant* evening with Draco Malfoy, who was an admittedly mouthy git but looked like vanilla cake with legs.

Harry could not believe how attractive he found Draco. He also couldn't believe what an idiot he'd been in front of him. *You have a nice smile...want me to walk you back to your dorm...* Harry smacked himself on the forehead. It was as if sometimes he couldn't help the words that came out of his mouth around Draco.

Draco hadn't seemed to mind in the slightest, however, and as long as the blonde continued to smile those heart-stopping smiles at Harry, Harry didn't care how big a fool he looked.

Suddenly, he heard a noise in the shadows.

Harry stopped. "Hello? Is someone there?" No answer. He checked his watch. A few minutes past curfew, so technically he could get busted. He decided he was just hearing things and hurried along. After a moment, though, he *knew* he heard a sound again.

"Look, just come out. If you're going to give me detention, just get it over with. Don't follow me around, it's creepy."

A moment of silence, and then Justin Finch-Fletchley walked out of the shadows.

"Sorry, Harry, didn't mean to freak you out," he said easily, and Harry smiled at him.

"That's okay, Justin. No harm done. So are you going to get me in trouble?" he asked cheekily, knowing that his Hufflepuff friend Justin would never turn him in for being out late at night.

"That depends," Justin purred, moving closer to the Gryffindor. "Do you want to get in trouble? Maybe I should just punish you right now - myself." He advanced on Harry, who felt that things were just a bit out of sorts.

"Um...okay..." Harry responded, backing up a step. Was Justin trying to *flirt* with him? This was really odd and not at all like Justin. Before Harry could figure out what was going on, the Hufflepuff reached out and caught his arm.

"Where are you going, Harry?" he asked, and up close Harry saw that his eyes seemed a bit vacant and out of focus. "The party's just getting started." And with that he smashed his lips up against Harry's.

"What the hell? Justin, get *off* me!" Harry shouted, pushing Justin away. He wiped at his mouth in distaste. He had only ever kissed one person before, and even though that kiss was wet and soggy it sure as hell was better than *that*.

Justin, however, didn't appear to be taking no for an answer and was advancing toward Harry again.

"Oh come on, Harry, you know you want it," he said, smirking. Harry had just enough time to think to himself *since when does Justin smirk* before he was slammed up against the wall of the corridor and Justin's lips were on his again.

"Justin, I said no! Didn't you hear me?" Harry said again, wrenching his mouth away. He tensed, trying to get free, but Justin held him tight against the wall.

"I heard you," he said menacingly, narrowing his eyes at Harry. "I just don't care." Justin ground his hips against Harry's and then plunged a hand down the front of Harry's loose-fitting trousers, Harry gasped in disgust while nausea washed through his body. Pissed beyond words now, Harry moved his leg and then kicked Justin's shin - hard. Justin sucked in his breath and then glared at Harry.

"You little bitch," Justin snarled, and drew back. The next instant a fist struck Harry in the face.

Well, that did it. Up to this point Harry had been willing to chalk this up to some kind of insanity on Justin's part, but he had just crossed the line. Harry Potter was *nobody's* bitch.

Harry fought back using skills he had gained watching his cousin Dudley over the years. He brought his knee up, hard, right into Justin's groin, and then punched him in the stomach. When Justin doubled over in pain Harry shoved him backwards. Justin overbalanced and fell.

Harry whipped out his wand and hit Justin with *Petrificus Totalis*, and then the next moment Harry was walking quickly back to Gryffindor tower.

The next morning, Harry looked at his reflection in the mirror carefully. Although not up to Madame Pomphrey's abilities, Hermione had performed a decent healing spell on him. All that was left from Justin's sucker punch was the faint hint of a healing black eye.

The other Gryffindors had been livid when he had returned to the common room with broken glasses and a red, puffy eye. Caving under their pressure he had given them an edited version of the events, not wanting to worry everyone with the information that Justin's goal had been rape. He had refused to divulge the identity of his attacker, however, saying he had already beaten the guy up pretty badly.

His friends had been highly pissed off with his secrecy, but really, he could take care of himself. He didn't need protection from anyone, and he wasn't worried. After last night he had proved that, and he doubted Justin would be in a hurry to mess with him again.

The day passed fairly smoothly, and soon it was their last class. Harry usually despaired that every year he seemed to have Potions last on Fridays, but today he was really looking forward to seeing a certain stunning blonde. He took his seat next to Draco, who actually turned and smiled at him before turning back to look at Snape.

And then whipping back around to look at Harry again.

"What happened to your eye?" Draco asked, sounding suspicious.

Harry started. No one else had said a word about it all day. You could barely see the black eye, as it was almost gone and what was left was mostly hidden by Harry's glasses.

"What happened to your eye, Potter?" Draco repeated. He sounded even more suspicious now. Harry struggled to find his voice.

"Um...nothing. It was nothing. An accident," he said offhandedly. He looked down at his notes, expecting Draco to drop the subject.

"Bullshit, Potter," Draco snapped. "That's a black eye. Who hit you?"

Harry looked up, stunned by the angry tone of Draco's voice. "No one," he said, trying to shrug the matter off. "Look, don't worry about it. Seriously, it doesn't matter."

"It matters to me."

Harry sat in surprised silence at Draco's unexpected admission as the blonde began to run his eyes up and down Harry's body. The silver orbs stopped at Harry's hands and narrowed. Harry glanced down at his bruised and scraped knuckles and realized he had forgotten to ask Hermione to heal them.

"You were in a fight," Draco said dangerously.

Harry closed his eyes. It was useless to keep denying it. "Alright, yes I was. Now let's drop it."

"No." Draco sounded furious. "Tell me what happened, Potter."

"Look, it *doesn't* matter, alright? I took care of it. Believe me; the other guy is much worse off than I am."

"I *told* you, it matters to *me*. Tell me what happened."

"Malfoy, I -

"Tell me. *Now*."

And for some odd reason, probably because it was so unusual to have Malfoy care what happened to him, Harry gave in and gave him the edited version of the events, the same one his friends had got.

But when Harry refused to tell him who attacked him, Draco wasn't having it.

"Tell me who it was," he demanded.

"Malfoy, *no*," Harry said firmly. "I told you I took care of it."

Undaunted, Draco began to scan the classroom. Harry watched in confusion as Draco's eyes took in each row, everyone present and accounted for and sitting in their proper seat with their partner except...

Draco whirled around. "It was Finch-Fletchley, wasn't it?"

Draco's lucky guess was right. Harry's mouth dropped open and his eyes grew wide, but he quickly tried to laugh it off. "What? Oh, come on, what on earth makes you think - "

"You are the worst liar, Potter." Draco narrowed his eyes at the empty seat. "I'll kill him. I'll fucking *kill* him."

And before Harry could ask Draco why any of this mattered to him, Snape had started the lecture.

Harry took off the moment class was over, and before Draco could chase him down and demand more information Hermione was in front of him.

"Can we talk after dinner?" she asked. "I've got a couple things I need to check with you."

"What? Oh, oh...right...about the love potion...thing," Draco said distractedly. He was absolutely livid that some Hufflepuff scum had had the nerve to hit Harry, and right now his mind was focused on what *exactly* would be the best method to gut someone and then strangle them with their own intestines. Hermione looked at him oddly, but just nodded.

"Yes. So...after dinner then?"

"Sounds great, Granger. Whatever you want," Draco said dismissively. "Now if you'll excuse me, I have to run an...errand." And with that he took off running towards the hospital wing. .

When Draco got to the hospital wing, however, he was told by Madame Pomphrey that Justin had just left. Draco spent the next half hour searching the castle, but couldn't find the Hufflepuff anywhere. Finally, admitting defeat - for now - he went down to dinner.

At dinner, he absently ate a few bites of his normal food before abandoning them for the treacle tart and strawberry ice cream offered for dessert. He was still furiously angry, and he kept one eye on the door in case Justin decided to show his ugly face.

With the other eye he watched Harry protectively from the Slytherin table. He stared suspiciously as Ernie MacMillian, one of Justin's best friends, approached Harry. Draco tensed, watching the two converse, but nothing seemed to be amiss. After a few moments Ernie went back to his seat at the Hufflepuff table.

Draco watched Harry carefully, but he still seemed alright. Draco reflected for a moment that the day before he might have been upset that he felt so protective of Harry. Tonight he just chalked it up to whatever weirdness had infected his body with all this Potter-love in the first place.

Which, speaking of the unknown weirdness, Hermione had finished eating and was covertly signaling to him from across the hall. She inclined her head to the door and he nodded. She went out, and Draco followed, reluctantly leaving Harry alone for the time being.

No one, not even Draco, had noticed the small vial of clear liquid in Ernie MacMillian's hand, nor had anyone seen him empty the contents into Harry's glass of pumpkin juice.

"So what's up, then, Granger?" Draco asked, lounging on the teacher's desk in an empty classroom on the third floor. Hermione was pacing back and forth, flipping through pages of notes.

"I just wanted to ask you a couple questions. Have any of your normal habits changed? Besides sleeping more, I mean."

Draco thought for a couple moments. "Not particularly, except that since this summer I seem to have developed a raging sweet tooth. I mean, I've always liked sweets, but now they're practically all I eat. Is that important?"

Hermione shrugged. "Might be, might not be. Hard to say at this point. Alright, another question. When Harry orders you to do something, do you always have to do it or is it just at certain times, certain tones of voices, etc.?"

Draco frowned, thinking. "I have no idea. I think the only time it's happened is with the whole mud...*mud*...that fucking situation with that fucking word I can no longer say," he finished, scowling, and Hermione smirked at him.

"Serves you right, you know. You never should have said it in the first place." She ignored Draco's responding glare and checked over her notes again. "So that's it then?" she asked. "You can't think of any other time you did something that Harry ordered you to do?"

"Well...there might have been one other occasion. On the Hogwarts' Express. You were there, remember? He told me to 'get out' and I did, without a fight, even though I didn't want to. I didn't really think about it at the time."

Hermione looked thoughtful. "Very interesting. I wonder what all this means."

"Yeah. Me too."

Harry stood up from the Gryffindor table, head reeling. Suddenly, he felt terrible - he was nauseous, sweaty, and having trouble breathing.

"Oy, Harry, you alright?" Ron had already left to send a letter to his parents, but Seamus Finnigan was still at the table and was looking at Harry with concern.

Harry smiled weakly. "Yeah, thanks, Seamus. Just a bit under the weather, I guess. I think I'll go up to the tower and lie down."

Seamus looked at him closely. "You sure you're alright? Want me to come with you?"

"No, I'm really fine," said Harry, forcing a stronger smile on his face. "Thanks, though."

Seamus looked skeptical, but agreed. "Okay, mate. Just be careful, alright? You look a bit peaky."

Harry nodded. "Will do."

He cautiously made his way out of the hall, praying that the world would stop spinning.

He didn't notice a pair of eyes at the Slytherin table watching his every move.

He certainly didn't notice two pairs of feet following him out of the Hall either.

"Malfoy, I've wanted to ask you - what happened that day on the Hogwarts Express?"

"I told you, Granger: I heard a laugh and it was bloody beautiful. I went looking for it and all of a sudden I found that I fancied the pants off Harry Potter."

Hermione rolled her eyes. "I don't mean between you and Harry, but to Ron and I. What did you do to us? How did you make us say those ridiculous things to you?"

Oh, that. Draco figured he may as well come clean about it. "I don't know, and that's the truth. It wasn't the first time that had happened, though."

He related to her how the other students had reacted in much the same way in the prefects' carriage. They sat in contemplative silence for a moment, before Hermione shook her head in frustration.

"This doesn't make any sense, you know."

"I know," Draco replied morosely. "What was it like for you? What made you say those things to me?"

Hermione blushed slightly. "I just wanted to impress you, for some reason," she explained reluctantly. "I didn't really think about what I was saying. It was more a need to have you notice me."

She seemed rather embarrassed, and Draco contemplated making fun of her. He decided against it, mainly because if he wanted to succeed in seducing Harry he probably ought to stop pissing off his friends.

"Weird," was all he said in response, and they went back to looking over Hermione's notes.

Harry squinted, trying to see clearly, but the world had become one big blur. He paused, leaning one hand against the wall for support, and tried to figure things out. He was drugged, he had to be. That was the only explanation for his current state. And it seemed he had wandered off course, and now he had no idea where he was. Some corridor somewhere that appeared to be empty.

He clutched at his head, trying to shake off the dizziness, when he heard the sound of feet nearby.

"Hello?" he called out tentatively. "Someone there?"

He heard a very evil chuckle, and then a familiar voice pierced through his haze. "You could say that, Harry. You could say that."

And before Harry could respond, someone grabbed his arms from behind and held him in place, and a fist came flying at his stomach.

"So, have you and Harry been getting along better?" Hermione asked. "He said something about your study session going very well last night."

That news made Draco break into a grin. "Did he really say that?" he asked, elated.

Hermione smiled back. "Yes, he really said that, and he also said he had a really good time," she reassured him. Then she narrowed her eyes. "You're not trying to seduce him or anything, are you?"

Draco's eyes widened. "Of course not," he lied. "I just thought this whole love potion thing would be easier to take if we were on friendlier terms, that's all."

"Uh-huh." Hermione replied suspiciously. She didn't sound like she believed him for a second. "Listen Malfoy, don't you *dare* make him fall in love with you."

"What? Oh please. Like I would do that," Draco scoffed, but he squirmed a bit uncomfortably under Hermione's glare.

"I'm serious here. Don't you make him fall in love with you. Harry is my best friend. I love him like a brother, and I won't let you hurt him."

Draco started to protest. "I would never -

"Look Malfoy, what happens if he falls in love with you and then we find a cure for whatever makes you love him? And then you stop and go back to hating him? Don't you see? You'll break his heart."

Draco hadn't thought of that. Conflicting feelings rose up in him - the desire to love Harry and to be with him fighting sheer horror at the thought of breaking Harry's heart. Now that he had given into the love potion, he didn't know if he wanted to live again in a world where he didn't love Harry.

"I won't break his heart, because I won't stop loving him," he finally said quietly, mostly to himself.

Hermione sighed. "Just...don't hurt him, okay? God knows enough people are out to do that already."

In an instant, Draco remembered Harry's black eye and felt his rage return. "Like that bastard Finch-Fletchley," he spat, feeling murderous again.

Hermione turned to look at him sharply. "Is that who hit Harry?" she asked.

Draco nodded, and was surprised to see Hermione's face contorting with the same rage he felt. "I'll fucking *kill* him," she spat.

"Granger!" Draco was a bit startled to hear his own words out of Hermione Granger's mouth.

"What?" she spat, already gathering her notes and grabbing her wand. "I told you, I love Harry like a brother. And Harry may think he hurt Justin enough, but I don't see why we shouldn't teach him a lesson as well."

Draco gave her an admiring look, and followed her out the door. Draco clearly remembered getting slapped round the face by her when they were thirteen for verbally insulting Hagrid. He couldn't wait to see what she did to Justin Finch-Fletchley for physically assaulting her best friend.

Provided, of course, there was a single scrap of Justin left for her after Draco was done with him.

"Justin, what the fuck..." Harry groaned. Before he could get his breath, Justin drove another punch into his stomach, and Harry would have crumpled to the floor but for the arms of someone else holding him firmly in place.

"Hi Harry. You didn't think I'd forget about last night, did you?" Justin asked almost pleasantly. His words were contradicted by his fists, which continued to rain blows on Harry. In Harry's drugged state he couldn't fathom fighting back. He couldn't even understand why Justin was hitting him.

One of Justin's fists hit Harry's nose, jerking his head back. Harry's head hit something behind him and he opened his eyes to find himself looking up at Ernie MacMillian's face.

"Ernie?" he asked painfully, tasting blood on his lips.

"That's right, Potter. Ten points to Gryffindor," he said sarcastically, and he and Justin laughed.

The edges of his vision were going black now, and Harry had the sensation that he was very far away. Snatches of conversation floated through his mind, none of which made any sense to him.

"Put him on the floor..."

Harry groaned when his head smacked the hard stone of the corridor floor.

"Shut *up*, will you?" a distant voice hissed. "Damn it, Ernie, hold him down...don't let him get away..."

Harry felt hands ripping at his clothes, his t-shirt practically shredded now. He distantly noted that the floor was awfully cold under his back.

"Bet you won't be so keen to defy the Dark Lord after this, will you Potter?"

The Dark Lord? Harry's head was a wreck, but he was able to process those words. Summoning the last of his senses, he bit down hard on the hand that was covering his mouth.

"*Fuck!*" Ernie swore, jerking his hand away. Harry took a deep breath.

"Help! Somebody help! *Please!* Hel - "

"Shut the fuck up, Potter."

And then the hand was clapped down over his nose and mouth again and Harry couldn't make another sound.

The Veela Enigma

Chapter 5: The Rescue

Draco and Hermione had just left the classroom when Draco heard it.

"Help! Somebody help! *Please!* Hel - "

And then the voice stopped.

Draco had heard enough, though. He grabbed Hermione's arm.

"Did you hear that?" He looked pale as a ghost.

"What, you mean everyone coming back from dinner?" she asked, unconcerned.

Draco shook his head. "No, it was Harry, he was calling for help. I think he's hurt." Draco's eyes were wild and fear was all over his face. "Granger, we have to find him!"

Hermione was smart enough to know not to question what Draco had heard. "Okay, okay, don't panic. Where did his voice come from?"

Draco's face was screwed up as if he were in physical pain. "It was behind us," he said breathlessly. "Harry's somewhere behind us. I'm going to him."

He turned around and began to sprint down the corridor, Hermione at his heels.

Up in Headmaster Dumbledore's office, Professor Dumbledore and Professor Snape were having a post dinner chat.

"There is something unusual about Draco Malfoy this year," Snape was saying. "He is getting an inordinate amount of attention from the student body, but he seems not to even notice it. Surely you're aware of this?"

"Something unusual about Mr. Malfoy? You don't say," Dumbledore said mildly. His eyes were twinkling. "Sherbert lemon, Severus?"

Severus Snape resisted the urge to shout something profane at the Headmaster. Obviously this was one of those cases where Dumbledore knew exactly what was going on and was choosing to keep his mouth shut.

Suddenly, an out of breath fairy appeared in one of the portraits.

"Professor Dumbledore," the little fairy squeaked. "There's big trouble."

"What sort of trouble?" Dumbledore asked, rising. The twinkle was gone from his eyes.

"It's Harry Potter, sir," she replied. "He's being attacked."

Harry's head was pounding and his vision was blurry, but Justin's words echoed in his head. *Bet you won't be so keen to defy the Dark Lord after this.* Harry desperately tried to hang onto his sanity. He had to figure out what was going on.

He could feel Justin's teeth against the skin of his neck, and then cried out when the other boy bit hard enough to draw blood.

"Like that, do you?" Justin simpered.

Harry tried to glare at the blur on top of him. "Fuck you," he managed to say.

"Now that's awfully rude. Didn't your mother ever teach you any manners, Potter?" Justin grinned maliciously. "Oh, *wait*," he continued dramatically. "I forgot. You never had a mother, did you? That mudblood bitch was killed by the Dark Lord, wasn't she?"

Harry snarled in rage, but a thought floated through his furious haze: Justin was muggle-born, like Hermione. Why would he use a term like *mudblood*?

He didn't have time to keep thinking before Justin sank his teeth into Harry's neck again. Harry cried out with pain and struggled desperately, but Ernie held him down tightly.

Harry could feel hands on the fastenings of his trousers, and he had just about given up everything for lost when -

"**STUPEFY!**"

Justin and Ernie were thrown off of Harry as each of them was hit in the chest with a ray of light.

Harry tried to sit up, to see what was going on, but the effort was too much. He fell back against the floor. The next instant, two bodies were at his side.

"Harry? Harry? Oh my God, are you alright?"

"Hermione..." Harry said weakly, recognizing the voice and the bushy brown hair. He attempted to sit up again, but strong hands were on his shoulders, holding him down gently.

"Don't you *dare* try to sit up right now, Potter," another voice scolded. "Are you okay?"

Harry turned his head slightly. "Malfoy?" he asked, his voice cracking. Even without his glasses he knew that platinum hair. "What..."

That was as far as he got before the drugs and exertion finally overwhelmed him, and he lost consciousness.

Draco sat perfectly still right now, gazing at Harry's unconscious face. He took in several cuts, a bloody nose and red, swollen patches. His eyes scanned over Harry's torso under his ragged, shredded shirt. His eyes narrowed as he saw matches cuts and forming bruises, and two painful looking bite marks on Harry's neck.

Rage unlike anything he had ever known exploded in the pit of his stomach and coursed through his veins. "Those Hufflepuffs are going to *die*," he snarled.

He heard the two culprits stirring next to him as the hexes he and Hermione had cast wore off, and he acted without thinking. He jumped to his feet and spotted Harry's wand a couple feet away. Grabbing it, he turned on Justin and Ernie.

"*Crucio!*" he shouted, pointing a wand at each of the newly awoken Hufflepuffs. Both of them screamed and fell back on the ground, writhing in pain. He had never cast an Unforgivable before but he had no trouble now, and he held them under the curse ruthlessly.

Screams filled the corridor, but at that moment a familiar voice rang out in the corridor.

"*Finite Incatatem!*"

And the curses stopped.

Draco whirled around, both wands still in his hands, to see who dared to interrupt him. He found himself face to face with the Headmaster and Professor Snape.

Nobody said a word for a moment. Dumbledore and Snape's eyes flicked from the bodies of the two shaking Hufflepuffs to the cold face of Draco Malfoy to Harry lying bruised and bloody on the floor with his head cradled in Hermione's lap.

Dumbledore made a move to speak. "Mr. Malfoy -

But at that instant they all heard a noise that was distinctly out of place.

"There's someone else here!" Draco shouted, and in an instant Severus Snape's wand was drawn.

"*Petrificus Totalis*," he called out, and there was the muffled thud of a body hitting the floor.

Snape purposefully strode over to the end of the corridor and pointed his wand again.

"*Finite Incatatem*," he snapped, and the body of Mark Avery, a seventh-year Slytherin, came into view.

"Disillusionment charm," Snape explained, glaring down at his student.

Dumbledore looked very angry. "Thank you, Severus," he said gravely. "It would appear that this situation is even more complicated than I might have first suspected."

His eyes flicked from the petrified body on the floor to the still trembling Hufflepuffs, and he seemed to come to a decision.

"Severus, would you please bring me a vial of Veritaserum, locate Minerva, and both of you meet me in my office as quickly as you can?" Snape nodded abruptly and turned and left.

Dumbledore continued. "Mr. Malfoy and Miss Granger, could you please take Mr. Potter to the hospital wing so that Madame Pomphrey can attend to him? Thank you."

"But what about -

"Miss Granger, I promise I shall tell you everything I learn as soon as I can. Right now, Harry needs medical attention, and quickly."

Hermione nodded, and Dumbledore conjured a floating stretcher underneath Harry. Hermione quickly grabbed Harry's broken glasses off the floor. She neatly repaired them with her wand before joining Draco to guide the stretcher, leaving Dumbledore to deal with the three students in the hall.

Madame Pomphrey looked horrified when the brought in Harry.

"What happened to him?" she asked, quickly guiding the stretcher over to a bed and gently transferring him over.

Hermione and Draco explained what happened the best that they could, neither of them knowing exactly what had happened.

Madame Pomphrey thanked them, and then tried to shoo them out. Draco shook his head.

"I'm not leaving," he said stubbornly. Madame Pomphrey looked at him, puzzled. The Potter-Malfoy rivalry was well-known throughout the caste. She looked to Hermione for an explanation.

"It's okay, Madame Pomphrey. They're um...friends, now," she tried to explain.

Madame Pomphrey looked at her doubtfully. Hermione smiled weakly.

"May I go get Ron?" she asked. "He's going to be furious, and he'll want to see Harry tonight as well."

Madame Pomphrey looked like she wanted to protest, but at Hermione's pleading look and Draco's stubborn face she sighed and gave him.

Hermione returned shortly with the promised red-head. Draco had parked himself in a chair next to Harry's bed and was watching Pomphrey heal Harry's cuts and bruises with concern.

Draco figured Hermione must have explained what happened to Ron and told him that Draco would be there, because the red-head showed no surprise at seeing Draco at Harry's bedside.

"My God," said Ron softly, when he saw Harry's body. His expression hardened. "Those fucking *bastards*."

"Mr. Weasley, really. Such language." Madame Pomphrey's scolding was half-hearted, however, as she was probably having similar thoughts. She had an obvious soft spot for Harry Potter, who was in and out of her hospital wing multiple times a year.

After a few more moments of healing, Pomphrey left the room, bustling off to get some kind of potion. The three remaining students just stood together silently for a moment.

"Why is he still unconscious?" Ron finally asked, breaking the silence.

Draco answered him. "Pomphrey thinks he was drugged."

"*Drugged*? So first they incapacitate him, then they beat him, and then they plan to rape him? Lovely," said Hermione angrily.

Ron looked at Draco. "Hermione said you used the Crutiatius curse on them," he said to the blonde.

"Yes, I did," said Draco with no remorse whatsoever. He waited to hear the Gryffindor's horrified reaction.

"Good," said Ron coldly, worried eyes traveling over Harry's body again. Draco raised an eyebrow. Apparently Gryffindor loyalty overcame their squeamishness about Unforgivables.

Madame Pomphrey returned, and the three students watched her work, united in their anxiety for Harry, who was still unconscious on the bed. After about an hour of uneventful silence, Dumbledore appeared.

"How is he, Poppy?" he asked with great concern, and she clucked her tongue and shook her head.

"He'll live," she said tightly, "But he's still unconscious, and I can't seem to rouse him. I'm going to need to keep him overnight." Dumbledore nodded, and turned to the three students.

"Just as well. I have a great deal of information for all of you, but it should wait until morning when Harry is with us. Could we all plan to meet in my office after breakfast, say, around 10am?"

Everyone nodded and turned to leave except Draco.

"Mr. Malfoy? Harry will be fine. Why don't you head down to your dorm?" Dumbledore said gently, but Draco just shook his head.

"I'm not leaving until he wakes up," he said stubbornly, and the headmaster looked at him seriously. After a moment, he nodded.

"Very well, then. But see that you leave after that."

Draco nodded back, and went back to watching Harry, not taking his eyes off him even to say goodbye to the other three.

It was close to midnight, but Draco Malfoy could still be found at Harry's bedside, watching over the other wizard. If the circumstances weren't so horrible, he actually would have very much enjoyed being able to stare at Harry without interruption for long. The moonlight was shining in through the window, illuminating the Gryffindor as he lay in sleep.

Draco took the opportunity to memorize Harry's face - jet black hair spilling over the pillow, long black eyelashes, smooth, tan skin. To Draco, he was perfect. He tentatively reached out and brushed a lock of hair out of Harry's eyes. It was thick and unruly, but softer than it looked, and Draco thought he'd never touched anything so nice in his life.

His eyes roamed downwards, and he began to fidget slightly. Harry's shirt had been nothing but shreds, and as Madame Pomphrey had needed to apply all sorts of healing salves to his torso she had simply removed it and not replaced it with hospital pajamas. The covers had slipped about halfway down Harry's chest, and Draco could see his skin almost glistening in the moonlight.

Most of the bruises had faded by now, leaving Draco to gaze at longingly at all that bare skin and muscle. Harry was slightly taller than Draco, with long limbs and large hands that indicated that he might get a little taller yet. Though he was slim his muscles were well-defined, and his arms looked strong and capable. Draco couldn't help but imagine how those arms might feel around him, those big hands tangled in his hair, as Draco straddled him on the bed and began to softly kiss his healing wounds and -

Draco blinked. He had stood up from his chair and actually gone so far as to place on knee on the bed. He guiltily flopped back into his chair.

"Harry's hurt," he scolded himself. "This is not the time for you to indulge yourself in your sordid little fantasies!"

He knew he should pull the blankets over Harry and hide him from view, but he couldn't do it. He kept staring. His fingers were itching to touch Harry, and his mouth was itching to kiss him.

"You will not," he thought sternly, "take advantage of Harry because he's lying here defenseless and unconscious. You are going to be a gentleman and leave him alone."

Despite his lecture to himself, however, Draco found that he had stood up again. He took a few steps toward the bed and hovered over the other wizard for a moment, watching him. After a moment, he noticed that Harry was shivering.

"There, you see that! You just had to keep looking, and now you've let him get cold!" Draco chastised his libido, reaching down to pull the covers over Harry's chest. He pulled them well over Harry's shoulders, leaning down and tucking him in as gently as he could.

"There you go, Harry," Draco said softly, turning to look down at Harry. His eyes widened as he realized that his face was only inches from Harry's head. All that soft, black hair right under his nose. Surely it wouldn't be violating Harry if Draco just sniffed his hair, right? Just one little sniff?

Feeling only a little silly, Draco touched his nose to the black locks and took a deep breath in. He closed his eyes and gave a small sigh of pleasure. The scent was heavenly, a faint smell of fruit and trees and something that made you think of warm summer nights spent lying on a blanket under the stars. It made him weak. It made him giddy.

It made it impossible not to kiss Harry.

Draco moved slightly, intending to begin at Harry's forehead and kiss his way down to his lips. As he moved in, however, Harry's eyelashes began to flutter as the other boy regained consciousness.

"Draco?"

Harry's sleepy voice made Draco jump back from the bed in alarm.

"Harry! You're...you're awake," he finished lamely, hoping against hope that Harry didn't understand what he had been about to do. Harry seemed pretty out of it still, though, as he squinted up at the blonde.

"What are you doing here?" Harry asked fuzzily, looking up at Draco with a puzzled look.

Draco gulped. The most truthful answer - about to kiss your unconscious body - made him sound like a pervert. The second most truthful answer - watching you sleep - sounded way too creepy and stalker-ish.

"I wanted to make sure you were okay."

"Oh." Harry was obviously trying to process this and having trouble. He looked back at Draco. "Where am I?"

"Hospital wing," said Draco, cautiously sitting back down in the chair next to him.

"And you're here with me?"

"Um...yes. Look, I...I just wanted to make sure you were okay, alright? That's all."

"Why do you care?" There was no malice or ill feeling behind the words. Harry was genuinely curious.

"I...umm...I..." Draco was stuttering and Harry was looking up at him with those big, pretty eyes, and without his glasses all Draco could see was green reflected in the moonlight. It made him lightheaded. It made him want to tell Harry the truth; that he needed him and loved him and wanted to spend the rest of his life making him happy.

But he didn't think Harry was really ready to hear him say that.

He settled for a more typical Draco Malfoy answer. "Look Potter, those fuckers were dead-set on having their way with you in the corridor, and they banged you up pretty good in the process. Can't I be concerned about your welfare after something like that?"

Harry nodded and yawned. "Yeah, sure, why not?" he mumbled. "Do you know what happened?"

Draco shook his head slightly. "Not really. But don't worry about it right now. We have a meeting in morning, so we'll all find out then. In the meantime, you should rest. Get some more sleep."

"Mmmm, sleep," Harry agreed, closing his eyes and rolling on his side.

"Yes, sleep," Draco said gently, standing up again. Harry's eyes fluttered back open.

"Thank you for saving me," he muttered, looking up at Draco, who smiled sweetly at him.

"Yes, yes. You're welcome. Now go to sleep, you crazy monkey."

He leaned down over Harry to pull the covers back over his shoulders. Harry startled him by lifting a hand to his face.

"Like an angel," Harry mumbled, trailing his fingers down Draco's cheek.

Draco closed his eyes as Harry's touch sent little sparks of pleasure across his skin, and it was all too soon when Harry lowered his arm back down to the bed.

"Night, Draco," he said softly, closing his eyes again.

Draco stood stock still as a breathtaking happiness coursed through his body. Finally, he leaned down over the black-haired boy who was quietly sleeping below him, and pressed a gentle kiss to his temple.

"Goodnight, Harry," he whispered.

And ignoring his promise to Dumbledore he curled back up in the chair next to Harry, watching the rise and fall of Harry's chest until he drifted off to sleep.

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The Veela Enigma

Chapter 6: Evil Plots Afoot

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Harry woke up the next morning, still a bit groggy but feeling at least a million times better than he had the night before. He yawned and stretched and instinctively groped for his glasses on the night stand.

His hands brushed the cool metal, and he gratefully slipped them on. Now that everything was in focus, he glanced around and immediately recognized that he was in the Hospital Wing.

He leaned back against his pillows and tried to remember what had happened the night before. Before he could really start, however, he heard a noise next to the bed and turned to look.

And then he melted.

Because in a chair next to Harry's bed was Draco Malfoy, curled up in little ball and fast asleep. His normally impeccable blonde locks were messy, his eyes were closed, and his face was relaxed and peaceful. He was utterly adorable.

Harry stayed absolutely silent, reluctant to wake him up. What was Draco doing in the Hospital Wing with him? For that matter, why was *Harry* in the hospital wing in the first place? He couldn't remember much of what happened after he'd left the Gryffindor table.

He continued watching Draco sleep for a few more moments, watching the slow rise and fall of his chest and listening to his soft breathing. He took a moment to appreciate how Draco's hair fell so easily around his face, unlike Harry's own cow-licked mess. He noticed Draco's blonde eyebrows and his blonde eyelashes, nearly invisible against the porcelain skin of his face.

Draco had taken off his tie at some point in the night, and unbuttoned the first couple buttons of his shirt. Harry could see his collarbone now, and even in his slightly fuzzy early morning state he had the odd urge to lick it. It wasn't as strong as his desire had been in the library the other night, but it was becoming very clear to Harry that his feeling as far as Draco Malfoy was concerned were not of the *let's just be friends, shall we* variety.

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There was a loud noise in a nearby room, and Draco's eyelashes fluttered open. He groaned softly, grimacing as he uncurling his long limbs and stretched like a cat. He looked around, bewildered for a moment, and then it all came back to him.

Like lightening his attention was focused on the bed. What he saw made his heart swell with happiness and his mind cringe in embarrassment.

Harry was sitting up in bed, studying Draco, a soft smile playing on his lips. Draco felt his cheeks flush slightly. He had been planning to wake up before Harry and sneak down to his dorm for a shower, and then return to the Hospital wing so that Harry wouldn't know he had been here all night. Well, looked like his secret was out.

"Do you make a point of being at all your schoolyard rivals' bedsides when they wake up from injury?" Harry queried, the smile now slightly teasing.

"Nope. Just you, Potter," Draco responded dryly, the flush deepening ever so slightly.

"Lucky me," Harry replied, and it really sounded like he meant it.

That soothed Draco's embarrassed pride, but he still hastened to change the subject. "Hey, Potter, what do you remember from last night?" he asked, wondering if Harry could recall their midnight conversation. Harry just shook his head.

"Nothing, really. I can't remember anything."

Draco wasn't sure if he was relieved or disappointed; he had almost kissed Harry, which he certainly didn't want Harry to remember, but Harry had also used his first name, thanked him, and called him an angel. Maybe he was being sappy, but he kind of wanted Harry to remember that.

Looked like he was out of luck, though. Harry was looking bemusedly at his half-dressed state. "Malfoy, do *you* know what happened to me yesterday?"

Draco just shrugged. "I was hoping you could tell me. All I know is I heard you shouting for help, and when Granger and I found you, you were at the mercy of two Hufflepuff *bastards* and - "

Draco was unable to continue as rage flared up in his chest. He took a deep breath and tried to calm down. It really wouldn't do to show Harry how angry he was. He didn't want the Gryffindor to suspect that something was amiss. More than he probably already did.

Harry didn't look like he was paying attention to Draco's anger, though. He was too busy looking angry himself.

"I remember that part now," he said, gritting his teeth. He glanced down at his bare chest, then turned back to Draco. "Pomphrey healed me up, then?"

Draco nodded. As if on cue, Madame Pomphrey chose that moment to come into the room.

She smiled warmly at the Harry, who smiled back. They appeared to be genuinely fond of each other. Madame Pomphrey's eyes narrowed slightly, however, when she saw Draco in the chair next to Harry.

"Mr. Malfoy, please tell me you haven't been here all night?" She clucked disapprovingly. "The Headmaster told you to return to your dorm."

Draco stared defiantly at her and refused to answer. She sighed and moved to check Harry's injuries. She pointed her wand at him and said a few spells, and seemed pleased with the results.

"Well, Mr. Potter, it looks like you're going to be just fine. In fact, if you like, you can run along to your dorm and get a shower before breakfast."

Harry nodded. "Thank you for everything," he said charmingly to the nurse, who smiled dotingly at him.

"Of course. Now off with you. And try to stay out of the hospital for a least a couple weeks this time, will you?"

Harry grinned at the nurse as she left the room, completely missing the stricken expression on Draco's face. Draco hadn't known Harry was in the hospital wing often. Did he get hurt a lot? That was *unacceptable*. Draco would make sure that from now on Harry took better care of himself, and stopped getting hurt, and didn't get into risky situations and -

Draco groaned inwardly. He could deal with the lust factor now. He wasn't sure he could deal with turning into a mother hen.

Draco turned as Harry threw back the covers and started to stand. In a smooth movement Draco grabbed his robe off the chair and tossed it to Harry. Harry gave him an odd look. Draco shrugged.

"You're not wearing a shirt, Potter, and Hogwarts isn't exactly known to be a tropical paradise," he explained. "Besides, I don't think you want to be prancing through the halls half-naked. Unless you're some kind of closet exhibitionist, of course."

Draco chose not to mention the fact that the thought of someone else seeing Harry undressed made him furiously jealous.

Harry, however, looked grateful for the robe. "Thanks," he said, pulling it on. He stood up, fastening the first couple clasps to hold the robe on. It fit fairly well, except for being the tiniest bit short in the arms and showing a sliver of Harry's bare wrists.

"Shall we go?" Draco asked. Harry raised an eyebrow.

"We?"

"Yes, *we*. I'm walking you back to your dorm, Potter."

Harry's face was amused. "What am I, your girlfriend?" he teased.

Not yet, was on the tip of Draco's tongue, but he chose a different response.

"No, you're a Gryffindor idiot who's just gotten out of the hospital after being attacked. If you had an ounce of Slytherin self-preservation you'd realize that you oughtn't be alone right now, hence I am walking you back to your dorm."

"*Hence?* Who says *hence* anymore?"

Draco scowled. "Shut up, Potter, and get moving."

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"I didn't *need* you to walk me back, you know," Harry hastened to prove as he and Draco walked along the corridor together. "I'm perfectly capable of looking out for myself."

"Of course you are. That's why you're always in mortal danger. Your impeccable ability to look out for yourself."

"Oh...bite me, Malfoy."

"Smashing comeback, Potter. What's your encore? *You suck?*"

"I was thinking more along the lines of *sod off, you stupid tosser*."

"How equally eloquent. Well, if it soothes your wounded manly pride then you can go on believing that you are capable of looking out for yourself. I, however, will of course know the truth: that poor little Harry Potter needs big, strong Draco Malfoy to look out for him."

"Big, strong Draco Malfoy? I don't know any big, strong Draco Malfoys. I only know a short, runty git Draco Malfoy. Is that who you mean?"

"I am *not* a runt, you stupid oaf! I'm the same size as *you*."

"Are not. You're a tichy little thing."

"Potter, you are *wearing my robe* right now. Obviously we're the same size."

"Yes, but look how short it is on me! My wrists and ankles are poking out."

"That's because my bone structure is more refined than yours."

"No, it's because you're short."

"Oh...bite me, Potter."

They were still engaged in their playful bickering when they reached the portrait.

"Hullo, Harry dear," said the Fat Lady dotingly to one of her favorite Gryffindors. "Who's your friend?"

"Oh, this is Draco Malfoy," said Harry, presenting him to the portrait. The Fat Lady eyed him critically.

"A Malfoy, hmmm? Well, I can't say I care much for Malfoys, as none of their lot has ever been decent enough to be sorted into Gryffindor. But he certainly is pretty."

Draco, who had looked rather offended at her comments about his family, now looked extraordinarily put out at being called "pretty" by a painting. Harry was fighting back a laugh.

"Now see here you silly painting, I'll have you know -

Harry clapped a hand over his mouth.

"Malfoy, be nice," he admonished, and turned back to the Fat Lady. "*Golden Snidget*," he said, and the painting swung open.

Harry dragged Malfoy into the Gryffindor common room, keeping his hand firmly over the blonde's mouth to prevent him from launching a diatribe at the Fat Lady. Once inside, he removed his hand and Draco glared at him.

"Do you manhandle all your guests to Gryffindor tower, Potter?" the blonde spat, a pout forming on his face.

Harry smiled sweetly at him. "Why yes. Didn't you know? It's standard Gryffindor procedure. My next move will be to have you bound, gagged and at my mercy on the floor of the common room."

Harry watched, puzzled, as Draco's eyes became huge and a light pink color rose into his cheeks.

"You okay?" Harry asked.

"Who, me? Oh fine, fine. Just thinking about bondage with you - I mean, bonding with you," Draco said, now blushing even more. "You know, male bonding and all."

Harry had the distinct impression he was missing something.

"Oh, well...okay then," he said and unfastened the first clip that held his robe on.

"OhmyGodwhatareyoudoing?" Draco burst out.

Harry shrugged. "I thought I'd return your robe. Thanks for letting me borrow it." His hand slipped to the next clip.

Draco looked slightly panicked. "But you're not wearing anything under that robe!"

"Yeah, I know, but so what?" Harry asked, more puzzled than ever. He undid the third clasp. "Look, it'll just take a second and I can give you back your -

"Nonononono!" Draco said, shaking his head frantically. "Keep it. Not that I don't appreciate the strip show you're offering me - I mean, your *generosity*, but you should leave the robe on in case I shag you. I mean, slag you. Off. Slag you off. Right. See you at the meeting!"

And with that odd, babbled statement, Draco bolted from the common room.

Later that morning, during breakfast, Harry, Ron and Hermione discussed the events of the previous night. Hermione filled Harry in on the basics of what had happened after he passed out. Harry was stunned to find out Draco had used an Unforgivable curse on his attacker.

"He used the *Crutiatius* curse? He must have been so angry," Harry commented to Hermione.

"He was. He was furious," Hermione concurred, flipping a page in *Love Potions and Spells: A Godsend or Hell on Earth?*

"That's so weird," Ron said thoughtfully. "I mean, not that I'm not glad he did it, because they truly deserved it, but I thought Malfoy hated you, Harry. I can't believe he came to your defense like that."

"I know," said Harry. "And get this: this morning, he walked me back to my dorm from the hospital wing. Maybe he's turning over a new leaf or something."

"Maybe he's got a little crush on you," Ron joked.

Hermione choked on her drink.

"Don't be ridiculous, Ron," she said severely, quickly shoving her book under the table. "Malfoy doesn't have a crush on Harry; he's just acting like a decent human being for once in his life, that's all."

"I know, I was only kidding," Ron said, sounding slightly taken aback by her tone. Hermione smiled weakly back.

"Oh, right. Sorry," she said, sliding her book into her bag discreetly. "Well, I'm off to the library. I'll see you two in Dumbledore's office at ten, then?"

"Sure thing," Harry replied, a bit puzzled by her reaction but letting it slide. She left and Ron turned back to Harry.

"Seriously, though, something *is* different about Malfoy this year. Apologies, rescuing Gryffindors, people staring at him constantly, all the fan mail -

"What fan mail?" Harry asked, a little more sharply than he had intended. Ron jerked his head in the direction of the Slytherin table.

"See for yourself."

Harry looked over at Draco. Next to the blonde's plate of whipped cream, powdered sugar and maple syrup that *might* have had a waffle on it somewhere, was indeed an enormous stack of letters.

"Malfoy's been getting tons of fan mail this year," Ron continued. "Most of Hogwarts fancies him like mad. I heard that even *Witch Weekly* is considering putting him on one of their covers."

Harry narrowed his eyes slightly. He didn't like that. Not one bit. And maybe Draco wasn't his, and he had no right to be jealous, but that didn't change the fact that he welcomed competition for Draco like Dudley welcomed the sight of a celery stick.

At ten o'clock that morning, Harry, Ron, Hermione and Draco assembled as planned in the Headmaster's office. Dumbledore motioned for them all to sit down. If he was surprised that Draco Malfoy had been involved in the rescue of Harry Potter, and was now sitting civilly in a room with three Gryffindors whom he supposedly hated, he didn't show it. Instead, Dumbledore sighed deeply, and looked at the group over his half-moon glasses.

"It would appear that our situation here is more complicated than I had ever suspected," he began, looking at Harry and Draco specifically. "And in order for everyone to appreciate the severity of things, can I trust that nothing that is said here will leave this room?"

Everyone nodded in agreement. Dumbledore continued.

"First, I would like to commend Miss Granger and Mr. Malfoy on their spectacular rescue of Mr. Potter yesterday. Professor Snape and I managed to find Harry after being informed by one of my portraits, but we might have been too late to save him. Twenty points each to Slytherin and Gryffindor."

Only twenty? He's Harry fucking Potter, we ought to get 100 each, Draco thought sullenly to himself. He glanced slightly sideways and caught Harry's eye. Harry shyly mouthed *thank you* in his direction, and suddenly house points were the last thing on Draco's mind.

"Professor Dumbledore," Hermione spoke up, interrupting Draco's thoughts. "Did you happen to find out what they used to drug Harry?"

"I did indeed, Miss Granger," Dumbledore said slowly. "I must admit, I am thoroughly surprised by the method. Harry, you of course know that you are highly resistant to any form of magic which affects the mind. That is why you can throw off the Imperious curse. Instead of taking chances with magical spells such as the Confundus charm or a Befuddlement drought, it would appear that your attackers chose to use a muggle drug."

"A *muggle* drug?" Ron asked, incredulous.

"That makes sense," Hermione said, nodding crisply. "There are several muggle drugs available that cloud the mind and affect judgment, and they are used in attempted rapes all the time. And Harry wouldn't have any kind of immunity to something like that."

"Exactly, Miss Granger."

"How are these types of drugs used?" asked Draco, who had kept a close watch on Harry the entire night and wondered when he could have possibly been drugged.

"Well, they come in several different forms, including powder," Hermione explained. "There are some that will dissolve in liquid. Often they are completely colorless and odorless, so the victim has no idea that their drink has been doctored."

"Ernie could have easily slipped it into my pumpkin juice while I was eating. I know I wasn't paying close attention." Harry's expression hardened. "But why? I don't understand why two people whom I considered friends would suddenly choose to attack me like that."

Dumbledore gave Harry an intense look over the top of his glasses. "I trust someone filled you in on the events which occurred after you passed out, Harry?"

Harry nodded, and Dumbledore continued.

"With the use of the Veritaserum from Professor Snape, we questioned both Mr. Finch-Fletchley and Mr. MacMillian as well as Mr. Avery. It would appear that the two young men from Hufflepuff were being controlled by the Imperious curse."

"Of course," said Harry, pieces clicking in place.

"What do you mean, of course?" Hermione asked, and Harry proceeded to explain how he found Justin's behavior extremely out of character, his slightly unfocused eyes, and his mentions of the Dark Lord and calling Harry's mother a *mudblood*.

Dumbledore nodded. "It appears that there are two students at Hogwarts who are seeking to become Death Eaters. The attack on you last night was a sort of "initiation," if you will. The students were to use the Imperious curse on two other students and attack you, Harry. The more damage they did, the higher their esteem in Lord Voldemort's eyes. Mr. Avery was controlling the actions of Mr. MacMillian."

"What about Justin?" Hermione asked. "We only caught one other person besides the two Hufflepuffs."

"Very observant, Miss Granger. I ascertained from Mr. Avery that there is another recruit here at Hogwarts who has been controlling Justin Finch-Fletchley's actions over the past two days. It has long been the custom, however, of Lord Voldemort to keep even his closet supporters in the dark about who he works with. Therefore, Mr. Avery only knows he is working with another Slytherin. He does not know the identity of the other, more dangerous student."

"Is that why Justin attacked Harry night before last?" Ron asked, and Dumbledore nodded.

"Yes. It would appear that the task was initially given to only one recruit, and he attempted to sexually assault Mr. Potter that first night. However, Mr. Potter was able to overcome his attacker, and return to his dorm only mildly injured, thus prompting our unknown Death Eater recruit to join forces with the other recruit and include drugging Harry first as part of the plan."

"*Sexual assault?* You didn't say a *word* about that, Potter," spat Draco, narrowing his eyes at Harry. Hermione and Ron were looking at Harry in surprise as well.

"Is that true, Harry?" asked Hermione.

Harry squirmed slightly in his seat. "Well, I guess he did try," Harry said, a little too casually. He appeared to be bracing himself for the inevitable outpouring of scolding from his friends.

"Harry! You should have told us!" Hermione chided, her voice appalled. "There was no reason to keep that a secret! You could have been seriously hurt, and you didn't say anything?"

"Yes, what the hell were you thinking, Potter? You didn't think it was important to tell people this? That was important information that we all should have know," Draco said angrily.

"Yeah, mate, I can't believe I agree with Malfoy on something, but honestly, why didn't you mention this?" Even Ron was bewildered.

Harry remained unaffected. "Look, I appreciate your concern, but in case you don't remember, I beat Justin pretty badly that first night. He didn't succeed."

"That's still no excuse," Draco snapped furiously. "Why didn't you tell someone?"

"I didn't want to worry anyone, okay? I thought I had handled things just fine *myself*," Harry seethed, sounding as if he was getting annoyed.

Luckily, Dumbledore broke in before things could get too heated. "Whatever the case may be with Mr. Potter's decision to keep this information to himself," he said, interrupting the glares between Harry and Draco, "the point is

that while we have Mr. Avery in custody, there is still a Death Eater initiate at large at Hogwarts. We don't know who they are, or when they will attempt to strike again."

"So Potter is still in danger," Draco pointed out, mentally assigning himself guard duty.

Dumbledore looked at him seriously. "As are you, Mr. Malfoy. In fact, you may be in more danger than Mr. Potter is right now."

"What do you mean?" asked Harry, and Draco was happy to hear a slight note of anxiety in Harry's voice.

"In order for you three to understand the whole situation I will give you the entire truth. The Malfoy family is no longer under the services of Lord Voldemort. Lucius Malfoy is now a member of the Order of the Phoenix and a spy for our side."

Harry started and turned to Draco, who nodded his head. Ron looked completely disbelieving, but held his tongue. Surprisingly enough Hermione looked less than surprised by the news.

Harry turned back to Dumbledore and opened his mouth - most likely to argue, considering what his last run-in with Lucius Malfoy was like - but Dumbledore held up his hand.

"I know what you are thinking, Harry. And I cannot give you all the details right now. I do not know all of them myself. Suffice to say, I am convinced that Lucius Malfoy is indeed sincere in his intention. He continues to report to Lord Voldemort as a Death Eater and to place himself in great personal risk to provide us with information. And it may interest you three to know as well that young Mr. Malfoy here has never intended to become a Death Eater."

Ron snorted under his breath, earning himself a spiteful glare from Draco, but Harry looked absolutely relieved. Draco couldn't blame him. If Harry was indeed developing a slight crush on Draco (Draco crossed his fingers on that one), it would certainly come as a relief to learn that Draco hadn't ever planned on killing him.

"Professor," Draco began hesitantly. "I don't quite understand. Why am I now in danger as well?"

"Because, Mr. Malfoy, the remaining Death Eater has reported your actions last night to Voldemort, who, needless to say, is not very happy with you right now."

Dumbledore addressed the rest of his explanation to all four of the students in front of him. "Lord Voldemort had been planning on recruiting Draco at one point, or so we have heard from Draco's father. However, because Mr. Malfoy and Miss Granger are the ones responsible for interfering with the initiation and protecting Mr. Potter, it has come to Lord Voldemort's attention that Draco will not be joining his forces after all. Voldemort sees this as a betrayal."

"I *never* planned to join the Death Eaters," Draco said vehemently.

"I know that, Mr. Malfoy," said Dumbledore seriously. "However, it would seem that Voldemort has now marked you as a target. The remaining unknown Death Eater now has a mission which involves you as his initiation. Unfortunately, we do not have the details. All we know is that the recruit is another Slytherin, and still at large, therefore your safety is in jeopardy and we are going to have to take measures to protect you. We would like to move your sleeping quarters to a safer area of the castle. Now, the dorm in which Harry sleeps is one of the best warded places in the castle. However, moving you, a Slytherin prefect, into a Gryffindor dormitory is not really a feasible option."

Draco opened his mouth to say *actually, Professor, I can think of nothing I'd like better* but wisely closed it without saying anything. He waited for Professor Dumbledore to continue.

"So for the time being, we have decided to move you into a private room. If this is agreeable to you, I can have the house elves start moving your things this afternoon."

This was more than agreeable to Draco. Goyle and Crabbe were alright but had a tendency to snore like sleeping dragons. Besides that, all his roommates seemed to spend an awful lot of time staring at Draco this year, and it was beginning to grate on his nerves. Not to mention that there were still times when they insisted on spouting that ridiculous babble at him, always at the most inopportune times and always interrupting his better Harry-fantasies.

He nodded at Dumbledore, who beamed back at him. "Excellent. Rest assured that we will be doing everything in our power to track down the other Death Eater recruit. In the meantime, however, I would suggest that all of you exercise the utmost caution at all times. We do not know who the recruit is, nor do we know what exactly his instructions are."

Draco, figuring they were about done, almost rose before Professor Dumbledore cleared his throat.

"There is one other potential complication that you should be aware of, and it concerns Mr. Malfoy's use of an Unforgivable curse on his fellow students."

Draco narrowed his eyes. "I had to! They were beating Harry senseless! He was covered in blood and Finch-Fletchley was ripping at his pants! Anyone would have been mind-bendingly furious!"

Dumbledore held up a hand. "I realize that the situation was extreme. However, things could potentially get very messy for you, Mr. Malfoy, should the students' parents choose to press charges."

"Justin's parents are muggles, they won't," Hermione said earnestly. "But I don't know about Ernie's. However, maybe there are extenuating circumstances."

Hermione looked at Draco, who met her eyes. He shook his head ever so slightly. He wasn't about to inform the room that he was in love with Harry. If it came down to a trial, he would admit that he was most likely under the effects of a love potion and therefore unable to act rationally. But he wasn't about to admit that now.

Dumbledore watched their interaction, but did not ask for clarification. He merely continued to speak. "For now, I think we shouldn't worry about it. I will let you know how things go. In the meantime, why don't you four head to Hogsmeade? It's a lovely day. Draco, Professor Snape will take you to your new quarters after dinner tonight. Thank you all."

And sensing their cue to go, the four students rose from their chair and left the room, Hermione deep in thought, Harry and Draco stealing surreptitious glances at each other, and Ron taking with him a handful of sherbert lemons.

Author's Note: FYI, the drug Harry was slipped was GHB, and it is very, disturbingly real.

The Veela Enigma

Chapter 7: Getting to Know You

Harry, Ron, Hermione and Draco had just left Dumbledore's office and were wandering towards the Entrance Hall, planning on heading out to Hogsmeade, when Harry paused suddenly.

"You guys go on ahead," he motioned to the other three. "I forgot to bring any money with me. I just need to run back up to the tower and grab some, and then I'll catch up."

Ron and Hermione shrugged, but Draco shook his head.

"Don't be silly, Potter. You shouldn't be walking alone to Hogsmeade right now."

Harry folded his arms across his chest and glared, so Draco quickly amended his statement.

"I meant that *neither* of us should be walking anywhere alone right now. Besides, I can run down to my dorms and get my cloak while I wait for you."

Harry looked torn between defending his ability to take care of himself and wanting to spend more time alone with Draco. Finally he gave in.

"Alright, Malfoy. If you insist." Harry turned to Ron and Hermione. "So can we just meet up with you in the Three Broomsticks later this afternoon?"

Hermione was giving Draco a slightly suspicious look, but Ron looked quite happy with the prospect. He always looked quite happy with the prospect of time alone with Hermione. "Later, mate," he said, pulling Hermione away from the pair.

"Meet you back here in ten minutes? That's good for me, is that good for you too?"

"Why Potter, you're such a *gentleman*. How sweet of you to want to make it good for me too."

With cheeks slightly pink from Draco's surely innocent words, Harry bolted for his dorm.

After Harry and Draco met up again (Harry with cheeks back to normal color) they set off for Hogsmeade. They purposefully ignored the looks they were getting from their very confused schoolmates as they walked together.

"So, how does it feel to be a target?" Harry asked, as they walked along the well-worn path.

"Eh," Draco said with a shrug. "It's kind of anti-climatic. Besides, you know damn well what it's like to be a walking target. You-Know-Who's been after you for years."

Harry conceded this was true. They walked in silence for a couple more moments, and then Harry asked a question he was dying to know the answer to.

"Hey Malfoy?"

"What?"

"You said you never wanted to become a Death Eater."

"That's true. What's your point?"

"I was just wondering why not," Harry said hesitantly.

Draco thought for a moment. "Well, there are lots of good reasons. I hate pain, and I don't fancy working for someone who uses the Crutiatius curse the way the Dark Lord does. And while I might be a bit prejudiced against mud...*muggleborns*, I don't necessarily want to see them all dead. Then there's the sex thing, obviously. And of course there's the issue of you."

"Me?" Harry asked, startled. "What about me?"

"Well, you've beaten Voldemort quite a few times, and I can't shake the feeling that one of these days you're going to beat him for good. So I'm not anxious to join his side."

Harry stopped in his tracks and stared openly at Draco. He knew the blonde had no idea about the prophecy, but to hear someone just come out and support him like that meant the world to Harry.

Then Harry remembered something. "Wait. Hang on a second," he said, dashing forward a bit to catch back up with Draco. "The sex thing? What sex thing?" He didn't *quite* pull off the nonchalant tone he was hoping for.

Draco smirked at him. "Oh, just that I'd rather spend my time having hot sex with other boys than wearing a mask and torturing people. Personal preference, you understand."

"Oh." Harry was intrigued. "So...you're gay?"

"Gee, Potter, how did you miss that? You're obviously not as sharp as you're rumored to be, and considering the rumors you should be quite worried."

"Oh hush up, Malfoy."

"Do you have a problem with guys liking guys?" Draco asked, and now he was the one who didn't quite pull off a nonchalant tone of voice.

"Of course not," Harry answered. "People fancy who they fancy."

"Mmm, yes, exactly," Draco said thoughtfully. "Ever think you could fancy a bloke?" He looked almost nervous he asked this question.

To Harry's horror, he realized he was blushing again.

"Um...I haven't really thought about it," Harry lied, not wanting to confess that yes, actually, he had recently spent a *lot* of time fancying another bloke.

Draco gave him a calculating look, obviously noticing his blush and his blatant lie, and beamed.

"Well, Potter...you should think about it. Especially if you're going to go around calling other guys angels and such," he tacked on much too casually.

Harry stopped walking again. "What are you talking about?" he asked suspiciously.

Draco looked much too innocent. "Oh, nothing," he called over his shoulder, as he continued to walk. "Just something that happened last night in the hospital wing. I take it you don't remember."

Harry took a few quick steps to catch back up to Draco. "Did I do something last night I should know about?" he asked, a little fearful of the answer.

"Oh, I don't know. Nothing *too* scandalous."

Harry looked at him warily. "Are you implying that I called you an angel last night?"

Draco looked rather smug. "You might have."

Harry groaned in embarrassment and covered his face. "You have *got* to be kidding me," he mumbled into his hands

"I'm not. But don't be too embarrassed, it was quite sweet, actually." He paused. "Do you remember *anything* from last night, Potter?"

Harry thought hard, his cheeks still burning. He vaguely remembered something pale leaning over him - that must have been Draco, and that must have been what caused the angel remark. Still, the majority of his night was really one big black spot after the attack. He finally shook his head.

"I remember Justin and Ernie," Harry said, not noticing how Draco tensed up at the names. "And I remember seeing you and Hermione and thinking I had never been so glad to see anybody in my entire life."

Harry noticed Draco smiling at that remark, and smiled back. "Yeah, I know, I can't believe it either, but I was absolutely thrilled to see you, Malfoy. Guess there's got to be a first time for everything."

Harry watched with a grin as Draco's face took on a pouty expression. "Shows what you know," the blonde said with an injured air. "Loads of people are absolutely thrilled to see me at any time, not just when they're in desperate need of a rescue."

"I know," said Harry, a little too quickly. "All those millions of fangirls and fanboys you've got." Harry was extremely pleased that he had kept the jealousy out of his voice.

Well, most of it.

"Mmm, yes," Draco said thoughtfully. "I won't deny that after all these years of watching you get hounded by fans, it is rather fun to be a bit of a celebrity."

Harry couldn't hold back a bit of sarcasm. "Oh, yeah. Such fun. All these complete strangers who think they're madly in love with you. And then the press gets a hold of you and splatters ridiculous stories about your love life all over for everyone to read, and then you get even more fan mail from people who now think they know everything about you but really, they don't know you at all."

Harry paused. "Not that I'm bitter," he finished, rather sheepishly.

Harry watched as Draco pursed his lips and gave Harry an examining look. "I bet I know you better than almost anyone else, Potter," he finally said.

Harry scoffed at this. "What? That's ridiculous, how could you know me? We've been rivals for five years."

"That's why I know you. The whole 'know thine enemy' bit. I'm telling you, I know you better than most people. Even most of your Gryffindor friends."

"No way, Malfoy."

"Don't believe me?" Draco said challengingly. "Fine, I'll prove it. Go ahead and ask me a question about you. Anything."

Harry shrugged. "Alright...when's my birthday?"

"July 31. You're a Leo," Draco replied promptly. "And several months younger than me, I might add."

Harry gave him a withering look. "You *would* lord that over me. Okay, new question...what do I have as a pet?"

"A snowy owl named Hedwig that you've had since first year."

"How do you know that?" Harry demanded.

Draco sighed. "*Everyone* knows that. Your owl is bloody gorgeous. Ask me something harder."

"Alright...well...what's my favorite color?"

"You say red, because you're a Gryffindor, but really, it's green and you just don't want to admit it because that's a Slytherin color."

Harry's mouth dropped open. "How did you...I don't even think Ron knows that about me."

"I told you - I know you. Keep going."

"What's my favorite Quidditch team?"

"Oooh, very nice, Potter. That's a trick question. You don't have one. Ron likes the Chudley Cannons but you haven't picked a team yet because you're not ready to form any kind of permanent allegiance to one team or another since you're good enough to play professionally one day. You want to keep your options open. Very Slytherin of you, actually."

Harry was just staring at him. "You're starting to scare me, Malfoy."

Draco just smirked. "Keep 'em coming, Potter."

"Favorite dessert?"

"Treacle tart."

"Post-graduation ambitions?"

"You want to be an Auror, but that means passing Potions for the next two years. Good luck with that."

"Okay, so what's my favorite subject then?"

"Defense Against the Dark Arts. Predictable, really."

"Most treasured possession?"

"I don't know exactly what you've got because you've been quite secretive, but anything you have from your parents. Or maybe your Firebolt."

"Good God," Harry said, thunderstruck. "How do you know all this stuff? I don't know anything about you."

"I told you, I know you. I know you better than most people. And you'd be surprised what you know about me, Potter. For example, what's my favorite color?"

Harry thought for a moment, and surprisingly, he knew the answer. "Its silver, isn't it? You wear silver all the time."

Draco smiled. "And why do I like silver?"

Harry took a guess. "Both because it's a Slytherin color and because it matches your eyes."

"Very good. And what do I keep as a pet?"

Harry thought again. "You have an eagle owl. And he brings you tons of stuff from home."

Draco appeared amused by this observation, but merely nodded. "What's my favorite food?"

"Anything with sugar in it," said Harry, growing more confident.

"Quidditch team?"

"Falmouth Falcons."

"Favorite subject?"

"Potions."

"Birthday?"

"I don't know the exact - oh, wait. I do. It's December 16th. I've seen you get really good presents from home on that day. Wow, I had no idea I knew that about you."

Draco grinned. "I told you that you knew me better than you thought you did. Now, a hard one. What's my greatest ambition?"

"Well, I think it used to be...maybe...to beat me. In Quidditch, in life, in whatever." Harry paused. "Now, I'm not so sure."

Draco smiled gently at him. "You're right. It used to be to beat you. Now, I'm not so sure, either."

"So what changed, then?" Harry asked curiously. "Why don't you want to beat me anymore?"

"Oh, I still want to beat you," Draco reassured him. "It's just not my greatest ambition anymore. And as to what changed..." Draco seemed slightly uncomfortable. "I don't know. Maybe I'm just growing up."

Harry and Draco rounded the corner and the village of Hogsmeade was in front of them.

"Well, whatever happened, I'm glad," Harry said sincerely. "You're quite nice when you're not a total dick, you know."

"How *very* eloquent, Potter," Draco said sarcastically, but his tone was more teasing than rude. They began walking towards the village and Harry turned to grin at Draco.

"Look, I bet I even know where you want to go first. Honeyduke's, right?"

"And what makes you think that?" Draco asked, curious.

"Your wicked sweet tooth. Honestly, Malfoy, you shouldn't eat so much sugar. It can make you hyper. And it's bad for your teeth."

"Why Potter, I didn't know you cared. Now who told you that? I'd stake my money on Granger."

"Well, maybe. Her parents are dentists. She's always at Ron and me about eating too much sugar."

Draco gave Harry an appraising look. "Yeah, well, your teeth are fine, so I wouldn't worry. And yes, I want to go to Honeyduke's first. And then I'd assume we're going to Zonko's, unless you don't shop there anymore because of Weasley's Wizarding Wheezes."

"Malfoy, you are very, very scary," was all Harry said in response, and the pair trudged off to Honeyduke's.

They spent a very productive afternoon shopping and wandering around. Harry noticed that wherever they went, people seemed to stare at Draco. And not just take casual glances. Outright stares. And sometimes people would start shouting crazy things at him, like "I'm a galleonaire! With my own dragon importing business! And I think I love you!" or "I'm going to be the next Minister of Magic! And I'm bloody gorgeous! Marry me!"

Harry mentioned this to Draco, who shrugged.

"Yeah, people have been doing that around me lately. It's bloody weird. But it's no big deal; I bet they do it to you to."

Harry was pretty sure complete strangers had never shouted marriage proposals at him, but if Draco wasn't fazed by it then Harry would try not to let it get to him either.

A gangly, buck-toothed woman with scraggly hair chose that moment to shout out, "Hey Blondie! You're divine! I want to have your baby!"

Harry bit back a chuckle, but Draco didn't even flinch. In fact, he seemed to have not even heard her. His attention was completely focused on Harry, which made Harry almost giddily happy and flattered.

They bought loads of sweets at Honeyduke's, and Harry quickly stepped up to the register to pay for it all, earning himself some raised eyebrows from his blonde companion.

"What are we, on a date?" Draco teased.

Harry colored slightly but kept his voice steady. "Of course not. Don't be silly. You saved my life, the least I can do is buy you chocolate."

"My hero," Draco simpered, but eagerly accepted three sacks filled with his favorite Honeyduke's sweets.

They finally met up with Ron and Hermione at the Three Broomsticks. The two Gryffindors were seated at a table together, drinking butterbeers and chatting enthusiastically with each other.

Harry and Draco joined them, Harry ordering another butterbeer and Draco ordering a glass of pumpkin juice. Conversation went surprisingly easy between the four of them, considering the addition of one of their previous enemies. Draco went out of his way to be if not exactly *charming*, not sneering and rude either.

It didn't hurt that Hermione and Ron kept staring at him rather dreamily. They never went so far as to actually say anything ridiculous, though, so everyone was spared any kind of truly embarrassing situation.

It was almost dinner time, so the quartet left the Three Broomsticks (Draco picked up the tab, shocking everyone) and began walking back to Hogwarts. Close to the grounds Hermione fell into step next to Draco, trailing slightly behind Ron and Harry. "So, how was your day?" she asked, innocently as she could.

Draco merely smiled enigmatically. "Fine."

"Fine? Did you guys do anything fun?" she continued, still pressing for information. Draco rolled his eyes.

"Granger, stop trying to pry. He bought me sweets. We chatted. That's it."

"Just remember what I said," Hermione said warningly. She lowered her voice to a whisper. "No flirting with him, no seducing him, and no trying to make him fall in love with you. I'm not going to see him get hurt when this love potion wears off."

"Oh yes. Um...about that, Granger," said Draco, striving for nonchalance. Over the past couple days he had grown very fond of being in love with Harry, and was no longer eager to get over it. "I think I may have been a bit hasty to think this is all a love potion. I mean, really, maybe I am just in love with Harry. You ever think about that?"

Hermione scoffed. "Oh really? And what was it you used to call me, Malfoy? A very rude term about my muggle heritage, if I remember correctly."

Draco's cheeks turned slightly pink. "Oh, um...muggle-born?"

Hermione narrowed her eyes. "No. It was much ruder. Let's hear you say the word again, shall we? For old time's sake?"

"But I *can't* say that word, you know that," Draco hissed under his breath.

Hermione raised her eyebrows. "That is exactly my point. You weren't hasty, you were right. Something magic is at work here. And I'm going to figure out what."

Draco was going to reply, but at that moment Ron and Harry turned around. "Hey you two, hurry it up, will you?" Ron said impatiently. "We're starving."

"Yeah, we're - Oh my God, Malfoy, don't move," Harry said, eyes going very wide.

"What? What's wro - "

"I said DON'T MOVE," Harry ordered in a desperate voice, and Draco felt his body freeze in place, one foot in the air. Horrified, his wide eyes met Hermione's, and then traveled up to meet Harry's. Only Harry wasn't there any longer, because he was now on his knees on the dirt road.

A low hissing noise was coming from under Draco's foot, and the blonde realized with a start that he had almost stepped on the snake that was now winding itself around Draco's ankle. Draco gulped. He could have sworn he felt the snake's tongue on his skin and he fervently hoped he wasn't about to get bitten. He heard more hissing, and then realized with a start that *this* hissing noise was coming from Harry.

Draco listened in awe. He hadn't heard Harry speak Parseltongue since their second year. It was easy to forget that Harry was a Parselmouth - it didn't really fit in to his image of the perfect Gryffindor golden boy.

Harry was now standing up, holding a small, brightly colored snake in his arms. Three pairs of questioning eyes looked at him.

"This is Isis," Harry explained, letting the snake slither up his arm. "She's just a baby, and she's lost. I told her I'd take her home." He looked at Draco and grinned. "You can move again, you know, Malfoy," he said teasingly, and Draco

felt his entire body relax as he was able to move freely again. He steadfastly refused to look at Hermione, and instead gave Harry a haughty look.

"I know that, Potter, I just wanted to be sure the danger had passed," he said imperiously.

Harry indulged him. "Yes, the danger's passed. And sorry for shouting at you like that, I just didn't want you to step on her. She's quite poisonous."

"Oh," said Draco, looking at the snake with a bit more respect. Hermione turned to Harry.

"You told the snake - "

"Isis," Harry interjected.

"Okay, fine. You told Isis you'd take her home? Where's home?"

"Forbidden Forest, obviously."

Draco sputtered. "You can't take her there, Potter! It's...well, it's forbidden. And it's dangerous," he finished, rather lamely.

Harry gave him a look that clearly said, "What's your point?"

"It's alright, Malfoy, Harry's been in there loads of times. He'll be fine," said Ron cheerfully, obviously distracted by thoughts of dinner. Draco looked at Hermione for support.

"Granger? Surely you don't endorse this? You're a prefect!"

Hermione shrugged and Ron looked insulted.

"I'm a prefect too," he said, and Draco rolled his eyes.

"Yes but you're...well, you're a special sort of prefect," he said, and ignored Ron offended look to continue to plead his case to Hermione.

"Granger, please tell me you're not going to let Potter run off into the Forbidden Forest alone with a poisonous snake?"

Hermione glanced at Harry, then back at Draco. "Malfoy, relax. I've been in there before a few times, it's not so bad. And Harry's very capable. He knows to be careful."

Draco was dumbfounded. Harry turned to Ron and Hermione.

"So I'll see you at dinner, then? I'll just be a moment," and they nodded. Ron and Hermione started walking up to the castle and Harry started walking off to the forest. Draco made a quick decision.

"Wait, Potter, I'm coming with you," he called out, and caught up to Harry, who gave him a puzzled look.

"Honestly, Malfoy, I'll be just fine. I really have been in here many times. I don't need your protection."

Draco was going to deny to the death that he was protecting Harry. "It's not that, it's just...well, I can't very well live with myself if you've been in there and I haven't. I'm not going to let you beat me on this."

Harry looked decidedly amused. "You have been in here before. Don't you remember? Detention, first year. If I recall correctly, you ran out screaming."

"Shut up," Draco muttered, looking cross. "I was eleven years old and I saw some freaky thing drinking the blood of a unicorn. Anyone would have run."

"I didn't," Harry pointed out with a grin, and Draco glared at him.

"Yes, well, that's because you're mental," he said crossly.

"Look, if it makes you feel better, it was Voldemort you ran from, and most people do," Harry said sympathetically.

"Are you serious? I've seen the Dark Lord?" Draco said with some surprise. Then he shuddered. "Ugh. It was horrible. Thank God Daddy dearest straightened out his allegiances before I was asked to join the family business."

They walked through the forest, and Draco was feeling very torn. His Slytherin instincts of self-preservation that he'd had since birth were kicking in big time, and he wanted to either run or stick close to Harry for protection. At the same time, he was watching out for Harry, and he was quite sure that if anything tried to attack Harry he would unhesitatingly risk his life to protect him.

After a bit of walking the snake, who had made herself quite comfortable around Harry's neck, lifted her head to hiss in Harry's ear.

"*Is he scared?*" the little serpent asked.

Harry looked over at Draco's pale face and white knuckles gripped tightly around his wand.

"*A bit, I reckon,*" Harry said back almost affectionately. The snake looked puzzled - well, as puzzled as a snake can look.

"*Why is he scared? Nothing in the forest will hurt him. Most of the other creatures here only attack humans.*" Now Harry was the puzzled one.

"*But he is human,*" Harry replied, sure that the baby snake was mistaken.

"*No, he's not,*" replied the snake. "*He looks human, but I know what humans smell like, and there's something different about that one.*" Harry just shook his head.

"*He's a pureblood wizard. He's as human as they come,*" he tried to explain.

The snake made a movement that would have been a shrug if she'd had shoulders. "*Suit yourself.*"

"What are you two talking about?" Draco asked inquisitively.

Harry grinned. "You."

"Me?" said Draco, frowning his brow. "What are you saying about me?"

Harry leaned close to Draco's ear. "Isis says you're not human," he whispered, enjoying the look of outrage that crossed Draco's face.

"Not human? That's ridiculous! I know my family tree inside and out, and believe me, I am one hundred percent pureblooded human wizard, thank you very much!"

Harry smiled at Draco's mini-tantrum. "That's what I told her. But she says you don't smell like a human."

"*What???* Now see here, you stupid snake -

"*This is my stop*," the snake said, cutting Draco off, and when Harry looked he saw several other similarly colored snakes just off in the distance.

Harry gently set the snake down in the dirt. "*See you around*," he said.

"*Likewise. And thanks again*," she replied and slithered off. Harry turned back to Draco, drinking in the adorable, put-out expression on his face.

"Oh, don't let it bother you, Malfoy. She's just a baby snake. You probably just use more hair products than any other human on the planet and *that's* what she smelled."

"Hey!" said Draco, cuffing Harry upside the head for that remark, but he looked felt a little better. After all, Harry had to be right. The snake just didn't know what to make of Draco's cologne or other scents, because truthfully, Draco *did* use a lot of hair products.

Really, Draco Malfoy, not fully human? Ha. That'd be the day.

Author's Note: I probably should mention that snakes don't "smell" in the traditional sense, but instead use their tongues to carry particles of air, water, or whatever to the roof of their mouth to be analyzed, combining the senses of taste and smell at the same time. And that's what Isis was doing.

The Veela Enigma

Chapter 8: Love and Hate

It was dinner time in the Great Hall, and Harry Potter's outrageously cheerful mood did not go unnoticed by his friends. Indeed, Hermione was *very* aware of how happy Harry currently was, as she had a pretty good idea as to why that was.

"Alright, Harry, spill," she demanded. "What happened between you and Malfoy today?"

Harry looked at her indignantly. "Nothing happened, Hermione. We just spent a very nice day talking. And not fighting."

"Uh-huh," Hermione replied, unconvinced. She watched as Harry's eyes darted back to the Slytherin table. "So why do you keep staring at him like some kind of love-sick puppy?"

"Love-sick puppy?" Ron looked like he might be sick. "Harry, mate, you don't...*fancy* Malfoy, do you?"

"What? No. No! Of course not," Harry said huffily, cheeks the slightest bit pink. Hermione raised her eyebrows. She recognized that faint blush from Harry's days of crushing on Cho Chang.

"Well, he is very good-looking," Hermione said cautiously, watching Harry's reaction. "And when he's not being a total prick, he's actually sort of pleasant to be around."

Harry's face lit up. "He really is, isn't he?" His eyes flicked back to the Slytherin table, and this time they locked with Draco's. The blonde smiled at him, and Harry absolutely beamed back.

Hermione watched this all with narrowed eyes. It was as she had feared. Whatever had made Draco fall in love with Harry was affecting Harry now too. She had worried that if the stunning blonde started behaving nicely to Harry that Harry would be unable to fight off an attraction to him.

*Attraction...*there was something unnatural about the way everyone was attracted to Draco. Hermione just couldn't put her finger on it. She watched Harry watch Draco, and she sighed. They had to tell him. Harry had to know that Draco was under a love spell. It just wasn't fair to watch him slowly falling for the Slytherin, who was just going to turn around and break his heart. She loved Harry like a brother, and she wasn't going to stand by and let him get hurt.

The next morning Draco woke up, disoriented for a second, before he remembered he was in his new room. Professor Snape had showed Draco to his new quarters after dinner, and the blonde had been ecstatic. It wasn't anything fancy, just a bedroom with a large bed, an armchair, a desk and an adjoining bathroom, but it was all his. This was going to come in incredibly handy if he could ever get Harry in here alone.

Not to mention that Draco hadn't even realized how stressful his roommates had been until he got away from them. Since the start of term he had noticed that he was constantly being stared at. He didn't mind for the most part, but it got downright creepy when you were trying to go to sleep and four pairs of eyes were staring at you. He had actually gotten to the point where he was sealing his bed hangings every night for his own comfort...and maybe even safety.

He shuddered, remembering just two mornings ago. He had been a bit late getting up, but that hadn't stopped him from using his time in the shower to indulge in some serious Harry-fantasizing. He had just gotten to a really good, really X-rated part when Zabini had called his name.

"Malfoy, you coming to breakfast?" the dark-haired Slytherin had asked. Draco had poked his head out from behind the curtain.

"Yeah, just a second," he had called out, but Zabini had frozen at the sight of him.

"Draco, have I ever told you about my amazing stamina in bed?" he had said in a dreamy voice, eyes unfocused.

Draco had just raised an eyebrow. "Um...no, Blaise, and I don't particularly want to hear about it either. That het stuff gives me the creeps, you know that."

Blaise had continued as if he hadn't heard a word Draco said. "I have amazing sexual prowess, you know...I'd love to show you...I'm sure I could make it good for you..."

"Are you...*propositioning* me?" Draco had asked, incredulous.

Blaise had started walking towards the shower in a daze, and Draco had panicked.

"Zabini, get away! Blaise, what are you doing? Stay away from me, you pervert!"

And just like that, Blaise had stopped. He had blinked a couple times, and then looked very sheepishly at Draco.

"Sorry," he had muttered, before fleeing the room.

Draco shook his head, bringing his mind back to the present and stretching out in his new bed in his new private room. He grinned to himself. It was Sunday. No one was going to be interrupting him anytime soon. He could take a nice, long shower and think about all the Harry he wanted, totally uninterrupted.

Heh heh heh.

Hermione spent the morning and most of the afternoon in the library, frustrated as all get out. She had no leads on Draco's problem, and she had wanted to at least have some tentative ideas before they told Harry everything. She looked down at the list she had made of Draco's symptoms and sighed.

She knew she was missing something. There had to be a simple explanation for all of this. She might have been willing to believe that it wasn't magic, just an infatuation, but she had seen Draco with her own eyes yesterday, after Harry ordered him not to move. He had frozen in place, and he couldn't move again until Harry released him. He had to be under a spell.

She looked at her watch. It couldn't be put off any longer. Harry had to know, so she needed to talk to Draco. She knew Harry was at Quidditch practice right now, and she had a sneaking suspicion Draco would be there too. Harry in workout clothes, all sweaty and barking orders at people was a pretty damn sexy Harry, and Draco wouldn't want to miss that.

Come to think of it, neither did she.

Sure enough, Hermione found Draco hiding under the bleachers, holding a pair of Omniculars to his eyes and watching Harry raptly.

"Malfoy," she said by way of greeting.

"Granger," he returned, not lowering the Omniculars. She rolled her eyes.

"Spying on Harry from under the bleachers? That's quite pervy, really."

"Oh hush. How did you find me?"

"I knew you'd be watching Harry," she said, gazing at the sky and rather wishing she had her own pair of Omniculars. "Although I didn't predict you'd be in full-out peeping tom mode."

"Oh please, Granger. He's gorgeous. I wasn't about to miss a chance to watch him fly."

Hermione watched her best friend appreciatively for a moment. "He is incredible. I bet the body under those robes is to die for."

Suddenly, a wand was pressed to her throat.

"Say that again and you die," Draco snarled, glaring at her.

Hermione looked at him wide-eyed. Draco seemed to come to his senses, and he lowered his wand sheepishly.

"Uh...sorry," he mumbled. "Bad jealousy problem. It's probably the...um...love potion thing."

"You don't say," Hermione replied dryly, rubbing her throat. She looked at Draco seriously. "That's why I'm here, actually. We need to talk."

"So talk," responded Draco, watching Harry again.

Hermione sighed. "We have to tell Harry the truth."

"WHAT? Are you crazy?" Hermione now had Draco's full attention. "We can't tell Harry I'm in love with him because of some stupid spell."

"We have to!" Hermione said urgently. "He's falling for you!"

Draco got a big, goofy smile on his face. "He is? Really? What did he say about me?"

Hermione rolled her eyes. "This is not the time, Malfoy. Just trust me. I can tell. He's falling for you, and we *have* to tell him."

Draco didn't respond right away. The practice had ended and the Gryffindor team was making its way to the locker rooms. His eyes followed Harry's laughing form into the locker room. Hermione nudged him.

"Look, you love him, right?"

Draco nodded. Hermione continued. "So you don't want to see him get hurt again, right?"

"Of course I don't. That's the last thing I would ever want." He paused. "What do you mean, *again*?"

Hermione sighed. "I'm not sure I'm really the person to tell you this. But, well...Harry has a horrible fate of losing people he loves, and people who love him."

Draco's eyes were filled with worry and compassion. "He has? I know he lost his parents, but who else?"

Hermione didn't say anything for a moment, and then Draco's eyes widened in comprehension.

"Sirius Black," he breathed.

Hermione nodded.

Draco drew in a shaky breath. "Oh my God. Oh, poor Harry." Draco looked uncommonly upset. "I never knew they were close. Oh Merlin, he must be so sad."

"I think he is. He doesn't really like to talk about it, though."

Draco chewed on his bottom lip a moment.

"Look, Granger...let me love him," he finally said earnestly. "Let's not tell him. In fact, let's stop looking for a solution. Just let me love him and I promise I'll never stop."

Hermione smiled sadly at him. It was tempting. "I wish I could, Draco. But we need to know what makes you love him. Because if Harry falls in love with you and then the potion wears off or reverses or something, where does that leave Harry?"

Draco was silent for a few moments. Hermione looked at him compassionately.

"Trust me. He needs to know." Draco looked away. Frustrated, Hermione hardened her gaze. "Malfoy, I love him like a brother. I'm not going to see him hurt. If you don't tell him, then I will."

"If we tell him, then I'll lose him. He won't want me anymore," Draco said in such a sad voice that it made Hermione's heart clench.

"Malfoy," she said gently, but Draco just shook his head.

"No, you're right. I couldn't live with myself if I hurt him." He sighed. "So...when did you have in mind?"

Hermione swallowed down her guilt. This would hurt Draco now, but it would save Harry from being hurt worse in the long run. "How about now?" she suggested.

"Now?" Draco repeated, looking panicked.

"Well, after he's out of the locker room, of course," she clarified. A couple of Gryffindor Quidditch players were drifting out of the lockers room as they spoke. "Look, why don't you go in and find Harry, and then we'll head to the Room of Requirement. Sound good?"

"Me? I can't go in the Gryffindor locker room, I'm a Slytherin," Draco said, sounding scandalized. "You go."

"I'm a girl," Hermione said pointedly. "That's worse than a Slytherin."

"Oh right. I forgot about that."

Hermione muttered something under her breath that sounded suspiciously like *you and everyone else in this school*. A few more players left the locker room, and then Hermione nudged Draco.

"Go on, now's your chance. Harry's in there alone. Go tell him we want to talk to him."

Looking sad and reluctant, Draco walked over to the door to the locker room. Hermione leaned against the wall just outside. He looked back at her. She waved him on. He took a deep breath and walked in.

The locker room was rather quiet, and at first Draco thought they must have missed him somehow. He called out, "Hey Potter?" and heard his voice echo off the tile.

"Malfoy?" Harry's voice came from around a corner. Oh, so he was here. He had been taking a shower. Draco tried very hard not to think about Harry in the shower and relayed his message.

"Granger and I need to talk to you. It's kind of important."

"Okay, just a sec," Harry replied. He walked out from behind the wall, and Draco felt his mouth go dry.

Harry had obviously just finished showering and had been in the process of getting dressed. The only thing he was wearing was a pair of very baggy cargo pants, and his chest was still glistening slightly with a few drops of water. Every muscle on his torso was exposed for Draco's eyes, and the sight went straight into Draco's blood.

Harry was still rubbing at his damp hair with a towel as looked at Draco, puzzled.

"What did you need to talk about?" he asked.

All Draco could do was stare. He opened his mouth to say something, anything, but the only sound that came out was some harsh, labored breathing.

Harry looked a bit concerned now. He moved closer to Draco, who gulped.

"Draco? Are you alright?"

And that did it. Hearing his own name from the lips of this heavenly creature in front of him, spoken with such concern, caused something to snap inside Draco. He quickly walked forward, and ignoring every single reason why this might be a bad idea he grabbed Harry around the waist and kissed him.

Harry's eyes flew wide open and he dropped the towel in shock, but Draco didn't stop. He didn't think he *could* have stopped. Kissing Harry was the most intoxicating, blissful sensation he had ever experienced. Harry's lips felt so good beneath his own, and prickles of pleasure ran all over his hands everywhere they touched Harry's skin. Draco would have said it was heaven, the absolute pinnacle of nirvana -

And then Harry began to kiss him back.

And if Draco thought it felt good *before*...Harry was tentatively returning his kiss, opening his mouth the slightest bit against Draco's, and when Harry's tongue touched his bottom lip Draco could have sworn he saw stars. Harry lifted his hands, and a keening sound resonated deep in Draco's throat as those hands came to rest in his hair. Draco wasn't very experienced, but he seriously doubted that he would ever feel anything that felt as good as Harry's hands sliding through his hair.

He pressed against Harry, hands sliding on Harry's wet back, and Harry pulled him close as they continued to kiss. Draco's entire body was on fire, and judging from the way Harry appeared to be trying to devour Draco through his kisses, Harry felt the same way. Draco moaned softly. This was so good. This was bliss, this was heaven, this was -

"Harry? Malfoy? Are you in here?"

This was Hermione interrupting them.

Instantly, Harry and Draco flew apart, wiping their mouths guiltily. It was too late though. Hermione had seen them. She glared at Draco. He glared back.

"Granger, what the hell are you doing in here? This is a boy's locker room. And you're a girl."

"Oh, I see, so *now* you realize I'm a girl, when you want to snog my best friend," Hermione said sarcastically. Her eyes drifted to Harry. "It's funny, Harry, but I could have sworn you said you *didn't* fancy Malfoy. Do you generally kiss all the boys you don't fancy?"

Harry blushed, but didn't answer. Hermione's eyes raked over Harry's still shirtless form, and she raised her eyebrows appreciatively. Draco practically growled at her.

"Granger, stop looking at him like that! *No one* is allowed to stare at Harry but me, do you understand? How *dare* you check him out as if...as if..." his voice trailed off as he realized Harry was looking at him curiously. Draco gave him a weak smile. Hermione gave Draco an irritated look.

"Yes, yes," Hermione said impatiently. "You get wicked jealous if anyone even looks at Harry."

Harry looked confused. "You do?" he said to Draco, who shot an angry look at Hermione. "Why would you get jealous?"

"Oh...well...um..." said Draco, stalling for time.

Hermione rolled her eyes. "Oh honestly. We're not having this conversation here. Harry, Malfoy has something really important to tell you. Get dressed and meet us in the Room of Requirement, alright?"

And then she pulled a protesting Draco out of the locker room and up to the castle.

The Room of Requirement had made itself into what looked like a House-neutral common room for their discussion. There were a few chairs and couches, mostly around a big roaring fire. Hermione and Draco sat down on a couch, and while they waited for Harry Hermione asked Draco if there were any new developments in his condition.

Draco shook his head. "Other than having the best kiss of my life - and so rudely interrupted," he gave the unfazed Hermione a dirty look, "- nothing is different."

"Nothing? Are you sure? Anything, no matter how insignificant it seems, could be important."

Draco sighed and wracked his brain. "Well, people seem to say crazy things or want to jump me more than usual lately. Blaise Zabini actually came on to me in the shower. And yesterday that pipsqueak of a snake had the nerve to say I wasn't *human*."

"A snake said you weren't human?" Hermione said, very intrigued. She looked like this was possibly ringing major bells for her.

Draco was still insulted by the comments. "Yes. She said I didn't smell human. Bloody snake doesn't know what she's talking about," he finished grumpily.

Before Hermione could respond the door opened and Harry walked into the room and over to the pair.

"So..." he said, looking slightly uncomfortable. After all, he'd just been heatedly making out with Draco and caught red-handed by Hermione. He took a good look at Hermione and seemed to know this was important. He cleared his throat. "What did you guys want to talk to me about?"

Draco and Hermione exchanged looked, then Hermione took a deep breath.

"Alright Harry," she began hesitantly, "this is what's going on. Ever since the first day back to Hogwarts on the train, Draco's had...very strong feelings for you."

"But he's always had strong feelings for me. He's hated me for years and - " Harry's mouth formed an "oh" of understanding as he realized what kind of feelings Hermione had been talking about. He looked flabbergasted for a moment, then rather happy. "Really?" he said, obviously trying to hold in his excitement.

Hermione gave him a sad look. "Yes, really. But we think it's a love potion or spell," she finished, and all of the joy promptly left Harry's face. Draco felt his stomach twinge uncomfortably.

"Oh," said Harry desolately, unconsciously moving a little farther away from Draco and taking a seat in one of the armchairs. "Okay...go on..."

Hermione dutifully relayed all the reasons on her list - the jealousy, the sudden infatuation, the obeying of Harry's orders. Harry listened to it all without a word, staring down at the floor the entire time.

After Hermione finished, the silence grew uncomfortable. Finally, Draco broke it.

"So...what do you think about all that, Harry?" Draco said hesitatingly, standing up and walking a few steps towards Harry.

Harry looked up at him, and Draco winced at the raw pain visible on Harry's face.

"This is the worst thing you've ever done to me, Malfoy," he said emotionlessly. "You made me think you liked me - you fucking *snogged* me just now - and then..." Harry trailed off and buried his head in his hands.

"But I get it," he continued dully, not looking up. "Of course, there's no way you could be in love with *me*, right? It has to be a spell, because why else would you ever love Harry Potter?"

His voice was bitter. He sounded miserable, hurt and angry, and it wrenched into Draco like a knife.

"It's not like that, Harry, it's not! It's easy to love you, you're very lovable, millions of people love you," he babbled nervously, and then flinched. That was the wrong thing to say.

Harry looked up with narrowed eyes. "Millions of people? Millions of crazed fans who don't even know me, you mean. But *you*, Malfoy. I thought you knew me. I thought maybe you honestly knew me and that maybe you liked me."

He made a scoffing noise. "I should have known I was wrong. You don't like me; you can't even *bear* the thought of liking me. You have to justify it with a potion or spell."

Draco was beginning to feel as wretched as Harry looked. "That's not true! I want to believe that I love you, I do. But the orders, Harry! You can order me to do things and I can't help but do it! That's not normal, how do you explain that?"

"There are plenty of ways to explain it," Harry snapped, standing up. "It could be your own conscience! Or I could be doing that to you! I could be using Imperious or some other spell! But you're so quick to believe that the only reason you could love me is because of a spell that you didn't even think about that!"

"Harry, *no*," Draco said desperately. "I want to believe I really love you, I want to so much, please - "

"Just shut up, Malfoy. I told you, this is the worst thing you've ever done," Harry said in a cold, angry voice. "I'd rather you make more stupid badges and go running off to tell the papers more lies about me then fuck with my emotions like this. So just get out of my life and leave me the hell alone. I *hate* you."

Draco's mouth fell open, and he felt a hot burning begin in his eyes. He steeled himself against Harry's words, ordering himself not to cry, but the words started stabbing through his brain...*I hate you...get out of my life...I hate you...*

Hermione saw Draco's stricken face, and turned to Harry. "Harry," she snapped, "Don't be so horrible! Draco has been trying for days to convince me that he's really in love with you, and I'm the one pushing this love potion idea. He knew telling you would be hard and would hurt him, but he was willing to tell you because he didn't want to hurt *you*! Potion or no potion he loves you!"

Harry turned to her, an angry retort on his lips, but then Draco spoke.

"You hate me, Harry?" he asked, in a very small voice.

Harry turned around, and froze as he saw Draco's miserable face and his eyes shining with unshed tears. Uncomfortable guilt spread its way across his features.

"Draco..." Harry began, sounding ashamed, but the blonde shook his head.

"No, don't say anything, I'll go," Draco said, hands up in a defeated gesture as he backed up rapidly, blinking back tears.

Harry's guilty look deepened. "Please Draco, I'm sorry, I didn't mean -

"It's okay, Harry, don't apologize. It's not your fault. I didn't...I didn't mean to hurt you, I really didn't," the blonde said quickly, anguish washing through him. *I hate you, Malfoy...get the hell away from me...*

He had to get out of there. If Harry hated him then he couldn't bear to be around Harry for one second longer. He wasn't even sure he could bear to keep living. Turning quickly Draco made for the door. Harry grabbed his arm to stop him.

"Wait, Draco, don't go." Harry's grip was strong and he sounded desperate.

"Let me go, Harry," Draco snapped, angrily wiping at his eyes with his free hand. "I need to go."

Harry refused to let go. "No. Don't go. Stay, *please*. Where are you going anyway?"

"To offer myself to the Dark Lord," said Draco, completely serious.

Harry's mouth dropped open. "*What?* Are you mad? He'll kill you!"

"Don't you get it, Harry?" Draco said furiously, on the absolute brink of bursting into tears. "If you hate me then I'd rather be dead!"

Harry's shock at this statement loosened his grip and gave Draco the opportunity to wrench his arm out of Harry's grasp.

Draco practically ran to the door of the Room of Requirement, but before he could open it Harry did the last thing Draco would have ever expected him to do.

"Draco Malfoy, I *forbid* you to leave this room!"

Draco's hand, which had been on the doorknob, jerked back violently as if he'd been burned. He reached for the knob again, only to find he was unable to touch it. Some kind of force was stopping him. He couldn't open the door, and he couldn't leave the room.

Draco whirled around, his eyes blazing.

"What have you done to me, Potter?!?" he screamed, and as misery and despair overtook him he heard Harry's voice echoing in his head, those same cruel words playing over and over...*I hate you...get the hell out of my life...I hate you...I hate you...*

And Draco Malfoy, who hadn't cried since he was six years old, fell to his knees and buried his head in his hands as hot, burning tears streamed down his face.

"What have you done to me?" he whispered.

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The Veela Enigma

Chapter 9: Comfort

"What have you done to me?"

Draco's words, though whispered, seemed to echo deafeningly through the room, and Harry watched in horror as Draco fell to his knees and began to cry. At the sight of those tears streaming down Draco's face, guilt and shame and self-loathing tore through Harry painfully.

Without stopping to think he ran forward and dropped to his knees in front of Draco, reaching out for him. "Oh Draco, I'm so sorry, I didn't mean it. I'm so sorry, please don't cry, please..."

Harry tried to pull Draco into his arms, but Draco tore away.

"For God's sake, Potter, you've done enough. Just leave me alone," he tried to snarl menacingly, but his voice trembled and broke and only made Harry more determined to fix what he'd done.

"No. I'm not going anywhere," Harry said firmly, and he reached out and wrapped his arms around Draco's shaking torso.

Draco went rigid and tried to push him away, but Harry refused to let him. Holding the blonde tightly, Harry began whispering "I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm so sorry, I don't hate you Draco, I don't hate you," over and over.

Finally, Draco gave in and collapsed into Harry's embrace, burying his head in Harry's shoulder to hide his tears. Harry wrapped his arms even tighter around him and tried to comfort him, reassuring him every way he could think of that he hadn't meant what he said.

Hermione watched as Draco cried in Harry's arms, and decided it was probably time to leave them alone. She slowly and quietly walked over to the door of the Room of Requirement. She paused before leaving, and looked back at the two figures in the center of the room, on their knees and holding onto each other tightly. Draco's face was hidden in the space between Harry's neck and shoulder, and Harry had leaned his own head against Draco's.

Hermione couldn't help but notice the startling contrast between their hair. Harry's jet black locks resting against Draco's head made Draco's pale, white-gold hair seem even lighter and finer than usual. Hermione stared for a moment. It was so pale, like moonlight. A very unnatural, almost inhuman color. She hadn't seen hair like that in ages. In fact, she hadn't seen hair like that since...

Oh God.

Since Fourth Year.

The Tri-Wizard Tournament.

Fleur Delacour.

And faster than a bolt of lightning Hermione had left the Room of Requirement and was on her way to the library.

Harry could feel his shirt wet with Draco's tears, and he cursed himself and his stinging words for the hundredth time. No matter how awful he might have felt upon learning that Draco was probably under a spell, he still didn't have the right to speak so cruelly to someone who loved him.

Draco seemed to be calming slightly under Harry's quiet words and caressing, so Harry kept it up. He slowly ran his hands up and down Draco's back, trying to soothe away the last of his sobs. Draco still kept his head buried in Harry's shoulder, and neither said anything beyond Harry's soft murmurings for a long time.

Finally, Draco raised his face up to meet Harry's worried, guilty eyes. "Promise you won't tell anyone about this?" he sniffed, and Harry tightened his arms around the blonde.

"I promise I won't. I wouldn't. Not ever," he said quickly, looking at Draco's tear stained cheeks and watery eyes. Harry didn't think it was possible to feel more ashamed and guilty then he already did, but looking into Draco's wounded face somehow managed to make Harry feel even worse.

"Draco, I am so sorry. I didn't mean what I said at all," he said, reaching up to brush a stray lock of hair out of Draco's face.

"S'okay," said Draco with a shrug. "You were upset, and I had hurt you, and I'm really, really sorry I hurt you and - "

"No!" Harry said vehemently, pulling Draco tightly to him again. "You didn't hurt me." He paused and then decided to be truthful. "Well... I guess you did, but not because I hate you. That was a lie. It only hurt because I *like* you. Understand?"

Draco nodded miserably. "Yes. But I still feel horrible about it. I shouldn't have kissed you but you just looked so *good* and I just...I want you so much, Harry, and I can't fight it anymore..."

"It's not your fault," Harry said comfortingly. "You didn't do anything wrong. You knew that telling me might make me never talk to you again, but you told me anyway. You cared more about protecting me from getting hurt then whether or not you got hurt in the process. You shouldn't apologize. I..."

Harry trailed off and looked away. "I'd be so lucky to have someone really love me that much," he finally said softly.

Lowering his head back down on Harry's shoulder, Draco whispered in a choked voice, "I *do* love you that much."

Neither boy acknowledged their unspoken pain: how they both knew Draco's words couldn't be true and how much they both wished they were.

Harry continued to hold Draco until the blonde finally sighed and stood up.

"We should go," Draco said, wiping his face on his sleeves.

Harry slowly stood up next to him. "If you want," he said, not quite ready to leave Draco alone. "But...can I walk you back to your room?"

Draco sniffed. "Decided you want me to be your girlfriend after all?" he asked with a sardonic smile.

"You'd be the best girlfriend a guy could have," Harry replied lightly. "All that pretty hair."

That startled a real smile out of Draco.

"Wanker," he said affectionately, as they walked over to the door. "Try to control your jealousy."

Try to control your urge to run your fingers through it would have been a more accurate statement, but Harry resolutely refused to give in to temptation.

They reached the door, and Harry opened it and walked out. Draco went to follow, but froze in the doorway.

He pushed for a second, and then his shoulders slumped.

"I can't walk out the door," Draco said, and he looked as though he might burst into fresh tears. "Bloody bugging hell, I can't walk out the fucking *door*."

He tried to lean forward through the doorway, but it appeared as though an invisible wall were preventing him from leaving the room. His watery grey eyes met Harry's green ones.

"Harry," he whimpered piteously. "What's *wrong* with me?"

"Oh Draco," Harry said, feeling guilty all over again. How could he have possibly thought Draco wasn't under a love potion when the poor guy couldn't walk through a door against Harry's orders?

"Let me out, Harry," Draco pleaded. He was biting his lower lip in a way that tugged at Harry's heart. "Please?"

"Of course," Harry said hastily. He wasn't sure exactly what to do, so he took a wild guess. "Alright...um, Draco, I take it all back. I give you permission to leave the Room of Requirement."

And with no further problems, Draco walked through the doorway.

They made no sounds other than their foot falls as Draco led Harry to his new, private room behind the portrait of a fierce-looking dragon with translucent, shimmering scales.

Spotting the portrait, Harry opened his mouth.

"Yes, it's an Antipodean Opaleye, and no, don't make any dragon/Draco jokes, got it?" Draco snapped.

Harry bit back about twenty jokes he was thinking of and just nodded. Draco spoke the password *Dragon Fire*, and they went in.

Harry looked around the room very appreciatively. It wasn't fancy but it was elegant, with an enormous bed (even bigger than the traditional four-posters that everyone else had), a large desk under the window, a comfortable looking armchair near the bed and a couple of doors leading to what Harry rightly assumed were a closet and the bathroom. The whole thing was decorated in silver and green.

"This is really nice," he said admiringly.

"It is, isn't it?" Draco agreed, looking a bit cheered up. "I've only been in here for a day, but so far it's excellent."

Harry wanted to stay and see the bathroom and the view, but his stomach gave an uncomfortable rumble. With a jolt, he realized they had missed dinner. He turned to Draco, who had moved to look out the window.

"Are you hungry?"

"A bit," Draco admitted, as he stared out the window. Framed by the window against the darkening night sky, Draco looked absolutely ethereal, like an otherworldly being somehow trapped on earth. Harry wanted to stand behind him

and wrap his arms around that narrow waist, lower his head and rub his cheek against that soft hair, plant kisses on that exposed neck and trail them up until he reached Draco's ear and -

Harry tore himself away from such thoughts and shook his head to clear it. "Listen, I'm going to go to the kitchens and try to get us some food. Why don't you lie down until I get back?"

"I don't think I'm very tired," Draco replied, although the exhaustion written clearly on his face said otherwise.

Harry raised an eyebrow. "You *look* awfully tired, Malfoy. It'd make me feel better if you'd lie down."

Draco turned to give Harry a dirty look. "I *said* I wasn't tired, Potter. I'm not a sodding child. I see no reason to lie down, and I don't plan to."

"I could order you to," Harry said with a trace of amusement.

Draco gave him such a scathing glare that Harry was properly cowed.

"Or...not. Sorry," he winced, and Draco's glare faded away.

"It's okay." He sighed and moved across the room to sit down on the bed. "Actually, it *is* kind of funny. In a bleak *oh my God, what have I ever done to deserve* this kind of way."

Harry was tempted to make a comment about just how much Draco *had* done to deserve this, but before he could Draco gave him a wry kind of smile.

"I know exactly what you're thinking, and don't you dare say it. I don't care how big a brat I've been to you. I didn't deserve this."

He paused and looked at Harry seriously. "Well, at least it's you, you know?"

Harry sat down next to Draco on the bed. "What do you mean?"

"I mean, if I had to be in love with someone, and someone had to have this horrible power over me, at least it's you. I know I can trust you."

Harry gaped at him in dismay. "How can you say that? I just told you I hated you in a moment of petty anger. You can't trust me at all. I hurt you without even trying to, and I said such awful things and I made you *cry* and -

Draco stopped him by placing a finger against Harry's lips. "Hush, Potter. I know you didn't mean to, and I forgive you. And I trust you, I really, really do."

Harry just looked at him, and when their eyes met there was a spark so intense it should have been visible. Harry could have sworn that his heart was beating loud enough for Draco to hear it. The skin of Draco's finger, pressed lightly against his lips, was so unbelievably soft, and almost against his will his mouth opened slightly under Draco's touch, ready to slide Draco's finger gently into his mouth and -

Harry blinked and then stood up quickly. "So...I'll just be getting that food then, right?" he said, stumbling over the words. "Food....yes, we need food so um....well...I'll just be right back..." Harry blurted out, and awkwardly rushed out the door, Draco staring after him.

Pausing just outside the door to Draco's room, Harry leaned against the wall with his eyes closed. His heart was pounding in his chest and his breathing was erratic. He couldn't keep doing this. He had to get some semblance of

control around Draco. He knew, he just *knew*, that if he didn't get a grip he would find himself kissing those willing lips and all over that willing body.

Because Draco *would* be willing, and that's what made it wrong. Harry wouldn't take advantage of Draco's willingness, because it wasn't real. Not as long as the blonde was under a love spell. No matter how much Harry wanted to kiss him again, he wouldn't.

Now if Draco *initiated* anything, or if Draco wanted to snog and such to ease his feelings under the love potion, then Harry would happily oblige. But *only* if Draco started it; Harry would not take advantage of him, and Harry *would not* hurt him again.

Getting himself under control, Harry went down to the kitchens and was immediately weighed down by piles of food from the House Elves. He made sure to get a large number of desserts for Draco as well. Pausing in front of the portrait, he took a deep breath, steadied himself, and spoke the password to the dragon.

The painting swung open, and Harry stepped into Draco's room. The blonde was nowhere in sight, but from the light streaming under the bathroom door Harry surmised he was probably changing. Harry carefully set the food down on the night-table next to the bed and had just dropped into the arm chair when the bathroom door opened.

Draco emerged, dressed in silk drawstring pajama pants and a clingy t-shirt, and Harry's eyes became huge. He had never so much as seen Draco out of uniform before, and now seeing him like *this*...he looked positively edible, his pants riding low on his hips, revealing a sliver of pale skin and perfectly flat stomach beneath the t-shirt that clung to the lithe muscles on Draco's arms and torso.

The only thing that prevented Harry from pouncing on Draco right then and there was the little voice in his head that kept screaming *love potion, love potion, LOVE POTION DAMN IT* over and over in his head.

Draco appeared not to have noticed Harry's struggles not to jump him because he was too distracted by the sight of the food on the table.

"You brought éclairs!" he said happily, grabbing the plate of desserts off the table and jumping onto the bed with it.

"Gah," replied Harry.

Draco was gleefully digging in. "Mmmm," he sighed blissfully, picking up an éclair and biting into the pastry. "I love French desserts."

As he devoured it, the chocolate icing from the éclair melted slightly and the filling seeped out. After popping the last bite in his mouth Draco slowly proceeded to lick and suck every last trace of chocolate and cream off his fingers.

Harry had to close his eyes.

After dinner, which consisted of éclairs, éclairs, and more éclairs for Draco and chicken and potatoes and sexual frustration for Harry, Draco stretched out on his side on the bed. He propped his head up to look at Harry, looking a bit shy and upset again.

"What's wrong?" Harry immediately asked with concern.

Draco flushed slightly and looked down at his comforter. "It's just...I'm really sorry for kissing you this afternoon, Harry. I never would have, if I had known how much it would hurt you."

"What?" Harry asked, incredulous that Draco could feel the slightest bit bad about anything after everything Harry had said to him that evening.

He quickly moved from the armchair onto the bed next to Draco. "You have nothing to apologize for, okay?" he said earnestly. Draco looking so vulnerable made Harry struggle not to wrap his arms around him, but he resisted.

"You did nothing wrong," Harry promised. "In fact," here Harry blushed slightly, "it was the best kiss of my life, truthfully."

"Really?" Draco asked, looking up happily. Then his eyes narrowed. "And how many kisses are you comparing it to, Potter?"

Harry was a little taken aback by the blatant jealousy obvious in Draco's voice. "Um...just one, really. With Cho."

"Oh yeah. Cho Chang. That little tramp," Draco spat vindictively, and Harry objected.

"Malfoy, that's not very nice. She's hardly a tramp, you know."

"She is for kissing you when you should have been mine," Draco said harshly, and when Harry's eyebrows flew up Draco had the grace to look sheepish. "Um, sorry. It's the love potion, or whatever it is. Makes me kind of...jealous."

"And possessive," Harry added with a smile. "But it's okay. It's not your fault."

Draco looked down at the comforter again, tracing a pattern with one finger. He looked uncharacteristically young and defenseless. "Hey, Harry?"

"Yeah?"

"Are you really sure you don't hate me?"

Deeply touched by Draco's obvious insecurity, Harry was powerless to stop from inching closer. "Completely sure," he reassured Draco, folding his hands together in his lap to keep from reaching out and stroking Draco's hair. "Why? Are you worried again?"

"It's just..." Draco bit his lip, looking nervous. "When you left earlier to get food earlier I was afraid you'd never come back. That you'd decide you hated me after all. I kept hearing your voice in my head, and it was so *horrible*..."

"Oh Draco," Harry said, and this time he couldn't stop his hand from reaching out and touching Draco's hair. He began to slide his fingers through the silken strands, and Draco closed his eyes in bliss.

"I know it's stupid, and irrational, and just a side effect of the magic," Draco admitted, as he lay there with his eyes closed. "But...and this is horribly embarrassing...if you leave me I think I won't be able to sleep all night because I'll be crazy with worry."

Harry made a quick and very easy decision. "So I'll stay with you until you fall asleep," he replied decisively.

Draco opened his eyes. "You'd do that for me?" he asked in surprise.

"Of course." And with that Harry kicked off his shoes, rolled onto his back and opened his arms.

"Come here," he said softly, his desire to cuddle away Draco's insecurities finally overpowering his worries about the love potion. Draco gratefully moved into his arms. Harry pulled the covers out from underneath them and pulled the blankets up to their shoulders. Draco settled his head against Harry's shoulder, one arm draped possessively across the brunette's chest. Harry wrapped his arms around Draco tightly, burying his nose in Draco's soft blonde hair.

"Night, Draco," he said gently, feeling ridiculously happy and complete.

"Night," Draco mumbled sleepily, and very shortly the room was filled with the sounds of his even breathing.

A little while later, lying on Draco's bed, with Draco sleeping so peacefully on top of him, Harry marveled at the whole situation. He looked down at the blonde head pillowed on his chest, and felt an incredible wave of tenderness wash through him. He wanted to cover that soft, sleepy head with kisses.

Harry had never had anything like this before. He had never spent the night with someone, cuddled together in bed. Before Hogwarts he had never even had anyone willing to hug him - just eleven long and lonely years with the Dursleys.

And now he was here, and Harry knew Draco would be more than happy to let Harry hug and kiss him and to let him stay the night...but no. Draco had said he trusted Harry, and Harry would keep that trust. He would not take advantage of him.

And so when Harry could pretend no longer that there was a chance Draco was still awake, he quietly slipped out of bed. He cast a quick spell on the leftover food to banish it to the kitchens, left a note for Draco so he wouldn't be worried when he woke up alone, and softly exited the room and went back to Gryffindor tower.

The next morning, when Draco woke up alone, a panicky feeling immediately rose in his chest. Harry had left him, Harry would never come back, Harry hated him - and then he noticed the piece of paper on his nightstand and picked it up.

Draco -

I hope you slept well. Don't worry, I still don't hate you.

See you at breakfast,

Harry

And Draco smiled to himself, slipped the note into the drawer of the nightstand and got up to get ready for the day.

At breakfast, from which Hermione strangely seemed to be absent, Harry watched the Slytherin table like a hawk. When Draco finally appeared, Harry sent him huge smile. Draco smiled back, and Harry's expression became a little dreamy. Ron raised his eyebrows.

"Let me guess...my favorite ferret just walked in," he said dryly. Harry turned to glare at him.

"Don't call him a ferret, Ron," he said severely, and Ron just rolled his eyes.

"Oh *that's* right. I forgot. You've got a little *crush* on him."

"Ron, shut up!" Harry hissed under his breath. Draco had agreed they could fill Ron in on the love potion hypothesis but nothing else. Ron had immediately seen that while Draco's feelings may have been the result of a love potion Harry's most definitely were not, which meant that Ron had probably gained about three months worth of teasing material.

Luckily for Harry, at that moment owl post arrived and a large, official-looking owl swooped down over his plate and dropped off a letter.

Harry picked it up. The seal indicated it was from Gringotts Bank. Before he could open it another owl flew overheard and dropped yet another letter in front of Harry. This one had the official seal of the Ministry of Magic. Looking a bit apprehensive, he opened the letter.

Ron watched as Harry slowly read the letter from the Ministry, his face paling slightly. With shaking hands Harry then opened the second letter, staring at it blankly. Ron finally decided to ask.

"So...what's up?" he said cautiously, because Harry didn't look so good all of a sudden. Harry wordlessly handed him the Ministry letter.

Mr. Potter -

The Ministry of Magic has come into concrete evidence concerning the existence of Peter Pettigrew and his involvement in the death of your parents and the subsequent incarceration of Sirius Black. Due to this information, Mr. Black's name has been cleared and his assets have been released. It would appear that you are the sole benefactor of Mr. Black's will, and therefore will be inheriting all of Mr. Black's possession, in addition to the monetary compensation the Ministry will be paying for his wrongful incarceration.

Please see the correspondence from Gringotts Bank for a full list of your inheritance.

Sincerely,

Alfred Glocken

Head of the Department of Wizarding Wills

Ron looked at Harry with big eyes. Harry handed him the letter from Gringotts, and Ron scanned it. "Blimey, Harry. You're getting 12 Grimmauld Place, three vacation homes, a huge pile of money...this is incredible."

"Yeah," echoed Harry, his voice suddenly dry and scratchy and his eyes suddenly overly-bright. "Incredible. Listen, I've got to go, I need to get some homework before class, alright?"

"Alright, then. See you in Charms."

And Harry took the letters back and fled from the Great Hall, blinking back tears.

Draco had watched the whole interaction, and with the eye of someone in love he clearly saw Harry's misery written on his face. Naturally, as soon as Harry left the hall Draco tore after him.

Draco found him in an empty classroom on the fifth floor, sitting on the teacher's desk with his knees drawn up under his chin and his head buried in his arms.

"Harry?" he asked quietly, and Harry looked up. To Draco's surprise, his brilliant green eyes were shimmering with unshed tears.

"Lo, Draco," he said back, equally quietly, lowering his head back to his arms. Draco cautiously walked into the room, shutting the door behind him. He hopped up on the desk next to Harry's feet.

"What's wrong?" the blonde asked with concern, and without looking up Harry handed him the letters. Draco quickly scanned them, and felt his own heart ache for Harry. "Oh, Harry, I'm so sorry."

Harry looked up again. "He's finally free. But he's dead, and it's all my fault. I don't want his stuff, I want him back." He blinked, and one of the tears he had been fighting so hard escaped and fell down his cheek.

Draco's heart broke. Harry looked so lost. It suddenly hit home to Draco that Harry was an orphan. An *orphan*. He had no parents and no real family. The only person he'd ever had was now dead, and Harry blamed himself. How could he never have noticed how *alone* Harry was?

He reached out with his arms. "Come here," he whispered soothingly, pulling Harry to him. It was a repeat of the night before, but this time Draco was the one holding Harry in his arms.

"It's okay, it's okay," Draco said softly to Harry, who was struggling not to cry. "I know, you miss him."

Draco heard a choked noise and felt a hot wetness begin to burn against his neck. He ran his arms up and down Harry's back in response.

"Shh, love, its okay to miss him. It's okay to want him back. I know you think you're alone again now, but you're not Harry, you're *not*. You have me, and I promise you'll *always* have me."

The words seemed to spill from the depths of Draco's soul, but they only made Harry cry harder.

"No I *won't*," he whispered into Draco's neck. "You'll leave me too when this potion wears off, and then I'll be more alone than ever."

"Harry, no, don't say that," Draco whispered, anguished. He pulled Harry upright by his shoulders and looked seriously into his face. "I *love* you, I *do*, and I promise, and I *won't* leave you."

And as he spoke he began to cover Harry with kisses, starting at his forehead and working down his face, over his cheeks where tears were forming hot, salty paths. "I promise," he breathed, when he reached Harry's lips, and then in a heartbeat breached the distance to press his lips to Harry's.

Harry responded with the fervor of a drowning man. And he was drowning, drowning in guilt and sorrow and he clung to Draco desperately. And suddenly Harry was clutching Draco to him, devouring his mouth, drinking him in. His hands flew to Draco's robes, pulling them open, sliding under his clothes to trace his fingers over Draco's cool, smooth skin.

And Draco let him. He let Harry ravage his mouth, and yank at his clothes. He would have let Harry do anything he wanted if it made him feel better. He responded with gentle loving touches and held back his own passion, because in his own mind he knew that Harry was right, that his feelings couldn't be real, and that he might leave Harry alone again when this was all over.

And the thought of Harry alone again broke his heart, so he refused to take advantage of Harry when he was vulnerable. He would have been willing to let Harry take him right there on the desk, if that was what Harry wanted. But he would not lead Harry on only to abandon him in the end.

Harry's hands came up to rest in Draco's hair, and he tipped the blonde head back so he could kiss his neck. As Harry's lips brushed Draco's sensitive skin Draco shivered, and against his will made a small noise of pleasure.

Immediately, Harry froze and then pulled back, looking highly ashamed.

"Oh gods, Draco, I am so sorry."

Draco furrowed his brow. "What are you talking about, Potter?"

"I didn't mean to take advantage of you like this. I didn't mean to use you just because I'm upset, and you're willing because of the love potion, and I'm just so sorry and -

"Harry, stop," Draco said, unable to see Harry in such pain. "It's okay, I don't mind, it's really okay and -

"No," said Harry, shaking his head fervently and backing up a few inches on the desk. "I won't do it. I hurt you last night, and I won't ever hurt you again, not in any way, and that includes kissing you when you can't decide for yourself whether you want it or not. I won't."

Draco opened his mouth to say *trust me Harry, I really, really don't mind*, but at the resolute expression on Harry's face, he closed it. Instead he pulled Harry to him again, and they sat in silence on the desk.

It could have been five minutes later, or it could have been an hour later. Draco was never really sure. However, Harry finally pulled back from Draco, and Draco concernedly looked down into Harry's eyes, made overly bright by his tears.

"We should go. We both have class," Harry said, wiping the last traces of tears off his face.

Draco just nodded, reluctant to let Harry go anywhere. "You going to be okay?" he asked gently, and Harry gave him a smile with no humor.

"Of course," he said, and his tone of voice left both of them quite sure that he was going to be anything but okay.

"We don't have to go," Draco said softly, pushing a lock of Harry's hair away from his eyes.

"Yeah, we do," Harry said back, but he made no movement to leave. Another moment of silence passed between the two, and Draco opened his mouth.

"Look, Harry," he started to say, wanting desperately to somehow reassure Harry that everything would be okay, but at that moment the door flew open and Hermione burst into the room.

"*There* you guys are," she said with great relief. "I've been looking all over the castle for you."

The two boys looked at her. Her hair was thrown up into a messy knot on her head, her robes were in complete disarray, and she looked like she hadn't slept all night. She was carrying a huge stack of books and her eyes were sparkling with excitement.

"What's up, Hermione?" Harry asked, ducking his head slightly to hide the fact that he'd been crying. He didn't need to worry; Hermione was too elated to notice.

"I've found it. I've got it. I know the answer," she babbled, throwing her stack of books on the closest desk. Harry and Draco exchanged dubious glances.

"What on earth are you on about, Granger?" Draco asked, confused, and Hermione turned to him.

"I know why you're in love with Harry."

The Veela Enigma

Chapter 10: Family Trees

"I know why you're in love with Harry."

At Hermione's words, both Harry and Draco just gaped at her. Draco recovered first.

"You figured it out? Really?" he asked, disbelieving.

"Yes." Hermione began sorting through her stack of books. Draco and Harry exchanged looks.

"So...are you planning on *telling* us?" Harry finally asked, and Hermione grinned up at him.

"I don't know. How badly do you guys want to know?"

"Granger..." At Draco's tone of voice Hermione stopped teasing.

"Okay, well...there's no easy way to put this so I'm just going to come right out and say it, alright? Draco - you're part veela."

Draco's eyes widened in shock. "What? No, there must be some mistake. That's not possible."

"Well, I'm sorry, but there it is. You're part veela with active veela genes, and that explains everything that's been going on. The jealousy, the strange attraction everyone has to you, your good looks, the snake thinking you weren't human -

"But Granger," Draco interrupted, "I'm NOT veela. I'm not. I know my family tree inside and out, and there are no veelas in my family. It wouldn't be *allowed*. We're as pure-blooded as they come."

"That's where you're wrong, Malfoy. But I thought you'd say that, so I brought these books with me to prove it to you." And here Hermione passed Draco the books she'd grabbed out of her enormous stack.

Draco looked at the covers. "Two copies of *Wizarding Genealogy* - one for the Black Family and one for the Malfoy Family. Look, I've seen these books before. We have copies in our libraries." He held the books back out to Hermione. "There are no veela in here."

Hermione refused to take them back. "Oh yes there are. My guess is that you've seen the *edited*, pure-blood versions of your genealogy, with all the 'unsuitable' people removed."

"What are you talking about?" Draco said testily.

It was Harry who answered. "I've seen the Black family tree. It's on the wall of Sirius' old house. Sirius had been burnt off, as had your mother's sister Andromeda, and everyone else who had supposedly disgraced the Black name."

Hermione nodded. "That's right. And carrying on with a magical creature would definitely count as 'disgrace' in a pure-blooded wizard family; hence the removal of all traces of veela blood from your family tree. But the copies that you hold in your hand, Malfoy, are the *unedited* versions of your family tree. Go on. Take a look."

Draco opened the Black genealogy book with trepidation and scanned the pages, his face growing noticeably paler. There, written in a brilliant crimson ink, were names he had never seen or heard. Sirius Black was indeed related to him, as were a dozen other witches and wizards who did not appear in the versions he had seen in his own home.

"Oh Merlin," Draco whispered.

Hermione gave him a commiserating look. "Lots of relatives you didn't know you had, eh? And actually, Malfoy, surprise, surprise, you're even distantly related to the Weasleys."

"WHAT?"

"Oh yes. Look there. It won't be on your family tree at home of course, but your great-uncle Lucas married a Prewitt, and Molly Weasley's maiden name is Prewitt. So you and Ron are actually cousins of some sort."

Draco looked flabbergasted. He traced over the names in the genealogy book with his fingers, and then glanced up at Hermione.

"So where are the veela?" he asked, and Hermione went over to him and pointed to a name in the book:

"This woman, Giselle Alliot, is actually one-eighth veela. If you look at her roots on the family tree, you can see that her great-grandmother was a veela who married a wizard. This fact, of course, isn't in your family tree, because Giselle Alliot hid it very well when she married into the Black family. Actually, she was your -

"Great grandmother," Draco finished weakly, recognizing the name. "My great-grandmother was part veela."

"That doesn't make sense, though," Harry said thoughtfully. "That only makes a very, very tiny little fraction of Draco veela. Fleur Delacour was a full quarter veela, and she wasn't dealing with all the stuff Draco is."

"We don't know that," Hermione pointed out. "She certainly had boys falling at her feet. Remember Ron?"

Harry shrugged and conceded. "But still, it's so little veela blood. How can that explain why Draco's feeling the effects so hard?"

"And why my mother never had any of the signs," Draco interjected.

"I'm getting to that," Hermione said, in an irritated "don't interrupt the professor" type of voice. "The thing is, veela genes are recessive. The looks may come through but on the whole, veela characteristics will be dominated by wizard ones. If no one tells them, a part veela can have no idea that's what they are. Look at your mother, Malfoy. She's blonde in a family with lots of black hair, and that's most likely the veela genes showing through. Just the physical attributes, though, not the actual veela powers."

Hermione grabbed the Malfoy genealogy book off the desk, flipped to a page and then held it out to Draco. "But in your case, Malfoy, the recessive genes came through loud and clear, and I'll show you why. You see this?"

Draco was staring intently at the page. "These are my father grandparents. I knew of them, and they're *definitely* not - OH!" And here he noticed something that definitely didn't appear in *his* version of their family tree. "My great grandfather had an *affair* with a veela? My father's dad is actually half veela? My dad's a *quarter* veela??"

"Got it in one, Malfoy. And here's the kicker: that means you got veela genes from both sides of your family. And even though they're normally recessive, in you the veela genes are dominant. It's like a family where everyone has brown eyes, and then someone with blue eyes pops up out of no where. Recessive genes showing through. And *that's* why you're having all these changes and problems when your parents didn't. Their veela genes are dormant under their wizard genes. That's not the case with you."

Draco looked like he'd been hit by a freight train. Hermione tried to explain some more.

"Look, your parents probably really do have veela characteristics, just very, very weak ones. Especially your dad. People probably get a little moony-eyed around him, and that's helped him become so powerful. He just didn't realize it."

Draco shook his head. "Fleur Delacour was also a quarter veela, and like you said, guys were falling at her feet. My dad would have noticed that."

"The powers of attraction are nearly always higher in veela females, Malfoy. That's why you practically only hear about the women."

"Then why - "

"You're just special, I guess," Hermione answered, before Draco could even finish the question. "Quite possibly it's because of your sexual preference. The attraction that veela females give off is used to attract males and find a partner. You wanted to attract men too. That could be it."

Harry furrowed his brow. "Okay, so Draco here is part veela. I get that. That perfectly explains why everyone has been saying ridiculous things around him and throwing themselves at him. But how does that explain everything else? Why does that explain how he's in love with *me*?"

Hermione took a deep breath. "Well, because veela mate for life. They love the same person until they die. Because it's so important that they fall in love with someone they can spend the rest of their lives with, veela are guided by their instincts."

"And you're saying...that for Draco.../m that person?" Harry said, gaping.

Hermione nodded curtly.

"So I'm a veela..." Draco began slowly, "and that I have some kind of 'veela sense' that chose Harry and made me fall in love with him...because he'll make a really good partner for me for the rest of our *lives*?"

Hermione looked a little awkward. "Um...well...in a nutshell, yes."

Draco, amazingly, looked completely unperturbed. "Alright then," was all he said.

Harry stared at him. "That...doesn't bother you, Draco? That you'll only love me for the rest of your *life*?" Harry asked, amazed.

Draco shrugged. "Not a bit. Now I can stop worrying about falling out of love with you, because I won't. I get to keep you forever." His face suddenly became very worried. "Wait, why? Does it bother you?"

"No, no, it doesn't *bother* me," Harry said hastily at the look on Draco's face. "It's just...you know, a bit of a shock." Draco didn't look very reassured. Harry quickly turned to Hermione. "So, you're *sure* about this? I mean, there are still tons more unanswered questions."

"Like...?" Hermione asked.

"What about what the snake said?"

"That one's easy," Hermione replied. "With his heritage and the way the veela genes are dominant in him, Draco really *isn't* human. He's a veela. So of course he doesn't smell human."

Harry tried again. "The irrational jealousy?"

"Again, it's a completely natural veela thing. Veela, *especially* males, are extremely territorial and possessive, with very jealous natures. This is manifested the strongest when it comes to their mates. Draco's just protective of you so no one steals you from him."

"Alright, well, why can I order him around?"

Hermione smiled. "That is one of the most fascinating things about wizard-veela relationships, actually. Because veela tend to be...well...actually very volatile, unsafe creatures - no offense, Malfoy - it seems that there is a sort of control mechanism that appears when they mate with wizards instead of other veela. It's almost a safety measure to protect other wizards from the veela."

"I don't understand."

"I told you that veela mate for life, and that they will love the same person forever. Naturally they are very careful to protect that person, and likewise are very hostile to threats made against them. A veela in a rage is very powerful, and can easily cause serious damage or even death if provoked to defend their mate. When veela mate with wizards, the wizards are able to exercise a degree of control over the veela, which makes it possible for them to exist in more or less a safe manner in the wizarding world."

Now Harry looked thunderstruck. "So because Draco's potentially hazardous to other wizards, I can order him to do anything that strikes my fancy?"

"Nope."

"What?" Harry looked at Hermione in confusion. "But you just said -

"You have a degree of control over Draco's actions, yes," Hermione explained, "but you can't order Draco to do *anything* that strikes your fancy, Harry."

"What? Sure I can. It's just like the Imperious curse. I mean, look, he can't say *mudblood* anymore, and he couldn't leave the room yesterday, and -

"It's nothing like the Imperious curse. You only have some control over his body, Harry, not his mind. You can't order Draco to feel a certain way, or to hate someone, or to love someone else. You can control his vocal chords so he can't say the word *mudblood*, but you can't control his mind so he can't *think* the word *mudblood*. And your power over his body is limited. It works when you are highly emotionally charged, like in a life and death situation or when someone could get hurt, but if you just order Draco to do something without that kind of power behind it, it won't work."

Harry rubbed his temples. "This is so confusing," he admitted.

Hermione gave him a sympathetic look. "I know. And everything's just going to get crazier because in terms of your veela powers, Malfoy, you're just a baby. You've just hit puberty, so everything is just kicking in. That is why no one has gone all loopy with love around you before."

"So...this attraction thing is going to get stronger?" Draco queried, sounding hopeful and resigned at the same time. Hermione nodded her assent.

"Yes. Probably much stronger. But don't worry, you should be able to learn to control it. Right now I think you've been 'turning on the charm,' so to speak, around Harry or when you're thinking of Harry, completely unintentionally. You should be able to learn to harness the magic and direct it, or use it when you want to."

She smiled gently. "Actually, a lot really interesting stuff will probably be happening to you. Veela are terribly magical, you know. Combined with your wizard blood, things could get very exciting."

Draco had an odd look on his face. "I'm a veela," he said slowly, as if tasting the words on his tongue. "A veela." He looked down at the stack of books on the desk. "Granger, can I keep these for awhile?" he asked, in a quiet voice.

Hermione nodded. "That's why I brought them. I thought you might want to read them"

"I do...it's...it's just a lot to take in, you know." Draco looked a little shaky as he said this, and Harry looked at him with concern.

"Are you alright, Draco?" he asked, and Draco just nodded.

"Yeah. I just...I need to do some reading. I won't be in class today. See you guys later." And with that he grabbed the stack of books and left the room.

Hermione and Harry looked at each other.

"Why'd he just leave like that?" Harry asked, looking slightly hurt by Draco's abrupt departure.

Hermione shrugged. "I think it threw him for a loop. I mean here, all his life, he's believed that his blood is the purest of the pure when it comes to wizards. Now he just had that ripped out from under him, and he has to come to terms with the fact that he's not what he thought he was. It'll be tricky."

Harry nodded in comprehension. "I understand. I do wish he'd left a book or two for me to read, though. I'd kind of like to know what he's going through, especially since he's supposedly going to...love me for life, or whatever," Harry finished, blushing slightly.

Hermione winked at him. "I thought you might say that," she said offhandedly, reaching into her bag. "That's why I saved this book for you."

She held out a copy of *You Lucky Dog: a Guide for Wizards Chosen by Veela*. Harry accepted it eagerly.

"Thanks Hermione, I can't wait to read this."

"You're welcome."

They stood up and walked out of the classroom together to class.

Lunchtime rolled around, and Harry, Ron and Hermione sat together at the Gryffindor table under a rain-drop splattered grey sky that seemed to be growing slighter darker with every passing minute.

"Do you guys think it's going to storm?" Ron asked out.

"Definitely. It'll be pouring by nightfall," answered Hermione.

"No thanks, I've got food," said Harry, and Ron and Hermione exchanged exasperated looks as they noticed Harry's eyes glued to the door of the Great Hall. Ron reached out and thwapped Harry on the back of the head.

"OW! *Ron!* What'd you do that for?" Harry asked crossly, rubbing the back of his head.

"Stop watching the door and eat lunch, Harry," Hermione scolded. Harry sent a glare at his best friends, but picked up his fork and began to eat. He was very disappointed that Draco was nowhere to be seen.

As they ate (and as Harry continued to watch the door), he and Hermione made the most of their time, filling in Ron on all the details of Draco's newly discovered veela status. Harry paged through book, fascinated by everything he was reading.

"You should read the entire thing cover to cover, Harry," Hermione said, when she noticed that Harry was skimming the book. "There are lots of important details in that book that you should know."

"Like what?" Ron asked, almost as curious as Harry was.

"Well," began Hermione, "probably the most important thing you should know is that veela are...well, they're...' complicated," she finished tactfully.

"What do you mean?" Harry asked.

"Well...they're not exactly *evil*, like vampires and werewolves - "

"Professor Lupin's not *evil*," Ron said, looking offended on Remus's behalf.

Hermione rolled her eyes. "Well, of course he's not. When he's human he's wonderful. But for those few hours when he's in his wolf state, yes, he is evil."

Harry and Ron gave Hermione *looks*, but they didn't argue.

"Anyway, as I was saying, veela are not exactly evil, but they're not exactly *good*, either."

"What kinds of creatures qualify as good?" Harry asked.

"Oh, you know, things like unicorns and kneazles and centaurs are *good*. Veela are more complicated than that. They fall somewhere in the middle. They're...well, to be honest, they're kind of like dragons. Not necessarily *evil*, but certainly dangerous."

Harry looked offended. "Draco's not *dangerous*," he said defensively.

"I didn't say *Draco* was dangerous," Hermione replied carefully. "I said *veela* are dangerous, and they are. Remember the World Cup? When they transformed into those giant birds? It takes a lot of magical power to transform like that, Harry. I'm just saying that you need to be careful."

Ron looked thoughtful. "She's right, mate. And it's not like Malfoy's exactly *safe*, is it? I mean, he threw the Crutiatius curse at Ernie and Justin without a second thought. He used two wands simultaneously and a curse he'd never used before and got it right on his first try."

"He was just protecting me. You guys don't know what he's really like," Harry said, shaking his head. "Draco's not some kind of dangerous wild animal. He's sweet and beautiful and wonderful, and I'm lucky that he wants me." Harry stood up to leave the table.

Hermione and Ron exchanged looks, but said nothing. They followed Harry's lead, and stood up, and the three of them went off to their afternoon classes under the darkening sky of the Great Hall.

Dinner came and still no sign of Draco.

The storm that had threatened all day had finally broken, and the rain lashed down around the castle, drenching everything. The ceiling of the Great Hall showed the deep, dark clouds and the flashes of lightening that occasionally lit up the sky.

It perfectly reflected the way Harry's mood was going. Harry was beginning to get really concerned. He hadn't seen Draco all day, and he was worried. Harry barely ate anything as he kept his eyes glued to the doors, but the familiar shock of blonde hair never appeared.

Harry stayed at dinner until the last possible minute, but Draco never showed. Wanting to see the blonde with his own eyes, to make sure everything was okay, Harry walked over to Draco's room behind the dragon portrait and knocked.

There was no answer.

Harry knocked again, and still no answer. He softly called out, "Draco?" hoping the blonde would respond. He was met with only silence. Now feeling even more anxious, Harry said the password and snuck into Draco's room.

"Draco? Are you here?"

The room was empty, and Harry felt an icy uneasiness make its way into his chest. He noticed the stacks of books that Draco had borrowed piled on Draco's desk and on the arm chair next to the bed, several of them open to various pages and chapters.

Harry snuck over to the desk to look at some of the books. There was *The Great Big Book of Veela Facts*, and also a copy of *MY GOD I'M PART VEELA?? WHY DIDN'T ANYONE TELL ME??*, a book called *Advice on Living Life as a Veela* and another book titled *Alluring Siren or Dangerous Beast: The Great Veela Debate*. Harry bristled a bit on Draco's behalf at the title of the last book.

He was just leaving when he noticed a book laying open on Draco's bed. He walked over and picked it up, checking the title (*Welcome to Gorgeous-ville: A Guide for Teenage Part-Veela*) before skimming the open pages:

...As a veela, your mate means everything to you. Be prepared to find yourself more protective, possessive, and powerful then you've ever been in your life when it comes to your partner...

...To attract your partner is the main function of the famous "allure" of the veela. Even witches and wizards who can combat the Imperious curse can fall under the veela's spell if it is powerful enough....

The last lines on the page in particular jumped out at Harry:

...The idea of not being with your mate is unthinkable, and no veela will want to suffer the heartache that comes with rejection...should your mate reject you, a terrible depression will engulf you, and that misery and anguish will haunt you for the rest of your life. This is the price that veela pay for their powerful magical abilities, this strong dependence on another...do not let your mate reject you, or unhappiness and grief will haunt you until the end of your days...

Harry bit his lip as fresh guilt surged through his body. No wonder Draco had looked so terrible last week, when he and Harry had fought. And no wonder Draco had broken down sobbing when Harry had told him he hated him. Harry felt a moment of utter self-loathing for the pain he had inadvertently caused the blonde. Then, setting the book back down on the bed, he left the room, more determined than ever to find Draco.

Harry scoured the castle on his way up to Gryffindor tower. He checked the library, the Charms corridor, the Astronomy tower, and he even checked the Slytherin common room. Draco was nowhere to be found.

In a bit of a panic, Harry dashed up to his room to check his Marauders' Map. The storm was coming down in full force outside now, and the rain howled outside and beat against the windows of his tower as he dug through his trunk and pulled out his treasured possession. Scanning the parchment, he breathed a sigh of relief when he found Draco's name. Then he blinked. The blonde was outside, at the edge of the lake.

Was he crazy? It was absolutely pouring outside! Without stopping to grab his invisibility cloak, or indeed, even his regular cloak, Harry sprinted through the castle in his t-shirt and burst out through the doors of the castle into the storm, running for the lake.

From his warm and dry spot under his weather-proofed cloak, Draco threw another rock into the water. You couldn't even see the ripples it made because of how heavily the rain was coming down. He sighed.

It wasn't that being a veela was *bad*, per say. It was just...unexpected. Not only was he not actually a pure-blooded wizard, but he wasn't even human.

He sighed again. A cold, gnawing feeling had been worrying him ever since Granger's revelation this morning - what if Harry didn't want him anymore? He was, after all, an *animal* - just some magical creature, not even a real wizard. Oh sure, Harry was friends with that werewolf, but this was more than friends. This was for *life*. No way Harry would want some half-blood freak when he could have his pick of any witch or wizard in Britain.

A tight, angry feeling arose in Draco's chest at the thought of Harry with anyone other than him, a powerful surge of that now familiar, irrational jealousy. Draco groaned and buried his head in his hands. This was horrible. Harry would never want him. Not now that he knew the truth. Draco was doomed to a life of misery and loneliness, a wretched existence of pining for someone who would never want him back.

"Draco..."

Draco heard his name being called, and he instinctively looked up. The sight that met his eyes hit him hard in the stomach, and caused his heart to leap into his throat. Harry was running towards him in the pouring rain, t-shirt soaking wet and plastered to his skin, hair dripping and hanging in his eyes.

And he was calling Draco's name.

"Draco..." Harry panted, stopping a couple of feet from Draco. He put his hands on his knees and bent down, trying to catch his breath. "What...are...you...doing out here?" he managed to say.

Draco shrugged. "Thinking," was all he said back.

Harry glared at him as he took a few more deep breaths, and then straightened up and narrowed his eyes. "*Thinking*? I'd say you were *not* thinking, you idiot. It's absolutely freezing out here, you could get sick!"

Draco blinked. Did Harry just scold him for not taking care of himself? Did Harry still care? Draco opened his mouth to say something but Harry cut him off.

"I've been worried sick about you all day, you know," he said, his glare increasing as his worry morphed into anger. "I looked all over the bloody castle for you only to find you out here! In the freezing cold rain! ALONE! What are you doing?? Come inside where it's warm!"

A small, warm feeling began to grow inside Draco's chest as he saw Harry's upset expression and heard the worry and concern so plainly obvious through the anger in Harry's voice. Then he shook it off. Harry was a hero, that's what he was. He cared about everyone. It didn't mean he still wanted Draco.

Harry seemed to notice the despondent look on Draco's face and took a deep breath. "Look, Draco, I'm sorry, I didn't mean to yell. It's just...you were gone all day, and I was worried you might be hurt, or you might have worked yourself into a state over something, and I just...look, we really need to talk. Please come inside?"

He held out a dripping hand to Draco, who took it in surprise.

Harry pulled Draco to his feet and they stood together, hands still lightly clasped. After a moment Harry reached out with his free hand and brushed a lock of blonde hair out of Draco's face, miraculously dry under his weather-proof cloak. He let his hand linger against Draco's face for a moment, before suddenly yanking the Slytherin into a fierce hug.

"I was really worried about you when I couldn't find you," Harry confessed, pulling back to look at Draco's face. "Are you okay?"

Draco gulped. "No, Harry, I'm not," he admitted, simultaneously enjoying the feeling of Harry's arms around him while being desperately afraid this would be the last time he felt them.

Harry looked at him with the utmost concern. "What's wrong?" he asked, studying Draco's face intently. Draco flushed a little under the scrutiny, but steeled himself. He had to ask. He had to know.

"It's just...this whole veela thing is kind of hard to deal with, you know? I'm not really a wizard, I'm...something else," Draco began. Harry nodded, keeping his arms loosely around Draco's waist. "And...well..." Here Draco bit his lip and closed his eyes. He couldn't bear to watch. "Look, Harry, I understand if you want to leave me. It's okay. I won't be mad at you."

Harry went rigid with shock for a moment, before he crushed the blonde to him in a bear hug. After a moment, he pulled back and stared right into Draco's eyes.

"How can you say that?" he asked, angrily. "Why would I ever want to leave you?"

Draco met Harry's intense green gaze with his melancholy grey one. "Well, it's just...I couldn't blame you, you know, if you didn't want to be with some kind of an animal. With a freak like me."

Harry practically growled, and seized the blonde by the shoulders and glared at him. "You're barking mad, you know that?"

Draco opened his mouth to respond, but Harry ignored him and carried on. "Listen to me, Draco. I don't care that you're part veela. Hell, I like it. It's unique and special. It makes you even more fascinating and wonderful in my eyes. You are not a freak, and if you ever say that again I will smack you, I mean it. Do you understand?"

Draco looked into twin green pools through the raindrops streaming down the lenses of those famous glasses. Harry was utterly serious and honest. Draco's heart gave an enormous leap.

"You...you don't mind that I'm part veela?" he asked, hardly daring to hope it was true.

"You complete and utter moron," Harry said, tightening his arms around the blonde. He looked seriously into Draco's eyes, only inches from his own. "I like it, Draco. I like *you*. And I most definitely still want you. Exactly as you are."

And with that Harry kissed him with all the passion and longing he'd been storing up for days. With a cry of joy Draco responded, throwing his arms around Harry's neck and pulling him in as close to his body as he could, and the rain poured down upon them as they kissed by the side of the lake.

The Veela Enigma

Chapter 11: Closer to You

Harry and Draco finally broke apart from their kiss to stare into each other's eyes, foreheads pressed together.

"I can't believe you're really okay with this," Draco breathed, a smile playing on his face. Harry smiled back.

"Yeah, well, believe it. You know, I knew you were going to get all worked up about this."

"What do you mean?"

Harry put a reassuring hand on the back of Draco's head, on top of the hood of his cloak. "I just knew you'd be all worried and freaking out about something. That's why I was so determined to find you. I wanted you to know everything will be okay. Neither of us knows exactly what will happen, but we can at least find out together - ACHOO!"

Harry cut off his own sentence with an enormous sneeze, turning away from Draco.

Draco sized him up and the realization hit him hard. "Potter, where's your cloak?" he asked suspiciously.

Harry shrugged. "Didn't have time to grab it. Wanted to come and see - ACHOO!" he sneezed again.

Draco was furious. "We have to get inside, you stupid prat! What were you thinking, coming out here in the freezing rain without even a cloak? You're going to get sick!" Draco was glaring hard at Harry, who glared right back.

"You're the one who chose the great outdoors during a rainstorm to sit and have a think," he retorted, crossing his arms over his chest.

Draco gave him a pained and exasperated look. "Yes. However, veela are not as susceptible to the weather as humans. They live in forests, you know. I've got some natural protection from the elements."

"Did you learn that in one of your books?" Harry asked with interest.

"As a matter of fact, I did. I'm much better off in bad weather than you are, and much less likely to get sick. And on top of that, I had the common sense to wear my warmest cloak, which happens to be completely weatherproofed. I am warm and dry right now. *You* are soaked to the skin."

Harry shrugged. "I'm really fi - ACHOO!"

"Oh yes, just fine," Draco said sarcastically. "That's why you're sneezing so much. Because you're *fine*."

Draco looked closely at Harry. "And you're *shivering*, you idiot!" He reached out and seized Harry by the arm. "That's it. We're going inside." And he began walking towards the castle at top speed, dragging Harry along behind him.

Harry, now that he wasn't completely focused on Draco, had realized that he was, indeed, freezing. This included his feet, which were clad only in trainers that were now completely soaked through. As a result he couldn't keep up with Draco, and kept tripping as the blonde hauled him along.

"Draco, slow down," he panted, as Draco mercilessly yanked him along the footpath up to the castle. The Slytherin ignored him.

"Draco! Oh come on! Slow *down* just a bit."

Draco ignored those pleas as well, intent on getting Harry warm and dry as fast as possible. Harry's clumsy, frozen feet hit a particularly large rock, and he stumbled violently. Draco held him securely, kept him from falling, and still didn't slacken his pace.

Harry glared at him. "Draco, stop," he tried ordering. Draco pressed on. "Draco, I said STOP," he tried again. No luck. Steeling himself, he tried one last time in his most authoritative voice.

"Draco, I *order* you to STOP."

And stop Draco did. He dropped Harry's arm and turned to face the Gryffindor, crossing his arms over his chest. For a moment Harry felt a slight victory. Then he took a good look at Draco's face and gulped.

"Harry," the blonde began, in an eerie sort of voice, "did you just try to order me to do something?"

"Um...no?" Harry said, smiling in what he hoped was a charming manner.

Draco narrowed his eyes. "So when you said *Draco, I order you to stop*, you weren't *actually* trying to order me to do something? Is that what you're saying?"

"Um...yes?" Harry said, faltering a little as he realized his smile wasn't charming Draco the way he had hoped.

"I see," was all Draco said back, glaring full force at Harry, who smiled weakly back. The silence between them grew for a moment, and finally Harry couldn't help but ask.

"So...did it work?" he blurted out, and Draco gave him an icy smile.

"No," he said shortly. "It didn't."

And with that he grabbed Harry's arm again and set off towards the castle, walking even faster than before. This time, Harry knew better than to even grumble.

Draco dragged Harry up to the castle, through the Entrance Hall and down several corridors, finally coming to a stop in front of the dragon portrait that guarded his room. Spitting out the password, he practically threw Harry inside and shut the door behind them.

"Go stand by the bed," he said, in a tone that brooked no arguments. Harry shot him a dirty look, but did as he was told. He moved over and stood next to Draco's bed, now shivering violently. Draco's room was still fairly close to the Slytherin dungeons, and it was a bit cold and drafty. He clenched his arms tightly around his chest, trying desperately to stop the quaking movements of his body before Draco noticed.

Draco had wandered over to his closet, throwing open the doors and grabbing a pair of pajamas. He turned around, and his eyes fell on the shaking Gryffindor, who still had water dripping off his hair and body.

"Oh, Harry," Draco said worriedly, grabbing a large fluffy towel from his linen stack. He quickly crossed the distance to the bed, dropped the pajamas on the chair and reached out with the towel, wrapping it around Harry.

"We need to get you out of those wet clothes, and fast," he said with obvious distress. Harry just nodded. Speaking was a bit out of the question, thanks to the chattering of his teeth. He unwrapped his arms from his torso, and with shaking hands reached for the hem of his t-shirt.

"Let me do it," Draco said impatiently, unwilling to wait for Harry's slow movements. He grabbed the bottom of Harry's wet t-shirt and pulled the sodden garment quickly over Harry's head, catching Harry's glasses and knocking them askew.

"Sorry about that," Draco muttered, reaching up to straighten Harry's glasses. He gently straightened the lenses on the Gryffindor's face, and then tenderly ran his fingers down Harry's cheek. "I can't believe you, Potter," he said, with a hint of affection in his voice.

"W-w-what?" Harry managed to say through chattering teeth. Draco grabbed the towel and rubbed Harry's hair with it before draping it over the Gryffindor's shoulders and pulling it tightly closed in the front.

"I can't believe you came after me like that, without even thinking of your own comfort or safety." Draco's tone was half scolding, half loving. "Next time, at least grab your cloak, alright?"

"Yeah, well, next t-time c-c-come and t-t-talk to me first," Harry replied defiantly. "Instead of getting all p-p-paranoid and running off."

"Point taken," Draco conceded, rubbing his arms up and down Harry's over the towel, roughly drying his body. His mind drifted for a moment as he felt the hard muscles of Harry's arms under his hands, sleek and firm to the touch. Suddenly, Draco began to feel a bit warm. Unbidden, his eyes strayed down to Harry's naked torso, covered only partially by the towel. Smooth, soft skin, still glistening slightly from the rain. Defined chest muscles and perfectly flat abs. Unable to stop himself, Draco's hands drifted from Harry's arms to Harry's chest, tracing a line from his collarbone to his belly button.

Draco's touch left a fiery trail on Harry's skin. Harry's eyes fluttered closed as the blonde's questing fingers traveled lightly over Harry's chest and stomach. Draco's hands continued their journey, and when they traced across the skin just above the soaking wet waistband of his jeans, Harry made a quiet sound as his breath hitched noticeably.

It was a small noise, certainly, but it pierced into Draco's heart like a dagger, sending blood streaming through his veins. His veela instincts took over, and forgetting that Harry was shivering and freezing, forgetting that they had really only shared a couple kisses to date, Draco suddenly shoved Harry backwards towards the bed with real force.

Harry landed on his back on the bed with an 'oomph' of surprise, Draco falling on top of him. Before he could blink the blonde's mouth was latched to his, kissing with a passion that sent Harry's mind reeling. Draco's tongue snaked out and traced Harry's lips, and then he bit Harry's lower lip, and none too gently either. Harry gasped and opened his mouth, and then Draco's tongue was deep inside, probing, tasting, claiming.

Draco hands were no less active. They snaked over every inch of Harry's torso not covered by his own body. They ran through Harry's sopping wet hair, twisting the black strands between his fingers. They felt and explored every inch of bare skin, slowly making an unmistakable journey lower.

Harry's mind seemed to have taken a permanent vacation as he submitted to every touch, every kiss, every caress that Draco was leaving on his skin. Excited sparks were shooting through his body at each and every point of contact with the blonde. Harry was faintly aware that he wasn't in control of the situation at all, and that his mind wasn't functioning properly, but none of that was important. The only thing that was important was Draco.

Until Draco brushed a rough and insistent hand over Harry's crotch.

Harry's eyes flew open, startled at the action. Suddenly, his brain came back on line. "Draco," he managed to say, whether out of lust or fear, he wasn't sure.

Somehow, Harry's voice penetrated through the thick haze in Draco's brain, and Draco stopped. Harry looked up at him, only to see Draco staring at him with an intense hunger that looked barely contained.

They stared into each other's eyes for a moment, and Harry realized with a jolt that Draco was licking his lips.

And then the blonde sank his mouth onto Harry's again, kissing him even more hungrily than before, the kisses almost bruising. Insistent hands traveled back over Harry's body, and this time Draco plunged his hand straight into Harry's loose-fitting jeans.

And suddenly Harry's mind was flung back to that horrible night in the corridor, when Justin Finch-Fletchley had shoved him up against the wall and tried to assault him. Without meaning to Harry cried out in fear against Draco's mouth.

The blonde stopped and pulled back, panting heavily. Harry looked up at him, his eyes wide and fearful.

"I'm sorry, Draco," he managed to whisper, biting his lip. "I can't. I'm sorry."

Draco froze. His veela senses were on overload, and were crying out for release. There was nothing he wanted more in the world than Harry, right there, right at that moment.

As he watched Harry squirm slightly underneath him, on some level he wondered if he turned on his veela charms strong enough if Harry would still be able to resist.

But he couldn't do that. He stayed perfectly still for a moment, his dual nature fighting itself. Breathing harshly, he looked in Harry's nervous green eyes. Beneath the anxiety and the fear, there was trust. Harry trusted him not to take advantage of him, and damn it, Draco had to let him go.

He quickly stood up, grabbed the pajamas off the chair and threw them at Harry.

"Go into the bathroom and put those on," he said, in a voice low and rough with desire.

Harry tried to protest. "But -

"Now, Potter. Or you're going to find yourself alone with a very horny veela and in way over your head." He grabbed Harry's hand and yanked him to his feet, then pushed him into the bathroom, slamming the door behind Harry.

"And lock the door!" Draco commanded as he leaned back against the bathroom door, heart pounding and breath coming in quick, heavy pants.

Inside the bathroom, Harry was slowly stripping off his wet clothes. He was more than a little shaken. Of all the reactions he had expected to have if he and Draco took their relationship beyond snogging, this wasn't one of them. He had never expected to be *scared*. That wasn't Gryffindor territory. And what sixteen year-old boy was scared of *sex*?

Harry felt ridiculous. Here he had this incredible, gorgeous veela who was gagging for him outside, and instead he was in the bathroom, shaking slightly, and locking the door to keep him out.

Harry took a deep, steadying breath. He could beat this. He would. He wouldn't allow the demons of the past to ruin his relationship with Draco. And besides, Draco already knew about the Hufflepuffs. He would understand that Harry wanted to take it slow, because of his near sexual assault at the hands of two trusted classmates last week.

Everything would be okay, because he knew he could trust Draco. The veela would never push him beyond what he was comfortable with. Making their mate unhappy went against every fiber of a veela's being. And Harry always had that last bit of absolute power, right? If he got really scared and yelled "STOP!" Draco would be forced to stop. Harry had nothing to worry about.

Outside his bathroom door, the veela and the wizard inside Draco were engaged in a gruesome battle, and the veela was winning. The veela wanted to storm the bathroom and have his wicked way with Harry right there on the bathroom floor. As Draco leaned against the door, he heard the sound of wet clothes being dropped on the floor, and a small moan escaped his lips. Against his will his hand reached out and grabbed the knob of the bathroom door, attempting to open it and join his naked mate.

It was locked.

Draco let out a cry of frustration and banged his head backwards against the door. At this point, the wizard in Draco made an appearance.

Get out of there. Right now. You saw the look on Harry's face. He isn't ready. Leave him alone and come back when you're calmer.

Draco took a deep breath. He didn't want to go, but it was the only way. He tentatively knocked on the door.

"Harry?" he called out.

There was a pause.

"Yeah?" said Harry, a myriad of emotions that Draco couldn't quite decipher expressed in the one word.

"I'll be right back, okay? I'm going down to the kitchens. When you get out, get in my bed under the covers, alright?"

"Alright," Harry called through the door. And then, in a slightly softer voice, he added, "thanks."

"Don't thank me," Draco muttered under his breath as he left the room. "You're not safe yet."

Luckily, the walk to the kitchens completely cleared Draco's head, and then the brief conversation with the house elves most definitely removed the thought of sex from his mind. Getting a tray of hot chocolate and cream cakes, he made his way back to his room.

He spoke the password and slipped inside. He looked over at the bed, and was happy to see that Harry was buried under the covers, so much so that not even his messy black hair was visible. Draco walked over and set the tray down on the nightstand, his fond smile turning into a frown when he noticed Harry's body was still shaking slightly.

"Harry?" he asked with concern.

"Yeah?" Harry replied, still a lump under the covers, not even bothering to poke his head out.

"I brought hot chocolate. You should drink it; it'll help warm you up."

The lump shifted, and then the top of Harry's head finally made an appearance, followed by his bright green eyes. "Hot chocolate? Really?" He held out a hand. Draco handed him a mug, and Harry sat up a bit in bed to drink.

He took a sip. "So good," he said, leaning back against pillows, eyes closed in ecstasy. There was something magical about the hot chocolate at Hogwarts; it always warmed you up a good deal more than it should have. Draco watched him drink dotingly, sipping on his own hot chocolate.

"Feeling better?" he finally asked, and Harry gave him a smile.

"Loads," he replied, handing the now empty mug back to Draco, who set it on the night table. He smiled as Draco started in on a cream cake. "So, is your perpetual sweet tooth actually a veela thing too?"

"Erm, yes," Draco managed to say through a mouthful of cake. "Sugar's one thing that feeds the attraction I can give off."

"Sugar's just one thing? What else is there?"

Draco smirked a bit. "You, of course."

"Oh," said Harry, his cheeks flushing slightly. He was silent for a moment, and then said, "You just did that veela thing to me, didn't you? Right before you made me hide in the bathroom?"

Draco felt vaguely guilty. "Um, well...yes, I guess I did. Just for a minute. But I didn't mean to, I don't really have it under control yet. I tried to practice a bit today but I'm still learning and -

"Draco, it's okay. I know you're new to all this. And it's not like it feels *bad*. Actually, it uh...it feels pretty good," Harry admitted shyly. "It's just...the attraction can take over people's minds and stuff."

"I know," said Draco, sheepishly. "I'll try to keep it in check, I swear. You're just so freaking hot I can't help myself."

Harry's face flushed a lot more than slightly at that, and Draco had to smile. Here, in Draco's bed under Draco's covers and in Draco's pajamas, Harry was utterly adorable. Draco's heart gave a leap as he realized that this adorable creature had chosen to be with him, veela or no.

"So..." trailed Harry, clearly dying for a subject change, "we've got a lot to talk about, don't we? I mean, I'd like to hear about everything you read today. Why don't you change and get in bed with me?"

Draco eyebrows shot up at light speed. "Wait...you want to spend the night with me?"

"Is that bad?" Harry asked, worriedly. "It was so nice last night being with you, and now that I don't have to worry that I'm taking advantage of you it'd be nice to just..." he trailed off when he realized Draco was staring at him.

"What?" he asked self-consciously.

"Aren't you worried that I might take advantage of *you*?" Draco asked pointedly. "I mean, I was ready to jump your bones twenty minutes ago. What makes you think I won't do it if I get in bed with you?"

Harry shrugged. "You seem to do okay as long as I'm dressed, so I'll just be sure to keep my clothes on."

At Draco's skeptical look, Harry made an impatient noise. "Draco, look, I *trust* you, okay? So please? I'm till kind of cold, you know."

Well, Draco could hardly refuse that, could he?

Finally, the Slytherin and the Gryffindor were buried together under Draco's warm blankets and soft sheets. Draco gave a wave of his wand and said, "*Nox*," and the lights went out. Tucked snugly under the comforter, listening to the rain lash against the window and the wind howl outside, Harry felt very cozy indeed. Now, if he could just get a little closer to Draco...

He inched his body ever so slightly in the blonde's direction. Draco had apparently had the same idea, because in short order Harry found his side pressed up against Draco's side as they both lay on their backs. Harry reached down and found Draco's hand, lightly entwining his slightly calloused fingers with Draco's silky soft ones.

"So, what did you learn today?" Harry finally asked, feeling extremely content and thoroughly warm for the first time all evening next to Draco's warm body.

"Oh, loads of stuff," Draco replied enigmatically. Harry rolled his eyes in the dark.

"Like what?" he prodded, poking Draco with his free hand.

"Oh, like how I'm always going to be ridiculously jealous and possessive about you, and if you ever don't want me I'll get insanely depressed, and there's a chance I might kill someone if I'm trying to protect you so I'm probably bloody dangerous."

Harry was quiet for a moment. "Well, um...what did you learn that was good?" he finally asked.

Draco smiled in the darkness. "Well, I'll always be gorgeous, that's something good."

Harry snorted.

"Quiet, Potter, you know it's true. Let's see...I'll also be able to somewhat control people with my powers of attraction, and I'll get stronger and more agile. But the best thing of all is that I should have much stronger magical power."

"Really?" said Harry, with interest. "Well, Fleur was the Beauxbatons champion; she had to be really strong magically. So you will be too."

Harry paused. "I have to ask. If you get pissed off are you going to change into a giant bird?" Harry asked. He'd been wondering about it all day.

In the darkness Harry could feel Draco shrug. "Don't know. Some part-veela do, some don't. Only time will tell."

While Harry contemplated this, he could feel Draco start to fidget awkwardly.

"Look, Harry, about earlier..." the blonde began quietly. "I just wanted to tell you I'm sorry. I didn't mean make you uncomfortable."

"Oh, no, Draco, it's not your fault. Not at all," Harry hastened to reassure him. Draco didn't look convinced.

"No, it was my fault, I pushed you too far and I scared you, and I feel really terrible about it and - "

"Draco," said Harry firmly. "It wasn't your fault. I wasn't scared of you."

Draco was silent for a moment. "Then why did you cry out like you were afraid?"

Despite the fact that Harry was extremely embarrassed with the whole situation, he felt that Draco deserved the truth. "I just...it reminded me of the incident last week. With Justin and Ernie," he said in a very quiet voice.

Next to him, Draco froze. "I'm going to kill them," the blonde bit out in a voice as cold as ice. Harry quickly turned on his side to face Draco.

"No, you're not," he said gravely. "They were under the Imperious curse and it wasn't their fault. And they didn't actually succeed with rape, you know, they just roughed me up a bit. I'll get over it."

Draco sat bolt upright. "Just roughed you up a bit?" he said, in an angry, incredulous voice. "Potter, they had you pinned and your pants undone. They would have succeeded if Granger and I hadn't shown up. How can you be so relaxed about this?"

Harry shrugged. "I'm Harry Potter. These kinds of things happen to me and I have to learn to deal with it. And besides, obviously I'm not so relaxed about this because I got freaked out earlier with you, right? But like I said, nothing really happened. I'm just being stupid, and I'll get over it."

Draco was fuming. "Potter, I can't believe you. Of course you're going to be freaked out about sex for a bit, it's completely natural. You are *not* being stupid, and if you ever call yourself stupid over this incident again I'll make you very, very sorry."

"Threatening me now, are we?" Harry said in a teasing voice, trying to lighten the mood. "Isn't that against your veela code or something?"

At Harry's light tone of voice and teasing words, Draco relaxed a little and slid back under the covers with Harry.

"Probably," he admitted. "But it's not against any wizard codes, and I'm only part veela, you know."

Harry smiled. "I know. Your better part."

"Ha ha," said Draco sarcastically. He reached out, and Harry closed his eyes as Draco's hand began to lightly trace his cheek.

"Harry, why are you okay with all of this?" the blonde asked suddenly, startling Harry.

"Okay with all what?"

"All the veela stuff. I mean, you're not a veela, so you've got no reason to like me back. And I've been *horrible* to you for years. How can you just put everything aside and want to be with me so quickly?"

There was a moment of quiet.

"Not that I'm complaining," Draco added hastily.

Harry was staring into the darkness, pondering Draco's question. "I don't exactly know," he finally admitted. "It's just...well...this is a magical bind between us. It means you'll always love me and need me, and that's something a lot of people can't say they'll ever have. I'd be a fool not to see that."

Harry swallowed, thinking of eleven years spent unwanted in a cupboard. "Believe me, Draco, I'm the last person who would ever throw away a chance to love and be loved."

Harry flinched as he thought about how needy and pathetic he sounded. He hoped Draco wouldn't notice, but he seemed upset by Harry's words.

"What do you mean?" the blonde asked worriedly.

"Nothing," said Harry, brushing it off. Under no circumstances was he going to tell Draco what his life was like with the Dursleys. "I'm just being melodramatic."

Draco was about to argue, but with the cunningness of a Slytherin Harry quickly changed the subject.

"You know, it's a shame that it didn't work earlier when I tried to order you to stop on the way to the castle. I'm going to have to work on that."

As Harry knew he would, Draco immediately forgot what they were talking about and bristled at Harry's words. "You'll do no such thing, Potter. I don't want you able to order me about at will."

"Ah, but I want to be able to. Think about how much *fun* that could be."

"For you, maybe," Draco grumbled.

"Oh please. You've got those blasted veela powers that you can use on me to get me to fulfill your every whim. It's only fair."

"I thought my veela charms didn't work on you," Draco said, sounding quite intrigued by this new information.

"Oh, um, that's right, they don't work, not at all," Harry said, blurting the words out suspiciously fast.

Draco smirked triumphantly and rolled on his side to face Harry. "You're such a bad liar," he said, affectionately. "So they work?"

"Maybe a little," Harry admitted grudgingly. Draco made a soft noise of triumph. "Oh, don't be so smug. I'm going to figure out how to order you around whenever I want, and then we'll see whose laughing."

"Right, Potter." Draco obviously didn't think much of his chances. "You do that."

"Stupid veela," Harry muttered under his breath, flopping back on his back.

Draco laughed. "But I'm *your* stupid veela," he said sweetly, moving over as close to Harry as he could get and laying his head down on Harry's chest.

And even if he had actually been angry Harry was pretty sure he would have melted the moment Draco's head was pillowed so trustingly on top of him. He put one arm around Draco's back and with the other reached up to play with Draco's hair.

"That you are," he said softly, sliding the silky strands through his fingers.

"Mmmm," said Draco, sounding a bit punch-drunk. He nuzzled even closer to Harry. "I love it when you do that. It feels sooo good."

"Really?" Harry asked. He unconsciously tightened his arm around Draco's back, overwhelmed for a moment by the beautiful creature sprawled over him.

"Mmmm," was all Draco said back. His breathing was becoming very slow and regular, and his weight on top of Harry's chest was very comforting.

Harry touched his cheek to Draco's soft hair and hugged him tight, distantly aware that he was treating Draco like a large teddy and that Draco seemed to really like it. After a few minutes, Harry kissed him on the top of his head.

"Night, Draco," he said sleepily. There was no answer. Draco was fast asleep. Harry leaned his black head against the blonde's and almost instantly joined him in slumber.

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The Veela Enigma

Chapter 12: Surprise, Lucius!

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The next morning, Harry woke up to the sound of Draco swearing.

"Oh, bollocks," the blonde was saying in an annoyed voice, glaring at the alarm clock on the night stand. Harry sat up a bit in bed, yawning.

"What's wrong?" he asked sleepily, watching a fuzzy, out-of-focus Draco through half opened eyes.

"We're *late*, that's what's wrong," Draco said irritably, looking at the clock. Harry squinted past Draco, but couldn't make out what the clock said.

"We're late? What time is it?" Harry asked, not feeling particularly concerned about being late himself but trying to be sympathetic to Draco's obvious state of distress.

"It's already 7am! We have class in one hour, we've got to hurry!" Draco said in an agitated voice, throwing the covers off.

Harry just stared at him. "It's only seven? And you want to get *up*? Fuck that. I'm going back to sleep," he said, rolling over on his side away from Draco and pulling the covers up over his head.

Draco promptly yanked them off back off.

"Draco, what the *hell* do you think you're doing? It's freezing!" Harry glared up at the blonde. "Give me back my covers!"

"No."

"*Draaaco...*"

"No. We're getting up."

Harry sat up in the bed, reached for his glasses, put them on and resumed glaring at the now in-focus Slytherin.

"Draco, why on earth are we getting up so early?"

"So early!" Draco said, sounding incredulous. "This isn't early, this is late! I have to shower, pick out my clothes, do my hair, check my homework over, get some breakfast and - "

"You're a morning person, aren't you?" Harry accused, in the same tone of voice someone might use to say *you eat small children, don't you?*

"No, I just happen to actually care what I look like," Draco said haughtily. "And you know, Harry, it wouldn't kill you to think about your hair or clothes once in awhile. You always look positively atrocious."

"Nice try, Malfoy. I happen to know that you will always think I'm hot, no matter what my hair looks like or what I'm wearing."

Draco scowled at this very factual statement of Harry's. "That is so not true," he denied.

"Liar," said Harry affectionately. "But it's okay. I always think you're hot, no matter what."

Draco brightened considerably. "Really?"

"Really really. Now can I have my covers back please?" Harry hoped that the compliment would get Draco to relent and give him back the blankets.

No such luck. Draco had other ideas. "Harry, why don't you go take a shower, and I'll pick out some clothes for you to wear. Oooh, and then I can fix your hair, and pick out a cologne for you, and then -

Harry's eyes grew very wide as he realized just how gay his new boyfriend really was.

"I look like a bloody ponce," Harry muttered mutinously under his breath as he and Draco walked towards the Great Hall.

"No, you look bloody gorgeous," Draco corrected him, eyeing Harry very appreciatively. He was dressed head to toe in Draco's clothes, from his fitted white dress shirt to the tailored grey slacks to the transfigured wizard's cloak over it all. De-licious.

"But your stupid little midget clothes are so *small*. They don't fit and I look ridiculous," Harry whined, fidgeting irritably with his shirt.

They were, truthfully, the slightest bit too small, but Draco would not have admitted that in a million years.

"No, they fit you perfectly, you idiot, so quit complaining. I told you we were the same size," he said smugly. "Besides, I've never understood why you wear such old, baggy clothes in the first place. They obviously don't fit you at all. Where do you normally get your clothes from?"

"Uh..." this was not a good topic of conversation. Harry was not about to say 'oh, I get them from my horrible, enormous fat cousin after he's worn them almost completely out because my aunt and uncle won't buy me any clothes of my own.'

Right. It was definitely time to change the subject.

"So, you really don't think we should tell anyone you're a veela?"

Draco raised an eyebrow. "Very smooth subject change, Potter. I take it you're ready to talk about something besides clothes?"

Harry nodded fervently.

"Alright, I'll let you have your way this once. No, I don't want to tell anyone I'm a veela. I don't think I'm ready to deal with having to explain things."

"Not even Dumbledore?"

Draco shook his head. "Not yet. Soon. I just want to get used to it myself."

"Alright, then," Harry said, shrugging. It was, after all, Draco's decision. "So then we should probably just act normally towards each other, don't you think?"

"What do you mean?"

"Well, we should act like we used to, before all the...you know, kissy-kissy stuff," Harry said, blushing only slightly.

Draco looked amused. "The *kissy-kissy* stuff, Potter? Been hanging out with the first-year Hufflepuffs again?"

"Shut up," Harry muttered ineffectually, knocking Draco slightly with his shoulder. Draco retaliated by pulling him into a side corridor.

"Speaking of kissy-kissy stuff," he said a little breathlessly, pushing Harry gently against the stone wall, "Perhaps we could do a little of that before breakfast?"

He didn't wait for Harry's answer before leaning in and firmly pressing his lips against Harry's. Harry responded eagerly, closing his eyes and opening his mouth under Draco's caressing tongue. He reached up to bury his hands in Draco's incredibly silky locks and run his fingers through the blonde strands of hair.

Draco responded eagerly to this, moaning softly and pushing against Harry. He pressed his hips against the Gryffindor's and thrusting slightly.

Harry's eyes flew open. "Draco," he said in a slightly anxious voice. Draco ignored him in favor of licking a trail from Harry's collarbone to his ear.

"Mmm, you taste like whipped cream," Draco said playfully to Harry's ear, and punctuated this by grinding his hips against Harry's again.

"Draco, stop," Harry said uncomfortably, pulling away slightly from the blonde. Draco looked straight into his eyes.

"Are you sure you want me to stop, Harry?" he asked sweetly. Harry stared into those mesmerizing silver eyes, and suddenly he didn't want Draco to stop at all.

"No, don't stop," he whispered huskily, pressing his lips decisively back against Draco's. This time Harry took the lead in the kiss, nibbling on Draco's lips, swirling his tongue over Draco's lips and teeth and plunging it into Draco's mouth.

Draco made a mewling noise of pleasure as Harry suddenly spun them around and reversed their positions, so that Draco now found himself with his back pressed up against the stone wall of the corridor with his Gryffindor mate tightly on top of him. He returned Harry's kisses with a fervor, bursts of pleasure exploding on each and every place on his skin that Harry touched.

Harry, meanwhile, was lost in a daze. Draco's hands were up his shirt and on his bare back, and there was fire everywhere the blonde's fingers touched. His head was swimming, and he felt an overwhelming need to impress Draco, to satisfy Draco, and just to possess Draco. He pressed his hips hard against Draco's, and both boys gasped at the pleasure that surged through them.

And then, in the corridor just to the side, they heard voices, and it was enough to break the spell.

Harry tore away from Draco just in time before they were seen by two passing four-year Ravenclaws. He backed away slowly and leaned against the wall of the corridor opposite of Draco. He was breathing heavily and looking at the blonde with big, incredulous, slightly angry green eyes.

"You just did your veela thing to me again, didn't you?"

Draco looked vaguely guilty. "Um...no?"

Harry narrowed his eyes. "Yes, you did. I know you did. I can tell when you're doing it, you know."

Draco sighed dramatically. "Alright, fine. You caught me."

"Draco, you can't do that to me!" Harry said a little angrily. "It's...it's just not *fair*."

"But Harry, I just wanted to see if I could make it work on you, that's all," Draco said, a little sulkily.

Harry gave him a very irritated glance. "Well, congratulations," he said shortly. "It works."

"But that's brilliant!" Draco said enthusiastically. Harry crossed his arms over his chest and looked rather menacing. "Or...um...it's not brilliant, it's uh...it's very, very wrong to take advantage of you, and I'll try not to do it again?"

"Good answer," Harry said tersely, torn between being angry at Draco for using his veela powers like that and wanting Draco to do it again.

Draco slid over to his side of the corridor and twined his arms around Harry's neck. "You're not mad at me, are you Harry?" he asked, making a sad, pouting face.

And as sad, pouting veela usually get what they want, Harry completely relented and wrapped his arms around Draco's waist.

"No, I'm not mad," he said in a long-suffering sort of voice, and Draco smiled happily at him.

"Good," he said brightly, pulling Harry's body closer to his own. "I really am sorry, you know," he apologized, kissing Harry gently on the nose. Harry smiled back.

"No you're not," he said in a voice half-playful, half-exasperated.

"Yeah, alright, I'm not," Draco admitted. "But I will really try to stop using my veela powers on you without permission. It just...well, it feels different when I'm doing it, doesn't it? Like, extra good?"

Harry blushed slightly, and couldn't quite meet Draco's eyes. "Yeah..." he said in a very embarrassed voice, "yeah, it does. I'm just not ready, alright?"

"Alright," Draco said agreeably, studying Harry's pinkening face. He smiled. "Aw," the blonde cooed, "Look at you blushing. You're so *cute*."

"Shut up," Harry muttered, although his heart gave a little leap. This was the first time in his life anyone had ever told him he was cute.

Harry and Draco didn't have any classes together that morning, so it wasn't until lunch time that Draco had another chance to see Harry. Eager to see Harry once again, he decided to meet the Gryffindor after Transfiguration. He walked quickly down the corridor, hoping to catch Harry just as he was leaving.

He turned the corner, heading for Professor McGonagall's classroom, and spotted Harry standing just outside the door.

And then he spotted Lavender Brown standing next to Harry, talking with him eagerly and *resting a hand on his arm*.

Draco took a very deep breath and fought down the surge of jealousy that rose up in his throat. He marched over to Harry and Lavender to find out exactly what was going on.

" - wondering if you wanted to go to Hogsmeade with me sometime?" Lavender was saying, as Draco got within earshot. Harry seemed slightly uncomfortable.

"Thanks very much Lavender, but I'm not sure I should -

Harry never got to finish his sentence.

"Brown, are you asking Potter here on a date?" Draco practically snarled, as he went to stand next to Harry.

"Draco, hi," Harry said, trying to get the blonde's attention, looking a little worried by the maniacal glow in Draco's eyes. Draco ignored him and continued to speak to the flabbergasted Lavender.

"For your sake, Brown, I hope that's not what you're doing," Draco spat, sounding very threatening. "I don't think I'd like it very much if you were trying to date my - my - Potter," he finished lamely, having almost said the word *boyfriend* to Lavender on accident.

"Draco, Lavender and I are just friends," Harry said quickly and placatingly. Lavender and Draco, however, were glaring at each other and ignoring Harry.

"Honestly, Malfoy, I don't understand. Why do you care if I ask Harry to go to Hogsmeade with me?" she asked, crossing her arms over her chest in irritation.

Draco gave her an evil smile. "I have my reasons," he said cryptically, eyes narrowed to mercury slits. "Besides, I don't think Potter here will go with you any way. You're not exactly his type."

"Oh really? And what's his type then, since you know him so well?" Lavender returned a bit sarcastically.

"Lavender, Draco, please, how about we all just forget about this and - "

"Tall, blonde and Slytherin," Draco said, interrupting Harry.

Lavender scoffed. "Oh, just like you? Is that it, then? You actually believe Harry would fancy an evil git like *you*?"

"Lavender, please," Harry said, as Draco's pale face became even paler with rage.

Lavender ignored his protests. "You're wrong, Malfoy," she said, moving closer to Harry. "You're the one who's not Harry's type. C'mon, Harry, let's go," she said, wrapping an arm around Harry's waist.

Harry opened his mouth to tell her no, but it was too late. Draco had already pulled out his wand and jammed it into Lavender's throat before either Harry or Lavender could move.

"Now you listen to me, Brown," Draco said, in a cold voice designed to send chills down your spine. "Get your *fucking* hands off Harry before I use a Severing charm to permanently remove them from your body."

Lavender's eyes went wide, but she did as Draco said.

"Good girl," Draco said in that same cold voice. "Now get the hell out of here, and don't ever lay so much as a *finger* on my mate again. Do you understand?"

Lavender nodded once, and Draco lowered the wand. With one fleeting, confused look at Harry, she took off running.

"Bloody hell, Draco, you even said the word *mate*. So much for the school not finding out you're a veela," Harry said, watching Lavender's fleeing back. Suddenly, he was pushed back against the wall by a furious blonde mass.

"You have some explaining to do, Potter," the Slytherin growled, pinning Harry to the wall by his shoulders. "Why were you talking to her? Why was she asking you out? Why was her *hand* on your *arm*?"

Harry, amazingly, didn't seem scared by the angry veela. Instead, he reached out and ran a hand down the side of Draco's face.

"Are you jealous?" he asked, and Draco narrowed his eyes.

"Yes," he hissed, and Harry smiled a disarmingly sweet smile at him.

"You don't have to be," he said softly. "She doesn't hold a candle to you. You're brilliant, and I'd never want anyone but you."

Draco's jealousy diffused like water streaming down a drain. He looked into Harry's eyes, which were shining with affection, and smiled back. And then Harry tentatively leaned forward and kissed him, and Draco happily responded. They kissed for several minutes outside the Transfiguration classroom, and this time Draco didn't try to use his veela charms on Harry.

This time.

.....

Harry and Draco finally reluctantly broke apart and headed down the Great Hall for lunch. Draco walked over to the Slytherin table and camped out by his Slytherin cronies while Harry sat in his usual seat with Ron and Hermione.

As Harry began to eat, Hermione gave him a meaningful look.

"So, Harry," she began in a not-so-casual voice, "I heard an interesting story from Lavender Brown a few minutes ago."

"Did you?" said Harry conversationally, reaching for the bowl of potatoes.

"Yes," replied Hermione, fixing Harry with a pointed stare. "It seems that one Draco Malfoy threatened her quite ruthlessly because she was trying to invite you to Hogsmeade with her. She said something about him promising to sever the hands from her body if she ever so much as laid a finger on you again."

"Really?" Harry continued in a light, conversational tone. "Is that what she said?"

"Harry, is this story true?" Ron asked, incredulous. Harry shrugged.

"It might be," he said casually, reaching for his fork.

"HARRY!" Hermione cried, completely appalled. "How can you take this so lightly? Malfoy *threatened* another student at Hogwarts! That's completely unacceptable!"

"Oh, you're over-reacting. He was just got a little protective, that's all. He gets kind of jealous sometimes, you know," Harry said rather fondly, looking over at the Slytherin table where Draco was devouring his second bowl of chocolate pudding.

Hermione and Ron just stared at him. Finally, Hermione took a deep breath.

"Harry," she said sternly, "This is serious. You can't just let Draco go around threatening other people on your behalf!"

"Well, what I am supposed to do about it?" Harry asked mildly. "Whack him on the nose with a rolled up newspaper and say 'Bad Veela!'"

Hermione seethed at him. "No, but you need to do something about his behavior. For the safety of everyone else around you. You've got power over him, you can control stuff like this!"

Harry looked a little bit scandalized. "That hardly seems fair to Draco. After all, I'm his boyfriend, not his master. Besides, I don't know why you two seem to think he's so dangerous. I think he's cute."

Ron nearly choked on his pumpkin juice in shock, and Hermione looked outraged. Harry, meanwhile, went back to gazing at the Slytherin table. His gaze turned into a frown when he noticed Snape leaning over to talk to Draco. Draco's face paled slightly, and then without question he followed the professor out of the Great Hall.

Harry furrowed his brow, wondering what was up. At that moment, Professor McGonagall approached the trio.

"Mr. Potter," she said in a voice that didn't quite mask her worry. "The Headmaster needs to see you in his office immediately."

"Is everything okay, Professor?" Hermione asked anxiously.

"That remains to be seen," Professor McGonagall said, motioning for him to come with her. Harry met the concerned eyes of his two best friends, silently promising to explain everything to them later, then dutifully followed his Head of House to Professor Dumbledore's office.

Harry walked into Professor Dumbledore's office with the feeling of trepidation. He had no idea what to expect, but chances were if it involved him and Draco, it probably wasn't good.

Draco was already seated in one of the cozy chairs of Dumbledore's office, and his big, worried grey eyes met Harry's anxious green ones. Harry quickly turned to face Dumbledore.

"Professor Dumbledore, why are we - "

Harry never got to finish that sentence, because at that moment the door burst open and Lucius Malfoy stomped into Dumbledore's office.

"Albus, this is an *outrage*!" he yelled, flinging his cloak and his bad-ass pimp cane into a chair by the door. "I demand that these charges against Draco be dropped *immediately*!"

"Charges? What charges?" Draco asked fearfully, standing up out of his chair.

"Everyone, please sit down," Dumbledore said, looking uncharacteristically grave. The two Malfoys and Harry took their seats. Dumbledore sighed, and for once cut straight to the point.

"Mr. Malfoy," he said seriously, addressing Draco, "It would appear that Ernie MacMillian's parents have pressed charges against you for using an Unforgivable Curse against their son."

Draco and Harry's eyes both went wide. "But he was using it in my defense!" Harry cried, horrified by this development. "Surely that gives him immunity!"

"That's right," Lucius said coldly, grey eyes glinting with anger. "My son was rescuing the Boy Who Lived. No jury in the wizarding world will convict him for this. It's utter madness for the MacMillians to have pressed charges in the first place."

Dumbledore sighed again. "It's more complicated than that, and you know it, Lucius." He focused on Draco. "Draco, the MacMillians, while acknowledging that it appears that you were acting in Mr. Potter's defense, are convinced that you are a Death Eater in disguise, and that you were most likely involved in the set-up of their son and Mr. Potter in the first place."

"WHAT?" Draco screeched, standing up out of his chair. "I would *never* hurt Harry, *never*! How *dare* they - "

Dumbledore held up his hand. "I know, Mr. Malfoy, I know. But their case is strong. Understand that a jury will be hard-pressed to believe you capable of casting the Crutiatius curse on *two* wizards simultaneously without prior training. They base their case on this, that you must be a Death Eater in training since you are able to cast Unforgivable Curses."

Draco paled considerably and sat back down. Harry chewed on his bottom lip nervously. Lucius stood up and began pacing.

"Draco, how *did* you manage to cast that curse? I never taught you to do it," Lucius said, and then glared at Dumbledore and Harry. "And for the record, I never said that," he said menacingly.

Dumbledore and Harry nodded, then Harry ventured a thought. "Look, it's not that hard to cast the Crutiatius really. You just have to be really, really, unbelievably angry for it to work," he said thoughtfully.

At the look on Dumbledore, Draco, and Lucius' faces his eyes widened. "Or so I've been told," he added hastily.

"Nevertheless," Dumbledore said regretfully, "given your past rivalry with Mr. Malfoy a jury will find it hard to believe that he was angry enough on your behalf to cast the Crutiatius curse. These are serious charges, and a guilty conviction will carry with it a lifetime sentence in Azkaban."

"NO!" Harry shouted out, horrified at the prospect. He turned to Draco. "Draco, we have to tell them."

"But Harry - " Draco began, looking like he was still wavering on the issue.

Harry glared at him. "I am not going to let you go to Azkaban for life," he said angrily. "Tell them. NOW."

Dumbledore sat back in his chair expectantly. Lucius, who had been following this little exchange curiously, watched in astonishment as his son glared heavily at Harry but opened his mouth any way.

"*Fine*," Draco spat, and then turned to Dumbledore and Lucius.

"Guess what, Daddy?" he said, his voice dripping sarcasm. "We're not really purebloods. You, me, Mum - we're all actually part veela. Isn't that *swell*?"

Utter silence met these words, followed by a loud THUMP.

Lucius Malfoy had fainted.

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After Lucius finally came around, and Draco had explained things to him at least three times, an uncomfortable silence filled the room.

Finally, Lucius broke it. "So I'm a quarter veela?"

Draco nodded. "Yes, Dad."

"And your mother's got some veela in her too?"

"Yes, Dad."

"So you've got active veela powers?"

"Yes, Dad."

"And you're in love with Harry Potter?"

"Yes, Dad."

"I see." Lucius appeared to be thinking things over.

Dumbledore was actually smiling. "Well, this is wonderful news!" he said happily, the twinkle restored in his eyes.

The other three occupants of the room looked at him like he was mad. Dumbledore beamed sagely at them.

"All the charges will be dropped now," he explained. "You can't possibly fault a veela in that situation for defending its mate. It explains everything."

"Oh yes, everything is explained," Lucius said in an undertone. "Except the part where I've got a gay veela for a son."

"HEY!" said Draco indignantly.

"Oh sorry, Draco. I forgot the part where my gay veela son is in love with the brat who landed me in prison and *stole my House Elf*."

"Dad, really," Draco said irritably. "You're such a drama queen. And you wonder why I'm gay."

Harry made a noise that sounded suspiciously like a repressed snort of laughter.

Lucius was not impressed. "Fine, well, now that we've cleared all this up," he said in a haughty tone of voice that was just like his son's. "I'll just be off. The Dark Lord is going to want to hear about this before it's splashed all over the papers. And I'll contact our Law Wizard, Draco, and get these charges dropped."

He turned to Harry menacingly. "And you, Potter," he said in a scary, evil voice. "You be good to my gay veela son, or I'll come after you and everyone you care about and shred them into tiny, bloody pieces."

"Aw, I haven't had a death threat from you in so long," Harry sighed dramatically. "It's just like old times, eh, Lucius?"

Lucius muttered something under his breath that sounded suspiciously like "*teenagers*."

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After the discussion in Dumbledore's office, Harry and Draco didn't get a chance to talk again all day. After dinner, Harry sought the blonde out in his room behind the dragon portrait, speaking the password and slipping inside quietly.

"Hey," he smiled at the Slytherin, who was sitting at his desk doing homework. Draco stuck his nose up in the air.

"I'm not talking to you," he said in an injured tone of voice that was just a little too dramatic to be believable.

"Oh?" said Harry, shutting the door behind him and walking over to the desk. "Why not?" he asked playfully, coming to stand behind Draco, who swiveled around in his chair to face Harry.

"You ordered me around again!" Draco said indignantly. "In front of my dad and Dumbledore! You made me tell them I'm a veela with your blasted power of control over me. You abused your powers, and *that's* why I'm not talking to you," he finished with a haughty sniff, turning away from Harry again.

Harry fought back a smile. "Aw, you don't like it when I tell you what to do?" he cooed, leaning down to speak into Draco's ear.

Draco immediately felt heat run through his body at Harry's close proximity. *Oh no you don't, Draco*, he thought to himself. *You're not giving in to Harry, even if he is cute and sweet and sexy and - fuck.*

Harry had just dropped into Draco's lap and wrapped his arms around the blonde's neck.

"Kiss me, Draco," Harry commanded gently, and Draco eagerly tilted his head back so Harry could lean down and kiss him. They snogged for a moment before Harry drew back.

"You didn't seem to mind my command so much that time," he said innocently, and Draco's mouth fell open in outrage.

"Why you - just for that, I'm going to use my veela powers tonight to ravage you senseless. You should be very afraid."

Harry rolled his eyes. "I'm shaking in my boots," he said, kissing Draco's temple. He lifted a hand and began to play with Draco's hair.

"Hmph," was all Draco said back, even as he melted under Harry's touch. After a couple of moments, he was practically purring.

"You really like this, don't you?" Harry asked, letting his fingernails gently rake against Draco's scalp.

"Mm-hmm," said Draco, closing his eyes in bliss.

"I wonder if it's because veela hair is magical," Harry said softly, almost to himself.

Draco opened his eyes. "It is?" he asked, and Harry nodded.

"You can make wands from it," he explained.

Draco looked impressed. "Cool."

They cuddled together for a few more minutes before Harry reluctantly stood up.

"So, I guess I should go back to my dorm," he said, sounding rather unenthusiastic.

Draco was put out and annoyed. "Now see here, Potter," he said imperiously. "I don't see why on earth you should go back to Gryffindor tower. I don't really like the idea of you staying in the same tower with that Brown girl after what happened today anyway. Plus you could have gotten sick from being out in the rain last night so you're really better off sleeping with me again because I'll keep you warmer and - "

Harry cut him off with a kiss.

"Thought you'd never ask," he said happily

The Veela Enigma

Chapter 13: The Plot Thickens

Far away from Hogwarts, where Harry and Draco lay peacefully sleeping, Lucius Malfoy was walking through Riddle Manor, absolutely dreading the conversation to come.

It wasn't like he wanted to tell the Dark Lord about his and Draco's veela heritage. Quite the contrary. He had no choice, however. In order to get the charges against Draco dropped, the MacMillians and their lawyers had to be told the truth about Draco's heritage. Lucius wasn't such a fool to believe that juicy gossip like that would stay hidden for very long.

And so it was inevitable that the Malfoys would be "outed," so to speak, about their veela genes to the wizarding world. Lucius knew that the Dark Lord would be very upset if he were to find out the truth from the Daily Prophet, so he took a deep breath and crossed the threshold into the room where Voldemort was waiting.

Lord Voldemort was seated in an armchair in front of a fireplace, Nagini curled up at his feet. She merely looked up when Lucius entered the room before dropping her head back down to its coils. Lucius was the only one of Voldemort's Death Eaters that Nagini never hissed at, and now Lucius had a pretty good idea of why that was.

Lucius dropped down to one knee onto the dusty rug on the floor. "My Lord," he said humbly, and the Dark Lord gave him an almost fond look.

"Rise, Malfoy," he said, and patiently watched as Lucius stood up. "What news could have possibly brought you here in such an urgent manner?"

"My Lord, I have received some interesting information concerning myself and my family."

"Is that so?" Voldemort remarked with curiosity. "Sit and tell me about it." He gestured to the armchair across from his own by the fireplace, and with a feeling of trepidation, Lucius sat down, took a deep breath, and explained the entire story to Lord Voldemort.

After finishing, he looked up nervously, wondering how the Dark Lord would react to learning that one of his right hand men was not the pureblood he had believed.

Voldemort said nothing for a few moments, but instead stood up and wandered over to the window to look out at the night sky. Lucius watched and waited.

"I've always been rather fond of veela," the Dark Lord finally said softly, his eyes burning red in the darkness.

"I'm sorry?" Lucius said anxiously, not sure if this was good or not.

Lord Voldemort looked back at him and stared for a moment, as if seeing him in a whole new light.

"Of course," he said, almost to himself, scrutinizing Lucius. "That would explain so much."

"My Lord?" Lucius asked, starting to feel slightly nervous. The Dark Lord had studied him at length, had looked at him closely before, but never as intensely as he was right now.

"Tell me, Lucius," Voldemort said, moving back towards the fire and Lucius' chair. For some reason, Lucius didn't like his tone of voice. "What do you know about veela?"

Lucius took a deep breath as Lord Voldemort approached him and continued to stare, an almost hungry look beginning to form on his face. "They...they're considered by some to be very beautiful," he said haltingly, and the Dark Lord nodded.

"And what else?"

Lucius wondered where this conversation was going, but continued. "Well, they have special powers, my Lord. Powers of lust and attraction."

"Indeed." The Dark Lord stopped in front of him and studied him. "You know, Lucius, that you've always been my favorite servant."

"Thank you, My Lord," Lucius said, trying to hide his surprise.

Voldemort red eyes stared him down. "You are surprised to hear that, are you not?"

Lucius knew better than to try to lie. "Yes, sir."

"Hmmm." Voldemort sat down in the armchair across from Lucius. "Yes, you may well be surprised. You are not my most loyal, my most devoted, or my most talented servant. And yet, there has always been something about you, some quality that I have desired and prized above others..." he trailed off, still staring.

"I should have noticed it before," he observed casually. "Your hair, your eyes, your skin...you *look* like a veela, Lucius, and you radiate their power so faintly I hadn't noticed it before. But it is there, and now I can feel it."

He smiled, and it was not a nice smile. "And you say your son has the full powers of the veela?"

"Yes, My Lord," Lucius replied, not liking the fact that Draco was getting brought back into this.

Lord Voldemort nodded slowly. "It is so very rare, you know," he said smoothly, leaning back in his chair. "A male, being born with the powers of a veela. Draco is quite a unique and extraordinary gift."

"I've always thought so, My Lord," Lucius said with a calm he did not possess inside.

"It's a shame he is unwilling to be my servant. Such a beautiful boy, and with such powers. If he were mine..." the Dark Lord trailed off, and Lucius was suddenly hit with a sudden horrible realization of what Voldemort might be getting at.

"My Lord? What are you trying to say?" he asked, trying to keep his temper under control.

Voldemort ignored him. "The ancient wizards used to keep veela as concubines, you know," he said almost pleasantly as Lucius' worst suspicions were confirmed. "Without their mates they go mad, and are easily manipulated under the Imperious curse."

"You...you aren't seriously suggesting," Lucius began, his blood beginning to boil.

Voldemort smiled his evil smile again, and moved to the edge of his seat, very close to Lucius. Lucius moved to stand up, but ropes suddenly sprung from the arms of the chair and bound him in place. Nagini hissed in surprise and slithered a short distance away.

Lucius began to struggle, and Voldemort leaned forward, his face only inches from Lucius'.

"I'm merely observing," he began, his voice nearly a purr, "that Draco would make the most perfect fuck-toy a dark wizard could ever ask for."

Lucius snarled in outrage, but Voldemort continued. "A veela is not like a wizard, Malfoy, and sex with a veela is not like sex with any other being on this earth. Their powers of attraction, if used correctly, are valuable beyond belief."

"You...you wretched, foul, loathsome..." Lucius was shaking with blind fury and rage, restrained as he was in the chair.

Voldemort sighed. "Tsk, ts, Lucius," he chided. "If you weren't so pretty, I would have to punish you for those words."

"I won't let you do this," Lucius Malfoy said furiously, all caution thrown to the wind. "This is my son we are talking about!"

The Dark Lord stood up, towering over Lucius.

"I do so prefer men to women," he said, almost conversationally. "And it must be centuries since a true male veela was born, with true veela powers. I shall so look forward to having Draco as a guest. Tell me; is he as striking as ever?" Voldemort finished with a leer, and Lucius lunged forward against the ropes with a cry of rage, pure hatred on his face.

Voldemort watched him struggle and smiled. "So beautiful," he said softly, reaching down and trailing his finger down Lucius' rage-contorted face. "If I didn't know you had a son, Malfoy, I'd take you. You are stunning, and I could work to bring out the weak veela traits you do possess. But Draco is the real prize, and I can wait. If he looks half as erotic tied up and struggling as you do, it will be worth it."

"I'll kill you," Lucius snarled. "Do you hear me? I'll kill you before I let you touch my son!"

The Dark Lord shook his head and sighed. "Oh Lucius, Lucius, Lucius," he said, condescendingly. "You won't kill me, because you won't remember one word of this conversation."

He pulled out his wand, and horror and panic hit Lucius like a tangible wave.

"I'm sorry I have to do this, Lucius, but I want Draco, and you might do something foolish like try to stop me. And I really can't have that." He pointed the wand directly at Lucius' head.

"*Obliviate!*"

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By the end of the week, not a soul in the Hogwarts castle didn't know that Draco was a veela, and that Harry was his mate, and that you didn't go within ten feet of Harry Potter unless you wanted your arse hexed to hell and back.

A front page headline in the *Daily Prophet* and a gushing article in *Witch Weekly* had detailed the entire story - the truth about the Malfoy and Black bloodlines, the attack on the Boy-Who-Lived and Draco's daring rescue, and the against-all-odds romance of Draco and Harry, part veela and mate.

Naturally, curious students had approached Harry to see if it was all true. That's how everyone found out it wasn't safe to get too close to Harry if Draco suspected your intentions weren't pure. In those first few days alone he sent five Hufflepuffs, three Ravenclaws, seven Slytherins and half of the sixth-year Gryffindors to the hospital wing for various hexes and injuries.

Ron and Hermione were at their wits ends. They had tried talking to Harry about Draco's behavior, but Harry would just shrug.

"It's just a veela thing," he would say, as if that explained everything, and then he and Draco would go off and snog.

Ron and Hermione were a bit pissed off, to say the least.

And that's why, during lunch on that cool and sunny Friday, Ron could be found sitting at the Gryffindor table, sulking for all he was worth.

"I don't see what on earth Harry sees in that stupid ferret," Ron was muttering to Hermione, who was patting his arm sympathetically while reading one of the many new books on veela that Lucius Malfoy had sent Draco. Draco was currently standing by the door of the Great Hall, obviously waiting for Harry to come in from his last class.

"Harry likes Draco because he's never had some one care about him before," Hermione tried to explain for what must have been the one-millionth time.

"I care about him," Ron muttered mutinously, then turned a bit red. "But...you know...not like that...oh God, don't tell Malfoy I said I care about Harry, he kill me," he said so hastily that Hermione had to fight back a laugh.

"I won't tell him," she reassured Ron, who looked visibly relieved. He went back to staring irritably at the blonde by the door.

"That veela's completely unsafe, you know," Ron complained, sounding very annoyed. "Bloody dangerous, actually. And Harry's acting just like Hagrid with all his monsters. He's always saying things like *oh Draco's not actually dangerous, he just gets a little jealous* or *Draco didn't really mean it, it's just a veela thing*. You know, yesterday I tried to tell him that he really, really should stop Malfoy from hexing everybody, and he chewed *me* out for being insensitive to Draco's veela needs!"

They watched for another moment, before Ron made a noise of disgust. "He only likes Malfoy because he's a veela anyway."

Hermione sighed. "That's not true, Ron. Draco's veela charms do help, it's true, and I'm sure there's some magic attracting them to each other on a subconscious level. But even if Draco didn't have all his veela charms, Harry would still be crazy about him, because Draco is so sweet and loving towards Harry and Harry's never had that before. Do you understand?"

Ron crossed his arms. "No."

"Okay, well, now you're just being difficult," Hermione said crossly.

They watched as Harry walked into the Great Hall, and Draco's entire being lit up before he practically knocked Harry off his feet in a bear hug in front of everyone. Ron and Hermione could see the smile on Harry's face from their seats at the Gryffindor table.

"Bloody hell," sighed Ron.

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Harry had been wandering down the Charms corridor on his way to lunch when he heard a voice calling his name.

"Harry...psst...*Harry!*"

He turned to see who it was, and saw none other than his ex-girlfriend, Cho Chang, waiting to talk to him.

"Hey Cho, what's up?" he said as nicely as he could to his ex.

"*Be quiet!*" she hissed, looking around fearfully. "Is Malfoy with you?"

Harry shook his head. "He's waiting for me in the Great Hall."

Cho motioned to him to follow her into an empty classroom. He did, and she shut the door firmly behind them.

"What was all *that* all about?" Harry asked.

Cho gave him a rather dirty look. "I didn't want to get hexed," she said shortly.

Harry just shrugged. If she was waiting for an apology from him about Draco's behavior, she wasn't going to get it.

"Look, Harry," Cho began, "I need to talk to you."

"About what?"

"About Malfoy, actually." She looked at Harry very seriously. "Do you understand what you're getting into?"

Harry was indignant. "Um, *yeah*," he said curtly. "But I don't understand how it's any business of yours."

"Just...hear me out, okay? I know things weren't always easy between us and we didn't end on the best terms. But I still care about you as a person and a friend, I do. That's why I want to warn you."

Harry sighed. Why did everyone always want to warn him about Draco? "What is it?" he said wearily, waiting to hear the inevitable *he's dangerous, he's unsafe, he may be pretty but he's a menace to everyone in the castle*, blah blah blah.

But Cho completely surprised him. "Veela very rarely choose wizards for their mates. Did you know that?"

Harry thought for a moment. He truthfully didn't. "No," he said cautiously.

"Do you know why that is?"

"Obviously not, if I didn't even know that was the case in the first place," Harry said, trying very hard to be polite and not roll his eyes.

"Veela and wizards are different, Harry. Wizards are humans who have magical powers. Veelas aren't human, they're highly magical creatures. That's why they can shape shift and spellbind wizards to lust after them. When veela mate with other veela, they're very attracted to the amount of magic in the other. Strong magic is almost irresistible to a veela."

"Okay..." Harry couldn't help but wonder why on earth Cho was getting at. "So, what does this have to do with me and Draco?"

Cho sighed with frustration. "Don't you get it? Veela are attracted to powerful magic, therefore they're only attracted to wizards with very strong magical abilities, and therefore it's rare for them to mate with wizards. But it's the reason why Malfoy is attracted to you."

"Cho, there are about a million things wrong with what you just said," Harry protested. "First off, Draco's only part veela - "

"Yeah, but he's got their magical powers *and* he's got their desire to mate. Not all part veela have that, you know."

"Okay, fine. Whatever," Harry continued. "But still, Draco is *not* attracted to me for my magical abilities. My magic's not any stronger than anybody else's."

Cho just gave him a disbelieving look.

"What?" Harry finally said irritably.

"You don't honestly believe that, do you Harry? You've stood up to You-Know-Who over and over. Don't tell me you think your magic powers are the same as everyone else's."

"Cho, I don't think - "

"Whatever, Harry. You want to stay in denial that's your choice. In the meantime, there's a more important issue I want to warn you about."

"Really." Harry raised his arms in a gesture of submission. "As bizarre as I'm finding it that you want to warn me about Draco, go ahead. What is it?"

"Well, first off I just want to ask - you're still a virgin, right?"

Harry went beet red and his mouth dropped open in shock. In a desperate attempt to salvage his manly pride in front of his ex-girlfriend, he tried to deny it. "What would ever make you think that just because we didn't do it that I haven't - "

"Harry, please. I know you haven't. It's pretty obvious."

"Yeah, well...I could have done it if I had wanted to," Harry muttered sulkily.

Cho looked amused. "There's nothing wrong with being sweet and innocent. It's part of your charm. I just know you don't have a lot of experience and I think you should know a little more about veelas and sex."

Harry was trying in vain to bring his cheeks back to their normal color. "Look, Cho, I appreciate the sentiment." He paused. "I think. But before we keep talking I want to know why on earth you feel the need to tell me all this. Not to mention, I'm rather curious as to why the bloody hell do you know anything about veelas and sex."

Cho seemed faintly embarrassed, but she explained herself. "When Fleur and Cedric were both School Champions during the Tri-Wizard tournament, I did a little research. Well...okay, a *lot* of research. I wanted to be sure that she wasn't going to use her veela powers to steal away my boyfriend."

"Oh."

A very awkward moment passed.

"Okay, look Harry, I'll keep this really short for you and then I'll leave you alone. I just thought you should know that veela are *crazy* for sex."

"*What?*"

"They're completely mad for it. And they'll stop at nothing to get it."

Harry attempted to laugh it off. "Cho, I don't think you really know what - "

"Harry, *listen*," she said urgently. "You have to understand that veela are *not* human. Their emotions aren't the same as ours. They don't feel love the way humans do. For veela, love is all about sex, and Malfoy is going to want sex from you soon. Not only that, if you don't give it to him, he'll force you."

By this point, Harry was redder than ever and sputtering. "Cho, that's ridiculous, Draco would never hurt me. He won't force me to - "

"Oh, he won't use physical force, Harry. He'll use his veela powers on you. He'll spellbind you so that you don't know what you're doing so that he can have sex with you."

"He wouldn't." But Harry's protest wasn't as strong as it maybe could have been, as a little incident in the corridor earlier in the week replayed itself in his mind.

"He's already tried it on you, hasn't he?" Cho said knowingly, and Harry refused to look her in the eyes.

"Why are you telling me this?" he asked again, his voice tense.

Cho hesitated. "I don't know," she confessed, her voice wavering slightly. "I guess...I guess I just don't want to see you get hurt again."

She paused. "There's nothing wrong with you, Harry. The thing is, veela just don't really understand love, they understand sex. The whole "mate" concept is really just about sex. Malfoy can't really love you, but he'll always lust after you, and if that's good enough for you that's your decision."

Cho paused again, and tentatively reached out to touch Harry before thinking better of it and stopping, her hand half-way to Harry's face. "I just thought you should know, that's all," she said quietly, dropping her arm. "In case you ever decide you want more than just sex."

And with that she suddenly kissed him on the cheek and abruptly left the classroom.

Harry made his way down to the Great Hall, slightly shaken by everything Cho had said. It wasn't true. It couldn't be. Draco wasn't just attracted to him because he had powerful magical abilities. And besides that, Draco was truly in love with him, and it wasn't just about sex, it *wasn't*. Harry just couldn't believe that everything that had happened between him and Draco over the past few days had just been veela hormones. They had something special.

And what on earth had Cho meant by *in case you ever decide you want more than just sex*? Harry was very confused.

Lost in his thoughts as he walked into the Great Hall, Harry was caught off guard when Draco barreled into him.

"Where have you been? I've been waiting for you!" the blonde scolded, even as he threw his arms around Harry in a huge hug.

Harry broke into a big smile. Cho was wrong. This wasn't sex, this was love.

"Nowhere important," he said, as he and Draco made their way over to the Gryffindor table where Ron and Hermione were sitting. They sat down, both too wrapped up in each other to notice the irritated looks that both Ron and Hermione were giving them.

"So, how many people have you hexed today, Malfoy?" Ron asked curtly, purposefully interrupting them as Draco started nuzzling Harry's cheek.

"Really, Ron, I'm sure Draco hasn't hexed anyone else since breakfast," Harry said, tossing his best friend an annoyed glance. "Right, Draco?"

Draco suddenly became very interested in his manicure.

"HA! I told you so," Ron said triumphantly.

Draco sneered at him.

"If you must know, Weasley, it's only been two," he said haughtily. "A pair of Hufflepuff fourth-years thought it would be cute to talk about how it was no wonder I chose Harry for a mate because he's so good-looking. And right in the charms corridor where everyone could hear them. It was their own fault."

"Oh honestly, Malfoy, I can't believe you're getting away with bullying the other students like this," Hermione said, looking slightly outraged. She turned to Harry. "And I suppose you're not going to do a thing about it?"

"Course not. Not his fault he gets jealous is it?" he said, stroking a hand through Draco's hair. Draco happily leaned into his touch.

"Harry, when Malfoy tells you what he's done do you actually hear what he says? Or are you so infatuated that you only see is his pretty little face?" Ron said, looking slightly disgusted by their actions.

Draco glared at him hotly, but softened as Harry wrapped a protective arm around him.

"Ron, Draco is a *veela*," Harry said, defending the now smug-looking Draco. "He can't help it. You should be more understanding, you know. It's not easy for him to be jealous all the time."

"I don't believe this," Ron said, under his breath, as Draco's look got, if it were possible, even smugger.

"Aww, Weasley, you're not really mad at me, are you?" Draco cooed, and Ron's look suddenly became rather distant, and his face seemed oddly slack.

"Of course I'm not mad at you, Draco," he said hastily, eyes fixed on Draco. "I could never get mad at you. You're so beautiful, and gorgeous, and wonderful. I would do anything for you."

"Would you?" Draco said conversationally, as Harry began to snicker under his breath and Hermione narrowed her eyes at Draco.

"Oh yes," Ron said eagerly. "I'd jump off a cliff, battle a dragon, slay a vampire - "

"Seduce a House Elf?" Draco asked innocently.

"Of course. Anything you want," Ron continued in a dreamy voice. Harry choked back laughter while Hermione rolled her eyes.

"Malfoy, that's enough," she said sharply, elbowing Ron hard at the same time. Draco assumed a long-suffering look as Ron's eyes came back into focus, and after a moment of confusion narrowed angrily.

"Malfoy, you evil little *ferret*," he began.

Harry gave him a reproachful look. "Ron, don't call him that."

"But Harry - "

"You heard him, Weasel," Draco said in the brattiest "Harry likes me best" voice he could manage.

Ron was fuming. Hermione folded her arms over her chest and gave Harry a *look*.

"What?" he asked innocently.

"Harry James Potter, are you *really* going to let Malfoy get away with all of this?"

Harry sighed dramatically. "Alright, alright." He turned to Draco.

"Bad veela!" he scolded, shaking his finger at Draco. "Bad veela, no biscuit!"

That irritated Hermione even more. "Harry, don't joke about this!" she snapped. "You're supposed to control his behavior! It's your job, you're his mate, you can't just - "

Harry wasn't listening to a word she said, because Draco had just leaned forward and taken his scolding finger in between his teeth and was now gently sucking it into his mouth.

Draco carefully swirled his tongue around the finger, watched as Harry's pupils dilated and then slowly released him.

"Want to get out of here so you can punish me properly?" he asked, in a sexy, sultry, purr.

All Harry could do was nod. Hermione narrowed her eyes at them as they quickly pushed back from the table and stood up.

It was really amazing that after six years Harry still hadn't learned not to mess with Hermione.

Just as they started to walk away, Hermione called out, "Oh Harry!"

Harry turned around. "What?" he asked tersely, in a voice that clearly said *make it fast, I'm busy here!*

Hermione smiled very angelically at him and made sure Draco was listening too. "You've got lipstick on your cheek."

Harry's hand flew to his cheek in horror, Draco's eyes narrowed to slits, and Hermione watched in satisfaction as Draco grabbed Harry's arm and yanked him out of the Great Hall, looking thoroughly jealous and pissed off.

Ron watched them go, and looked at Hermione in awe and respect. "I think I love you," he said, and they both smiled.

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The Veela Enigma

Chapter 14: Fight

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Draco dragged Harry into a corridor just off the main one that led to the Great Hall. He pushed Harry up against the wall - not particularly gently either - and said in one short, terse breath "Explain."

Harry had the distinct impression that if he had had a father, and his mother had ever said the words "just wait until your father gets home!" and then his dad had come home and cornered him, that *this* was more or less exactly the same feeling.

He took a deep breath, "Well, Draco, see, it's like this..." he trailed off, reluctant to reveal that it was Cho who had kissed his cheek and subject her to the rages of a jealous veela. After all, she had only been trying to help.

Draco folded his arms over his chest and glared at Harry. "No, Potter," he said icily. "Actually, I *don't* see. Why don't you start by telling me which filthy slut left that lipstick on your cheek?"

"I say, that's a bit harsh," Harry protested, and suddenly he found himself with Draco on top of him.

"Are you *defending* this mystery woman, Potter?" Draco breathed into Harry's ear, silver eyes glinting menacingly, and for one fleeting instance Harry understood why everyone else was so afraid of Draco.

But the understanding was gone as soon as it came, because Harry trusted in his heart that Draco would never hurt him, and that Draco's threats were only words and nothing more, and that the blonde only got madly upset and jealous because he was so afraid of losing Harry.

"No, I'm not defending her," he said calmly, reaching out to run a hand through Draco's silky blonde locks. Draco closed his eyes, torn between his anger and the melting sensation that came with having Harry's fingers tangled in his hair.

Harry saw this, and smiled. *He's so sweet*, Harry thought to himself, as Draco grudgingly began to give in to Harry's caresses. He rested his head on Harry's shoulder and Harry kissed it, delighting in the sensation of the cool downy hair against his lips.

Draco sighed and nuzzled Harry's neck, his arms going around Harry's waist. He lifted his head up to kiss the brunette -

And saw that faint pink mark on Harry's cheek again.

Faster than you could see "Hungarian Horntail" Draco's eyes narrowed back to slits. He grabbed Harry's wrists to stop their petting motion and in one alarmingly agile movement pinned those wrists on either side of Harry's body.

"Who was she, Potter?" Draco practically growled, and Harry bit his lip. "*Who was she?*" he repeated insistently, and Harry took a deep breath.

"I can't tell you," he whispered, and Draco moved in closer to pin Harry's body to the wall with his own.

"You can't tell me?" he repeated. "And why not, Harry?"

"Because you'll hurt her, Draco, and she was just trying to help me," Harry breathed, still trusting the angry veela not to cross the line and hurt his mate.

Draco's expression became absolutely livid. "Help you? By kissing you? How does that help you do anything, Potter?"

"Draco, please," Harry pleaded, locking the veela's silver eyes with his own bright green ones. "I can't tell you."

Draco stayed perfectly still for a moment. "You mean you *won't* tell me. Fine. I'll find out some other way. In the meantime," he lowered his voice dangerously, "I think that you ought to be taught what it means to be a veela's mate."

In a swift, graceful movement, Draco let go of Harry's wrists and snaked his arms around Harry's waist, crushing Harry against his own body forcefully before locking onto his lips with his own. Harry froze at the sudden onslaught, his arms hanging at his sides for a moment in shock.

And then Draco did something that Harry hadn't been expecting - he let go of any personal restraints he had had, and turned on his veela powers as strong as he possibly could.

In an instant, Harry's body was on fire, and he moaned into Draco's mouth. Every nerve and every inch of skin on Harry's body was alive with sensation. It was the most amazing feeling that Harry had ever felt, his senses singing with fervor as Draco continued to ravish his mouth. Harry lost all sense of who he was and where he was, and the only thing that mattered now was that he never stop kissing Draco's soft pink lips, and he never stop touching the body on top of his own. He clutched at Draco, pulling him tightly against his body, grinding their hips together as jolts of pleasure coursed through his system.

And then suddenly Draco stopped and pulled back from Harry, who moaned in grief at the loss of contact. He whispered harshly, "Next time some little slut goes to kiss you, Potter, just remember - you are *mine*."

And abruptly turned and walked down the corridor, purposefully not looking back.

If he had looked back, he would have seen Harry slide down the wall of the corridor and bury his head in his arms, his body trembling uncontrollably.

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Hermione was a little concerned when Harry didn't show up for Transfigurations after lunch. Her concern rose when he skipped his favorite class, Defense Against the Dark Arts as well. Finally, when he didn't show up for Care of Magical Creatures, and Hagrid asked her what was wrong, she begged out of the last half of class to go look for Harry.

She found him in the first place she looked - up in his room in Gryffindor tower, lying on his back on his bed, wizard robe off and tie crooked, staring unfocusedly at his hangings.

"Harry?" she said tentatively, walking into the room and over to his bed.

"Hullo, Hermione," he said in a monotone, not bothering to look over.

"You weren't in class this afternoon, Harry," she said gently, and Harry just shrugged. Hermione sat down on the bed at his feet. "Is everything okay?"

An uncomfortable pang of guilt hit her stomach as she recalled the "lipstick" incident at lunch, and she hastily asked, "Did something happen between you and Draco?"

Harry finally turned to look at her and smiled humorlessly. "Sort of."

Hermione opened her mouth to apologize, and Harry shook his head. "It's not your fault, Hermione," he said, before she could say a word. "I was being a total prat at lunch to you and Ron, and I deserved it, so don't apologize."

"Okay," she said hesitatingly, leaning back against a bed post. "So what happened between you and Draco then? Was he really mad about the lipstick?"

Harry nodded slowly. "You could say that."

"Did he kill whoever it was? And who was it, anyway?" she asked, and Harry sighed.

"I didn't tell him who it was." Hermione's eyes got wide. "And I'm not going to tell you either."

"But Harry," Hermione started, stunned. "This is a really big deal. Draco's a veela, he must be freaking out right -"

"I *know* he's a veela, Hermione!" Harry growled. "He made sure to remind me of it."

"What does *that* mean?" Harry sighed again.

"Nothing," he said dismissively. Hermione's eyes narrowed.

"Did he hurt you, Harry? Because if he did, veela or no, I swear to God I'll -"

Harry smiled a real smile for the first time since lunch at Hermione's protectiveness. "No, he didn't. Draco would never physically hurt me, don't worry."

Harry's use of the term 'physically' didn't escape Hermione's notice.

"What did he do, Harry?" she asked softly, resting her hand on Harry's ankle.

Harry didn't say anything for a moment. Then he looked at her seriously. "Is it possible for me to learn to control Draco by choice, and not just in a life or death situation?"

Hermione raised her eyebrows at the question, but answered him anyway. "Yes, actually, it is. It isn't easy, and you'll probably have to practice, and if I know Malfoy he won't like it at all, but yes, you can learn how to do it." She reached into her bag and brought out the book she had been reading at lunch. "There's advice on that and a bunch of other stuff in here. It's a really good book, Harry. You should read it."

He took the copy of *Everything a Veela's Mate Should Know* from her and slid it under his pillow. "Thanks, Hermione."

They heard the bell that ended classes ring, and Harry sat up and straightened his glasses. "I've got Occlumency with Snape right now," he said with a sigh, and Hermione looked at him worriedly.

"Harry -" she began, but at that moment Ron bounded up into the room.

"Harry, where have you been all afternoon? Did Malfoy do something really wicked to you for having lipstick on your cheek?" the redhead asked almost eagerly.

Harry rolled his eyes. "No," he said, "he didn't. Listen Ron, um...about lunch time," Harry began almost sheepishly.

"You going to apologize for letting Malfoy veela charm me and then call me Weasel?" Ron asked expectantly, and Harry nodded.

"Sorry," he said, and Ron waved it off.

"Yeah, just don't let him do it again, alright? He's been acting like a real brat and its bloody annoying when you don't do anything about it."

"Deal," Harry acquiesced, sliding off the bed. He stood up and put his robe back on before saying goodbye to his two best friends and leaving for his Occlumency lessons.

"Hey Captain, don't forget about Quidditch practice tonight!" Ron called after him, and Harry waved to let him know him had heard.

As soon as Harry left, Ron turned back to Hermione. "So what did Malfoy do to him about the lipstick?"

"I don't know. Harry says nothing, but I don't believe him. He wouldn't have been hiding up here in his room all afternoon over nothing." Hermione looked grim. "Something's going on, and I'm going to find out what."

Harry hadn't exactly *wanted* to resume Occlumency lessons with Snape, but after Lord Voldemort had slithered his way into Harry's mind at the end of last term, Harry had become determined to learn how to keep him out.

Draco had been fascinated by the whole concept of Occlumency, and had wanted to learn as well. Snape was willing to indulge his favorite student a bit, and allowed Draco to come for the last fifteen minutes of each class to learn.

Today was no exception. Harry had been working with Snape for three quarters of an hour before Draco pushed open the door to the Potions classroom and joined them.

"Potter, Professor Snape," the blonde said coolly. Harry felt a sudden rush of nervousness at seeing Draco again for the first time since lunch. Draco's use of his veela powers that afternoon had left Harry shaken and trembling as he realized that if Draco chose he could have Harry any way he wanted, panting and gagging for it with no ability to control his own mind or desires.

At the same time, being with Draco was unbelievable. Nothing Harry had ever felt before came close to the feeling he had had that afternoon, when Draco used his veela powers without inhibition. And now Harry was emotionally torn in so many different directions - he wanted Draco badly and his hormones were begging for him to surrender to the blonde's every whim. At the same time, he was terrified - terrified of having no control, terrified of being pushed farther then he was ready for, and most of all, terrified that Cho was right, that he would never really be anything more for Draco then his favorite sex toy.

Needless to say, Harry was a wreck, and Draco only made it worse when he turned to Snape and, without so much as glancing at Harry, asked, "Would it be alright for me to practice Leglimency on Harry tonight?"

Harry gulped. Draco wanted to use the *Legilimens* spell to access all the memories in Harry's head, and Harry knew exactly which memory Draco was going to be looking for: the memory of whoever had planted that kiss on his cheek that afternoon.

As Draco turned to look at Harry, he had to physically bite his lip to restrain himself from moaning in frustration. The blonde's entire body was still on fire. It was a side effect of using the veela powers, that he was left desperately longing for Harry, even more than usual. The afternoon had been absolute torture as his mind entertained the dirtiest scenarios it possibly could starring himself and Harry.

He would never have confessed it to Harry, but waiting for him to be ready to take things to the next level was driving Draco crazy. More than once he had wondered just how angry Harry would be if he spellbound him just long enough for both of them to get off. So far he hadn't chanced it, but he was worried that if they waited much longer his veela senses would take over and then Harry wouldn't stand a chance.

But so far he had stayed strong, because he knew just how much Harry trusted him not to do anything to hurt him, whether physically or emotionally. Even now he felt guilty about what he had done at lunch - well, at least until he remembered the lipstick on Harry's cheek.

"Very well, Mr. Malfoy. The spell you will need to use to see into Potter's mind is *Legilimens*. Are you ready?"

Draco nodded, and then the Slytherin faced Harry, wand out, ready to cast the spell. Harry just concentrated on guarding his mind, keeping the memories he didn't want Draco to see hidden behind mental barriers.

"*Legilimens!*" Draco shouted, and Harry kept concentrating as hard as he could. He couldn't let Draco see the memory of Cho, but even more important, he couldn't let him see anything from when he was younger and living with the Dursleys. He just wasn't ready for Draco to know about his past. He wasn't sure he ever would be.

Draco watched as memories surfaced and swirled around him. First he was with Harry, Ron and Hermione in Gryffindor common room, laughing and playing wizard's chess. Then the memory shifted, and now he was flying on a Firebolt, chasing after the snitch, the golden ball only inches away from his fingers. Another shift, and he was with Harry underwater, fighting urgently with Merpeople over the floating bodies of Hermione, Cho, and Gabrielle. Then that faded and he was in a small bedroom that didn't look like Hogwart's, and three of the Weasleys were outside the window in a floating car, and were those *bars* on the -

"Enough!" shouted Harry, and shoved Draco out of his mind. They stood, facing each other, each breathing heavily, and the tension in the room was so high that even Snape knew better than to say a word.

"What the hell was I just looking at, Potter?" Draco finally whispered, chest heaving up and down, looking at Harry in confusion.

"Chess. Quidditch. Triwizard Tournament," Harry replied flatly. Draco narrowed his eyes.

"Not those," he said angrily. "That last memory."

"Nothing," Harry relied. "Ron, Fred and George visiting me during summer holidays."

"There were *bars* on your window."

"Standard muggle practice. Keeps burglars out."

Snape raised an eyebrow. Draco didn't look convinced, and opened his mouth to protest. Harry cut him off.

"I have Quidditch practice," he said shortly, and went to leave.

"Harry!" Draco called out, as the brunette reached the door. Harry reluctantly turned around. "Meet me in my room after your practice?" he asked, and Harry hesitated. "Please?" Draco added softly, and Harry gave a short nod before walking out the door.

Draco turned back to Snape. "There's something he's not telling me."

Snape looked less than impressed. "I'm sure there are a great many things Potter isn't telling you, Draco."

Draco furrowed his brow. "But why won't he tell me? He was blocking parts of his mind to me, I could feel it. What doesn't he want me to know?"

"If you are asking me to explain the workings of Mr. Potter's feeble mind, I assure that is a task well beyond my capabilities," Snape said irritably.

In a heart beat Draco's wand was pointed at Snape's chest. "Take that back," the veela snarled, his eyes narrowed and his wand steady.

Snape raised an eyebrow. "Mr. Malfoy," he said, his voice the voice of a man on the very last edges of his patience. "Think very carefully on what you are doing. You are threatening a Hogwart's professor."

Draco refused to back down. "You insulted my mate. I like you and respect you very much, but I won't stand for it. Now take it back," he spat venomously.

Snape looked less than impressed. "*Expelliarmus!*" he said quickly, and Draco's wand flew out of his hand. Snape caught it in a deft movement, and then crossed his arms and looked at Draco pointedly. "I sincerely hope we're finished with this foolishness."

Draco smiled his most beguiling smile. "But Professor, I could never be finished with you," he said sweetly, turning on the veela charms and directing them at Professor Snape. "Why don't you just give me back my wand?" Draco cooed, moving slightly closer.

Snape's eyes seemed slightly out of focus as he smiled vapidly at Draco. "Of course, Draco. Here you are," Snape said in an oily, eager voice. He held out the wand and Draco reached for it.

Just then, Snape blinked twice, and then rapidly shook his head to clear it before yanking the wand out of Draco's grasp and glaring at him. "Nice try. Surely you didn't think that someone who has mastered the art of Occlumency would fall under your spell so easily? You are still a very young veela, Draco. Your powers are not nearly strong enough for that."

Draco was annoyed that his powers hadn't worked, but he just shrugged. "It was worth a try."

Snape narrowed his eyes. "I realize that Potter has been coddling you and treating you like a spoiled and pampered pet, allowing you to treat the rest of your peers in the most appalling of manners. Do not think for one instant that you can behave that way with me."

He handed a now offended looking Draco back his wand. "Now I would suggest you go to your room and wait for Potter. It would seem that you two have much to talk about."

Snape gestured to the door, and sulking, Draco took his leave.

A couple hours later Harry could be found in front of the Antiopean Opaleye portrait, still in his Quidditch practice clothes, knocking hesitantly.

The painting swung open and there was Draco, out of his school uniform and dressed in soft grey slacks and a fitted black sweater. He was holding a glass half-full of pink liquid in one hand.

"Hey," Draco said, stepping back, and Harry walked in. Draco's eyes followed him as he moved, skimming over the athletic pants and long-sleeved Gryffindor t-shirt that Harry had worn to practice. His eyes traveled up to Harry's body to his windswept hair, and he felt his blood begin to stir.

"Hey," Harry returned, his eyes going to Draco's glass. "What're you drinking?"

"Cosmopolitan," Draco replied. "Want one?"

"It's not a very manly looking drink, is it?" Harry said thoughtfully, and Draco rolled his eyes. "What's in it?"

"Vodka, cranberry juice, bit of lime," Draco listed. "It's my mum's favorite."

"Um, no thanks," Harry declined, not looking particularly keen on drinking alcohol around a potentially lusty veela. "Where'd you get the vodka?"

"Theodore Nott gave it to me," Draco explained, taking a sip and going back to ogling Harry.

Harry seemed aware of Draco's eyes on him, and started fidgeting nervously. When Draco shut the portrait behind them, the click of the door swinging into place made Harry jump slightly.

"Do you want to sit down?" Draco asked casually, trying to control the feelings that were beginning to well up within him. The burning lust was beginning to become awfully familiar.

Harry shook his head. "I'm all sweaty and gross from practice," he explained, looking a bit shifty. "I forgot to bring extra clothes with me, so I didn't take a shower or anything. So you...uh...probably don't want to get too close to me."

If Harry thought he was being sneaky, he had no idea who he was dealing with. Draco saw right through Harry's scheme of trying to make himself less desirable so Draco wouldn't jump him. Forgetting that it was his own behavior in the corridor at lunch time that had made Harry nervous in the first place, Draco took offense to Harry's insinuations.

"Why don't you just take one here? I can loan you some clean clothes," he offered, purposefully putting Harry in an uncomfortable position. "I'll even pick out all my biggest stuff, so you can't complain about the size thing." He left Harry no outs.

Harry squirmed a bit, then shook his head. "No, I'm okay, but thanks for the offer," he said politely.

Draco rolled his eyes. "You know, you're perfectly safe, Potter," he said casually, finishing his drink and setting the glass down on the desk. "I'm not going to jump you in the shower."

Harry bristled a bit. "I didn't think you would."

"Really." The two boys stared challengingly at each other for a moment before Draco raised his eyebrows. "So go on then. Take a shower, if you're not worried."

"Fine, then. I will," Harry said, but he sounded far from secure. "Do you have clothes for me?"

Draco nodded. "Why don't you go ahead and get in the shower and I'll bring you some," Draco suggested. He didn't miss the way Harry's eyes widened to the size of dinner plates at that.

"Oh, for God's sake, I'm just going to put them on the counter," Draco snapped, exasperated. "I'm not going to jump into the shower and rape you. I assure you I have more self control than that."

Harry didn't look convinced, so Draco challenged him a bit more.

"Are you scared of me, Potter?" he asked, his voice low and confrontational. "Worried you might have to defend your virtue from the big, bad veela?"

Draco knew if there was one thing Harry Potter refused to be, it was scared.

Harry glared at Draco for a moment. "I'm not scared of you, Malfoy," he said angrily.

Then, as if to prove it, he deliberately reached down and grabbed the hem of his shirt, and began to slowly pull it over his head. This time, it was Draco's eyes that widened.

"W-what are you doing, Harry?" he asked, his voice slightly unsteady as Harry pulled the shirt off the rest of the way and tossed it on the floor.

"I'm stripping down for my shower, Draco. Why, does that *bother* you?" Harry asked, his voice cold. Underneath his long-sleeved t-shirt he was wearing nothing but a tight, fitted tank top, and Draco's mind began to spin as it took in the way the tank clung to Harry's torso. Harry then reached down and began to pull at the drawstring that held up his pants.

Draco gulped nervously. "Wait...wait, Harry, are you sure you want to do that?" he asked, unable to take his eyes off Harry's hands as they worked with the knot, slowly untying the athletic pants - the big, baggy athletic pants that would surely fall off if they were no longer held up by a drawstring.

Right before the string came completely undone, Harry stopped. Draco made a noise of frustration. His eyes continued to travel up and down Harry's chest, over the broad shoulders and down the flat abs covered only by thin cotton, to the top of Harry's hip bones, exposed by his baggy pants. His eyes darted back up to Harry's glowing green eyes, to find them narrowed slightly in Draco's direction.

"I'm going to take a shower now, Draco," Harry said, the emotion in his voice unreadable. "Can I trust that I won't have to defend my virtue from the big, bad veela?"

Draco closed his eyes in frustration. This *wasn't fair*. He felt slightly out of control, and he was hornier than anyone should rightly be at the sight of a half-dressed man. His mind still dwelled on kissing Harry at lunch, and now the he had the sight of Harry half naked in his bedroom, still glowing from the wind and cold and exercise. There was nothing he wanted more in this moment than to shove Harry down on the bed and give him the seeing to of his life.

Instead of doing that, he narrowed his eyes back at Harry. "Don't flatter yourself, Potter," he spat, sexual frustration making his voice a little sharper than he had intended. "I promise I'm not even remotely interested in seducing you right now."

"Good," Harry said back shortly, and disappeared into the bathroom. A couple moments later Draco heard the water running, and he just stood in the middle of the room for several minutes, willing himself to get back under control.

Harry knew, he *knew*, that he shouldn't have provoked Draco like that. It was like holding a piece of raw meat in front of the jaws of a werewolf. But he was angry. Draco had used his veela powers on him at lunch without Harry's consent, and left him a trembling, shaken mess in the corridor. Now he was being sarcastic to Harry, almost mocking him for being nervous around Draco. Damn it, he had every reason to be nervous. He wanted to trust Draco, but when the blonde kept staring at him and licking his lips it made him worry a bit.

Harry heard the bathroom door open, and the sound of Draco moving about. Then the noise stopped. Harry waited to hear the bathroom door close so he would know Draco had left, but he didn't hear it.

He waited, and waited, and *finally* heard Draco leave and the door click shut behind him. Harry let out a breath he hadn't even known he was holding.

Back in the room, Draco was laying on his bed, one arm flung over his face, his breathing heavy. He knew he had probably freaked Harry out by staying in there so long. He had meant to just lay the clothes and the counter and leave, but the realization that Harry was naked behind that thin curtain, naked and warm and wet - it had driven Draco crazy.

Even now, laying on his bed, a thick door between him and Harry, Draco knew he was on the absolute edge of his self-control. His mind was spinning, his breathing was shallow, and he could feel his restraint slipping. He felt almost drugged, and the pull towards Harry was stronger than ever.

He was very thankful to hear the water shut off, and to hear sounds of Harry moving about, obviously getting dressed. He took a deep steadying breath, commanding himself to focus on other things, on the talk he and Harry needed to have.

He heard the door open, and then Harry's voice cut through his thoughts.

"Is there a *reason* you didn't get me a shirt, Malfoy?" Harry's voice was not amused, and Draco realized he had, indeed, forgotten to get Harry a shirt. He sat up on the bed, and turned to Harry, apology on the tip of his tongue -

And promptly forgot anything and everything other than the vision in front of him: Harry, naked from the waist up, dressed only in a pair of Draco's jeans. Not only that, but his hair was still dripping wet and glistened with moisture, and his skin was almost dewy with water.

Something inside Draco snapped.

"Draco, come on," Harry demanded, not liking the way Draco was eyeing him. The veela raised his head to look at him, his pupils so dilated so that his eyes almost appeared black.

"I need a shirt," Harry said, feeling uncomfortable, as Draco didn't move or answer him.

"Draco, knock it off. Stop staring at me," Harry said irritably, and Draco stood up. Instead of going towards his closet to get Harry a shirt, however, Draco was now heading straight towards Harry.

"Draco?" Harry asked, and took a nervous step backward as the blonde kept coming forwards. "What are you doing?"

Harry kept backing up as Draco advanced on him, until Harry felt his back hit the cold stone wall. Harry closed his eyes as Draco pressed into him, panic beginning to sweep through his body.

"Draco, please don't," Harry whispered. "Not like this."

Something in Harry's pleading tone of voice must have cut through Draco's hormone-crazed haze, because the blonde suddenly backed away from Harry as fast as he could.

Relief flooded through Harry, and he relaxed. He knew he could trust Draco, that the veela wouldn't actually hurt him or force him.

Draco meanwhile, was tense as a bowstring and most definitely not relaxed as he realized that he was maybe three minutes away from losing all control and ravishing Harry.

Harry opened his mouth and was about to speak when Draco spoke first. "I think you better go, Harry."

"Draco," Harry began, but Draco cut him off.

"I mean it," the blonde said harshly, dropping down onto his bed and pointing at the door. "Something's wrong with me. Not to mince words, but in half a second you really are going to be defending your virtue from the big, bad veela."

Harry shook his head. "Look, I'm not afraid of you, I'm really not. Let me just put a shirt on and you'll feel better, I promise."

"You don't understand," Draco said angrily. He wasn't getting through to Harry, and the momentary control he had was beginning to slip. "I can't control myself right now. You have to go."

"Draco, I'm not leaving, I trust you. I'm sure you can control this," Harry said rationally, refusing to be cowed. "We have a lot to talk about, and - "

"Harry, GET OUT," Draco shouted, clenching his hands into fists, feeling the veela powers beginning to leak through as his attempts to control them began to fail.

"Stop worrying so much, you'll be fine," Harry said reassuringly, moving away from the wall towards the bed, and towards Draco.

"Potter, *listen to me*," Draco began, as Harry walked over to him, oblivious to the danger he was in. "You need to leave. I'm losing control, and if you don't want to have sex in the next two minutes, you need to get out. Please, Harry," Draco pleaded, squeezing his eyes shut so he wasn't looking at Harry, but still feeling his self-control teetering on the brink.

Harry now seemed to be getting really worried about Draco. He reached the bed and stood right in front of Draco's knees, looking at him anxiously. Draco face was flushed and his breathing was too heavy.

"Draco, are you okay?" he asked with concern, reaching down to feel Draco's forehead.

The instant Harry's fingers made contact with Draco's skin the last bit of control that Draco had snapped.

He reached out and grabbed Harry's wrist, yanking him down towards the bed as hard as he could. Harry was caught off-guard and lost his balance, tumbling down on the bed on his back. Before he could do anything Draco rolled on top of him and pinned him, catching his lips with his own even as he held both of Harry's wrists securely in his grasp.

"I told you to get out," the blonde whispered harshly against Harry lips, as Harry squirmed and tried to free himself underneath him. "You should have listened to me."

Harry had a fleeting moment of absolute panic and fear before that now-familiar rush of sensation clicked in: Draco's veela powers.

And in a split-second Harry was no longer scared but was moaning under Draco's touch as the blonde ran his hands over Harry's bare skin. Harry reached down and grabbed the hem of Draco's sweater, yanking it over his head.

Both boys hissed as their bare chests came into contact for the first time, the skin-on-skin sensation sending bolts of pleasure coursing through them both. Harry rolled them over so that he was on top, and began to lick and suck on Draco's neck before sliding down to apply those same ministrations to Draco's chest.

Harry took one of Draco's nipples in his teeth, sucking hard before he bit down. Draco's eyes rolled back into his head, and he slid his hands down Harry's back before grabbing the Gryffindor's arse and pressing Harry's groin down against his own.

"Ohgod," Harry breathed as Draco began to rock his hips against Harry's, and he bit down on Draco's neck to keep a stream of swear words from leaving his mouth. Draco seized the opportunity to roll them over again, pinning Harry on his back against the mattress and grinding down into him, a sheen of sweat covering his pale skin and making him glow ethereally.

Harry reached up and sank his hands into Draco's silky hair, grabbing the blonde locks tightly in his fists and pulling gently, arching Draco head back so he could kiss and bite his neck. Draco shuddered above him, and moved one hand behind Harry's head to pull his face up to his own, pressing a kiss of almost bruising intensity on Harry's lips.

The feeling of the kiss, Draco's soft lips against his own and his tongue deep in Harry's mouth, pushed Harry over the edge. He came with a cry against Draco's mouth, and Draco, who had been hovering on the edge himself, now came hard as Harry's cry of ecstasy triggered his own release.

Draco collapsed on top of Harry, burying his head in the space between Harry's neck and shoulder, breathing heavily. He felt Harry's arms wrap around his back, pulling him close, and he smiled in contentment.

Draco lay there happily for a moment, a feeling of utter bliss coursing through his body, before he felt Harry suddenly go rigid underneath him.

"Get off me," Harry whispered, and stunned, Draco propped himself up on his arms to look into Harry's face.

"What?" he asked, clearly confused, and then Harry's hands were on his chest.

"I said get *off* me," Harry snarled, shoving hard, and Draco moved off Harry as quickly as he could, half from the force of Harry's arms and half from the force of Harry's command.

Draco moved over to the edge of the bed and Harry quickly stood up, and without a second look at Draco began moving towards the door.

"Harry?" Draco asked, standing up, worried and uncertain. Harry whirled around to face him, and Draco was taken aback by the sheer fury in those bright green eyes.

And then Draco realized what he had done.

"Oh my God," he whispered, as the comprehension tore through him. "Oh Harry, I'm so sorry, please, I didn't mean to," he pleaded, and Harry just continued to look at him furiously.

"*Why*, Draco?" he asked harshly.

"Harry, *please*," Draco begged. "I don't know what came over me. I couldn't control it. I tried but I couldn't. I'm so sorry."

Harry glared at him. "I *trusted* you!" he said, and Draco winced at the raw emotion in Harry's voice.

"I know, and I'm so sorry, Harry, I really am. Although, to be fair," Draco said, trying to defend himself. "I tried to warn you. I told you to get out."

"Oh, so now this is *my* fault?" Harry asked, incredulous and angry. "Because I didn't leave?"

"I'm not saying it's *your* fault," Draco said, beginning to get upset himself. "But it's not completely my fault either! I'm sorry if I hurt you but I'm part veela, I can't help these things!"

"How bloody convenient, Draco," said Harry, his voice steeped in sarcasm. "You can take advantage of me and blame it on being a veela. That's nice, really nice."

"Look, I lost control, and I'm sorry! I didn't mean to!" Draco growled, his temper rising.

"But you still did it! How am I ever supposed to trust you again?" Harry said furiously.

Draco folded his arms over his chest defensively. "Now you're just being a drama queen. You can still trust me."

"Can I?" Harry said, his eyes glinting. "How do I know that the next time you fancy a fuck you're not going to turn on the charm and pound me into the mattress whether I want it or not?"

That comment made Draco very angry. "I would *never* do that," he snarled, his eyes narrowed into silvery slits. "I care about you too much."

"Really? Because you've got a funny way of showing it," Harry said bitterly. "Using your veela powers to control me just because you want to get off."

"Oh for God's sake Harry," Draco snapped, now every bit as furious as Harry. "Did you ever think that maybe this wouldn't have happened if you weren't so goddamn frigid in the first place?"

As soon as the words left his mouth Draco regretted them. The look on Harry's face sent a flood of cold guilt and shame into Draco's stomach as he realized what he had just said.

"Fuck you, Malfoy," Harry spat, and turned to leave. "And *don't* follow me," he added, his voice cold as ice as he slipped out the portrait.

"Harry, wait, no," Draco said, trying to run after him, but it was too late. Harry had gone, and Draco, unable to disobey Harry's order, couldn't follow.

The Veela Enigma

Chapter 15: Absolut Chaos

Harry ran through the halls of Hogwart's, barely noticing where he was going. The corridors were cold and he still wasn't wearing a shirt, but the heat in his body fueled by his running and his tumultuous feelings kept him burning. He ran, and ran, and he didn't stop until he found himself in an unfamiliar section of the castle that appeared to be empty.

Harry finally paused to catch his breath, and leaned against the stone wall, the coolness of the stones a welcome sensation against his burning skin.

A million mixed emotions were flowing through him, the most notable an aching mix of hurt and foolishness and betrayal. Why had Draco done that to him? Why? And why hadn't he listened to Draco when he said to get out?

Harry slid down the wall and sat on the cold floor, tilting his head backwards until it rested against the stones and closing his eyes. He heard approaching footsteps and he prayed that whoever it was would just leave him the hell alone.

"Harry? Is that you?"

Harry recognized that voice, and slowly opened his eyes. It was Cho, who was looking down at him with concern.

"Cho," Harry began weakly. "What are you doing here?"

Cho smiled. "I could ask you the same question." At Harry puzzled look, she gestured down the corridor. "This is Ravenclaw territory. Our common room's not far from here. Bit out of the way for a Gryffindor like yourself, isn't it?"

Harry shrugged. "Guess so." He began to push himself up. "Sorry about that, I'll get out of your way."

Cho stopped him with a hand on his shoulder. "No, you're fine. No one really uses this corridor anyway." She took a closer look at him. "Harry, is everything alright? Where's your shirt?"

Harry smiled thinly. "Long story. Look, I'll just get going," he said, attempting to stand up again.

Cho wasn't having it. "Just stay put, silly," she said, kneeling down to sit next to Harry on the floor. She turned to rest her back against the stone wall as well, moving so that her shoulder was only inches from Harry's shoulder. "So, want to tell me what's bothering you?"

Back in his room, Draco was sitting in his armchair, curled up in a tight ball, trembling. He felt so horrible - sick, nauseous and dizzy. What had he just done? He had let his veela powers take over, and had taken advantage of Harry. And to make matters worse he had insulted his mate and called him frigid. Oh God, the look on Harry's face...

Draco stood up, wobbling slightly, and staggered over to his desk. He wanted to tear after Harry and apologize, to beg and plead with Harry to forgive him. But he was a veela and Harry was his mate, and thanks to Harry's command that wasn't an option.

He was so miserable, and he could only think of one thing that might possibly make him forget what had just happened with Harry:

Vodka.

"I can't believe I'm telling you this," Harry said for the third time, after spilling the story of what had just happened with Draco to Cho. Cho smiled.

"You needed to tell someone, Harry," she said, knocking his shoulder with her own playfully, "And who better than an old friend?"

Harry smiled back. Cho hadn't quite pulled back after that teasing bump, and now their shoulders were pressed together, as were Cho's right leg and Harry's left. Harry gave it only a fleeting thought - sure, he and Cho might have shared a couple kisses last year, but that relationship had blown over, leaving them with just a platonic friendship like the one he shared with Hermione.

Right?

Granted, Harry hadn't had a crush that lasted two years on Hermione, and Hermione didn't have Cho's long, silky black hair or almond-shaped chocolate-colored eyes, but still. He and Cho were just friends, and friends sometimes sat a bit snuggled up together, especially if they were having a meaningful conversation.

"So," Harry said, feeling quite a bit calmer than he had been all day, "Are you still seeing Michael Corner?"

Cho laughed sweetly and shook her head. "Nope. That ship sailed ages ago."

"Oh, sorry to hear that," Harry said, completely insincerely. After Michael and Ginny went out he had come to think that Michael was a bit of an idiot. "What happened?"

Cho paused for a moment. "He seemed to think that I hadn't really gotten over you," Cho said, laying her head against Harry's shoulder.

Harry let out a short laugh. "Well, that was a silly thing for him to think, wasn't it?" he said, letting Cho rest her head against him. After all, maybe she was tired and didn't want to hold her head up anymore.

"Oh, I don't know how silly it was, Harry," Cho whispered softly reaching down, and entwining the fingers of her right hand gently with Harry's left.

A very faint alarm bell began to ring somewhere in Harry's head.

Cho lifted her head up to stare into Harry's bright green eyes. "I think Michael may have been right."

And with that she leaned in and kissed Harry.

BANG! BANG! BANG!

Draco covered his ears in irritation as he heard a loud knock on his portrait.

"Goway!" he slurred, knocking back the remainder of the alcohol in his second shot of vodka.

"Malfoy, it's me, Nott! Look, I know you're in there and I need to talk to you! Now open the portrait, damn it!"

Theodore Nott's voice drifted through the dragon portrait, and Draco rolled his eyes.

"NO!" he shouted, slumping back in the armchair. "I said GO AWAY!"

"I'm not going anywhere!" Nott's voice drifted back in. "And I can stay here all night if I need to, so get off your arse and open the door!"

"FINE," Draco finally huffed, standing up. He made his way very unsteadily to the portrait and threw it open.

"What do you want?" he asked, holding himself up with a hand against the door frame, feeling rather unsteady on his feet.

Nott suddenly seemed a million miles away. "Draco, did I ever tell you that I'm a dragon slayer?" His face had a dreamy and vacant expression.

"For Christ's sake," Draco said, rolling his eyes and causing himself to sway dangerously.

"I am," Nott said insistently, giving Draco a coy smile. "And I'm filthy rich, too, and so good in bed. Why, I could rock your world so hard that - "

"Got...to turn...these bloody powers...off," Draco mumbled, and attempted to concentrate. "Bloody veela powers," he continued to mumble to himself. "Make Nott crazy, make Harry leave."

After a great deal of effort, he finally got a handle on the attraction and turned it off. Theodore Nott's eyes cleared up immediately.

"Thanks, Malfoy," he said, shaking his head.

"Don't mention it," Draco said magnanimously, "Stupid powers. Keep getting away from me tonight."

"Do they." It wasn't a question.

Nott was looking at Draco with a calculating gleam in his eye. "Malfoy, have you been drinking the vodka I gave you?"

"Maybe," Draco said, moving away from the door frame to let Nott enter the room and nearly falling over in the process.

"Lovely," Nott said, pulling out his wand.

Draco looked at him and blinked a couple times. "Why's that lovely?" he asked, placing a hand on the foot of his bed to steady himself.

"Because," Nott said, smiling brightly, "It makes it so much easier to do this." He pointed his wand at Draco.

"*Imperio!*"

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The instant Cho's lips touched Harry's, he froze.

A thousand thoughts went through his mind at the speed of light: Cho still wanted him, Cho was so sweet and uncomplicated, Cho couldn't ever hurt him like Draco could...

Draco.

The blonde's face flashed in front of Harry's eyes, and he pulled back from Cho.

"Cho," he said, backing away on the stone floor, "I can't do this."

Cho rolled her eyes. "Because of Malfoy? Harry, come on."

"Yes, because of Draco," Harry said, standing up quickly. "Do you have any idea how devastated he would be?"

Cho stood up as well and leaned casually against the stone wall. "So what? He chose you, Harry, not the other way around. He needs you, but you don't need him. And why the hell do you even want him after what he did to you today? He took advantage of you, Harry, and if you stay with him he'll probably rape you."

Harry hesitated, and Cho saw her chance. "I would never do that to you, Harry," she said softly, walking closer.

"It was an accident," Harry said swiftly, as Cho inched ever closer. "Draco didn't mean to do it, he just lost control of his powers. It won't happen again."

Cho laughed derisively. "Harry, don't be naïve. Of course it will happen again. Malfoy will do that to you every chance he gets."

"No, he won't," Harry said firmly. "He tried to warn me before it happened. He told me to get out and I didn't listen."

"He called you frigid."

"Everyone says things they don't mean during a fight. We were both upset. He cares about me and he won't let happen again." Harry wasn't sure whether or not he believed this, but he wasn't going to let Cho drag Draco through the mud.

"He doesn't care about you!" Cho said viciously. "He just wants you for sex!"

"You don't know that," Harry said defensively.

Cho threw her hands up in the air in a gesture of absolute frustration. "Are you really that thick, Harry? How can you defend that monster?" she asked incredulously.

"He's *not* a monster, Cho!" Harry was getting mad.

"Oh yes he is," Cho insisted, and she and Harry faced off, glaring at each other. "He's not even human! Why would you want some half-blood freak when you could be with someone normal?"

Harry's eyes nearly bugged out of his head. "A *half-blood freak*?" he snarled, now very angry. "Is that what you think Draco is?"

"Yes!" Cho snapped back. "He's a dangerous *animal*, Harry!"

"No he's NOT!"

Cho set her mouth in a very thin line. "Fine, Harry, have it your way. Go running back to your little veela. And when he uses his veela powers to rape you, *which he will*, you know where to find me."

And with that she huffed off down the corridor. Harry squeezed his eyes shut in frustration and turned and slammed his fist in the stone wall.

"Fuck," he cursed under his breath, shaking his aching hand, and then whirled around and took off, heading back to Gryffindor tower.

"Follow me, Draco," Nott said evenly, and Draco obediently followed him. Nott led Draco up the corridors and out of the dungeons, and then past the empty Great Hall and down another corridor. Finally they stopped in front of an unused classroom and walked into the room.

"And now we wait," Nott said pleasantly, hopping up and sitting on one of the desks, swinging his legs in the air. "Sit down," he said, gesturing to Draco, who dutifully sat down at the desk next to him. "And drink some more vodka," he said, pulling another bottle out of his bag and passing it to Draco. "You're so much more fun to control when you're drunk."

Draco grasped the bottle and took a big sip, coughing slightly as the liquid burned his throat. He passed it back to Nott, who gave him a patronizing smile.

"You never did any research about veela, did you?" he asked, and Draco just stared blankly at him. Nott closed his eyes.

"Veela, or even part-veela, should never drink alcohol without understanding the consequences," he recited. "As alcohol causes a wizard to lose their inhibitions, the effects are ten-fold upon those with active veela blood."

He paused and opened his eyes. *"Understanding the Veela in You, page 56. Do you know what that means, Draco?"*

Draco just continued to stare straight through Nott, eyes unfocused.

"It means," Nott said, deciding to explain things to Draco anyway, "That veela can't hold their liquor. A couple shots of vodka and you're so drunk you can barely walk. Not only that, but it's very, very hard for a drunk veela to control their veela powers."

Nott cocked his head. "Hell, just one drink is more than enough to make a veela lose control in the right circumstances. The only thing that's keeping your powers from coming back on is the fact that I've got you locked down tight under the Imperious Curse."

Nott studied Draco for a moment, to see if that got a reaction, but the veela didn't budge. Nott shrugged.

"Well, be sure to tell the Dark Lord that I did my research," he said, and handed the bottle back to Draco. "Now drink up, lovey. Cheers."

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Harry burst into the Gryffindor common room, red-faced, shirtless, one hand scraped and bleeding. Ron and Hermione looked up from their spot on the couch, mouths dropping open in shock as they took in Harry's condition.

"Harry, what on earth...?" Hermione started to ask, but Lavender beat her to it.

"Harry, what happened to you?" she asked, quickly standing up from the table where she was working on Advanced Divination with Parvati. "You're all red and sweaty. Do you have a fever? Here, let me..." she strode over to Harry, reaching out to feel his forehead.

Harry jerked away. "I'm fine, really, but thanks," he said, slightly shortly.

Lavender ignored his protest. "Don't be silly, let me just check if..." Lavender's mouth suddenly fell open. "Are you wearing lipstick?"

Harry's good hand flew to his lips reflexively and he cursed Cho again in his mind. "Lavender, don't be silly, I - "

"Oh my God, Harry, you're not *wearing* lipstick, that's someone *else's* lipstick. You've been snogging someone other than Malfoy!"

Lavender said this last part a little too loudly, and whispers broke out through the common room.

Harry closed his eyes and gritted his teeth. "Lavender, I haven't been snogging anyone, I've been - "

"Oh, it's alright, Harry, I won't tell Draco," Lavender cooed, pressing up close to Harry. "It'll be our little secret."

Harry just stared at her, open-mouthed.

Lavender pressed on. "'In fact, as long as you're open to snogging other people, maybe you and I could have a go?"

Harry snapped.

"That is IT!" he shouted, whipping out his wand. "If ONE MORE PERSON bloody tries to get in my pants tonight, I'm going to start hexing limbs off! Do you understand?!?"

Lavender backed away, alarmed. Hermione and Ron exchanged worried glances and then ran over to Harry.

"Okay, come on, Harry, there's a good lad. Come upstairs with your nice friends to the nice room with the nice bed," Ron said, grasping one arm.

"Yes, bed, wonderful idea Ron," Hermione said, grabbing Harry's other arm. "Let's go, Harry, up we get, let's have a lovely little best friends sort of chat."

Harry slumped in relief and let his two best friends drag him upstairs to his bedroom. Once inside, Harry fell down on his bed face first and buried his head in his pillow.

Ron and Hermione sat down on either side of him on the bed.

"Give me your hand, Harry," Hermione said, and without looking up Harry extended his right hand for Hermione.

She pursed her lips and studied it for a moment. "What did you hit?"

"Stone wall," Harry mumbled into his pillow. Hermione and Ron exchanged worried glances.

"Harry, really, you could have broken bones like that," Hermione said, casting a couple healing spells over Harry's bruised and bloody hand.

"I know," Harry sighed, rolling on his back. "But I had to let it out somehow."

Ron looked at him carefully. "You look like you've had a rough evening."

"A bit, yeah."

Ron nodded thoughtfully. "So...who's been trying to get in your pants?"

Harry groaned. "You don't want to know."

"Try us," Hermione said, reaching out and playing with Harry's hair. "You can always tell us anything."

Harry sighed again, and began his story.

"Know what this is, Draco?"

Draco didn't move.

"It's a portkey," Nott said, dangling a medallion on a long gold chain in front of Draco's eyes. "And it's going to take your hammered arse straight to the Dark Lord's personal chambers, or so I was told. No idea what he wants with you, but I don't question my orders."

Nott fingered the medallion, rolling it in his hand. "In case you were wondering, it's one of those time activated portkeys. It's going to become active in," he paused and glanced at his watch. "Oooh, just about twenty minutes. Aren't you excited, Draco?"

Draco's eyes did stray up to Nott's face at these words, but he did nothing. Nott continued to talk to Draco anyway.

"You know, after I give you to the Dark Lord I become a fully-fledged Death Eater. I'm so looking forward to that. The Dark Lord said that if I succeed in this mission then he'll forgive me screwing up with Potter. In fact, he might even let me try to bring Potter to him."

At Harry's name, Draco perked up. "Harry..." he said, and Nott watched in amusement as Draco began to resist the Imperious curse.

"You can't fight off the curse, Draco," he said patronizingly. "It works *amazingly* well on veela. Something to do with veela already primed for control by their mates. Really, don't even bother trying."

"Harry..." Draco said again, blinking rapidly. Nott rolled his eyes.

"What, you actually think Potter is going to come and save you?"

Draco shook his head "no" violently.

Nott hadn't expected that reaction. "No? Why not?"

Draco looked down at the floor.

"Draco, answer me," Nott commanded. "Why isn't Potter coming to save you?"

Draco bit his lip. "He's mad at me," he finally whispered.

Oh, this was too good. Malfoy and Potter had had a fight? This could be fun, if Nott handled it right. "Did you do something to him, Draco?" he asked sternly, like a scolding parent.

Draco nodded.

"What did you do?" Nott asked, curious.

"Used my powers without asking," Draco said, looking ashamed.

Nott nodded thoughtfully, and then the game began. "That was a horrible thing to do, Draco, treating your mate like that. Complete and utterly horrible. How could you do that to him? Harry's never going to forgive you for that, you know."

Tears began to well up in Draco's eyes, and Nott pressed on. "He'll never, ever forgive you. He's going to hate you forever."

"No!" Draco cried, looking at Nott, horrified. He blinked, and a tear fell down his cheek. "Harry..."

Nott shook his head. "There's no Harry here," he said harshly, continuing to wreck havoc on the veela's fragile, drunken psyche. "Harry doesn't want you anymore. He's found somebody better."

"No," Draco said fervently, shaking his head. "No, no, no..."

"Yes, Draco," Nott said mercilessly, his words designed to cut Draco to the quick. "Harry hates you because of what you did. You screwed things up with your mate, and he'll never want you ever again. He doesn't love you anymore."

Nott watched in glee as Draco completely broke before him, his face crumpling as tears began streaming down his cheeks.

"Harry..." the veela sobbed, burying his head in his arms on the desk, his shoulders shaking. Nott smiled and fingered his wand.

"That was just too easy," he said.

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"...and then I ran in here and Lavender said she wanted to snog me and...yeah. I kind of lost it."

"And you're still not going to tell us who kissed you in the corridor, Harry?" Hermione asked, and Harry shook his head no.

"If Draco finds out, he'll kill her, and he and I have enough problems to deal with as it is."

Ron looked confused. "I thought Malfoy's veela powers didn't work on you."

Harry shrugged. "They do, but only when we're alone, it seems."

"Well, obviously," Hermione said, rolling her eyes. "When there are multiple people around it dilutes the strength of the powers and you can resist them better."

"Yeah, well, too bad there wasn't anyone else in Draco's room tonight," Harry said, slightly bitterly. "That would have solved our problems."

Hermione sat back against the headboard of the bed and looked distraught. "This is so weird. I can't believe he did that too you."

Ron shook his head. "Me either."

Harry sat up in the bed. "You guys are surprised? But you both were always warning me that Draco was really dangerous and I needed to be careful and keep him in line. I would have thought you expected him to do something like this."

"He's very dangerous to other people, Harry. I don't think I ever actually believed he'd be dangerous to *you*," Hermione said, looking grim.

Ron shook his head. "Yeah, veela are a bit scary and all, but they practically worship their mates. No matter how horny he gets, it's hard for me to take in that he actually took advantage of you."

"Are you sure you've told us everything?" Hermione asked.

"Yeah," Harry said.

"Everything *everything*, Harry. Every little detail. There could be something important that we missed."

Harry rolled his eyes. "What more do you want me to say? That he met me at the door wearing grey trousers and a tight black sweater holding what must have been the gayest looking drink I've ever seen? And then he said "hey" and I said "hey" and - "

Hermione snapped to attention. "Back up. Drink? What drink?"

Harry shrugged. "Called it a "cosmopolitan." Cranberry juice, lime, vodka. Said it was his mum's favorite."

Hermione's mouth dropped open. "He was DRINKING???" she screeched.

Harry and Ron both looked at her, stunned.

"Yeah..." Harry finally ventured. "So what?"

"SO WHAT?" Hermione's hand shot down and grabbed the book that Harry had placed under his pillow at lunch. "Don't you bloody READ?"

"Yes!" Harry protested. "But I've been busy!"

Hermione opened the book, scanned through it a bit, and then threw it back at Harry.

"Read that," she said, pointing to the words at the top of the page: *Veela and Alcohol*. Harry glanced back at Ron, who shrugged. As Harry read the first paragraph, his eyes grew wider and wider.

"Oh my God," he finally said, closing the book. "It wasn't his fault. He had been drinking alcohol, and he was already having trouble controlling his powers, and then I was stripping in front of him..." he trailed off, looking upset. "And he tried to get me leave, and I didn't. Merlin, what a mess."

Ron took the book from Harry and scanned the passages for himself. "Gosh, Harry, what are you going to do? Malfoy must be devastated."

Harry furrowed his brow. "You really think so?"

Hermione nodded. "Oh yes, poor Draco's probably heartbroken right now. Imagine that you took advantage of the love of your life because of something you couldn't control. Now multiply that by ten and you've got what a veela would be feeling right now."

Harry was stuck on something she had said. "Love of his life?"

"Well, yeah. That's you," Hermione said, puzzled by Harry's confused expression.

"But...I thought it was just a sex thing for veela. I thought veela couldn't really love," Harry said, and the looks on Ron and Hermione's faces spoke volumes.

"Who told you that rubbish?" Ron asked. "Even I knew that veela fall in love."

"Yeah Harry," said Hermione, looking concerned. "I mean, sure, the sex is a big part of it for veela, but it's definitely not just a sex thing. Veela fall deeply, madly, and passionately in love with their mates. The only people who say it's just a sex thing are those few prejudiced people who believe that veelas are really animals. Where on earth did you hear that?"

But Harry wasn't listening anymore. He had gone very pale, and was now jumping off the bed.

"I've got to find Draco," he said, throwing open his trunk and grabbing a t-shirt. "There's been a horrible misunderstanding and I left him alone with an entire bottle of vodka. He's probably alone and drunk and miserable and I've got to go to him."

He went for the door, then promptly turned around and went back to his trunk. He dug around a bit and pulled out his trusty Maurader's Map.

"Last time I went looking for him I couldn't find him anywhere," he explained to Ron and Hermione. "Let me just check the map and make sure I know where he is."

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Theodore Nott slid off the desk and walked over to where Draco was sobbing into his arms.

"Draco, look at me," he commanded, and Draco lifted his head, tears still running down his cheeks. Nott studied him for a moment.

"God, you're even beautiful when you cry," he said softly, reaching out to touch Draco's face. Draco didn't move. Nott fingered the medallion portkey in his hands, then slipped it over Draco's head so it hung around his neck.

"Ten minutes, Draco," he said in a business-like tone, but the look in his eyes was far from business. Nott was an excellent student, much like Hermione. When the Dark Lord had assigned him to kidnap Draco, he had done all the research he possibly could about veela before designing his plan. That's how he knew that the vodka would make Draco exceedingly drunk and easy to control.

Now, however, something else he had learned about veela was running through his mind.

"Draco, stand up," he finally said, and the blond stood and faced Nott, sniffing slightly. Nott reached out and captured a lock of Draco's hair, letting it slip through his fingers. It felt like silk. Knowing that if the Dark Lord ever found out what he was about to do he might be killed, he still couldn't help himself.

He leaned forward and kissed Draco hard on the lips. Draco still didn't move, so Nott commanded him again.

"Draco, kiss me," he said, reaching one hand behind Draco's head and crushing his mouth with his own. Obediently Draco opened his mouth and began to kiss Nott back, and Draco's sweet taste combined with the heady power of control made Nott reckless.

"Turn on your veela powers for me. Just a little," he whispered, and under the Imperious Curse Draco had no other choice. The kiss immediately became a sea of pleasurable heat for Nott, who gasped at the sudden change in sensations.

"Wow," he breathed, pulling back for a second and looking at Draco in awe. "Potter is one lucky bastard. Or was one, I should say," he smirked.

At the word "Potter," Draco started. "Harry..." he whispered, and Nott rolled his eyes.

"Shut up about Potter," he said harshly. "Or I'll use the Crutiatius curse on you, understand?"

Draco just continued to stare at Nott with vacant eyes. Nott narrowed his own.

"Kiss me, Draco, and use your veela powers again. Stronger this time," he ordered, wrapping his arms around Draco's waist and pulling him tight against his own body. Draco dutifully leaned forward and began to kiss Nott again.

Nott became completely lost in the amazing play of sensations from just a kiss. He felt almost drunk with the pleasure of Draco's soft lips against his own, the blonde's veela powers acting as a powerful aphrodisiac.

Maybe that's why he didn't hear the door burst open.

"What the FUCK is going on here?"

Nott did, however, hear that.

Pulling away from Draco and looking at the door, Nott felt his stomach jump into his throat. Standing in the doorway, flanked by a furious Hermione Granger and Ron Weasley, was Harry Potter, looking absolutely murderous. His chest was heaving, his green eyes were glowing, and his wand was pointed straight at Nott's heart.

"Theodore Nott, you disgusting piece of shit," Harry snarled. "Get your fucking hands off my veela."

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The Veela Enigma

Chapter 16: Mind Games

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At the sound of his mate's voice, Draco jerked.

"Harry," he whimpered, twisting around in Nott's arms to see if by some miracle his mate had actually come back. Nott immediately tightened his grip around Draco, now holding him tightly from behind, his arms locked around Draco's waist to keep him from escaping.

"You're not going anywhere, Draco. Now hold still," Nott said to the trapped veela, and Draco, still under the Imperious curse, stopped trying to break free.

"Let him go, Nott," Harry growled, his wand still pointed at Theodore Nott. Behind him, Ron and Hermione had drawn their wands as well.

"Not on your life, Potter," Nott said, tightening his grip mercilessly and making Draco cry out in pain.

Harry saw red. "Let. Him. GO," he snarled, advancing forward, "Or I promise when I'm done with you, the House Elves will still be cleaning your blood from these walls ten years from now."

Nott took a couple steps backwards, dragging Draco with him. He pulled out his wand and pointed it at Draco's temple. "Sorry, Potter, but Draco's not going anywhere. And if you come any closer then I'll make him suffer more."

Harry paused. Draco was already trembling, and his eyes were glassy and unfocused. "What did you do to him, Nott?"

"Like I'd tell you," Nott sneered. "Now, you've got exactly three seconds to put your wand on the ground or I'll blast your precious little veela with the Crutiatius curse."

Harry glared at Nott.

"One...two..."

"Okay, okay," Harry said quickly, and complied, placing his wand on the ground.

"Your little guard dogs too."

Ron and Hermione looked at Harry, who nodded once. They both slowly lowered their wands.

"Good, very good," Nott said condescendingly, and then leaned down and whispered something in Draco's ear.

"What are you saying to him, you son of a bitch?" Harry growled.

Nott smiled sinisterly. "Aw, someone sounds a little upset. You don't like me holding on to your veela, Potter? Or kissing him?"

"What gave you the first clue?" Harry said, voice dripping with sarcasm.

Nott turned his head slightly, and ran his tongue up Draco's cheek. "Mmmm," he said, as he licked the blonde, "he tastes like candy."

Harry was so furious he began to shake with anger. "You sick fucker, let him go."

"Temper, temper, Potter. You really ought to - NOW, Draco!"

"*STUPEFY!*" Both Draco and Nott cried out simultaneously, Nott aiming for Ron and Draco aiming for Hermione. Both spells hit their unsuspecting marks straight in the chest, and Ron and Hermione fell to the ground, unconscious.

Harry dove for his wand, but Nott had been expecting that. The second Harry's finger touched the wood Nott shouted "*Expelliarmus!*" and the wand flew out of Harry's grasp, rolling several feet away.

Harry turned over onto his back, only to see Nott looming over him, wand pointed straight between his eyes. Ropes shot out of the Slytheirn's wand, and in a matter of seconds Harry was completely bound and helpless on the floor.

"Do you know how pleased the Dark Lord will be when I deliver not only Malfoy here, but your dead body to him personally?"

Harry's eyes narrowed, even as he struggled uselessly against the ropes. "So you're the other Death Eater wannabe. The one who was controlling Justin Finch-Fletchley when he tried to rape me."

"The one and only," Nott said, leering down at Harry. "I happen to be very good at the Imperious curse."

A very evil smile crossed Nott's face. "Want to see just how good I am?" He didn't wait for Harry to answer. "Draco! Get over here."

Draco was standing against the wall, eyes squeezed shut as if he were in pain. At Nott's words, he jolted and began to walk towards Nott and Harry.

Harry finally recognized Draco's symptoms. "You've got Draco under the Imperious curse, do you?" Harry hissed, glaring up at Nott from the floor. "And you think that will work? Then you're stupider than I thought. Draco!" he called out, in his most desperate, authoritative voice. "Stay back! Don't move!"

Draco froze in his tracks. His eyes were wide as he began to glance between Nott and Harry.

"I don't think you want to do that, Potter," Nott said, in a sickeningly sweet voice. Then he called out again. "Draco! I said COME!"

Draco took a couple halting steps forward.

"Draco, no! Stay back!"

Draco stopped moving, then took a step forward, then stopped again. He took one more halting step forward before he clutched at his head and began to whimper.

"Draco!" Harry cried out, as the blonde fell to his knees and began rocking back and forth, clutching at his head and making sounds of pain. Harry looked up at Nott, horrified.

"What the hell is going on?"

Nott rolled his eyes. "Oh, Potter. Honestly. You and Malfoy are quite the pair. Don't either of you read?"

"Shut the fuck up and tell me what's wrong with Draco!"

Nott drew back his foot and kicked Harry in the stomach.

"Watch your mouth, Potter."

At Harry's cry of pain, Draco growled and jerked up, eyes blazing murderously. Nott looked terrified for half a second before he remembered himself and said, "Draco, calm down."

Draco's eyes glazed over again, and he went back to trembling on the floor.

"What's wrong with Malfoy," Nott said in a bored voice, as if explaining the most basic of spells to a first-year, "is that we're breaking his mind."

"WHAT?" Harry gasped.

"Don't you see? I've got him under Imperious, so I can order him to do anything I like. But you're his mate, so you can command him as well. And when our orders conflict with each other, he doesn't know which one to follow, and it drives him crazy."

Nott spared a glance at the veela, who was huddled in a ball on the floor. "Not to mention that he wants to defend you so badly but the Imperious curse won't let him. That alone might be enough to break him."

Harry was positively terrified. He couldn't let Nott get away with this, but he couldn't use Draco either, couldn't order him to do anything, because he didn't want to damage his mind or distress him even further.

Nott smiled an extremely horrible smile. "Of course, that's nothing compared to what we're about to do. If we play this game right, Draco's mind will probably completely crack. Oh Draco! Come over here! We're going to have some fun with your mate!"

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Draco slowly stood up from the floor, a blank look on his face. He was still trembling, and Harry wanted nothing more than to comfort him, but the blasted ropes kept him securely immobile.

"Draco, here's what I want you to do. You're going to point your wand at your mate and say '*Crucio*.' Are you ready?"

Harry's stomach lurched with dread, and Draco looked panicked.

"No," he said, shaking his head. "No."

"It's really not up to you, is it? But if you like, we can start smaller." Nott paused to think for a moment. "How about you kick him? Go on, Draco, why don't you kick Potter here, hard as you can."

"No, please, no," Draco said, his trembling becoming more pronounced.

"Yes, Draco. That's an order. Kick Harry. *Now*."

Whimpering, Draco obeyed. Harry winced as Draco's foot connected with his shin, but made no sound, determined to keep quiet for Draco's sake, hoping to spare the veela some mental anguish.

"Good boy, Draco. Now how about a Stinging Hex? Not as bad as Crutiatius, but still packs quite a bit of pain."

"No!" said Draco, as tears welled up in his eyes and spilled down his cheeks, the arm holding his wand shaking so badly he was barely hanging on to the wood. Harry watched in horror, his mind racing, desperately trying to think of a way out of the situation before Draco's mind snapped.

"Yes!" said Nott, looking amused. "Do it. Now."

Pointing his wand at Harry, Draco took a shaky breath and said the spell. A jet of light hit Harry right in the chest, but Harry still made no sound. The only indication of his pain was a sharp intake of breath.

Draco was sobbing now, barely hanging on to his sanity as he watched his mate suffer at his own hand.

Harry tried to reassure him. "Draco, I'm fine, it's okay," Harry said, as soothingly as he could to the veela. "I know this isn't your fault."

The thought crossed Harry's mind - maybe he could order Draco to throw off the Imperious curse? He dismissed it almost immediately - the Imperious curse controlled the mind, where as Harry only had a limited amount of control over Draco's body. It was unlikely to work and could damage Draco's mind even more. But he had to think of something, and he had to think fast.

Nott made a dramatic show of looking at his watch. "Wow, would you look at the time? Well, Potter, it's been fun, but it's almost time for Draco to go."

"Go?" Harry said, turning his head sharply in Nott's direction. "Go where?"

"None of your business. Now, I think we've got time for maybe one more curse, and I'm willing to bet that hitting his mate with the Crutiatius curse will completely shatter this veela's mind. Ready, Draco?"

"No," Draco pleaded, "Please no."

And suddenly a very desperate idea struck Harry.

"On the count of three," Nott said patronizingly. "One...two..."

"Draco - turn on your veela powers!" Harry ordered desperately. "Do you understand me? Turn your veela powers on as strong as you can!"

And in an instant Harry actually *felt* Draco's magic sweep through the room. Nott immediately dropped his wand as his eyes glazed over and his face went slack.

"Draco, did I tell you I've got the biggest vault in Gringott's? Because I do, and I'd love to spend all that money on you, because you're the most beautiful creature I've ever seen. Why, I'd buy you so many things..."

"Draco," Harry hissed, as Nott continued to babble. "Tell Nott to take the Imperious curse off of you." He mentally crossed his fingers and hoped this would work.

Draco, obeying orders, turned obligingly to Nott. "Nott, take the Imperious curse off me."

Nott raised his wand, smiling dreamily. "Of course, Draco. I'll do anything you want. *Finite Incantatum.*"

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There was a pause, and then Harry watched as Draco's eyes slowly focused, took in Harry's bound body on the stone floor and then narrowed.

"I told you I'd do anything for you, Draco," Nott continued, completely unaware of what had just happened. "Did I tell you - "

Nott never got to finish that sentence, because at that moment Draco reached out and grabbed him by the collar of his shirt.

"I'll kill you," Draco growled, and then he threw Nott as hard as he could against the opposite wall. Nott was no match for the super-human strength of an angry veela, and he crashed against the stones like a rag doll. He slid down, blood trickling down his face, before hitting the ground unconscious.

Draco took a step toward him, but then remembered his mate on the ground behind him.

"Harry!" he cried out, and with staggering steps he ran to Harry's side. Reaching down, he ripped the ropes that bound Harry apart with his bare hands, and then clutched at the Gryffindor desperately.

"Harry, I'm sorry, I'm so sorry," he moaned, and Harry, bewildered by Draco's sudden mood swing from furious to distressed, quickly sat up and reached for him, pulling the distraught veela into his arms.

"Shhh, I know, it's okay, it wasn't your fault," he murmured soothingly, smoothing Draco's hair and kissing his head. He could smell the strong scent of vodka heavy on Draco's breath, and figured that even though Draco wasn't under Imperious anymore, he was apparently still very drunk and confused.

Harry wondered for a fleeting moment why Draco's veela powers, which he could tell were still flaring out of corner, weren't affecting him. Then, out of the corner of his eye he saw that Ron and Hermione were stirring and standing up, rather blank looks on their faces.

Suddenly Draco stiffened and pulled back.

"What? What's wrong?" Harry asked anxiously.

"You hate me," the blond said softly, beginning to tremble again.

"What? No I don't," Harry said quickly, alarmed as more tears began to spill down Draco's cheeks and Draco's trembling became full-fledged shaking.

"Yes, you do. You hate me because of what I did to you, and what I said to you," Draco whimpered. "And you should, I was horrible to you. You hate me and you don't want me anymore."

"Draco, that's not true!" Harry said, aghast, reaching out for the crying veela.

"Don't lie to me, Harry! I know you hate me, and I know you've found someone else!" Draco said with a heart-wrenching sob, scooting back on the floor away from Harry. He buried his head in his knees and continued to cry.

Ron and Hermione had been making their way over to the pair but now they paused, looking back and forth between Harry and Draco, unsure of what to do. Draco's veela powers had shut themselves off in his despair, and now they were just standing in the middle of the room, staring down at Harry and Draco.

"Take care of Nott," Harry mouthed at his friends, pointing at the body on the other side of the room. Ron and Hermione exchanged a quick glance and then nodded, before heading over to deal with Nott.

Harry had been overwhelmed with guilt at Draco's words, even though he realized that there was no way Draco knew about what had happened with Cho. Determined to fix things somehow, he crawled over to the crying veela and wrapped his arms around Draco.

"Draco love, you're still drunk and you've had your mind screwed with, so please, believe me when I tell you that none of that is true. *None*. What on earth would make you think I hate you?" he said, as calmly as he could, stroking Draco's hair while the veela remained rigid in his arms, silently fearing that Draco was about to lose the very last shreds of his sanity.

"Nott," Draco sniffed. "Nott told me right before he gave me the portkey. He said you -"

"Portkey? Draco, *what portkey?*"

"The portkey that's going to take me to the Dark Lord. He said - "

"Shit," Harry swore, panic rising his chest. "Draco, where is the portkey?"

Draco sniffed loudly and wiped at his eyes. "I don't know, Harry, I couldn't understand him. He was telling me that you...that you hated..." and here Draco broke down sobbing again, trying to wrench himself out of Harry's arms.

Harry's heart broke for his poor veela even as he held Draco as tightly as he could and refused to let him go. He wanted to comfort the blonde, but he *had* to find that portkey. "Draco, *listen to me*. Where is the - "

"I DON'T KNOW!!" Draco wailed. "I don't know, okay? All I know is that you hate me and I hurt you and kicked you and hexed you and you *hate* me and I can't...I can't...oh God, I can't *take* it..." Draco's voice trailed off as his body went limp in Harry's arms.

"DRACO!" Harry cried out, but it was too late. Draco was unconscious.

"Draco, Draco please, wake up, wake up," Harry said urgently, shaking him gently. Nothing happened. Draco just continued to lay still, chest slowly rising up and down.

"Hermione, *what happened to him?*" Harry called out, anguished, holding Draco's unconscious form close to him.

To his fury, it wasn't Hermione's voice that answered him. "Guess Draco's just a weak little baby, eh Potter?"

Theodore Nott had regained consciousness, and was lying on the floor with Ron and Hermione's wands pointed straight at him.

A murderous rage tore through Harry. He very gently laid Draco's body against the stone floor and he slowly stood up. He walked purposefully over to Nott and kicked the Slytherin with tremendous force. Nott cried out in pain, but Harry just reached down and grabbed the front of Nott's shirt, yanking him to his feet.

"I should kill you," Harry hissed through clenched teeth, as he drove his fist as hard he could in Nott's stomach. Nott groaned and doubled over, but somehow managed to hiss words out through his teeth.

"You can never win, Potter. The Dark Lord wants that veela, and he's going to get him."

Harry unhesitatingly smashed his fist into Nott's nose, and the sickening crunch of bone breaking was heard.

"Want to keep talking?" Harry said, his voice low and menacing. "Because believe me, I would love to keep hitting."

Thinking better of it, Nott just shook his head, wincing.

"Good. Now listen up: if you ever get out of Azkaban I want you to tell your Master to keep his slimy hands off my veela."

Nott, to the immense surprise of the three Gryffindors, began to laugh.

"What's so funny?" Ron asked. Nott looked very demented, leaning there against the wall, blood flowing out of his nose, laughing hysterically.

"You think you've won, don't you?" he finally choked out. "You've think you've saved Malfoy from the Dark Lord? You couldn't be more wrong."

"What the fuck are you talking about?" Harry said, a cold knot of dread forming in the pit of his stomach.

Nott seemed to be losing control, and just continued to laugh. "The Dark Lord will have Draco, oh yes, he'll have him. He'll have him in about...oh, I would guess about one minute."

"You're lying," Harry snarled, grabbing Nott by the hair and yanking his head up.

"Sorry Potter," Nott practically giggled, looking up into Harry's eyes. "I'm not lying. Hey, I'm not...I'm Nott...get it?"

Harry wasn't listening. He had turned to stare at Draco's body, his eyes raking up and down the veela's unconscious form, because Draco's words had just barreled back into his head...*before he gave me the portkey...before he gave me the portkey...the portkey...*

And then he spotted something that looked completely out of place on Draco, a huge, ugly medallion around Draco's neck.

"*Shit!*" he swore, sprinting over to Draco. Not knowing how many seconds he had left before what he was sure was a portkey activated, he grabbed the medallion on Draco's chest and pulled as hard as he could.

The fine gold chain that the medallion hung on snapped and the medallion came loose in his hand.

"Hey Nott!" Harry hollered to the still maniacally laughing Slytherin, "CATCH!"

And with that he threw the medallion as hard as he could at Theodore Nott. Nott, reacting instinctively, reached out -

- and as the portkey medallion landed in his outstretched hands it activated, and Nott disappeared from the classroom.

Ron and Hermione stood speechless for a moment on either side of where Nott had just stood not ten seconds before.

"Jesus Christ, Harry," Hermione finally said. "That was insane."

Harry didn't even hear her. He was too busy leaning over Draco.

"Draco, love, wake up, please wake up," he begged, running his hand through Draco's hair and down his cheek. "Draco, *please*."

Hermione and Ron exchanged a quick glance before quickly moving to Harry's side.

"What happened to him, Hermione?" Harry said, looking up at his best friend with big, worried green eyes.

"You tell me," Hermione said. "What happened while Ron and I were unconscious?"

Harry bit his lip, and then related what Nott had made Draco do. Hermione nodded thoughtfully.

"In that case, it was probably just the combination of everything that made him pass out," she said, kneeling down next to Draco and scanning him for injuries. "He was already a mess and then he got piss-drunk and Nott fucked with his mind. He thought you didn't want him anymore."

A wave of guilt and worry flooded through Harry. "Is he going to be okay?"

Hermione smiled at him weakly. "Physically, yes. Mentally..." she trailed off for a moment.

"Oh God, what?" Harry asked, taking Draco's limp hand in his own.

Hermione shook her head. "I don't know. We won't know until he wakes up. But Nott did a major mind fuck on him, that's for sure. He might get really sick."

"What should I do? I'll do anything for him."

"Just take him back to his room and stay with him. He needs his mate, so don't leave him under any circumstances. He'll probably be okay after a good night's sleep, but don't take any chances."

"I wouldn't have left him right now for any reason anyway," Harry said hotly, reaching one arm under Draco's knees and the other under his arms. He stood up, holding the unconscious veela in his arms.

The friends made their way towards the door of the classroom.

"So you two will tell Professor Dumbledore what happened so I can put Draco to bed, right?" Harry said, and Ron and Hermione nodded, and then Hermione hesitated for a second.

"Harry, do you, um, want one of us to spend the night in Draco's room with you?" she said, and Harry looked at her.

"Why would I want that?"

Hermione looked uncomfortable. "Well, it's just...it's just that as long as Draco's still got all that vodka in his system, his veela powers might still be out of control."

"Meaning...?"

"Meaning if Draco does wake up tonight, and he wakes up in bed with you in the middle of the night, he might..." Hermione didn't need to finish the sentence. Her meaning was quite clear.

Harry looked panicked for a second but took a deep breath, and then a look of determination settled into his eyes. "I don't care. If anything happens, I'll just deal with it."

Hermione looked very serious. "You can't get upset with him. He's going to be incredibly fragile as it is, and if he has to deal with his mate getting angry with him again - "

"I won't. I told you, I don't care if anything happens. He can do whatever the hell he wants to me. I just want him to be okay."

"Actually, Harry, it might help him heal," she said softly, and Harry's eyes widened slightly as he grasped what she meant.

"Ugh, can we not talk about this?" Ron said, breaking the tension. "I mean, it's not that I don't love you Harry, but you and Malfoy...gross."

Ron's comment broke the tension, and Hermione and Harry both snorted in laughter. They said their goodbyes, Ron and Hermione heading to the right to the headmaster's office, and Harry heading to the left to the dungeons and Draco's room.

Harry carried Draco to his room, muttered the password to the dragon portrait, and then once inside laid him gently on the bed. Going over to Draco's closet, he pulled out Draco's favorite silk pajama bottoms and a t-shirt, and took them back over to the bed.

Harry tenderly set about getting Draco into pajamas. He slowly untied and removed each shoe, followed by each sock. Harry had just leaned down to take off Draco's jumper when the blonde made a soft noise under him.

"Draco? Are you awake?" Harry asked, a bit anxiously, but there was no response. Realizing that Draco was probably dehydrated, he ran into the bathroom for a moment, and emerged with a glass of water and a wet washcloth. Sitting down on the edge of the bed next to Draco, he leaned down and put his hand behind the blonde head.

"Draco, I need you to drink some water, okay?" he said softly, lifting Draco's head up slightly and holding the glass of water to his lips.

Draco didn't respond but he did drink, gulping down most of the water in the glass. Harry laid him back down on the pillows, set the glass on the nightstand and then picked up the wet washcloth.

Working carefully, Harry began to gently wipe the sweat and dried tears off of Draco's face. Beneath him Draco's breathing deepened and evened out as he relaxed in his sleep under Harry's gentle touch.

When Harry was finally satisfied that Draco wouldn't wake up sticky, he put the washcloth down and again reached for the hem of Draco's sweater.

Harry slowly pulled the sweater off Draco's torso, revealing inch after inch of Draco's smooth, porcelain skin. Tossing the sweater onto the nearby arm chair, Harry took a moment to take his first really good look at Draco, the veela that had chosen him as a mate for the rest of their lives.

"You're so beautiful," he whispered in awe. To Harry, he was the most stunning thing the Gryffindor had ever seen. There wasn't one thing about the blonde that Harry would have changed. Reaching out, almost unconsciously, Harry began to run his fingers lightly over Draco's torso, over the soft, velvety skin and hard muscles of his chest and stomach.

Draco moaned a little in his sleep, and the sound made Harry's blood run hot.

"You like that?" he murmured, and leaned down and placed a kiss on Draco's chest, loving the feeling of Draco's skin warm against his lips. Draco arched slightly into sensation, trying to prolong the contact. Emboldened, Harry began to place more kisses on Draco's chest, kissing up to his collarbone and running his tongue along the hard ridge before trailing back down. He paused at one of Draco's nipples, flicking his tongue out and swirling it around. Draco moaned faintly again, his fingers clutching at the bedspread.

Seeing Draco's reaction, and desperately wanting to make the blonde feel good, Harry set about kissing and licking every inch of Draco's body. He covered his chest with kisses, bit each nipple gently, licked his way along Draco's ribs and swirled his tongue in circles around Draco's belly button, loving the little noises of pleasure that were escaping Draco's lips.

Reaching the top of the blonde's pants, Harry didn't hesitate. He unbuttoned and unzipped the tailored slacks, and slowly slid them off Draco's hips, down his legs, and over his feet. Beginning at Draco's ankle, Harry slowly began to kiss his way back up Draco's legs, alternating between each one, trailing his tongue over Draco's knees, inching his way up Draco's thighs, until he reached the hem of Draco's black silk boxers.

"Harry," Draco whispered, and Harry looked up. Draco's eyes were closed but his breathing was heavy, and the bedspread was twisted in his hands. With a start and a flood of blessed relief, Harry realized that Draco was at least partially awake.

And then it hit Harry - if Draco was at least a bit awake, that meant that he had no idea whether he was doing all this out of his own free will or because of Draco's veela powers.

More importantly, though, Harry realized that he really didn't care.

Draco wasn't completely conscious of anything right now. He didn't know where he was, what he was laying on, or how he had gotten here. The only thing he was truly aware of was that his mate was taking care of him and was now touching him, placing kisses on every inch of his body.

Draco managed to say Harry's name, and he felt Harry stop for a moment. That was torture, losing that feeling of contact that he had been longing for.

He whimpered, and then felt Harry move into place next to him, one hand burying itself in Draco's hair and then his lips coming to rest against Draco's cheek.

"Shh, don't worry, I'm not going anywhere," Harry whispered reassuringly, nuzzling against him. Then Draco felt what must have been the most exquisite feeling of his life - Harry's hand beginning to touch him through the silk of his boxers.

Draco let out a moan that would have woken every roommate he had, if there had been anyone else in the room. He turned his head and buried it into Harry's neck, breathing in Harry's scent as Harry continued to touch him. Then he felt Harry's hand slide under the waistband and onto his bare skin, and Draco bit down on Harry's neck to keep from crying out again.

After a moment Draco had a sense that he should be reciprocating and made a move to get up, but Harry gently pushed him back down against the pillows.

"Just lay still," he said softly, sliding his free hand through Draco's hair, creating delightful sensations that made the blonde melt. "Let me do it."

Nodding slightly, Draco gave in, and lay there in a cloud of pleasure created by Harry's hands. Just when Draco thought he couldn't hold back one moment longer, Harry whispered "You're mine, Draco," and reached behind his head and pulled him up for a possessive kiss.

Harry's words and the feeling of Harry's lips against his own sent him over the edge and he came, gasping against Harry's lips.

And in that hazy aftermath, Draco felt Harry pulling him tightly into his arms, laying the blonde head on his chest and stroking his hair. He could hear Harry murmuring sweetly, and while he couldn't make out the actual words he knew they weren't important. What was important was that he was here, in Harry's arms, and that he had his mate back.

The Veela Enigma

Chapter 17: Bookworms

When Harry woke up the next morning, he immediately realized two things: one, he was still fully dressed, and Draco's jeans were definitely not his first choice of sleeping attire.

Two, his arms were still around Draco, who had pressed himself as close as humanly (or veela-ly) possible to Harry, his hands clutching at Harry's clothes and his face buried against Harry's chest.

A wave of tenderness flooded through Harry, as he remembered the horror of the night before, how Draco had completely broken down after being forced to curse him. Harry carefully moved one hand from Draco's waist to his head so he could play with Draco's soft blonde hair.

"He had such a bad night. Poor baby," Harry couldn't help but think, even though he knew Draco would probably be highly pissed off if he ever heard Harry refer to him as "baby." If he had ever had any lingering doubts about wanting to be with Draco, then the events of last night completely shattered them. Draco loved him so much that hurting Harry literally made him pass out. How many people in their lifetimes would be loved like that?

At that moment Draco stirred, and Harry looked down anxiously at him.

"Draco? Are you awake?" He tried to keep his voice neutral, but he was worried about lasting effects on Draco's mind from the night before.

Draco groaned something unintelligible into Harry's chest and his grip on Harry's clothes tightened.

"I'm right here," Harry said reassuringly, kissing Draco's hair. "Are you alright?"

Draco pulled away from Harry just enough to mumble one word. "Head."

"Head? Oh, does your head hurt? I bet you've got a hangover from hell, poor ba - thing," Harry said, just barely staving off the urge to say 'baby.'

Draco made a noise that Harry took to mean yes, and buried his head back in Harry's chest. They lay together in a comfortable silence for a moment.

Then Draco suddenly shoved back from Harry and scooted as far as he could to the other side of the bed.

"Oh God..." he said, eyes wide open and scared.

Harry had been expecting this. "Draco, it's okay, I promise, it's okay, I - "

Draco's body was beginning to tremble. "Last night...I kicked you...I hexed you..."

"Listen, it's okay, you were under the Imperious curse, it's not your fault," Harry said hastily, moving closer. Draco jumped off the bed.

"But before...I forced you...I called you frigid..."

"It's alright, you were drinking, you didn't mean it," Harry said in the most soothing voice he had, sliding off the bed and taking a step towards Draco.

The veela began to back up, and to Harry's horror his normally ethereal skin was taking on a greenish tinge.

"Go away, Harry!" Draco shouted desperately. "You don't want to be near me."

"Yes, actually, I do," Harry said softly, still advancing on Draco. "I want to be as near to you as I possibly can be."

"No you don't! You can't! I don't deserve you, I don't," Draco had hit the wall, and was looking trapped and panicked. "Oh God, what have I done?"

"You haven't done anything," Harry said firmly, reaching Draco at the wall. "You're freaking out because of stuff that isn't your fault!"

Up close, Harry could see that Draco was definitely turning green. Worried, he put one hand on the wall next to Draco's head and reached out towards Draco with the other, but the veela slid down the wall before Harry could touch him, hugging his knees to his chest and burying his head in his knees.

"I hate myself."

"Draco!" Harry admonished, dropping down on one knee next to Draco. "Don't say that! Now stop worrying, I think you're making yourself sick."

"I deserve to be sick," Draco mumbled. "I hit you and forced you and insulted you and...oh God, I don't feel so good," he moaned, suddenly trying to strand up. Harry gently pushed him back down.

"It's okay, just relax," Harry said softly, but Draco shook his head.

"No, can't, think I'm going to..." and with that he suddenly leapt up and dashed into the bathroom.

"Draco!" Harry cried out, chasing after him, only to find him hunched over the toilet, puking his guts out.

"Gross," the blonde finally said, collapsing backwards onto the floor. Harry dashed to his side and caught him around the waist before his head hit the wall, lowering them both safely to the floor.

Draco looked up at Harry from where his head was now resting on Harry's chest. "Do you hate me?" he asked pitifully. Harry smiled and shook his head.

"Haven't you been listening to me?" he said gently. "No, I don't hate you. A thousand times, no."

Draco's big grey eyes looked up at Harry uncertainly.

"I promise," Harry said, tightening his grip around Draco's waist in case the veela thought about trying to bolt again. He wasn't letting Draco go anywhere.

But Draco finally seemed to believe him, because his body relaxed in Harry's arms and he turned his head into Harry's chest and closed his eyes with a sigh.

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Harry wasn't sure how long they stayed in that position on the bathroom floor, but Draco finally pulled back from Harry's chest to look up at Harry.

"I've been acting like a total idiot this morning, haven't I?" he said, a bit sheepishly.

Harry responded by squeezing him tightly and kissing his head. "No, considering what you went through last night. I'm just so relieved you're okay. I was so worried."

"Really?" Draco asked, raising an eyebrow. "Worried about little old me?"

"Are you kidding me?" Harry said, now nuzzling Draco's cheek. "I thought your brain was toast. Man, if I ever see Nott again..."

"You'll have to get by me first," Draco said darkly, his silver eyes glinting menacingly. "Because I'm going to kill that bastard. I'm going to rip his guts out and then strangle him with his own intestines."

"What a lovely mental picture," Harry said, sounding slightly disgusted.

"He hurt me, but worse, he hurt you. No one touches you and gets away with it," Draco said very seriously. "Not on my watch."

Harry had to smile. "That's kind of romantic, you know."

"Shut up. I'm a veela, I can't help it." Draco sighed and stood up. Harry followed his lead.

"So what do you want to do now?" he asked.

"Take a shower," Draco replied. Then he made a face. "And brush my teeth. My mouth tastes like shit."

"Okay," said Harry, a tad uncertainly. After last night, which he had no idea if Draco remembered, a large part of him was very tempted to join Draco in the shower. "I guess I'll wait in your bedroom."

Draco immediately turned to him. "Wait, would you just...stay in here with me?" he asked, blushing slightly. "I mean...I just...God, I hate this! I'm so fucking needy and it's driving me crazy!"

"Hey, it's okay," Harry said in what was beginning to become his all-purpose veela soothing voice. "It's fine."

Draco perked up. "Really?"

Harry nodded. "Really. Get in the shower, and I'll come right back in," he said, slipping out the door.

Feeling very much relieved, Draco brushed his teeth (three times) and then started the shower. Sliding off his boxers - which, curiously, were the only article of clothing he was still wearing - he slipped into the hot water.

A moment later, Harry, true to his word, came inside and sat down on the floor next to the shower. Draco was embarrassed to admit, even to himself, how much better it made him feel to have Harry there.

After a moment, he heard Harry's voice.

"You alright?"

"Yes," Draco called back, closing his eyes in bliss as the hot water ran through his hair and down his shoulders and back. As he stood under the steaming water his mind drifted through several different thoughts, mostly about Harry. How Harry looked when he smiled, how Harry looked when they kissed, how Harry looked as he licked Draco stomach, how Harry -

Wait.

Draco's mind suddenly snapped back to a very interesting mental picture of Harry. Harry was kissing and licking Draco's stomach, and his hand was touching Draco somewhere that Draco was pretty sure Harry had never actually touched. Unless...

Well, that would explain when he was only wearing boxers this morning.

"Hey Harry?" Draco said suspiciously, poking his head out from the shower curtain. "What happened after I passed out last night?"

Harry seemed to be slightly distracted by the sight of a wet Draco, but he answered anyway. "I hit Nott a couple times and then threw the portkey at him, so he got portkeyed to Voldemort."

"Not that part - although good to know, I was wondering. I mean, after that."

"Um...I brought you back to your room." Was that the faintest hint of a blush on Harry's cheeks?

"After that."

"Oh. Um..." Okay, *that* was definitely a blush. Harry was now rubbing the back of his neck and looking vaguely uncomfortable. Draco put two and two together.

"Did you take advantage of me when I was drunk?" he asked, incredulous.

Harry's guilty face was the only answer he needed.

"Harry James Potter!" Draco scolded, more out of surprise than anything else.

"Wait, it wasn't like that, I swear!" Harry said desperately. "I was just going to put you to bed, I didn't mean - "

"Is that why I woke up in my boxers?" Draco wasn't mad - not one bit - but this was such an unexpected reversal of situations that he was going to milk it for all it was worth.

"Well, I was going to put your pajamas on, but then I got...um...distracted...because...um..."

"You better have a damn good reason, Potter, else I'm going to be very angry with you." A total lie, of course, but Draco was curious.

"I couldn't help it!" Harry burst out. "You're just too fucking hot! I couldn't keep my hands off you! And then you were moaning and clutching at the sheets and - God, you were just so *hot*." And here Harry closed his eyes tightly, presumably at the memories of the night before.

Inwardly Draco gave a little cheer, but outwardly he sighed morosely. "I know I'm hot. But that's not a good enough reason. I was drunk and unconscious, Harry. I would have thought a Gryffindor would be more honorable than that." He made sure to let his voice wobble just a little.

It worked. Harry looked horribly distraught and jumped up from the floor.

"Oh Draco, I am so sorry," he said, his eyes shining earnestly. "I wasn't thinking. Please, I didn't mean to. Forgive me?"

"I don't know, Harry," Draco said, biting his lip uncertainly.

"Oh please, Draco. Look, let me make it up to you. I'll do anything you want."

"Anything?" Draco said, raising an eyebrow.

"Anything!" Harry promised.

"Well, I guess I could forgive you if..."

"What?"

Draco suddenly smirked. "If you get in this shower and take advantage of me again."

Harry's mouth dropped open as he realized that Draco had just completely played him. "Oh, you're in trouble now, Malfoy."

And without even stopping to get undressed, Harry jumped into the shower with Draco, who squeaked as he suddenly found himself pressed against cold tiles.

"Bad veela," Harry scolded softly, as his eyes began roaming up and down Draco's naked body.

"You love it," Draco returned, his voice husky.

"You're right," Harry agreed, and then his lips met Draco's.

Whether it was the after effects of the vodka in his system or just the knowledge that Harry had ravished him the night before Draco wasn't sure, but in that instant he lost control of his veela powers. Harry immediately began grinding up against him, pinning him against the shower wall, tongue plundering Draco's mouth.

Horrified, Draco desperately turned the powers off, but not before the damage had been done. He watched as Harry's dilated pupils returned to normal, guilt surging through him.

Harry stared at him, a strange mix of emotions playing in his eyes.

Draco bit his lip. "I'm so sorry, Harry," he whispered, pushing Harry off of him. He pulled the shower curtain back and was about to leave when he felt a hand on his arm.

"Where are you going?" Harry asked.

"Away from you," Draco responded.

"Why?" Harry asked, still holding Draco's arm.

Draco gave him an angry look. "Because I'm still having trouble controlling my powers! Do you want a repeat of last night?"

"Well...yes."

Draco blinked. Harry was serious.

"Look, Potter, you don't understand - I can't control these powers right now. You need to let me go, for your own safety. Please Harry," Draco begged. He could feel his control slipping again, the sight of his soaking wet mate standing in the hot steamy shower infecting his blood like a disease.

To Draco's surprise, Harry shook his head. "I don't want you to control them," he said quietly.

Draco was positive he hadn't heard right. "What?"

Harry's cheeks colored slightly, but he met Draco's eyes defiantly. "I don't want you to control them. I want you to use them."

"You want me to..."

Harry nodded. "Yes."

"You won't get mad at me?" Draco asked hesitantly.

Harry looked rather guilty at how worried Draco was at the thought of Harry mad at him. He pulled hard on Draco's arm, drawing the blonde into an embrace.

"I won't get mad, baby, I swear."

"You promise?"

"Cross my heart."

Draco looked like he was about to give in, then -

"Potter, did you just call me *baby*?"

Oops.

"Oh, shut up and turn on your veela powers, Draco," Harry said, ignoring Draco's suspicious look. "That's an order."

It wasn't really an order, not in the sense that Draco's body obeyed it without question. But there was something erotic to Draco about the way those unlikely words floated off of Harry's lips, and the tiny thread of control he had on his veela powers snapped.

Instantly the world was reduced to nothing but two bodies, clutching at each other in the steamy confines of the shower. Lips met lips like magnets, and though water streamed into their mouths as they kissed they neither noticed nor cared, too focused on the other.

Harry's clothes were soaked completely now, and Draco was doing his best to get them off, yanking at Harry's shirt and ripping off the buttons of his jeans. Harry wasn't making it easy; his hands were too busy roaming over every inch of Draco's skin.

"So soft," he managed to say when their mouths parted, as Draco pulled the sodden t-shirt over Harry's head.

"What's soft?" Draco said back, taking advantage of their momentary pause to yank off Harry's jeans and boxers.

"Your skin," Harry whispered, falling on top of Draco, pressing their naked bodies together. Both boys let out moans of pleasure at the sensation of skin on skin.

Harry kept Draco pinned to the tiles of the shower even as his hand slid down the flat planes of Draco's stomach to grasp him tightly.

"Yes, fuck, Harry," Draco hissed. Harry began to kiss Draco again, and then moaned against Draco's mouth as the veela's hand found its way up Harry's thigh to return to the favor.

"Fucking...amazing..." Harry managed to pant out. He was positively on fire with pleasure.

"Yeah," Draco panted back, speeding up his hand. They continued to kiss, tongues battling with each other, until they found themselves shuddering in each other's arms and hanging on to the walls of the shower for dear life.

When Harry's mind finally cleared, he realized that he and Draco had slid down the wall of the shower and were now leaning against the smooth porcelain. He was cradled between Draco's legs, his head resting on Draco's chest. He smiled when he realized that Draco's heart was thudding and that his chest was heaving up and down. He was in the same state himself.

They lay there together in silence for a few minutes, before Draco finally said something.

"Wow."

"Yeah."

"I mean...wow."

"Yeah."

They lay in silence a moment longer, before Draco asked the question that was burning in his mind.

"Harry?"

"Hmmm?" Harry responded, nuzzling against Draco's chest.

"Why?"

"Why what?"

"Why are you suddenly all over me? I thought you didn't want to...you know."

Harry sighed and sat up from Draco's chest and looked seriously into the blonde's eyes. "Because I almost lost you. Because the shock got me over my fears and made me realize how much I really wanted you. What if Voldemort had succeeded? What if you disappeared forever? I don't want to lose you, Draco. I need you."

Draco suddenly felt a tightness in his throat. "You need me?"

Harry blushed slightly but nodded. "Yeah."

"You're just sucking up to my veela half," Draco said gruffly, trying to ignore the fact that his heart was suddenly light as a feather and he felt sure that at this moment he could fly without a broom.

Harry laughed, and the sound was literally music to Draco's ears.

"Whatever you want to tell yourself," Harry said playfully, reaching for the shampoo. "Now lean forward so I can wash your hair."

"What do I need you to wash my hair for? I can wash my own...oh wow...oh, that feels good...mmmm..."

.....

A little while later Harry and Draco were dressed and lounging again on Draco's bed.

"So what do you want to do today?" Draco asked.

"Read."

Draco blinked. That wasn't the answer he had been expecting.

"Read?"

"Read."

"Okay..."

Harry took pity on his confused state. "I'm sick of everyone knowing more about veela than you and me. We're the ones who are in this, and I just keep getting all these little bits of information from other people. And half of what they tell me isn't even true."

"Who told you something that wasn't true?" Draco asked.

"Oh, Cho said - "

And then Harry promptly clapped a hand over his mouth.

It was too late.

"Oh, Cho said something to you, did she?" Draco's voice was cool like ice. "Pray, tell me Potter, what did your little ex-girlfriend have to say about veelas?"

"Nothing important," Harry said weakly.

"Are you lying to me, Harry?" Draco asked dangerously. Harry saw that his eyes were glinting again and his face had hardened. A stab of guilt and worry hit Harry hard in the stomach - he knew that the last thing Draco needed right now was to suffer jealousy over Harry's ex-girlfriend.

Harry was saved by a blessed noise - Ron and Hermione's voices and their knocks on the portrait.

"Harry? Malfoy?"

"You guys in there?"

Draco narrowed his eyes at Harry. "This isn't over," he hissed, and then stood up and made his way over to the portrait.

"Hey Granger, Weasley," he said, opening the portrait. To his enormous surprise Hermione threw her arms around him in a hug and Ron looked very relieved.

"You're alright. Thank God," Hermione said, before letting go. Draco looked at Harry in shock.

"You guys were really worried about me, weren't you?" he said, sounding genuinely astonished.

"Of course we were," Hermione said angrily. "Last night was horrible. We weren't sure if you would recover."

"You were out cold last time we saw you. Of course we were worried," Ron added.

Draco looked back and forth between Harry, Ron and Hermione's earnest faces, and felt rather touched. It was nice to be cared about.

Hermione had brought food and the book she wanted Harry to read, and the four of them spent a peaceful afternoon in Draco's room, reading various books on veela. Lucius had sent Draco a copy of every book on veela he could find, so there were a lot of books to choose from.

Draco sat in his armchair with his feet propped up on the bed, reading *Understanding the Veela in You*, the book Nott had quoted at him. Hermione claimed Draco's desk and had several books spread out, mostly concentrating on a very old and tattered book titled *Veela Magick: Spells and Enchantments*. Ron and Harry had sprawled out on either end of Draco's bed. Ron was reading *Under Your Spell No More: Teaching Yourself to Resist the Power of a Veela*, and Harry was reading *Everything a Veela's Mate Should Know* - more specifically, reading and re-reading a chapter titled *How to Control Your Veela*.

Right before dinner time, Draco suddenly slammed his book shut loudly. The other three occupants of the room started.

"I *hate* being a veela," Draco said, in a sulky sort of voice.

Ron, Harry, and Hermione exchanged looks.

"Um...okay. Why's that?" Harry asked uncertainly. Draco sighed.

"Well, I guess I don't really hate it. It's just these books make me sound like I'm some kind of animal."

"Don't say that!" Harry burst out, angry. Draco looked startled at the vehemence of his response. Harry just continued. "You're not an animal, do you understand?"

"Yeah. You've just got a diversified gene pool," Ron added, then smirked. "Let's just say you're pureblood-challenged."

"Shut up, Weasley," Draco snarled, but Ron was having fun.

"Actually, if you really are an animal, maybe Harry should get a leash and collar and keep you for a pet. What do you think about that?"

"Ron!" Harry wasn't pleased.

Ron just smiled. "Oh, Malfoy knows I'm just kidding around, right Malfoy?" Draco didn't look convinced, but Harry did.

"Well that's okay, then," Harry said, looking back down at his book.

Ron took the opportunity to catch Draco's eye. "Not kidding," he mouthed at the veela, just to wind him up. "Leash and collar," he mouthed again, making a circle around his neck with his fingers.

"Least I've got money," Draco mouthed back.

Ron narrowed his eyes, but Hermione just sighed.

"Don't bicker, you two," she said. "Draco, what did you read that made you say that anyway? Did you read something about mating season?"

"No, I was reading about how veela can recognize the smell of their mates when - wait, did you just say *mating season*?" Draco asked, a horrified look floating across his perfect features.

"Well, yeah," Hermione looked back and forth between Harry, Ron, and Draco's stunned faces. "Wait, you guys didn't know that veela have a mating season?"

Speechless, the three guys in the room shook their heads.

"Oh. Well, veela go through a mating season in late winter or early spring," she explained.

"Fuck me. A *mating season*?" Draco leaned his head back and closed his eyes with a sigh. "I'm going to go through a mating season. Fucking hell, I *am* an animal."

"I told you not to say that!" Harry scolded. Then he turned to Hermione. "So what happens during mating season?"

"Crazy, mad increased sex drive. And veela also get more jealous and possessive."

"*More* jealous and possessive? Oh great," Ron said sarcastically. "So instead of sending half the student body to the hospital wing he's going to send all of us. Something to look forward to."

"Sod off, Weasley," Draco said irritably. "I'm actually going to have to live through this."

"He's right, Ron. This will be hard for Draco. We need to be supportive about this kind of stuff," Harry added.

Ron didn't miss the smug smile of triumph Draco shot in his direction.

"Brat," Ron mumbled under his breath so only Draco could hear. Draco narrowed his eyes, and opened his mouth for a response.

"If you two are quite done with your childish antics," Hermione interrupted, before Draco could say a word. "It's dinner time. Shall we go down to the Great Hall?"

"Yeah," Ron replied, checking his watch. "But I want to put my bag up in my room first."

"Oh, well I'll come with you up to the tower then. Harry, Malfoy, you two will meet us in the Great Hall?"

"Of course," Harry replied, immersed back in his chapter. Draco nodded.

"Great," Hermione responded, and she and Ron slipped out the portrait.

"Mating season," Draco mumbled, rubbing his temples. "Bloody hell."

Harry sensed that Draco needed a distraction, and thanks to everything he'd read that day, he was pretty sure he had one.

"Hey Draco?"

"Hmmm?"

Harry sat up on Draco's bed, took a deep breath, and said in the most authoritative voice he could muster: "Touch your nose."

Draco stared at him for a moment, and then laughed outright.

"Sod off, Potter," he said, shaking his head. "It's not going to work." He closed his eyes again, severely underestimating the sheer will power of Harry Potter.

"Draco, I said touch your nose," Harry tried again, trying to remember exactly what the book had said about controlling the tone of his voice to mimic a life or death situation.

"You can't do it, Harry," Draco said in a condescending voice, not bothering to open his eyes. "Give up while you still have a shred of dignity left."

Harry narrowed his eyes. "Draco Malfoy," he said commandingly, and Draco snapped to attention. "I told you to *touch your nose*."

And sure enough, Draco's hand flew up of its own will and connected with Draco's nose.

"*Fuck*," the blonde swore.

"YES!" Harry shouted, raising his fist triumphantly in the air. "I did it!"

Draco was not nearly so pleased. "Don't get all cocky, Potter. You got lucky and did it once. Woo hoo," he said, irritation dripping from his voice.

"Aww, is ickle Dwakkie angwy?" Harry teased.

"Potter, I'm warning you," Draco snarled, standing up from his chair. "If you think you can ever do that to me again, then you are sorely - "

"Draco, *sit down*."

And Draco sat.

"You were saying?" Harry asked, with a look so smug that Draco felt the urge to hit him.

"Son of a bitch," he swore again, looking murderously at Harry.

"This is great," Harry said enthusiastically, completely ignoring Draco's furious glare. "I can't believe I can actually do this. Oooh, what else can I make you do?"

"Potter, don't you dare," Draco growled, but Harry wasn't listening.

"Stand back up," he ordered, and against his will, Draco stood.

"Yes!" Harry said in triumph. "Now jump."

"What the FUCK?"

"I said *jump*," Harry said again, in *that* tone of voice.

"God damn it," Draco swore, even as he obediently jumped. "Potter, if you don't stop this instant - "

"Now say 'Harry Potter is a sex god.'"

Draco clapped both hands over his mouth before the words could escape.

"Hrry Pmrph ssx gmrr," was all that was heard.

"*Again*."

Draco clamped his hands tighter against his mouth.

"Hrry Pmrph ssx gmrr."

"Draco Malfoy, are you trying to disobey your mate?" Harry asked sternly.

"Fuck you," Draco spat, removing his hands.

There was a sudden silence, and Harry's eyes went wide as Draco's words caused something unexpected to occur to him.

"Holy shit..." he said in a wondrous tone of voice. "I could do this to you during sex."

You could have heard a pin drop in the room as both boys grasped the full meaning of this. Intrigued and mischievous green eyes met horrified grey ones.

"You wouldn't," Draco protested, taking a step backwards.

Harry took a step towards him. "Wouldn't I?"

Draco shook his head and began to back up faster. "You're a Gryffindor, Gryffindors don't get off on kinky stuff like that."

"Ah," said Harry, eyeing Draco hungrily, "but the Sorting Hat wanted to put me into Slytherin."

"It *what*?" Draco said in shock. "I don't believe it. You're Harry fucking Potter, there's no way you could have been in Slytherin."

"I swear it's true," Harry replied, and Draco, seeing the truth in Harry's eyes, decided his best course of action at the moment might be, simply, to run.

He lunged for the door, nimble veela reflexes letting him dodge around Harry.

"Yeah you better run, Malfoy," Harry said, leaping after him. Draco was faster but he couldn't get the portrait open in time, and Harry grabbed him around the waist and pulled him down to the ground.

Harry quickly straddled Draco and pinned the struggling veela's wrists on either side of his head. "Look what I've got here," he purred, his faces only inches above Draco's. "I've got a veela completely at my mercy."

"What the fuck is wrong with you, Potter?" Draco growled up at Harry. "24 hours ago you stomped out of here completely pissed off at me because I used my veela charms on you, and now you're talking about making me your fucking sex slave!"

"Guess the power went to my head," Harry leered. "And as for making you my sex slave - if I'm not terribly mistaken, Draco dearest, you're getting off on the idea."

Draco groaned. It was true. He was hard as a rock.

"Not my fault," he said desperately. "I'm a textbook Slytherin, we're supposed to be kinky."

"Indeed," Harry said thoughtfully. He smiled wickedly. "Kiss me."

Draco didn't move.

"Draco, I said kiss me," Harry ordered again.

Again, Draco didn't move.

A tiny little inkling of worry began bubbling up in Harry's stomach. "Draco, say hello," he said, trying a different command.

Nothing happened.

Draco suddenly smiled evilly. "You've lost it, haven't you? Forgotten what you're supposed to do? Can't make it work any more, can you Potter?"

"That's not true!" Harry denied, although he was inwardly cursing. "I can still do it. Close your eyes!" he ordered desperately. "Stick out your tongue! Count to ten!"

Draco did nothing but gaze up at Harry with his evil smirk.

"*Fuck*," Harry swore.

Draco chose that moment to shove Harry as hard as he could, and Harry, caught off guard, tumbled off Draco onto the floor.

"Well, well, well," Draco said, looking at Harry with raised eyebrows. "Who's in trouble now?"

There was a moment of tension as Harry and Draco looked into each other's eyes, the roles of predator and prey reversed.

Then Harry jumped to his feet and bolted for the door.

"Yeah you better run, Potter," Draco called out, and chased him out the portrait.

The Veela Enigma

Chapter 18: Gryffindor Prefect

Draco caught up with Harry in a corridor not far from the Great Hall, pouncing on him from behind and nearly knocking him over.

"Gotcha," the veela said, and in one smooth movement he had turned Harry and had him pinned securely against the wall, one wrist in each hand on either side of Harry's head. "That was a nasty little game you just played with me. I think you owe me an apology, Potter."

"Not on your life," Harry responded defiantly, trying to break free of his veela bonds. "As soon as I figure out what went wrong, I'm going to do it to you again."

Draco lifted one eyebrow. "Brave words from someone in your position. Perhaps you need a little...*persuasion*."

And with that, Draco turned on his veela powers.

Draco had noticed that his powers didn't affect Harry exactly the same way as they did everyone else. With Harry, there was no gibberish, or spouted promises and lies. Instead, there was a feverish, consuming lust, and right now was no exception. Harry's pupils immediately dilated, and he began straining against his captor, no longer trying to break free but trying desperately to get his lips on Draco's skin.

It made Draco feel almost feverish to see Harry lusting after him like that, and he had to take several deep breaths to remind himself that he had to resist, that he was supposed to be punishing his mate for his earlier actions.

Even if they turned you on, his mind felt compelled to add.

"Fuck off," he told his mind. And then he sucked in his breath; Harry had just managed to reach his neck, and was kissing and biting the soft skin. It was almost his undoing, the feel of Harry's lips on his skin, but with a great effort of will he pulled himself together and turned the powers off.

He watched as Harry's stunning green eyes slowly became more green than black.

"So? Do we feel like apologizing yet?"

Harry shook his head no, but it was weak, the lust was evident in his face.

"Are you sure?" Draco asked sweetly, putting just a little bit of veela power behind the words. "There's nothing you want to say to me?"

Harry screwed his eyes tight shut, and his chest heaved up and down. "Only that if you don't turn off your veela powers right now," he breathed, "I'm going to jump you."

Harry's words set Draco's heart racing.

"Not much incentive for me to turn them off then, is there?" he whispered back, leaning forward to press his body against Harry's.

"Oh God," Harry groaned, body instinctively arching against Draco's, and that did it for the blonde. He let go of Harry's wrists to clutch at Harry's hair. Harry's arms immediately went around Draco's waist, and the next thing Draco knew he was being pushed backwards towards the door on the opposite wall of the corridor.

He crashed against the door with considerable force, but he hardly noticed; Harry had just started kissing him, and the sensation of Harry's tongue against his own was way more important than a little bruise.

Blindly feeling his way behind him, he found the knob of the door and turned. The door swung open and he and Harry stumbled into the empty classroom, lips still locked together. Harry continued to push Draco backwards until they hit a large desk, and Draco fell onto his back with Harry on top of him.

Harry pulled away then, and Draco opened his mouth to protest - whether the loss of the kiss or the fact that he was the one on his back, he wasn't sure. But then Harry ripped open his belt and plunged a hand down his trousers, and Draco forgot to care anymore.

Harry and Draco finally made it into dinner a little while later, falling all over each other with matching goofy grins. Ron glared at them from the Gryffindor table.

"I don't even want to know why you're late," Ron said shortly, as Harry and Draco made it to the Gryffindor table and sat down, Draco practically in Harry's lap.

"Oooh, I do," Hermione said.

The three boys gave her startled looks.

"Er, I mean...gross," Hermione said, quickly picking up a book and burying her nose in it.

Harry and Draco quickly dished up their food and began to eat. Draco took two bites of his Shepard's pie and then abandoned it in favor of a plate of brownies. Harry watched him with a sappy look on his face.

Ron rolled his eyes. "Is it good for Blondie over there to eat just sweets?" he asked Hermione.

"No, actually. He'll probably make himself sick," she answered, setting down her book.

Harry looked at her with concern. "Is that true?"

Hermione nodded. "He's only part-veela, you know."

Harry looked at Draco with worry. "Um, Draco?"

"Mmres?" Draco said, through a mouthful of chocolate.

"Maybe you should eat some more of your real food," Harry suggested. Draco swallowed his mouthful of brownie and took on a pained expression.

"But Harry," he whined, "I like chocolate better."

"I know, but it's not good for you to eat just sugar," he said worriedly. "Just a few more bites. Come on."

Draco shook his head. "No."

"Draco..."

"No."

Harry looked stumped. Ron raised an eyebrow.

"So that's it, Harry? You're going to let him get sick because you can't stand up to him? You're that whipped?"

"Ron, really," Harry said. Draco gave Ron a nasty look, and then turned to Harry.

"I'll eat it if you feed it to me," he said in a conciliatory manner.

"Oh yuck," said Ron. "Harry, for the love of Merlin, please don't. Some of us would like to keep our dinners down."

"Ron, try to be a little more understanding, alright? Veela don't like regular food as much as sugar, this isn't easy for him," Harry said shortly, reaching for a fork.

"I don't believe this," Ron said in disbelief. "You're going to feed him right here in public and make the rest of us watch."

"Something like that, yeah," Harry responded, getting a forkful of Shepard's pie. "Okay baby, open up."

Draco did open up, with the full intention of yelling at Harry that he wasn't a "baby," but Ron beat him to it.

"BABY? Harry, did you just call Malfoy BABY?" Ron looked beyond disgusted. "That is so gross."

Draco decided that as long as it bothered Ron, he no longer cared if Harry called him baby in public.

"Look, just because "Weasel" is the only pet name you'll ever get doesn't mean you should harass us. Now sod off and leave us alone," he said irritably.

"This is the Gryffindor table, and I'm a Gryffindor prefect. You sod off," Ron returned, just as irritable.

"Fine then. Come on, Harry, let's go," Draco said, starting to stand up, but Harry put a hand on his shoulder.

"Just let me talk to him for a moment, alright?" he said quietly. Then, in a louder voice, he turned to his best friend. "Ron, can we talk for a second? Over there?" he said, pointing towards the door.

"Fine. Whatever," Ron responded, and they got up from the table and walked a little ways away.

Draco watched them for a moment, and then rolled his eyes at Ron's retreating back.

"I saw that," Hermione said. "Honestly, you and Ron are like children."

"He starts it all," Draco said, childishly and untruthfully.

Hermione gave him a withering glance. Draco bristled. "It's true, he does. Look at tonight, all I was doing was - "

And then he paused, as Draco's hyper-sensitive hearing picked up the words "Harry" and "lipstick" coming from just a little ways down the Gryffindor table and he listened intently.

"Can you believe it, Parvati?" Lavender Brown was saying in an excited hushed whisper. "Harry Potter coming back to the Gryffindor common room with lipstick all over his face?"

"Oh my God," Parvati responded, her whisper equally excited. "You mean he was snogging someone else besides Malfoy?"

"Yes! Can you believe it?"

"What was Harry thinking? Malfoy's like, psycho-possessive, you know? If he ever finds out..." Parvati trailed off.

"Oh, he'll totally kill whoever it was. God, I wish it had been me. I'd love to snog Harry. Get my hands all over that body. Mind you, I tried, in the common room, but he kind of flipped out before I had a chance."

"You don't say," a cold voice hissed from above.

Lavender and Parvati looked up in fear to see Draco Malfoy glaring down at them, furious.

"M...Malfoy!" Lavender stuttered. "How...how long..."

"Long enough," Draco snarled. "Who was she?"

"W-what?" Lavender said, looking even more nervous.

"*Who was she?* Who was kissing my mate?"

"I...I don't know..."

Draco drew his wand. "Remember what I said last time, Brown? About what I'd do if you ever touched Harry again?"

"You said...you said you'd sever...oh my God," Lavender said, starting to shake.

"That's right. Now you've got exactly three seconds to save yourself if you tell me who this other bitch was. One..."

"But I really don't know!" Lavender wailed.

"Two..."

"She doesn't know, you asshole!" Parvati snapped. "Leave her alone."

"Three. Too late, Brown. Next time, learn to keep your fucking mouth shut." He raised his wand. "Sever - "

"There you are, Draco. What are you doing down here? Did you finish dinner already?"

Harry had walked up behind Draco, completely missing the fact that Draco had his wand pointed straight at Lavender. Draco lowered his wand and whirled around, teeth clenched. Lavender immediately began sputtering.

"Harry, Harry save me, he's going to sever my hands!"

Harry looked surprised. "Don't be silly. Draco wouldn't do something like that."

"Yes he would!" Lavender said desperately. "Harry, you don't understand, he knows about - "

"I know about you and that slut, Potter. Last night. The one who left her lipstick all over your cheating face."

Harry's eyes grew almost comically wide. "Wait, Draco, I can explain - "

"I don't want to hear your fucking explanations, Potter."

"But Draco, it's not what you - "

"I SAID I don't want to hear you try to explain it!" Draco snarled, advancing on Harry. "Did you fuck her?"

"*WHAT??* Merlin, no, she just - "

"She didn't *just* anything, Potter!" By now Draco's yelling had caught everyone's attention, and the Great Hall lay silent, watching their fight. "This bitch laid a hand on *my* mate, and *you* let her. I hope it was worth it. I hope she thinks it was worth it, because when I find her, I'm going to kill her."

And with that, Draco threw open the doors to the Great Hall and ran.

"Shit, shit, shit, *shit*."

That was Harry's train of thought as he ran after Draco. This was the worst possibly moment for Draco to have found out. His mind was still so fragile after the horrible events of last night, and believing that his mate betrayed him could push him over the edge.

Terrified for Draco, Harry turned a corner, only to be slammed up against the wall for the second time that evening.

"You bastard," Draco snapped, and Harry's stomach twisted in guilt when he saw the tear tracks on Draco's face. "Was it the same fucking girl who kissed you before?"

"Draco, you have to listen - "

"Shut up and answer the question, Potter! Why are you protecting her? Do you love her? Do you?" Draco's eyes were frenzied, and he looked furious and frightened at the same time.

There was nothing for it. Harry took a deep breath and attempted his most authoritative voice. "Draco, calm down and *listen to me*."

And it worked. Draco immediately calmed down and closed his mouth. His eyes retained their crazed look, however. *How could you?* They asked Harry. *How could you hurt me like this?*

"Yes, it was the same girl."

"I fucking knew it," Draco said, but Harry raised a hand.

"Stay calm, baby, okay?"

"Don't you fucking call me baby, Potter."

"Draco, please listen. I don't want anything to do with her, okay? She found me after our fight last night. I thought she just wanted to talk, and then she kissed me. I pulled away immediately, and told her there was no chance in hell. That I was with you."

Draco looked at him suspiciously. "Then what happened?"

"We yelled at each other, and then I hit the wall and stormed off to the Gryffindor common room. She had left her lipstick on me, and Lavender saw it. And couldn't keep her mouth shut, apparently."

Harry reached out to touch Draco's cheek. He flinched slightly, but didn't pull away. "Nothing happened, Draco. I promise. You have to believe me."

Draco couldn't bear to look directly into Harry's pleading eyes. It hurt too much.

"Why won't you tell me who she is, Harry? Why are you protecting her?"

Harry hesitated. "I just... I feel like I owe it to her."

Draco's face took on a very hurt expression. "But what about me? You're my *mate*, Harry. Don't you owe it to me to tell me?"

"I'm sorry," Harry said, and he meant it. He moved his hand to Draco's hair, and began running his fingers through the silky strands. "I'm so sorry. But I don't want her, Draco. I promise. I don't want anyone but you."

Draco was quiet for a moment. "You promise?"

"I promise," Harry said softly, still stroking Draco's hair. "You're the only one I want. For now and for ever."

And with a shuddery sigh Draco gave in, and collapsed against Harry's warm body, welcoming the strong arms that quickly wrapped around him.

"I promise," Harry whispered, and slid to the ground, still holding Draco in his arms.

The next day Lavender Brown was very, very, very careful to avoid Draco Malfoy at all costs. She snuck around the corridors, peered around each corner before turning, and spent a significant amount of time hiding in the girl's bathroom.

It was in the girl's bathroom where Parvati finally tracked her down.

"Lavender," she hissed in an excited whisper. "Lavender, are you in here?"

"Yes," Lavender said back, exited a stall. "What's up?"

"I think I might know who kissed Harry."

"Oh my God," Lavender said, pulling Parvati close. "Who?"

Parvati took a deep breath. "Well, you know how my sister Padma is in Ravenclaw?"

Lavender nodded.

"Okay, last night in the common room she saw Cho Chang pacing about, biting her nails and looking really scared. So she asked Cho what was up. And she said she was just a little stressed out. And after that she went up to her room and hid, and didn't come out again except for classes."

Lavender's mouth fell open. "You think it might have been *Cho*?"

"It fits, doesn't it? After all, she and Harry went out last year. Maybe she tried to win him back."

"But...but he's with a veela, is she mad?"

Parvati opened her mouth to answer, but the door swung open to the bathroom. She and Lavender immediately fell silent as none other than Marietta Edgecombe and Cho Chang walked into the bathroom.

"Hey," said Lavender, smiling weakly. Cho just nodded. She walked over to the sink and began to fix her hair. Lavender couldn't help but notice that her hands were shaking slightly.

"So, what's going on?" Parvati said as casually as she could.

"Not much," Marietta responded.

"Yeah," Cho echoed her, reaching into her school bag and pulling out her make-up kit. Lavender and Parvati exchanged looks as the final link fell into place as Cho began to put on her lipstick...

...which happened to be a very familiar shade of pink.

Ron watched in disgust as yet another dinner time fell upon the school and he yet again found himself watching a cuddling Harry and Draco make their way into the Great Hall.

"That is so gross," he said in an annoyed voice to Hermione, who shrugged.

"It's not so bad. They're a very cute couple, I think, what with Harry's black hair and Draco's blonde. Very pretty combination."

"It's not about how they look, they're both good-looking blokes. It's how they *act*. Or how Harry acts, at any rate, treating Malfoy like he's a sweet, cuddly bunny rabbit and not realizing that he's bullying the rest of the school."

"Well, to Harry he is sweet and cuddly, and Harry's gotten very protective of him. He gets upset when people think Malfoy's some kind of monster."

"He's a monstrous *brat*, that's what he is," Ron said, sounding very grouchy. "He's hexing people just because he can get away with it, I know he is. And have you *heard* what Harry calls him?"

"You mean baby?" Hermione said with an amused smile.

"Yes! For the love of all things holy - *baby*? This is Malfoy we're talking about. He's not a baby, he's a bloody veela, and he's horribly dangerous. He almost took off Lavender's hands yesterday!"

"I know," Hermione said, furrowing her brow. "And Harry's not doing anything about it. It's bad news."

"What's bad news?" Harry asked, as he and Draco sat down across from Ron and Hermione.

"Oh...nothing," said Hermione weakly as Ron glared at Harry.

Harry and Draco dished up their food and began to eat, Harry coaxing Draco to eat his chicken and ham pie by offering to feed it to him again.

"So, did you apologize to Lavender?" Ron asked curtly, before any feeding could take place. Harry looked surprised.

"Whatever for?"

"*Whatever for*? For letting Malfoy come within one syllable of removing her hands from her body!"

"Oh. That." Harry shrugged. "Well, he didn't actually do it, did he?" He picked up his fork to get a bite ready for a now very self-satisfied looking Draco, who discreetly stuck out his tongue at Ron.

Ron was outraged. "He very nearly bloody did, Harry! How can you just ignore how dangerous Malfoy can be?"

"Dangerous?" Harry shook his head lightly. "Don't be silly. Draco's not dangerous, are you baby?" he cooed, nuzzling Draco in an Eskimo kiss. "Just a little jealous, that's all." He held out his fork to the happy veela, who obligingly took the bite.

"Why...but...you...argh!" Ron said, so ticked off he couldn't even vocalize his feelings.

"Speaking of Brown, where is she?" Draco said conversationally, after swallowing, effectively cutting off Ron's rant.

"Gryffindor tower," Hermione, not quite hiding her annoyance. "Hiding from you."

"Is she now? Smart girl," Draco said, his eyes flashing pure hatred for a moment. By the time Harry turned to him with another bite, though, those eyes were all love and sweetness again.

The foursome continued to eat, until a tiny, trembling first year made her way over to where Harry was sitting.

"Um...excuse me, H-Harry," she said in a very small voice, and Harry and Draco turned to look at her, Harry with a smile and Draco with a menacing glare. "Could...could I possibly have your rolls, please, if you're finished?"

"Of course," Harry said, grabbing the basket. "Here you are."

And with that he handed the basket to the first year, who took it from him, their hands brushing over each other's for just a second during the exchange.

It was enough for a jealous veela.

"You little slut, are you trying to make a move on my mate?" he snarled, standing up.

The little first year girl began to shake. "N-n-no..." she managed to squeak.

"You filthy little liar. How *dare* you touch my mate like that," Draco sneered down at the girl, who burst into tears.

"I'm sorry!" she howled. "I didn't mean to!"

"*Draco!*" Harry scolded, but Draco paid him no attention.

"Do you know what I do to people who touch my mate?" Draco hissed at the first year, and whipped out his wand.

"Draco, let her alone!" Harry said, standing up. "She didn't do anything!"

"She *touched* you!"

"On *accident!* For crying out loud, she's only ELEVEN!"

Draco closed his eyes for a second and took a deep breath. When he opened them, he was all smiles at Harry again.

"You're right, love. What was I thinking? Only eleven, of course it was an accident..."

Harry beamed at him and gave him a huge hug. "I knew you wouldn't really do it." He kissed Draco on the nose and then turned back to his friends.

"See?" he said to Ron and Hermione, as he sat down at the dinner table again. "He's not dangerous at all."

The second Harry's back was turned, however, Draco whirled around to glare down at the little girl again.

"Looks like it's your lucky day," he whispered to her in his most dangerous voice. "But I'll be watching you. Very closely. And if I see you in the same room as Harry again, I'll hex you until you bleed. Now get out of my sight."

The first-year burst into fresh tears and ran.

Ron and Hermione dropped their mouths open in twin expressions of horror, as did every other occupant of the Gryffindor table other than Harry, who was blissfully unaware of what had just happened.

Draco smoothly sat down next to Harry and picked up his fork.

"You...you monster..." Ron finally managed to choke out. Harry's head snapped up

Harry's head snapped up. "Ron, don't fucking call him that!" Harry said sharply, his voice annoyed.

Ron wasn't listening to him. "How could you?" he asked Draco in disbelief.

"I'm sure I don't know what you're talking about," Draco said haughtily.

"Christ, Malfoy," Ron said, his voice beginning to grow angry. "That girl was *eleven*."

"I didn't do anything to her, did I?" the blonde said icily.

"But what you said to her...how *could* you?" Ron's eyes were narrowed, and he was beginning to turn red. Draco rolled his eyes.

"I'm a Malfoy and a veela, Weasel. I can do whatever the hell I want." He stood up, and leaned over to kiss Harry on the cheek.

"I'll be in my room, love, if you want to come see me later." He glared at Ron. "*Alone*," he finished pointedly, and swept out the Great Hall.

Harry watched him go and then turned to Ron, his face very annoyed. "Look Ron, I don't know what your problem is."

Harry should have realized that when red-heads turn the color of their hair, as a general rule you should run for your life.

"You don't know what *my* problem is?" Ron said, his voice quiet and dangerous.

Harry shook his head and carried on, oblivious. "No, I really don't. I think you ought to be a little more sympathetic here. I mean, poor Draco is so jealous that he suspects first years of trying to make moves on me and - "

"Poor Draco? Poor DRACO?!?! THAT IS *IT*, HARRY!"

And with that, Ron lost it. He stood up at the Gryffindor table and began shouting.

"I have had enough of this SHIT! There is nothing POOR about MALFOY! He is a BRAT, a MENACE, and a BULLY, and it is YOUR JOB to KEEP HIM IN LINE!!"

Ron leaned over the table and grabbed the front of Harry's shirt. "I am a PREFECT, Harry, and I'm NOT going to allow this any more! If I EVER catch that veela threatening or hexing anyone again, it will be TWO HUNDRED House Points and a MONTH of detentions with FILCH for the BOTH of you! DO YOU UNDERSTAND???"

The entire Gryffindor table burst into applause. Ron didn't even wait to hear Harry's answer. He stormed out of the Great Hall, leaving a stunned Harry Potter in his wake.

And before Harry even had a moment to process what he'd just heard, Professor Snape was at the Gryffindor table.

"My office, Mr. Potter. Right NOW."

Head spinning, Harry obediently followed Snape out of the Great Hall.

The Veela Enigma

Chapter 19: A Chat with Snape

As soon as Snape and Harry had left the Great Hall, Hermione took off after Ron. She didn't have far to go - Ron was pretty predictable when he was angry.

Sure enough, she found him just outside the main doors of the castle, sitting on the bottom step of the stairs, angrily pulling up the grass at his feet.

"Hey," she said quietly, sitting down next to him on the steps. "That grass must have really ticked you off."

Ron rolled his eyes, but stopped his senseless murder of the Hogwarts lawn.

"I couldn't take it anymore," he offered by way of explanation. "I mean, honestly. That poor little girl. And Harry just won't see it!"

Hermione sighed. "It's not that he won't see it, Ron. He *doesn't* see it. The saying 'love is blind' exists for a reason, you know."

"I don't know about blind, but love definitely needs Harry's glasses," Ron said irritably. "How come he *doesn't* see it, then?"

"How come I always have to explain everything? Figure it out yourself," Hermione said, playfully nudging his shoulder.

Ron looked out across the lawn to the lake. "Because Malfoy's a stupid veela?"

Hermione rolled her eyes.

"Okay, fine. Because Harry's in love with Malfoy, that's why he doesn't see all the crap Malfoy's doing to everyone else."

"Partly."

"Partly? What's the other part?"

"Malfoy is in love with *Harry*, and that's why Harry doesn't see it. All he sees, for the first time in his life, is someone who loves him. Really, really unconditionally adores him. Of course he's not going to see anything bad that Malfoy is doing."

Ron sighed. "Maybe. But in love with Harry or not, I don't approve of Malfoy hexing everyone, Hermione."

Hermione's gaze hardened slightly. "Me either. That has to stop, and now. But I have a feeling it's about to."

"Oh yeah? Why's that?"

Hermione grinned. "Snape."

"Sit," Snape said testily to Harry, who took a seat on the other side of Snape's desk, glaring at the Potions Professor. Snape paid the glare no mind. "Do you know why you're here, Potter?"

"Let me guess," Harry said sarcastically. "You're going to chew me out about Draco, am I right?"

"Five points from Gryffindor for your cheek," Snape snapped. "And yes, as it happens we are here to talk about Draco. Or rather, your insistent refusal to acknowledge what Draco is."

"And what is that? Besides, obviously, a veela?"

"Your *mate*, you stupid boy. This is so typical of you, Potter. You're so thrilled to be the mate of a veela, with all the good that comes with it. Did it never occur to you that you must take the responsibilities with it as well?"

"What responsibilities?" Harry asked irritably.

Snape rolled his eyes. "What world do you live in where you suddenly get the unconditional love of a beautiful creature without any kind of conditions? You think Draco is some kind of knight in shining armour who has swept into your life with his pretty face and his veela powers, and all you have to do is lay back and bask in his affections? This is not a fairy tale, Potter."

Harry gritted his teeth and attempted to be polite. "I still don't understand what you're talking about."

"Then listen. If Draco were part vampire, could you see how he could be dangerous to the other students?"

"Well, yeah," Harry responded. "He probably want to suck out their blood or something."

"Yes, he would. So if Draco were a vampire, and you were his mate, you can see that you'd have to exercise some control over him, to protect the other students from harm?"

Harry thought for a moment. "Alright, yes. But what does this have to do with - "

"If provoked, a veela can be as much of a threat as a vampire, Potter. You need to protect the other students from Draco. As Draco's mate it's your responsibility to him, to help him exist in a wizard society without hurting anyone."

"With all due respect, Professor, Draco is a wizard too."

"He is *part* wizard, Potter, and the veela in him is stronger than the human."

"What *is* it with everyone?" Harry snapped, angry. "Draco is as human as you or I! Why can't everyone else see that?"

"Did you ever stop to think that perhaps it is *you* who cannot see," Snape snapped back. "Draco is *not* human like you or I. There is *nothing wrong with that*. It only makes him different from us, not inferior. Or are you so arrogant that you assume anyone who is different from yourself is automatically your inferior?"

Harry seethed at Snape's words. "I don't believe he's my inferior, Professor."

"Nevertheless, you refuse to do your duty as his mate. He is not a pet, Potter. He's dangerous."

"Okay, first off I think of him as my boyfriend, not my *pet*," Harry said sharply. "Second, he is *not* dangerous, he's just - "

"*Silence!*" hissed Snape. "Yes, he is. Veela are extraordinarily dangerous creatures, and Draco is even more dangerous than other veela. Do you not think it odd, even for a veela, that he threatened an eleven year old the way he did tonight?"

Harry paused and thought.

"Alright, maybe it was a bit extreme," he finally said cautiously. "So why did he do it?"

"Because with you Potter, even the abnormal cannot be normal. When veela mate with wizards, normally they meet, easily seduce their mates, and live happily ever after. *Normally*. You and Mr. Malfoy, however, met and hated each other. For five years."

Harry gave a short nod. He knew this.

Snape continued. "Did you never wonder why he wouldn't leave you alone after you rejected him?"

Hesitating, Harry shook his head. "I just thought he hated me."

"He did. With a burning, passionate obsession. He was wounded to the core by your refusal to be friends. It hurt him deeper than any curse can ever go. And he hated you for it, because he loved you and you didn't want him."

"But I didn't know - "

Snape held up a hand. "I'm just telling you how the veela in Draco sees things."

Harry thought this over and sighed. "But he has me now."

"And he is terrified of losing you again. Don't you see? Draco is possessive beyond all reason because he is afraid. You rejected him once, for Ron Weasley no less, and he subconsciously he fears it is only a matter of time before you reject him for someone else again. He is at risk of doing serious injury to another student because of this fear."

Snape paused for a moment so Harry could think things over.

"You need to allay his fears, Mr. Potter. Reassure him. Coming back to him with lipstick on your face is not going to help matters in the slightest."

Harry glared at him through the rising guilt in his stomach. "That wasn't my fault."

"Are you so dim-witted you cannot sense when another is about to kiss you?" Snape asked in disbelief. Harry colored slightly, and Snape raised an eyebrow. "Well, I suppose if you are so blind that you cannot see the damage Draco is doing ..."

Harry looked at Snape suspiciously. "Is he really that bad?"

"He has put more students in the hospital wing in the past week than the entire season of Quidditch so far. He would indeed have severed Miss Brown's hands had you not intervened when you did. He is manipulating the Slytherins, irritating the Gryffindors, terrorizing the Hufflepuffs - "

"Okay, okay. I get it," Harry said shortly, interrupting Snape. "He's been a very bad veela and I need to stop him. How am I supposed to do that?"

"Do not interrupt me again, Potter," Snape said warningly. "And as for stopping Draco, I suggest you use your abilities as his mate to give him something which you yourself so obviously lack: discipline."

"*What?*" Harry asked in shock. "I'm not going to *discipline* him. We don't have some freaky kind of S&M relationship here."

Snape closed his eyes and sighed. "Must everything be so black and white with you teenagers?" he asked, his voice pained. "I am not asking you to have, as you so eloquently put it, a 'freaky kind of S&M relationship.' What I am

asking you to do is prevent Draco from hexing the other students. It will make him feel much safer and more reassured about your relationship."

"Um, okaaay," Harry said, confused. "I don't see how my...*disciplining* him, as you suggest, will make him feel more reassured."

"Think of it this way. If a parent does nothing to discipline their child, ironically the child feels unloved, because if the parent truly cared they would set limits and boundaries to protect them."

Harry was outraged. "I am *not* his parent!" he exclaimed angrily.

Snape's expression became even more pained, and he began rubbing his temples. "It was just an *example*, Potter. I realize that you are not his parent. But you are his *mate*, and you have a responsibility to him to take care of him. As long as you allow him to continue bullying the other students, he's going to feel like you don't truly love him."

Harry sucked in his breath. This was not good.

Snape sighed and set his hands back down on the desk, looking straight into Harry's eyes. "If you can't get that through your thick skull, then think of this: how long do you think the authorities will allow Draco to continue this behavior?"

Harry avoided Snape's eyes and shrugged nonchalantly.

"No clue? Very well, I will tell you. The next set of parents to complain about their child's suffering at Draco's hands will land you in suspension, expulsion, or even prison, Mr. Potter, depending on the strength of Draco's attack."

Harry's eyes grew very round. "What?" he whispered. Snape nodded.

"Oh yes. The law clearly puts responsibility for the veela's actions on its mate. If there was any way the mate could have prevented the injury, then they will be charged in the veela's place. And whatever happens to you, happens to Draco as well. They will send him with you."

Snape leaned forward. "Do you know what happens to veela in prison, Potter?"

Harry shook his head, speechless.

"They are kept in solitary confinement, where they cannot use their powers on other prisoners or guards. They are only allowed to see their mates once a month, from behind bars. And when dementors are present, they gather like vultures at the veela's cell, and feed almost constantly off their magical energy. Most veela go insane before the first week is up."

Harry stared at Snape in horror, his face ashen grey, his stomach sick.

"That is what will happen, if you do not exercise some control over Draco. Do you want to see him suffer like that, Potter?"

Harry shook his head "no" violently.

"Then take care of him. Surely, you can do that much."

Harry left Snape's office shaking.

After leaving the Gryffindor table, Draco had no intention of going back to his room. Not when Lavender Brown was alone in Gryffindor tower. They still had some unfinished business to attend to.

He sprinted up to the tower, spoke the password Harry had given him earlier in the week to the Fat Lady, and then entered the common room, which was nearly empty

Nearly empty, except for Lavender sitting in a chair by the fire.

"Brown," Draco said, his voice cold as ice. "I've been looking for you."

.....

Lavender froze. She knew that voice. The voice did not mean good things for someone who was alone, without her wand, about to face down an angry, jealous veela who thought she was after his mate.

She was beyond screwed.

"M-Malfoy," she choked out. Draco smiled nastily.

"In the flesh," he said sarcastically, with a short bow. "We need to talk."

"I didn't kiss him, Malfoy," Lavender said desperately. "I may have wanted to, but I wasn't the one who kissed him."

"No, you weren't," Draco agreed frostily. His wand was out and pointed at Lavender. "And I offered you a deal, last time, didn't I? I said I'd spare you if you could tell me who the other bitch was. So what will it be, Brown? Do you know who it is?"

Lavender visibly hesitated. She knew. She was 100 percent sure it was Cho. But could she really sell out the other girl to save herself?

No. Lavender had been sorted into Gryffindor, not Slytherin. And she may have been a gossip, but she wasn't a snitch.

"I've got no idea," she said bravely.

Draco raised an eyebrow. He'd seen her hesitate. She hadn't hesitated the night before, and now his suspicions were raised.

"Really, none whatsoever?" he said lightly. "In that case, you won't mind if I check, right?" And then before she had a chance to respond, he cried out, "*Legilimens!*"

And suddenly Draco was in Lavender's mind, scanning her memories and thoughts, slipping through them like warm breath through cold air, until he found one that intrigued him: a memory of her and Parvati in the girl's bathroom earlier that day.

"I think I might know who kissed Harry."

"Oh my God, who?"

"Well, you know how my sister Padma is in Ravenclaw..."

"You think it might have been Cho?"

And that was all Draco needed as all the pieces fell into place for him: Cho wore pink lipstick, Cho was Harry's ex-girlfriend, Harry's words *I just...I feel like I owe it to her...*

It was Cho Chang. Draco was sure of it.

"Thank you, Brown," he said politely, but his voice was dangerous and scary. "You've just made my job much easier. And I suppose, since I did say if you told me I'd spare your hands, I won't carry out my original threat."

Lavender stared up at him in horror and disbelief. "But...but I didn't tell you..."

Draco shrugged. "Not willingly, no, but I'm prepared to be generous." He turned to go, then turned back around. "Before I have my little meeting with Chang, however, I notice that you seem to have a bit of a problem remembering who Harry belongs to. Let me refresh your memory."

And with that, he pointed his wand straight at Lavender.

Harry was walking up to Gryffindor tower, Snape's words heavy in his mind. When he turned the corner and began walking down the hall, however, he noticed a commotion at the portrait.

"...get her to the hospital wing!" Seamus was saying, Lavender in his arms. He turned, and Harry saw Lavender and gasped. She was covered in painful looking boils on every square inch of her visible skin.

"What happened to her?" he said, horrified. Seamus glared at him.

"Your stupid veela, that's what happened to her," the Irishman spit. "Now move, so I can take her to Madame Pomphrey."

At Harry's voice, Lavender stirred.

"Harry?" she said, cracking one eye.

"It's me Lavender," Harry said, guilt and fear rising in his stomach. "Listen, I am so sorry - "

"Harry, you have to stop him," Lavender interrupted, wincing.

"What? What are you talking about?" Harry said, heart quickening just a bit.

"I didn't tell him, but he read my mind. He knows, Harry. He *knows*."

"What? What does who know?"

But with a sinking feeling in his stomach, Harry thought he could venture a guess.

Lavender's next words confirmed his worst fears:

"Malfoy, Harry. He knows about Cho."

Draco knocked on the portrait of the tall, dark-haired witch standing next to an even taller stack of books which marked the entrance to the Ravenclaw common room.

"Hello," he said pleasantly to the third year who answered the portrait. "Could you possibly get Cho Chang for me?"

The third year hesitated, so Draco gave her a slight push by turning on his powers.

"Please?" he said with his most charming smile, and the third year looked back at him, dazed.

"Okay, anything you want," she said agreeably.

"Only don't tell her it's me," Draco continued, turning his veela powers on even stronger. "Tell her Harry Potter wants to see her, alright?"

"Not Draco Malfoy. Harry Potter. Got it," the girl said. "Did you know I'm about to become the youngest Headmaster of Hogwarts ever?"

"Are you really?" Draco said pleasantly, if not slightly impatiently. "That's lovely. Now do be a dear and get Chang for me? Tell her Harry Potter is waiting for her in the empty classroom down the hall."

"Anything for you," the girl said, disappearing back in the portrait. Draco strolled casually down the hall and slipped into the classroom to wait.

Cho warily stepped into the classroom just down the hall from the entrance to the Ravenclaw common room. She was curious as to what Harry could want. Hopefully Draco's jealous outburst yesterday had made him reconsider their relationship, and he was interested in getting back together with her.

"Harry?" she called out into the darkness. "Are you there? Did you finally decide to give me another chance and break it off with that animal you were seeing?"

From the darkness, a voice suddenly hissed, "*Colloportus!*"

And the door behind her slammed shut and locked. The candles lighting the room suddenly flared up, and Cho's heart dropped into her shoes as she came face to face, not with Harry, but with Harry's veela mate.

"Oh God," she whispered, as her body began shaking with terror. "Malfoy."

Draco had his wand out and it was pointed straight at Cho's heart. "You're dead, Chang," he snarled. "This *animal*, as you so quaintly referred to me, is about to kill you for trying to steal my mate."

Cho desperately reached for the one weapon every Ravenclaw has: their brain.

"Fine, kill me. See if Harry wants anything to do with you then," she said bravely, and was pleased to notice Draco's wand waver slightly. Her research on veela had taught her the biggest key to dealing with an angry veela: exploit their weak point - their mate.

"I'm sure Harry will just be so happy with you if you kill someone," she continued, her tone calculatingly sarcastic. "I'm sure he'll welcome you back with open arms. I can just picture the Boy Who Lived wanting to be the mate of a *murderer*."

Draco's eyes opened wide at that, and despite his extreme anger he knew Cho was right. Harry wouldn't want him to kill.

But he could still maim her.

His eyes narrowed again, and Cho, seeing this, began grasping at things to say.

"Don't do it, Malfoy," Cho warned. "Harry will hate you if you hurt me. He still cares about me."

"No, he *doesn't*," Draco spat, but his self-confidence was weakened. Cho was right; Harry hadn't told him about her. He probably did still care about her.

Cho pressed her advantage. "He does still care for me. I know it." She chose her next words very carefully. "After all, what would he want with you, half-blood? Filthy, animal *freak*."

It was cruel, Cho knew, cruel and low, to hit Draco with words like that. Words designed to cause the utmost shame in someone raised in their pure-blood culture.

But it worked.

Draco dropped his wand and took a staggering step backwards, as if he'd been hit by a physical blow. Burning tears welled up in his silver eyes as shame flooded his stomach. He had described himself like that to Harry, but to hear that slander from someone else's lips...he desperately grasped at his self-control, but all his years of pure-blood training told him Cho was right. He was a freak. A disgrace. A filthy animal. What could Harry ever want with him?

"DRACO!"

Draco and Cho both whirled around to see Harry burst through Draco's locking spell and into the classroom.

Harry quickly looked back and forth between the two of them, assessing the damage. His eyes scanned Cho first - angry, flushed cheeks, slightly shaking body, but otherwise completely unscathed. He flicked his eyes over to Draco - watery eyes, trembling lower lip, crushed expression. His own eyes narrowed.

"What just happened here?" he asked in a low voice. At the sight of Draco on the verge of tears, every protective urge he had was kicking in.

Cho spoke up to answer Harry's question before Draco could. "Harry, thank God you're here to save me!" she said dramatically. She pointed at Draco. "Your crazy veela was about to - "

"I didn't come here to save *you*, Cho," Harry interrupted coldly. He looked directly into Draco's eyes. "I came here to save Draco."

Draco blinked, obviously surprised by Harry's words.

Cho was also taken aback. "What on earth are you talking about?" she asked incredulously. "Malfoy doesn't need to be saved; he needs to be locked up."

After Harry's conversation with Snape, that was not the smartest thing Cho could have said.

Harry tore his gaze away from Draco to glare at Cho. "Get out," he spat.

Cho blinked. "What? But he *threatened* me, Harry!"

"So what?" Harry snapped. "You're perfectly fine and you haven't been hexed, so get out. I've had it with you. Take your dirty lies and your prejudices and get the hell away from me and Draco."

Cho made some sputtering, indignant noises behind him, but Harry really didn't care. He walked over to Draco and touched his cheek.

"You okay?" he asked softly, registering the slam of the door behind him as Cho left in a huff.

Draco screwed up his eyes, willing himself not to cry.

"Draco?" Harry whispered. "What did she say to you?"

"Half-blood," Draco whispered back, unable to fight it as one tear escaped and fell down his cheek. "Filthy, animal freak."

Harry responded by crashing into him, wrapping both arms around Draco's waist and kissing him as hard as he could.

"No," he finally whispered fiercely, against Draco's lips. "Beautiful. Perfect. *Mine*."

And then all of the tears that Draco had been fighting so hard escaped, and began to fall down Draco's cheeks in streams. The blonde attacked Harry's mouth with his own, pushing Harry backwards until he slammed up against the wall.

Harry wasted no time getting Draco's belt and zipper open. Holding Draco's head in one hand, he agilely spun them around, reversing their positions, cushioning Draco's head against the stones with one hand. His free hand snaked its way into Draco's pants, and in a matter of minutes Draco was coming, biting into Harry's neck to stifle his cry.

Not taking even a moment to rest, Draco spun them back around, pinning Harry firmly to the stone wall and yanking open his trousers. And then in a move that was completely unexpected by Harry, Draco dropped to his knees.

Harry's eyes flew wide open for a moment, before they rolled back in his head and shut tightly. His hands scrabbled uselessly for something to hold onto on the flat stone wall as his legs began to tremble. It was all wet heat and tongue and veela powers and -

It was less than a matter of minutes before Harry saw stars. His knees buckled and he fell, grabbing for Draco's shoulders, desperately trying to keep from hitting the ground.

And then Draco's arms were around him tightly, holding him up, and he knew that Draco never would have let him hit the ground in the first place.

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After resting a moment, collapsed as he was on top of Draco, Harry moved so that he was sitting against the wall, pulling Draco with him. He pulled the blonde securely against him with his back to Harry's chest and his body between Harry's legs. Harry wrapped his arms tightly around Draco's waist, and pressed his cheek up against Draco's.

They cuddled in silence for a moment before Harry kissed Draco's cheek.

"Thank you?" he said playfully, and Draco grinned.

"You're welcome. You know," he said casually, "they say imitation is the sincerest form of gratitude." Harry laughed.

"I think the saying is 'imitation is the sincerest form of *flattery*,' you git."

"Oh. Well in that case, feel free to flatter me anytime," Draco returned impishly.

"Your wish is my command," Harry said, and this time Draco laughed.

"Actually, *your* wish is usually *my* command, not the other way around."

"And don't you forget it," Harry muttered, nuzzling the soft skin of Draco's cheek. Then he sighed. "We have to talk."

Draco sighed as well. "I figured as much," he said, playing with Harry's fingers that were wrapped so securely around his waist.

"I saw what you did to Lavender, Draco," Harry said, and he felt Draco stiffen ever so slightly in his grasp.

"Are you mad at me?" Draco asked in a small, pitiful voice. Harry knew Draco well enough by this point to know that a good part of that smallness and pitiful-ness was clever play acting, but he still felt guilty.

"No, I'm not mad," Harry said, kissing Draco's head. "It would hardly be fair of me to be mad at you after I've let you hex everyone and their dog up until now with no consequences."

"Up until now?" Draco wasn't sure he liked the sound of that.

"Up until now," Harry said firmly. He tightened his arms around Draco. "Look, Draco...I had a talk with Snape just now..."

Harry carefully relayed everything Snape had told him. Draco listened intently until Harry was finished.

"So, we could go to prison for this?" Draco said, mulling everything over in his mind.

"Yes. And I can't...I won't..." he closed his eyes, a queasy feeling in his stomach as he remembered what Snape had said happens to veela in prison. "I won't ever let anything bad happen to you, Draco."

"I thought protection was *my* job," Draco pointed out. "I'm the veela."

"Yeah, but I'm the Gryffindor," Harry responded. "I'll do whatever I have to protect you."

"Even...*discipline* me?" Draco purred seductively, remembering the word Harry had said Snape used. Harry snorted.

"It sounds all sexual and kinky when you say it. Believe me, it doesn't sound sexy coming from Snape."

"Well, I don't get it. I mean, really, how *exactly* are you supposed to discipline me?"

"I don't know," Harry said, sounding honestly bemused. "Snape didn't give me any ideas. And I sure as hell wasn't going to ask."

"Well, I'm just running scared now, with that horrible threat," Draco said, smirking.

"Hey, I'll think of something," Harry protested. "And it *will* be horrible, and you won't like it at all. So no hexing the other students anymore, got it?"

"Whatever," Draco drawled, laying his head back against Harry's chest and closing his eyes.

Harry furrowed his brow. "What do you mean *whatever*?"

"I mean," Draco said lazily, "that I'm not worried. You couldn't discipline me if you tried."

Harry raised an eyebrow. "Is that a *challenge*, Malfoy?"

"No," Draco said, eyes still closed. "It's a fact. Face it, Harry, you're a total softie. I've got you wrapped around my finger. You're not really going to do anything if I hex a couple other students."

"You better believe I will," Harry said warningly, his tone of voice making Draco's eyes fly back open. "If it's a choice between you getting punished or you going to prison, I think you can figure out which one I'll choose."

"Please," Draco scoffed. But he didn't sound quite as assured as before.

"I mean it, Draco. No more hexing. Promise me."

"*Fine*," said Draco, sounding rather put out. "I promise. Now can we just snuggle and talk about something else?"

Harry gently squeezed Draco in a hug. "Promise me one more time," he said, as he trailed kisses down Draco's cheek and neck.

"Aw, Harry," Draco whined.

"Please? For me?"

Draco rolled his eyes. "The things I do for you. Alright, I do solemnly swear that I won't hex the other students," Draco promised, and he really, honestly, one hundred percent truly meant it from the bottom of his heart.

Sort of.

The Veela Enigma

Chapter 20: Crime and Punishment

The cold, midnight moon shone through piercingly through the windows of Riddle Manor, illuminating the circle of hooded Death Eaters that stood listening to Lord Voldemort speak.

Lucius Malfoy held himself stock still, listening to the Dark Lord's plans, trying to memorize every detail to relay back to Dumbledore. Next to him, his long-time friend and fellow spy Severus Snape also listened closely.

Finally, after what felt like ages, Voldemort dismissed the Death Eaters.

"You may all leave," he said in his cold voice, "Except for Lucius and Snape."

Fear coursed through Lucius' body. Him and Snape? Oh God. Did the Dark Lord know?

"Snape, wait here for a moment. Lucius, come with me into the study."

Lucius took a deep breath as his heart beat a rapid staccato somewhere in his throat. If Voldemort knew...if he suspected...Lucius was as good as dead.

Schooling his features to show no fear, he followed Voldemort down the hall and into the spacious study. Nagini was curled as usual in front of the fire. The Dark Lord turned to face Lucius.

"Remove your hood, Lucius," he said. His tone of voice was unreadable.

Lucius slowly removed his hood, revealing his white-blond hair. Voldemort stared at him for a moment, before reaching out with one hand.

Lucius held his breath as Voldemort picked up one lock of Lucius' long hair and ran his fingers down the length.

The Dark Lord made a soft noise in the back of his throat. "Such hair you have, Lucius. The veela influence comes through most strongly here."

Lucius was rather at a loss for words. He had a nagging feeling that there was something, some memory he ought to have, about the Dark Lord and veela, but it just wasn't there. He remembered telling Voldemort about his heritage, and the Dark Lord receiving the news well before allowing him to go home.

So why was part of Lucius so angry and afraid right now?

"I have a favor to ask of you," the Dark Lord said. "A small thing."

"Anything for you, of course, my Lord. Big or small," Lucius said with a formal bow.

The Dark Lord nearly smiled. "Charming thing, aren't you," he muttered.

Lucius blinked. Did Lord Voldemort just call him *charming*?

"Thank you, Lucius, but it is a small thing. I need one of your hairs."

"One of my - "

"Hairs, yes. The hair on your head. Just one. I wish to...study it closely. Veela hair has many magical properties, you know."

"I'm hardly a veela, my Lord."

"Humor me, Lucius."

Obediently, Lucius reached up and grasped one of his hairs. Voldemort watched him intently as he pulled the fine, flaxen strand of hair out of his head. Lucius couldn't suppress a wince as he did so; it had always been particularly painful to pull out his hair.

Voldemort, however, actually seemed pleased when he winced. "Excellent, most excellent," he muttered to himself, then held out a hand. Lucius placed the hair on his palm, the whiteness of it a stark contrast against the Dark Lord's hand.

"You may go, Lucius," Voldemort said graciously. "Send Snape in as you leave."

As Lucius left the study, resisting the urge to rub at the tender spot on his head, he vaguely wondered why the Dark Lord had taken to always referring to him as Lucius and never Malfoy anymore.

"Oh please, Ron, please please please please *please*?"

It was an unusual scene for the Gryffindor common room. A large crowd of Gryffindors watched as a red-haired boy stood in the center of the room with his arms crossed, glaring down at a black-haired boy with glasses and an uncommonly good-looking blonde boy, who were kneeling in front of him and begging.

"I don't think so, Harry," Ron spat. "I told you what would happen if Malfoy hexed anyone else."

"Please, Weasley, I didn't mean too, I just got really jealous and Harry wasn't around to stop me!" Draco pleaded, clasping his hands in front of him in supplication.

"That's right, it wasn't his fault! I should have stopped him but I was talking with Snape," Harry added.

"But you *never* stop him, Harry," Ron growled. "*Someone* has to be responsible around here and stop all this hexing."

"I'm going to, I promise! Snape talked sense into me, Ron! I'm not going to let Draco hex anyone anymore!"

"Tell him about the discipline thing, Harry," Draco said, nudging Harry with his shoulder.

Ron looked at them skeptically. "What discipline thing?"

"I promised Snape that if Draco hexes anyone else I'll discipline him," Harry said earnestly. "And I will, Ron! I won't let him hex anyone else, and if he does then he'll be in big trouble with me."

"That's right," Draco agreed. "So I'm going to be a very good veela from now on, because I don't want Harry to punish me."

Ron appeared to be thinking this over. "How are you going to discipline him?"

Harry and Draco exchanged a look. "Well, I um...haven't decided yet," Harry admitted sheepishly.

Ron's gaze hardened. "Then no deal. You two are still getting the month of detention *and* the house points taken off."

"Awwww," the whole of Gryffindor house groaned.

"Wait!" Harry said hastily. "What if I let you help me decide on Draco's punishment.?"

"*Harry, no!*" Draco hissed, but Ron's attention was caught.

"Help you, eh?" He looked like he might be wavering slightly. Harry pressed on.

"Yes, you can help. We can come up with something really nasty," Harry promised, ignoring Draco's glare. He doubled his efforts at pleading. "Please, Ron, *please*. We're *best mates*. Remember the World Cup? The Tri-Wizard Tournament? Those were good times, Ron. Good times."

Ron looked like he was teetering on the brink of retracting the detentions. Harry struck the final blow.

"Think of *Quidditch*, Ron. We'll lose to *Hufflepuff* if I can't practice."

That did it.

"Alright, I'll change your punishments." Harry and Draco threw their arms around each other in a huge hug, and the Gryffindor common room cheered. "HOWEVER - "

Harry and Draco turned expectant faces to Ron.

"There are still going to be consequences," Ron said firmly. "First, I'm still taking 50 house points each. Second, Malfoy has to apologize to Lavender. *Nicely*."

Draco made a face but didn't say anything.

"Third, Harry has to punish Malfoy if there's any more hexing. And I mean that," he said, looking seriously at Harry. "And finally," Ron continued, looking at the pair sternly, "Harry can't stay the night in Malfoy's room anymore."

"*What?*" Harry and Draco gasped together.

"That's right. If I find out that Harry's not in his bed one night, I'll report it to McGonagall."

"But...but *Weasley*," Draco whined, sounding very upset. "I can't sleep without Harry."

"Well, maybe you should have thought of that before you hexed Lavender," Ron said shortly.

"For how long?" Harry asked, looking as upset as Draco.

"Until Christmas."

"UNTIL CHRISTMAS???" Harry said, aghast.

"But that's *three* weeks away!" Draco added.

"Suck it up, Malfoy," Ron said, unsympathetic. "Next time keep your wand in your pocket."

"This fucking *sucks*," Draco complained, and Harry had to agree.

"Ron, come on, be reasonable - "

"Sorry, Harry, but that's my final decision. Unless you want to take things up with Snape, McGonagall or Dumbledore, you're going to have to live with it."

And since Harry and Draco most certainly did not want to take things up with Snape, McGonagall or Dumbledore, they found themselves resigned to three weeks of lonely nights.

A few days later, Harry could be found just after curfew, moping by the fire in the Gryffindor common room.

"Oh, buck up, Harry," Hermione said, as she worked on her NEWT-level Arithmancy homework. "It's not like you don't see him everyday."

"Yes, but I *miss* him," Harry said plaintively. "He's so nice and *warm* at night."

"I'll just bet he is," Hermione said, looking amused. "And of course you miss the snuggling."

"I do," Harry said morosely.

"And the loving."

"Exactly."

"And the sex."

"Yes, of - *Hermione!*"

"Oh, what? Like that's not what you're missing most?"

Harry blushed and mumbled something under his breath.

"I'm sorry, Harry, I didn't quite catch that. Come again?"

Harry bit his lip. "I *said* we haven't actually had sex yet."

Hermione raised an eyebrow. This was definitely more interesting than Arithmancy. "Ooh, Harry, why not?" she asked in a quiet voice, putting her book to the side and scooting close to Harry on the couch. "I'd have thought, with him being a veela and all..."

"Well, we were going to, but then Ron put this stupid ban on us," Harry replied in a heated whisper. "I mean, it's both of our first times, and it's a really big deal for veela. I don't want it to be all rushed and stuff. I want to, you know, wake up with him the next morning."

"Why Harry Potter, if I didn't know better, I'd say you were being romantic," Hermione said, putting a hand over her heart.

Harry colored slightly. "ANYWAY," he said, obviously desperate for a subject change, "Draco's birthday is right before we leave for Christmas Break, and I need to get him a present. I wanted something kind of special. Any ideas?"

Hermione thought for a moment. "Could you get one of the hairs from his head?"

"What, just pull it out?"

"No, he has to give it to you," Hermione explained. "Of his own free will. And he won't like it, because it'll hurt a lot to pull it out."

"Because it's magic and all that?"

"Exactly. It's painful for anyone who has active veela magic in their blood to pull out their own hair. But the hair has to be removed by free will; otherwise it will lose its magical properties. If you can get one of his hairs, though, then I know the perfect gift."

She indicated the book *Veela Magick* in her bag. "It uses a spell from in there. And trust me, he'll love it."

"You're the best, Hermione," Harry said, reclining against the couch, already dreaming about the clandestine snog session he was going to sneak during lunch the next day.

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A couple days later, Ron, Hermione and Harry could be found sitting together at a large table in the common room, surrounded by several stacks of veela books stolen from Draco's room.

"There's got to be suggestions about veela discipline in at least one of these books," Hermione said practically, paging through a large volume titled *Soulmates and Sirens: A History of Wizard-Veela Relationships*.

"Yes," agreed Ron, looking at his own copy of *Veela and the Wizarding World*. "Hopefully suggestions like 'turn the bratty veela over your knee and administer a sound spanking.'"

"Ron!" snapped Harry, scandalized. "Don't be ridiculous. He's still my boyfriend. I'm *not* going to spank him."

"Pity," Ron muttered under his breath. After a moment's more searching, he turned to Harry.

"Harry, is this really all worth it?"

"What do you mean?"

"I mean, is it worth it? Is it really worth it to be with a veela? Is it worth it to have a boyfriend who's so jealous and possessive that you have to be careful not to be alone with people he doesn't trust? Or one who's so dangerous you have to discipline him to keep him from hurting others on your behalf?"

Harry didn't hesitate, not for one second. "Yes."

Ron didn't look convinced. "But Harry...no offense meant, but he's a royal pain in the arse."

Harry smiled. "Sometimes," he admitted. "But most of the time he's so bloody wonderful I can't figure out what the hell I ever did to deserve him."

"If you can get past his brattiness, Ron, you'd see that he absolutely adores Harry," Hermione added. "Harry's his whole world. Sure he's a git to the rest of us, but he loves Harry, and that's what matters."

She grinned suddenly. "And don't forget he's got those veela powers. He's probably amazing in bed, and how hot is that?"

"Hermione!" Ron and Harry both gasped.

"Just kidding," Hermione said, in a tone of voice that left both Harry and Ron suspecting that maybe she wasn't kidding after all.

The three continued searching for several more minutes, until Harry made a noise and pointed at his copy of *Visions of Veela* by Gilderoy Lockhart.

"This isn't about *discipline* per say, but it's instructions on how to get a veela to do what you want. It says you should threaten to make them wear copper jewelry. What on earth does that do?"

"Veela can't stand how copper feels against their skin," Hermione explained. "It's actually quite fascinating, when you think about how metals like copper and iron has long been associated with Ares, the Greek god of War. It goes along with fighting and bloodshed - they're what weapons are often made of. Veela are the opposite of that - they're all about beauty, love and sex, like Aphrodite, the goddess of Love. Not to mention that copper interferes with the transmission of their veela powers, and veela don't like that much either."

"Thank you, Human Textbook," Ron said with a grin. "So you could make some copper handcuffs for Draco then, Harry. He'd hate that."

"NO WAY," Harry said emphatically. "Too mean. Try again."

"Hmmm...what about taking away something he really likes?" Hermione said, looking deep in thought. "Oh Harry, what would you say to sex?"

"WHAT?" Harry and Ron sputtered together.

Hermione rolled her eyes. "Taking away something he really likes? Take away sex, Harry."

"*Take away sex?*" Harry looked scandalized. "Do you have any idea how *hard* that would be?"

"Actually, I think she's right," Ron said, looking sideways at Harry. "That would get him where it really counts."

"I don't know, guys..." Harry said, looking pained. "I think that might be one of those 'this hurts me more than it hurts you' punishments."

"I know it will be terrible, but it's supposed to be. Don't you want him to stop hexing people?" Hermione said earnestly.

"Well...yes, but - "

"Then do it, Harry."

Harry sighed. "Alright, fine. Besides, I probably won't have to do it anyway. He hasn't hexed anyone since Lavender."

"Only because you've been a dream boyfriend," Hermione said distractedly, scanning a passage in her book. Harry's cheeks flushed slightly as Ron gave him an amused look.

"Dream boyfriend?" Ron asked, a smirk quirking up the corners of his lips.

"I've been nothing of the sort," Harry protested.

"Mmm-hmmm," Hermione said. "That's why you've been waiting for him after every class with chocolate, walking him back to his room every night, being very careful to keep all your attention on him and nobody else...you're being very sweet."

Ron made a gagging motion with his hand. Harry folded his arms and looked cross.

"I'm *not* sweet. I just don't want him to get jealous, that's all," he mumbled.

"Whatever you say, Harry," Hermione said, and then held out her book. "There's one quick note in here I think you should read," she said, passing the book to Harry.

Harry read the passage out loud. *"Be warned, for veela are often mischievous and manipulative, and adept at using their good-looks and power to worm their way out of trouble. If it should become necessary for a mate to discipline their veela, a firm hand will be needed."*

"A firm hand? On Harry?" Ron asked, shaking his head. "We are so screwed."

It was the next evening, right before dinner, and Harry and Draco were in Draco's room. Draco was in his armchair, reading a magazine, and Harry was laying on his stomach on the bed, pretending to do homework while actually working up the nerve to tell Draco about his decision.

"Okay, so, here's the deal," Harry finally said, hoping he sounded stern. Draco glanced up from his magazine.

"What deal?"

"The deal about your punishments," Harry continued. He remembered the book warning him that a firm hand would be necessary, and tried to sound strict and forbidding. "If you're bad and you hex anyone, I'm not going to have any kind of sex with you. I'm cutting you off."

Draco raised an eyebrow. "Cutting me off?"

"Yes," said Harry firmly. "No kissing, nothing."

"Hmmm," Draco said, obviously trying not to smile.

"I mean it, Draco."

"Mmm-hmmm," Draco said, returning to his magazine, the corners of his lips twitching.

"What's so funny?"

"Oh, nothing..."

"*Malfoy...*"

"Okay, okay!" Draco said, setting down his magazine. "It's just that it would never work."

"What do you mean 'it would never work'?" Harry asked, a hint of a pout in his voice. "It would to. I think it's a dreadful punishment. It would certainly work on me."

"Look, Harry, it would never work, and I'll show you why," Draco said, smoothly standing up. Harry followed suit, standing up next to Draco's bed. "I want you to try and resist me."

Harry furrowed his brow. "Resist you?"

Draco nodded. "Yes, resist me," Draco said, his voice practically a purr as the blonde began slowly walking towards Harry. "Tell me I've been a bad veela and I can't have any kisses."

"You've...you've been..." Harry's mind began spinning as Draco's veela powers kicked in full force.

"I've been a bad veela..." Draco prompted, reaching Harry and wrapping his arms around Harry's neck, running his fingers through the hair at the back of his head.

"Mmm...bad veela..." Harry mumbled, closing his eyes and losing himself in the sensation.

"And I can't..." Draco whispered, leaning in until his lips were a breath away from Harry's. "...have any...kisses..."

"Can't...have...kisses..." Harry agreed, not even sure what he was saying anymore. The next instant, his lips closed the distance between his and Draco's and he was kissing the blonde, slipping his tongue into that hot mouth, wrapping his arms tightly around Draco.

Draco kissed him back for a moment, then pulled back slightly.

"And that, Harry," he breathed, his lips still only inches from Harry's, "is why it would never work."

And then he shut off his veela powers.

Harry's mind snapped back online, and he stared at Draco in disbelief. Draco just smiled angelically and went back to his armchair.

"I think you better come up with a better punishment, Potter," he said, picking up his magazine. "And for Merlin's sake, put a little *effort* into it this time."

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"It won't work."

Ron and Hermione raised their heads from their homework to find Harry standing above them, annoyed and frustrated.

"What won't work?" Hermione asked.

"The no-sex thing. Won't work. Total wash." Harry dropped onto a chair across from Ron and Hermione, looking rather cross.

Hermione and Ron exchanged looks. "Well, why not? What hap - "

"Bloody veela powers," Harry said. "I'm putty in his hands."

"Ooooh." Harry's best friends made a unified noise of comprehension.

"Right. Forgot about that part," Ron said thoughtfully. "That would make it difficult, wouldn't it?"

"You have no idea," Harry said bluntly. "He turns those stupid powers on, and I can't remember my own name."

"Hmmm..." Hermione said, thinking out loud. "I suppose we had better come up with something else then."

"I still like the spanking idea," Ron put forward.

"Ron, not that that isn't a good idea, but Harry already said that he - "

"I'll do it."

Ron and Hermione exchanged confused looks.

"But Harry," Hermione ventured, "you said - "

"I know, but this is serious," Harry said, sounding agitated. "I need to be sure he understands that he can't keep hexing people, so I need a punishment he's going to take seriously. And as much as I don't want to discipline him, I don't want him to end up in trouble with the authorities more. So, I'll do it."

While pretending to read his Potions textbook, Ron gave a silent cheer.

Ron and Harry were walking towards the Great Hall after Transfiguration the next day, Ron's arm slung around Harry's shoulder as they heatedly discussed the latest Chudley Cannons match.

Draco was waiting by the entrance for Harry, a scowl on his face at their closeness. He fingered his wand in his pocket, trying to decide just how angry Harry would be if he hexed his best friend.

"Draco!" Harry called out, before Draco had the chance to decide.

Draco flashed Harry his most brilliant smile. "Hi Harry," he said sweetly. He turned to Ron. "Weasley," he spat in an annoyed tone.

Ron smiled wickedly at him. "Hey Malfoy, guess what?"

"What?" Draco asked in a bored tone.

"Harry's got a new punishment for you."

"Oh?" Draco asked, intrigued. "What did you come up with this time?" he asked Harry, adding cheekily, "I do hope it's a sight better than your last attempt."

"It is," Harry promised. "If you hex or jinx anyone else, Draco, you're getting a spanking."

Draco's eyes flew open wide. "A *spanking*?" he asked incredulously. "From *you*?"

"No, from Professor Trelawney," Harry said rolling his eyes. "YES, from me. And don't think I won't really do it, because trust me, I will."

Draco chewed on his bottom lip for a moment as his kinky Slytherin nature slithered up to the surface. "So you're saying that if I were to hex Weasley here - "

"Why on earth would you hex *me*, you stupid albino?"

"Because your *arm* is still on *Harry* and I *don't* like it," Draco snarled, glaring daggers at Ron. Ron rolled his eyes but was awfully quick to remove his arm from Harry's shoulders.

"So, I was saying," Draco said, looking much happier, "that if I were, *hypothetically*, to hex Weasley here, you'd spank me, Harry?"

"Er, yes," Harry said with a nod.

Draco licked his lips. "Fuck, Potter, that's kind of hot," he muttered under his breath.

"*What* did you just say?" asked Ron incredulously.

"I said, fuck, I better not get caught," Draco lied smoothly.

Ron looked relieved. "Good. For a second a thought you said..." he trailed off and shook his head, then turned to Harry. "So Harry, do you really think the Falcons are going to beat the Canons? I mean," he put his hand on Harry's arm for emphasis, "the Canons are doing *loads* better and - "

Draco's hex hit him square in the chest and he toppled over.

"Draco!" Harry cried out, sounding appalled. "What did I just tell you would happen if you hexed Ron?"

"But Harry, I don't like it when other people touch you," said Draco, the picture of innocence.

"I know, but...but...but now I have to..." Harry sputtered. He shook his head, and then reached down to help Ron to his feet. "I'm so sorry, Ron."

"Not your fault," Ron said, directing a scathing glare at Draco. "You know what's coming now, right Malfoy? You...you...bad veela, you."

"That's right," Draco agreed. "I'm a *very* bad veela. Now how about that spanking, Potter?"

Harry was nowhere to be seen until nightfall, when he stumbled back into the common room one minute after curfew, hair a complete disaster, shirt half-buttoned, glasses crooked, and neck covered in red marks.

Ron and Hermione stared at him.

"Er, hi guys," he said, a dazed look on his face.

Ron narrowed his eyes. "Do I even want to know how the punishment went?"

"Oh, that," Harry stuttered. "Well, it seems that it's...um...not really a punishment."

Hermione raised an eyebrow. "Spanking's not really a punishment?"

"Not as such, no," Harry admitted, attempting to straighten his glasses.

"Not as...Harry Potter, did you guys turn Draco's discipline into some kind of sordid, kinky sex session?" Hermione asked sternly.

Harry's guilty face was answer enough. Ron and Hermione glared at Harry.

"I'm going to think of something that will really work, I promise!" Harry said earnestly.

His best friends looked at him in disbelief.

"I will," Harry promised. And he meant it. The question was...what?

It was about one week later, and Harry was coming back from Quidditch practice with Ron and Hermione when he came across a scene in front of the Gryffindor tower that made his heart freeze.

Draco was there with his wand out, pointed straight at the little first year girl he had yelled at a couple weeks before.

"I told you to stay the *fuck* away from Harry," Draco was hissing, and before Harry could stop him a jet of light shot out of his wand.

"Draco, no!" Harry shouted. Draco whirled around, but it was too late. The little girl was on the floor, clutching her arm and crying. Hermione and Ron ran straight to her side, while Harry ran up to Draco.

"What are you *doing*?" Harry cried, grabbing Draco by both shoulders and looking straight into his eyes. "Are you crazy? Do you want to go to *prison*?"

"But Harry," Draco whined, "she was planning on *finding* you, for Merlin knows what deviant purposes."

"I...I just wanted to give him a m-m-message," the little girl howled. "From Professor McGonagall."

Ron and Hermione turned to glare at Draco. Harry tightened his grip on Draco's shoulders.

"Look, I understand, love, I do. I know you get jealous and that it isn't your fault," Harry said earnestly. "But you have to understand that you *can't* keep hexing people. You could wind up in serious trouble."

"But Harry - "

"No, *listen*. If you're worried or jealous or upset, come find me and I *promise* I will make it better. But *don't* hex the other person. It's dangerous, and you could really hurt someone."

"That's usually my intention," Draco grumbled under his breath. Ron made an angry noise and stood up, but Harry waved him down.

"Draco, I can't let you hex the other students," Harry said, very seriously. "You really could get in trouble, and I care about you too much to let that happen. You're too important to me, do you understand?"

Draco rolled his eyes, but he looked rather pleased all the same.

"Look," Harry said, almost hesitantly, "you know I've got to punish you for this, right? I promised everyone, and you *have* to stop doing this."

"Oh, please," Draco scoffed. "You haven't been able to come up with a decent punishment yet. You expect me to be worried right now?"

Behind Harry, Hermione and Ron exchanged looks. Draco was right. What on earth was Harry going to do?

Harry looked at a loss for a moment, biting his lower lip, his brow furrowed, eyes watching the ground. Then suddenly, his head snapped up, his eyes widened, and a look of inspiration blossomed on his face.

"I've got it," he said triumphantly. "The perfect punishment for you. Draco - no sweets tonight."

Two sets of confused Gryffindor eyes turned to look at Harry.

Two sets of confused Gryffindor eyes, and one set of horrified Slytherin eyes.

"*What?*" Draco gasped.

"No sweets. Nothing with sugar. No pudding, no tarts, no éclairs. No chocolate, ice cream, pasties, cakes, pies, creams, or candy. Nothing. Not even sugar for your tea."

Ron and Hermione watched with dawning admiration as Draco began to sputter indignantly.

"But...but...but you can't...that's not fair...*Harry!*"

"Sorry, Draco," Harry said firmly. "But I'm not backing down."

"That's brilliant," Hermione whispered to Ron as Draco began whining in earnest. "It's the perfect punishment for a veela."

"Absolutely," Ron agreed in an undertone. "And don't forget the best part."

"What's that?"

Ron smirked. "We get to rub it in Malfoy's face tonight."

At dinner, Draco watched with a sulky expression as Ron took great pleasure enjoying an entire plate of éclairs right in front of him.

"Mmmm," the red head moaned dramatically, taking yet another bite. "These are *amazing*."

"*Haarryyy*," Draco whined. Harry remained unmoved.

"No."

"But éclairs are my *favorite*."

Harry shrugged and went back to talking with Hermione. Ron made a great show of licking the chocolate icing off his fingers. Draco made an irritated face at him and turned to Harry.

"What if I promise not to hex anyone else?" he bargained.

Harry raised an eyebrow. "You already promised me that, remember? And how long did that promise last?"

Draco had the grace to look sheepish.

Dinner progressed, and Draco just poked miserably at his baked chicken, casting longing glances at the cream-filled dessert. Finally, beyond desperate, he turned to begging.

"Please, Harry? Please? Just one? Just one little one? You know how I love French desserts and the éclairs look so good and Weasley's eating them like he's coming with each bite...oh please, Harry, please?"

And he punctuated his plea with the most adorable face he knew how to make. He even turned on his veela powers to make him even more irresistible.

To Draco's credit, Harry wavered.

Ron and Hermione stopped eating and stared at Draco with sappy expressions, and Harry found himself on the brink of passing Draco the éclairs himself. The blonde looked forlorn and adorable in a way that only veela and Puss-in-Boots can pull off.

But then Harry saw that beautiful face in a cold, gray cell in solitary confinement in Azkaban prison, bars slamming shut in front of him. The beautiful silver eyes grew cold and desperate as Draco slowly went insane, alone in his cell, crying out for Harry and -

Harry wrenched his hand away from the plate and shook his head to clear his mind.

"Nice try," he said to Draco. "But it won't work. Now turn off those bloody powers, you're making Ron and Hermione drool."

Draco scowled but turned off his powers. Ron and Hermione's expressions went back to normal, and Harry breathed a sigh of relief. It made him ache inside to deny the blonde anything he wanted. Draco had no idea how hard this was for him. None at all.

After dinner, Harry walked Draco back to his room. Draco looked sulky and a bit irritated, which didn't make Harry feel any better.

They reached the dragon portrait, which swung open when Draco said the password.

"So," Harry said hesitantly. He felt all queasy inside, and desperately wanted to know that things were okay between him and Draco.

Draco made no response, and instead just took a step towards his room.

"Wait," Harry said, slightly desperately. Draco rolled his eyes and stopped, still saying nothing. Harry bit his lip nervously.

"Look, I...I didn't want to do this, but I had to, you know, and...just...well, I'm sorry," he said awkwardly, reaching out to run his hand through Draco's hair.

"Whatever," Draco snapped, jerking away from Harry. The next instant he was slamming the portrait shut in Harry's face.

Harry stood there for a moment, hurt and upset. He raised a hand to knock when he heard Draco utter a locking charm behind the portrait.

And since Harry was the only other person who knew the password, it was obvious that he wasn't wanted.

Crushed, Harry made his way back to Gryffindor tower.

A couple of hours later, Draco was still in his room, lying on his back on his bed and staring at the hangings. A fierce battle was raging within him, essentially going something like this:

Draco Malfoy, go apologize to your mate, the veela was snarling.

*No way. I'm a Malfoy, and no one tells a Malfoy what to do. **No one,*** the wizard was snarling back.

Draco sighed and rolled over onto his side. He closed his eyes, and Harry's face flashed in front of him, horribly hurt, as Draco slammed the portrait shut in his face. Draco's stomach gave an uncomfortable lurch as his veela half went into full guilt mode.

Draco opened his eyes, unable to bear the image of Harry's crushed expression anymore. If he were capable of being completely honest, he might have admitted to himself that he was a bit out of control. He hadn't really been particularly jealous when he had gone up to Gryffindor tower to wait for Harry and found the 11 year old girl on her way to look for him. It had been his pride in carrying out his threats more than anything else that had hexed her.

His pride, and the fact that he *could*.

His stomach gave another uncomfortable lurch as he remembered his stint on Umbridge's Inquisitorial Squad. He had taken house points from almost everyone in Hogwarts simply because he *could*. He had been given power. And now he was even more powerful - he had his veela traits and Harry's protection, and it had gone to his head something awful.

Draco bit his lip. Harry was so sweet, and so unwilling to recognize Draco's faults. Draco had wondered a few times why Harry was almost blind to everything he did. Even Draco's veela half knew that he was behaving completely unacceptably, but Harry just kept defending him with the staunchness of a fool in love.

Even now, Harry was only punishing Draco out of sheer worry for the blonde, to protect Draco from expulsion or prison. He was doing it not out of anger, but because he cared about Draco.

Still, it was awfully humiliating to be punished by your *boyfriend*.

Not as if you didn't deserve it, snapped his veela half.

Bugger off, returned his wizard half.

Draco rolled over on his back to stare at the hangings again as the battle began anew.

"Still think it's worth it, Harry?"

Harry sighed in the darkness as Ron's words from earlier repeated in his head. He had come back to Gryffindor tower so obviously upset that Ron and Hermione had dragged what had happened out of him. Hermione had been sympathetic, pointing out that it was just Draco's wounded pride that had caused the rift and promising that Draco would come and apologize soon.

Ron had just rolled his eyes at Draco's behavior and asked, "Still think it's worth it, Harry?"

Yes, Harry had staunchly protested. And now, in the darkness of his bedroom, surrounded by the soft snores of his roommates, he stuck to his beliefs with a fierce loyalty that would have made Godric Gryffindor proud.

It's worth it, he told himself stubbornly. *And tomorrow I'll find Draco and talk to him again. He can't stay mad at me forever. And even if he could, it'd be better than letting him suffer in prison.*

Pulling the blankets up more securely around his shoulders to ward off the night's chill, he tried to get some sleep.

Suddenly, moonlight poured into Harry's bed as his hangings were pulled open. Harry didn't need his glasses on to recognize Draco as the moonlight reflected off the veela's similarly colored hair.

There was a moment of silence as they looked at each other. Finally, Harry made the first move.

"Hi," he said quietly. Draco just nodded back. Harry wondered for one horrible moment if Draco had found a way around the whole mate thing and was here to dump him when Draco's whisper cut through the night.

"I'm sorry."

Harry blinked in shock. "What?"

Draco reached up and rubbed the back of his neck uncomfortably. "I'm really sorry, Harry."

Squinting a bit without his glasses, Harry could just about make out that Draco was in his pajamas and a dressing gown. Apparently, he wasn't the only one who couldn't sleep.

"It's okay," Harry replied.

"No it *isn't*," Draco said back in a distressed voice, kneeling on the bed next to Harry. He began wringing his hands together nervously. "I've been an absolute nightmare and I haven't been taking you seriously and I slammed the portrait in your face and hurt your feelings when you were just trying to help and I'm miserable and I can't sleep and -"

"Draco," Harry interrupted.

Draco paused his tirade. "What?"

"It's okay."

Draco let out a relieved sigh, and the next instant Harry found himself smothered in veela as Draco threw himself on top of Harry and began nuzzling into his chest.

"I was so mean to you...I feel so bad...I'm so awful..." Draco kept mumbling, tucking his head under Harry's chin and curling up on top of Harry. Harry wrapped his arms around Draco, kissing his head and rubbing his back soothingly, recognizing how much the veela in Draco needed comfort.

"I'm sorry I got all pissed off when you punished me, Harry. I know you're just protecting me in your stupid Gryffindor way."

"I really am. I don't want you to end up in prison for hexing other students."

"I know. I'm sorry I hexed that girl. I won't do it anymore, I mean it."

"Learned your lesson, have you?"

"Oh yes. I'm really sorry, Harry."

"It's alright. I understand. You were jealous."

Draco fidgeted on Harry's chest for a moment, then nodded his head.

"That's right. I was jealous. Very, very jealous."

"Course you were. Poor thing," Harry said sympathetically. "So no more hexing, promise?"

"Promise," Draco agreed, and this time it really sounded like he meant it.

Harry kissed the top of his head. "How about getting under the covers with me? I don't think I've really been warm since the last night we slept together," Harry confessed.

Draco quickly shed his dressing gown and slipped under the covers next to Harry. Harry held his arms open, and Draco crawled into them and then directly on top of him. He appeared to be ignorant of the fact that he was only slightly smaller than Harry as he lay stomach to stomach on the Gryffindor, crushing Harry slightly with his weight.

"I...kiss...am...kiss...so...kiss...sorry..." Draco said, pressing kisses all over Harry's face. "Can you forgive me?"

Harry barely bit back the urge to go, "Awww." Draco was absolutely adorable when he was apologizing. On some level Harry knew Draco probably always acted extra cute on purpose to be sure that Harry forgave him, but it didn't change how positively endearing the blonde became.

"Of course I forgive you, love," Harry said, lifting his head to meet Draco's lips in a quick kiss. "Don't I always?"

Draco grinned at him. "Yeah, you do." He lay his head down against Harry's chest. "I miss sleeping with you," he confessed, his voice a bit muffled by Harry's pajamas. "I don't want to leave."

"I don't want you to leave," Harry said, feeling so complete and happy to be snuggled up with Draco in bed again.

"Still, I suppose Weasley will make our lives hell if I don't," Draco said with a sigh, placing his hands on Harry's chest and pushing himself into a sitting position.

Then Harry had a thought.

"You know, *technically* Ron said I'm not allowed to sleep in your bed," Harry pointed out. "He didn't say anything about you sleeping in mine."

"Hey, you're right. Potter, how dreadfully sneaky of you to realize this," Draco said approvingly, quickly laying back down on top of Harry.

"My inner Slytherin again," Harry said playfully, wrapping his arms around Draco.

The blonde sighed contentedly. "Why do you put up with me, Harry?" he asked, snuggling even closer and tucking his face into Harry's neck.

And for the first time, Harry wanted to tell him everything about how he grew up - how he lived in a cupboard under the stairs, how the Dursley's starved him, how Dudley beat up on him and never let him have friends, and most of all, how he grew up knowing he was unwanted and unloved.

And then he wanted to tell Draco that he would put up with anything at all and protect Draco at all costs because Draco was so good to him and so sweet to him, and how he made Harry feel so wanted and so loved. He wanted to tell Draco that he made him happy, and that Harry would rather die than live in a world without Draco again.

But he didn't know the words to explain how he felt, so instead Harry just cuddled Draco closer and gently stroked his hair.

"Because you're worth it," he whispered softly in the darkness.

The Veela Enigma

Chapter 21: Potions and Presents

"You'd better have a damn good explanation for this, Harry."

Draco reluctantly cracked one eye open to see Ron Weasley glaring down through Harry's hangings.

"I do, Ron."

Ah. Apparently Harry was already awake. Good, he could handle this. Draco shut his eye and burrowed back under the covers.

"And what exactly is your good explanation then, Harry? Go on, I'm waiting."

"Simple. You said I wasn't allowed to sleep in Draco's bed. You never said he wasn't allowed in mine."

Draco fought to keep a grin off his lips as Harry's words were met with silence. He couldn't help but picture Weasley's mouth hanging open like a goldfish.

"But...but...but Harry, you knew what I meant! You should have followed the rules like you were supposed too!"

Ah, Weasley was desperately grasping at some kind of Gryffindor morals. Not going to work.

"I was merely following your instructions," Harry said righteously.

"Well, you can't do it again," Ron said crossly. "You're not supposed to be sleeping with Malfoy, that was one of my conditions."

"Fine," Harry said, sounding a little peeved. "We won't do it again." Draco then felt a warm hand slip under his shirt and rest on his back. "Now if you don't mind, Ron, I'd like to snog my boyfriend a bit before getting out of bed. I'll see you at breakfast."

Ron made a choked sound, then Draco heard the hangings wrenched shut. He grinned.

"You sure told him, Harry," Draco said without opening his eyes.

"Oh, you're awake then, are you?" Harry asked, rolling onto his side and into a spooning position behind Draco, his arms coming to rest under Draco's shirt on his stomach.

"More or less," Draco said, quickly becoming wide awake as Harry's fingers began to trace a pattern across his stomach.

"So you heard me talking to Ron?" Harry asked, his lips coming to rest on the sensitive skin on the nape of Draco's neck.

"Yesss," Draco hissed, as Harry's began planting soft kisses on the base of Draco's neck. "I heard you mention something about wanting to give your boyfriend a snog."

"I did say that, didn't I?" Harry asked rhetorically. Draco shivered as Harry trailed the kisses up to his ear, his hand now tracing a maddening path just underneath the waistband of Draco's pants.

"Yes, you did," Draco said, his voice a bit husky. "But by snog you actually meant "mind-shattering blow-job," right?"

And just to be sure that was what Harry meant, he turned his veela powers on full-force.

Harry immediately bit down on Draco's neck. "Oh God, yes, that's exactly what I meant," the brunette panted. Draco gave a soft cry as Harry's hand plunged down the front of Draco's pants and began stroking him. Draco rolled onto his back underneath Harry, and the two began kissing fervently, devouring each other's mouth, Harry's hand moving ever faster until -

"Hey Dean, did I ever tell that I won *Witch Weekly's* Most Charming Smile award?"

"Bah, Seamus, that's nothing. I've just become the world's youngest dragon slayer."

Shit. Two of Harry's roommates had just walked into the room, and even though they were outside the bed hangings they had still been hit full on with Draco's veela powers.

With a long-suffering sigh Draco shut off his veela powers and Harry rolled off him. They lay side by side on their backs for a moment, both staring up at the canopy overhead.

"I miss your room," Harry finally said.

"God, me too."

Harry and Draco made it down to breakfast pretty quickly, neither keen on doing anything with Harry's roommates around. They took seats at the Gryffindor table across from Ron and Hermione, and then Draco gave a happy cry.

"WAFFLES!" He quickly grabbed a plate and a waffle, and then began loading it up with whipped cream and strawberries. He had just grabbed the pitcher of maple syrup when he froze.

"Is this...okay?" he said uncertainly, turning big, worried silver eyes to Harry. "Can I have sugar now?"

Harry melted.

"Of course, baby," he cooed, and Draco smiled with relief before upending the pitcher over his plate and dumping every last drop of the sticky, sweet syrup on his waffle.

"That," Ron said, making a face, "is disgusting."

"Oh, what do you know, Weathley," Draco said thickly, his mouth already stuffed. "Thith ith bloody marveloth."

"Veela," Ron muttered, shaking his head. "So I take it you're not going to hex anyone else, then, Malfoy, or Harry's going to take away your precious sugar again."

Draco swallowed his enormous mouthful and then gave Ron a withering look. "No, Weasley, rest your bright flaming head. I'm not going to hex anyone anymore. Well, unless someone tries to attack Harry," he added thoughtfully.

Ron, Harry and Hermione all gave an understanding sort of nod. Encouraged, Draco continued. "Or they sleep with Harry, I couldn't be expected to stand for that. Or maybe if they threaten Harry, that would really piss me off. Or they tried to make a move on him. Or if they looked at him wrong and I didn't like it or maybe if they sort of glanced in his general direction for too long - "

"Draco," Harry said warningly.

"Kidding, kidding," Draco said, nudging Harry playfully. "So my birthday's on Friday."

Harry exchanged a quick look with Hermione. "I know. And then we leave for Christmas holiday on Saturday."

"Yes," Draco said, his face falling. "I can't believe we're not going to be together for three weeks. It's going to be awful."

"It'll go by fast," Harry tried to reassure him. "And there's nothing we can do about it. You have to go to your Manor with your mum and dad and I have to go to Grimmauld place with the Order. But you'll be coming for a visit, right?"

"Yes, but Dad says we can't go until the last night so we don't alarm the Dark Lord," Draco said, looking upset. "I can't believe we only get one night together the entire holiday."

"We'll just have to make it count," Harry said, giving Draco a meaningful look.

"Oh God, too much information," Ron moaned, burying his head in his arms.

"Not *enough* information," Hermione muttered.

"WHAT?" three shocked male voices gasped.

"Nothing," Hermione said sweetly.

.....

Late Wednesday night, after everyone else had gone to bed, Harry and Hermione met down in a quiet corner of the Gryffindor common room to work on Draco's present.

"Did you get one of his hairs?" Hermione asked, and Harry nodded.

"I hope this works, Hermione," he said doubtfully, reaching into his pocket and pulling up a tiny leather satchel. "He isn't speaking to me right now, just clutching at his head and moaning."

"Drama-queen," Hermione muttered. "And it'll work, trust me. Did you pick out bracelets?"

Harry nodded again, and withdrew a larger leather bag from his robe. He passed the bag to Hermione, who reached in and pulled out one of the bracelets.

"There're pure silver, like you said. No other metals, so there's no chance it'll irritate him," Harry said, sounding slightly nervous. "But I'm not sure he'll like it, I tried to get something simple but I wasn't sure, you know? Of course, his is just for show anyway so if he doesn't like it I guess it doesn't -"

"He'll love it, Harry," Hermione said simply. And she was telling the truth. The matching bracelets were beautifully simple, each a thin band of pure silver that lay flat around the wrist and magically sized itself. "And wait until he finds out about the modifications we'll make to yours. Then he'll *really* love it."

"I hope so," Harry said, sounding nervous. "I got him other stuff too, you know, like Falcons gear and a new hat and some potions books and -"

"Harry," Hermione interrupted, squinting closely at the bracelet. "Did you get this...*engraved*?"

Harry promptly flushed scarlet.

"They...they offered at the store!" he said desperately. "And...and I just thought...oh God, I'm hopeless, I'm so ridiculously cheesy and he's going to *hate* it."

"All it says is *Happy Birthday Draco* and the date. That's not cheesy. So relax. He's going to love it," Hermione reiterated. She handed Draco's bracelet back to Harry, and then reached back into the satchel, pulling out Harry's matching silver band. "Yours isn't engraved, is it?" she asked, scanning it quickly.

Harry shook his head. "No. I remembered you said we'd be modifying it so I didn't do anything to it. You're *sure* this is going to work, Hermione?"

"YES, Harry," Hermione said impatiently, pulling out her wand. "Now get ready with the veela hair, Harry. We're going to have to work fast."

Harry nodded and reached into the smaller satchel, pulling out the fine strand of hair. It gleamed almost white in the firelight, and was so whisper soft Harry could barely feel it between his fingers.

Hermione carefully aimed her wand right in the middle of the Harry's silver bracelet and whispered a spell.

Immediately, a jet of white light shot out of the tip of her wand and hit the silver band. Holding her wand as steady as she could, Hermione slowly began to twist the bracelet in her free hand.

The jet of white light melted the silver on contact, and a small, shallow path of hot, molten silver began to form in the middle of the bracelet. As Hermione revolved the bracelet in her hand, melting a path like a stripe, Harry held Draco's hair ready.

As soon as she completed the path, the white light melting a complete circle through the bracelet, Harry laid Draco's hair in the newly formed circle on the bracelet. The hair stuck to the melted silver at first, and then with a small hissing noise, sank through the molten metal and disappeared.

Hermione smiled a huge smile of relief. "There. It's in." She whispered a quick cooling spell, and there it was: Harry's silver bracelet, looking perfectly normal and identical to Draco's again. You couldn't tell that a highly magical substance was contained within its core.

"Now we just soak it in spring water with a diricawl feather for 24 hours and it's done," Hermione said brightly.

Harry froze.

"Harry?" Hermione asked, her eyes narrowed. "Did you forget the feather?"

Harry shook his head with frustration. "I just got so caught up worrying about everything else."

"But we have to start soaking it tonight, if you want it to be ready for Draco's birthday Friday," Hermione said, sounding agitated.

Harry grit his teeth. "I know. Look, I'll just get my cloak and sneak into Snape's office and grab one."

Hermione pursed her lips, obviously disapproving, then finally nodded. "Alright, fine. But do be careful, Harry."

Silent as a mouse, Harry crept through the halls of Hogwarts, safely under his invisibility cloak. He quietly entered the Potions classroom, heading towards the storage cabinets.

He searched through all the jars until he finally found one with feathers from the diricawl, a plump, flightless bird with the ability to disappear at will. He had just put a feather in his pocket and turned to go when the sound of conversation out in the corridor made him freeze.

"You're welcome to look at the potion if you like, Albus, but I doubt you'll glean anything more from it."

Shit. Professor Dumbledore and Snape. Harry quickly dropped to the ground and slid under Snape's desk just in time as the door to Snape's classroom swung open and the two Hogwarts professors walked in.

"Nevertheless, Severus, I appreciate your humoring me," Professor Dumbledore replied. Harry held his breath as the two men walked over to a cauldron simmering on the fire just behind Snape's desk.

There were a few random sounds which Harry assumed were Professor Dumbledore and Snape poking around at the cauldron. Finally, he heard the heavy iron lid being replaced on whatever potion was brewing on the fire.

"The Dark Lord told you nothing of the potion's purpose, then?"

"Unfortunately no. All he ever does is instruct me which potions to brew. For the life of me, I cannot figure out why he would want the *Mutosis* potion. Had he given me werewolf fur I would understand, but for the final catalyst he gave me *this*."

There was a rustle, and Harry's heart skipped a beat when Snape opened one of the drawers in the desk directly above his head.

Harry clearly heard Professor Dumbledore's surprise when he spoke. "Is that veela hair?"

Beneath the desk, Harry started.

"Yes," came Snape's confirmation. "And that is why I'm so confused. This potion is ridiculously difficult and complication, but once I add the veela hair then it becomes little more than water. Any human could drink the potion and nothing would happen."

"What if a veela drinks it?"

"Again, it would have no effect. What he intends to do with this potion, I cannot fathom."

"Could it be intended somehow for Draco Malfoy? For that matter, could the hair be from Draco's head? Lord Voldemort has already tried once to get his hands on the boy for reasons still unknown to me."

Harry was now fighting a cold sweat that had broken out over his body. What *did* the Dark Lord want with Draco? Was he brewing a potion to trap him again?

To Harry's relief, Snape was already discounting that theory.

"No, sir. The hair is much too long. There is no possible chance that it came from Draco." Harry heard rustling again as Snape replaced the hair in the drawer. "And as to the potion being meant for Draco, I cannot say. I can tell you that he could drink it and come to no harm."

There was more rustling, and then Snape spoke again.

"Should I sabotage the potion, sir?" he asked.

"No, Severus," came Professor Dumbledore's reply. "There are no clear signs that it will be used to hurt someone, and I won't have you taking more risks. The Dark Lord is not pleasant to his followers when they fail him. I do not wish to see you suffer needlessly."

"Thank you," Snape said, sounding relieved. His voice already sounded farther away. Harry heard the door close, and then stayed under the desk to the count of 100 before finally crawling out. He quickly made his way back up to Gryffindor tower. He knew from experience the Dark Lord did not do things for no reason, and wondered what on earth Lord Voldemort was planning.

"Harry? *Harry!* Wake up you lazy sod, it's my birthday!"

That was what Harry woke up to bright and early Friday morning: Draco on his bed, lying right on top of him as he had gotten in the habit of doing lately.

"Good morning to you too," Harry said, squinting blearily at the blonde mass on his chest. "And Happy Birthday."

"Thank you," Draco said graciously. "Now I believe you had some presents for me? Unless of course, my present is *you*, wrapped up in blankets instead of shiny wrapping paper, ready and willing for me to live out all my wildest fantasies?"

It took Harry a couple moments to get over the temptation to tell Draco he was absolutely right.

"No, I've got real presents for you. Under the bed."

Draco disappeared for a moment, and then reappeared with dust in his hair and a large box in his hands. He promptly placed the box on the bed and then sat back on top of Harry, legs folded under him on either side of Harry's body.

"Oof," Harry said inelegantly as Draco's weight was deposited on his stomach.

"Oh hush," the blonde said distractedly, already ripping open the box. "I'm not heavy."

"You're not exactly a lightweight either," Harry said with obvious affection.

"Well, I certainly don't weigh as much as *you*, you ogre," Draco retorted, with just as much affection. "Now stop distracting me."

"Yes sir," Harry said, with a roll of his eyes. Draco excitedly went through the box of presents, happily exclaiming over each one - the Falcons poster, the soft, fuzzy hat, the Potions book, the seemingly endless supply of chocolate. At last he came to the last thing in the box, the leather satchel with the bracelets in it.

"What's this, Harry?" he asked, reaching into the bag. His face immediately softened. "You got us matching bracelets? How *cute*, in a "second-year-I-have-a-crush-on-you" sort of way."

His words were teasing but his face was lit up. He obviously loved the idea and held out his hand, motioning for Harry to put the bracelet on his wrist.

"Well, there's a bit more," Harry said hesitantly. He propped himself up as best he could with Draco on his stomach and nodded at the second bracelet. "Mine is a little different from yours."

"Oh? How so?" Draco asked, picking it up and looking at it. It looked exactly the same as his.

"Well, you remember when I asked you for one of your hairs?"

Draco scowled. "How could I forget? My head hurt like a bitch for the next four hours."

"It did?" Harry asked, sounding rather guilty.

"Well...the next two hours, at any rate," Draco amended grudgingly.

"Sorry. But I needed it. See, my bracelet is different because it has your hair in it."

"What?" Draco asked, intrigued. He turned the bracelet over in his hands, looking closely, but Harry shook his head.

"You won't be able to see it. Hermione and I melted the silver and then cooled it over your hair. There's all sorts of magic you can do with veela hair, and Hermione showed me this. When the hair is then suspended in pure silver and then soaked with a diricawl feather, it becomes a portkey."

Draco made a surprised noise. "A portkey to where?"

Harry smiled. "That's the best part. A portkey to *you*. Since it's your hair, the portkey will always take me directly to your side."

Draco looked awed by the idea. "Harry, that's brilliant."

"It was Hermione's idea," Harry said modestly. "She read about it in one of your veela books."

"How do you make it work?" Draco asked, still fingering the smooth metal.

"You wrap your wand hand around the bracelet and say *Portus Veela*," Harry explained. "And then it portkeys you. I...I know it's sort of more a present for me," Harry said uncertainly, "but I thought you'd like it anyway. You know, so you don't have to worry and so I can always be there if you need me and if you don't like it that's okay, I under - "

Draco cut him off with a hard kiss right on the lips.

"I love it," he said, so earnestly that Harry knew it was true. He picked up Harry's wrist and slipped the bracelet on before holding out his own wrist. "Why'd you get me one, then? Mine's not a portkey to you, is it?"

Harry shook his head and slipped the matching bracelet on Draco's wrist. "I wish. Unfortunately, my hair's not magical in the slightest. But I got you one that matched because...because I wanted you to be able to look at it and remember that I'm wearing mine because I always want to be with you, no matter what," Harry said, managing to get his sappy speech out despite the blush staining his cheeks. He waited for Draco to berate him for his sappiness.

Much to his surprise, Draco didn't tease him but launched himself at Harry instead, wrapping the Gryffindor up in a huge hug.

"I love you," he whispered huskily, his face tucked in Harry's neck. "And if we didn't have class right now, I'd show you how much."

"You can show me how much tonight," Harry whispered back. "I can use the bracelet to portkey into your room after everyone falls asleep."

Draco's eyes opened wide, and he pulled back to look Harry in the face. "You mean...you want to..."

Harry nodded. "We'll have the whole night, and then we'll be able to wake up together. The Hogwart's Express doesn't leave 'til after lunch, so we'll have all morning to be together. It's perfect, we can...what's the word all the veela books use? Bond?"

"Yeah, bond," Draco confirmed. Then he shook his head in disbelief. "Wow."

"Wow, what?"

"This is the best birthday ever."

"So you loved the bracelets, right Malfoy?" Hermione said as she, Draco, and Harry ate lunch together. Ron was held up by Snape in the Potions lab, forced to clean cauldrons for making smart-ass remarks about Pansy's new haircut.

Draco nodded enthusiastically.

"See, told you so Harry," Hermione said good-naturedly. "So you guys going to bond tonight?"

Both Harry and Draco spit their food out in surprise.

"Hermione!" both boys cried, scandalized.

"Oh come on," Hermione said, rolling her eyes. "Don't play innocent with me. I happen to know exactly what Harry's wearing on his wrist, and you two would be stupid if you hadn't realized that Harry can use it to sneak into Draco's room tonight."

Harry and Draco exchanged glances. "Fine, yes, we're going to bond tonight," Harry finally hissed in a very quiet voice. "Not that it's any of your business."

"Lovely," said Hermione, looking at the two of them appraisingly. "So who's going to be on top?"

"Me," Harry and Draco both said in the same voice.

Then they turned to stare at each other in surprise. Hermione rubbed her hands together eagerly.

"Excellent," she whispered, and sat back to enjoy the show.

"Harry, obviously I'm going to be on top our first time," Draco said in a somewhat patronizing voice. "After all, I'm the veela."

"Exactly," Harry responded. "You're the veela. I'm your mate, the one who takes care of you. I'm always the one holding you when we cuddle. Wouldn't that translate to you being the bottom?"

"NO," Draco said, as if it was the most obvious thing in the world. "It's completely irrelevant. YOU ought to bottom. I'm the older one, and the stronger one."

"Yeah, but I'm the taller one."

"I've got veela powers."

"I can order you to do what I want."

"I'm more possessive. Obviously I'll be on top."

"I *punish* you when you're too possessive. Obviously, *I'll* be on top."

"You're the one who gets all girly and sentimental," Draco said hotly. "Hardly top behavior."

"Yeah, well *you're* the one who enjoys being arse-up over my lap getting spanked. That practically screams bottom."

"Oh, so it's a crime now to be a bit kinky?"

"A *bit* kinky? Draco, you're the kinkiest little sod I know. You get off on anything that's a bit twisted."

"Yeah, well you're just repressing you inner Slytherin. I bet you're kinkier than me when you really let go."

"I *highly* doubt that," Harry snapped. "Seeing as that would be *impossible*."

Draco and Harry glared at each other.

"I top you in everything."

"Draco, you've never topped me in *one single thing* in your life."

"I have so."

"Yeah? Name one."

"Quidditch - "

"I've kicked your arse every time."

"Pranks - "

"You dressed as a dementor and made scary noises. We made fucking *polyjuice potion* and impersonated Crabbe and Goyle."

"I'm braver - "

"You ran screaming from the forest and left me to fight Voldemort alone."

"My marks are higher - "

"Only in Potions because Snape's a biased git who hates my dad."

"I got more OWLS - "

"You didn't, we got the same."

"I've got more money - "

"It's all your Daddy's money."

Draco narrowed his eyes. "I'm a *prefect*."

"Hey, me too."

Harry, Draco and Hermione all glanced up in shock to see Ron joining them at the table.

"Hi Ron," Hermione said pleasantly.

"Ron, hey," Harry said, still glaring at Draco.

"Weasley," Draco said, returning Harry's glare.

Ron looked back and forth between Harry and Draco, and then shrugged and sat down next to Hermione.

"Happy Birthday, Malfoy," he said, actually managing to be not openly hostile. "Get any good birthday presents?"

"Yeah, these bracelets from Harry," Draco said, indicating their wrists. "His is a portkey made from my hair that will take him to me no matter where I am."

"Really?" Ron said, sounding impressed. He took a closer look at Harry's wrist. "Blimey, Harry, that's brill...wait..." Ron suddenly narrowed his eyes. "Hand it over."

"WHAT?" Harry and Draco both gasped. Ron held out his hand meaningfully.

"Hand the portkey over," he said again. "You're not shaking up with each other tonight behind my back."

Harry and Draco were at complete loss for words.

"Ron," Harry finally said incredulously, "I would *never* betray your trust and use this portkey to travel to Draco's room after you've fallen asleep just so we could finally shag and - "

"Fine, Harry, if that's how you want to play. Professor!" Ron called out, raising his voice. "Oh, Professor McGonagall! I've got something I need to tell you about Harry and Mal - "

"Alright, alright, you can have it," Harry hissed, taking the bracelet off his wrist and practically throwing it at Ron. "*Best friends* my arse."

"Oh, don't be such a drama-queen, Harry, that's Malfoy's job. I'm just doing my duty as a prefect." Ron paused. "And tell Malfoy to put his wand down. If he hexes me I'll put the ban back on you guys after Christmas break."

Draco sourly put his wand away.

That evening, about an hour before curfew, Draco headed up to Gryffindor tower, planning to at least catch Harry before he went to bed and say goodnight. He gave the Fat Lady the password and then headed over to the couch near the fire where Ron and Hermione were sitting.

"Well, if it isn't the prodigal veela," Ron said, rolling his eyes.

"Oh hush, Ron, you don't even know what *prodigal* means," Hermione chided, turning a page in her book.

"I do too! It means...it means...oh sod it, so I don't know what it means. Still doesn't explain what Malfoy's doing here."

"I'm looking for Harry," Draco sniffed haughtily. "Have you seen him?"

"Yes, actually," Ron said, folding his arms over his chest. "He's busy sucking up to McGonagall so she won't suspend you both for hexing a first year."

Draco made a quiet "oh" of understanding and fell silent. He fidgeted uncomfortably for a moment before taking a seat on the couch next to Hermione.

"Sorry," he finally said, sounding truly contrite. "I didn't mean to get Harry in trouble."

Ron softened ever so slightly at Draco's obvious distress.

"Yeah, well, luckily McGonagall adores Harry, so she'll probably let him off," he said briskly.

"Really?" Draco asked, looking up at Ron, eyes hopeful.

Ron wanted to kill himself when he realized he found Draco's behavior kind of cute.

"Really. Now bug off and let me do my homework," he said, disgusted with himself. "Why Harry puts up with you is beyond my understanding."

"There are plenty of good reasons to put up with me," Draco said self-righteously. "One, I'm gorgeous. Two, I've got bloody veela powers. Three, I'm a natural blonde, not some flame-headed freak of nature with more freckles than - "

"Draco, I wanted to ask you about your powers, actually," Hermione cut in.

"Oh? Alright then," Draco said agreeably. "What do you want to know?"

"Well, you can use to your powers to heighten...um...sexual pleasure, right?" Hermione asked, with the fortitude of true curiosity despite the embarrassing topic. Draco nodded.

"Yes I can. And heighten it a great bit, may I add."

"Oh, I don't want to hear this," Ron said, covering his ears. Draco rolled his eyes.

"Well, I was wondering...does it work when you touch people other than Harry?" Hermione asked. Draco looked thoughtful.

"It works on them," he finally said slowly. "When Nott had me under Imperious and made me use my powers, he could obviously feel them quite strongly. But they only work for me when I'm touching Harry." He grinned roguishly. "Probably a good thing, eh? Keeps veela from becoming outrageously promiscuous."

"Very true. So you're saying that if you were to touch me with your veela powers, then I would feel your touch differently but you wouldn't?"

"Exactly," Draco confirmed. Hermione paused for a moment, then tentatively held out her arm.

"Do it to me?" she asked. Draco looked stunned.

"*What?*" he gasped. "Cheat on Harry?"

"It's not cheating on Harry if you just touch my arm. I'm not attracted to you like that and you don't even like women. I'm just curious. I want to see what all the fuss is about."

Draco thought this over. "Fair enough. Alright, I'm just going to turn them on a little, okay? Not enough for you to lose your mind."

Hermione nodded in understanding, and then sucked in her breath as Draco's hand brushed over her arm.

"Whoa," she said, eyes opening wide at the sensation.

Draco removed his hand and shut off his powers. Hermione slowly put her hand on top of her arm where Draco's hand had just been.

"That was *wicked*, Malfoy," she finally said, smiling lightly. "That goes a long way towards explaining why Harry doesn't care that you're a brat."

"HEY!"

Hermione ignored Draco's indignant outburst. "Ron, you ought to try this, it's incredible."

"No fucking way, Hermione. I'm not willingly touching Malfoy."

"Oh fuck off, Weasley. Like I would have touched you," Draco scowled.

"Do it again, Draco?" Hermione asked, holding out her arm again. "With your powers on stronger?"

"I don't think so. You called me a brat, Granger."

"I'm sorry," Hermione said, completely insincerely. "Now please?"

Draco rolled his eyes. "FINE." He let his veela powers go on about half-way, and ignoring Ron and Hermione's sudden drooling as he traced a light figure eight on Hermione's arm and then shut off the powers.

Hermione had closed her eyes. "That's unbelievable," she breathed. "It feels almost inhuman."

"I am inhuman," Draco felt compelled to point out.

"What's going on over here?" Ginny, Neville and Seamus had noticed the display of veela powers over by the fire and come to investigate.

Hermione pointed at Draco. "You will not believe what he can do. His veela powers are incredible."

The other Gryffindors exchanged looks.

"I've always been really curious about what veela powers feel like," Ginny finally said. "You hear so many stories. Can I try it?"

"*Can you try it?*" repeated Draco, sounding scandalized. "I'm not a sodding broomstick."

"Oh come on, Malfoy. You owe us. You've hexed everyone in this room at least three times over Harry, the least you can do is show us what your veela powers feel like."

Draco considered refusing, but he knew Seamus was right, so he sighed and gave in.

"All right, I'll feel up all you bleeding Gryffindors," he snapped. "Why don't you just form a line and get ready to ride the Draco Malfoy Express?"

Harry was tired and cranky after his lecture from Professor McGonagall. He checked his watch. 30 minutes until curfew. He'd just pop in to Gryffindor tower to make sure Draco wasn't there waiting for him before he headed down to Draco's room to say goodnight.

He gave the password to the Fat Lady, and walked into the Gryffindor common room.

And immediately noticed something odd: everyone was staring in one direction with blank looks on their faces. He followed the train of sight to see that everyone was staring right at Draco, who seemed to have his veela powers on.

Confused, Harry pushed his way through the mass of Gryffindors crowded around the couch by the fire.

"Draco, what's going on here?" he asked, when he finally reached the edge of the couch.

"Oh, hi Harry," Draco said, looking up from where he was seated on the couch next to Parvati Patil. "I'm letting all your Gryffindor friends see what it feels like to be touched by a veela," he explained, reaching out with his hand to run his fingers along Parvati Patil's arm.

"Oh, oka - *what?* NO!" Harry shouted, and before Draco's hand could reach Parvati Harry slapped him hard across the wrist.

"Ow, *Harry!* What the fuck?" Draco snapped, jerking his arm back and cradling it against his chest. "That *hurt!*"

Harry ignored his whining. "What do you think you're *doing?*" he spat. "You're not *allowed* to use your veela powers on anyone except me!"

"Says who?" Draco scowled, glaring hard up at Harry.

Harry glared equally hard back. "Says your *mate*. Now turn off your veela powers."

"No," Draco snarled back defiantly. "I'll do what I want. And right now I want to use my veela powers to show these Gryffindors what they're missing."

He reached out to touch the still drooling Parvati Patil's arm, only to have his hand slapped again by Harry.

"Son of a - Harry, stop it!"

"No! *You* stop it. I *don't* want you touching other people like this!"

Comprehension began to dawn on Draco's face. "You're *jealous*," he cooed with mock sympathy. "Poor ickle Harry is *jealous*."

"So what?" Harry snapped. "Bit rich for *you* to make fun of *me* for being jealous, isn't it? Now turn your sodding powers off."

"Make me," Draco baited.

"Turn them off, or I bloody *will* make you," Harry threatened through clenched teeth.

Maybe it was because of their earlier verbal battle over who would get top, or maybe it was because Draco had a tendency to get drunk on any kind of power, or maybe it was just because Draco Malfoy always pushed Harry Potter one step too far, but Draco chose not to take Harry's threat seriously.

Instead he let his veela powers flare up as high as he could, and, not letting his eyes leave Harry's, he leaned over and deliberately kissed Parvati Patil on the cheek.

Immediately, three things happened: the hordes of Gryffindors watching the scene cried out with jealousy, Parvati nearly swooned, and Harry got righteously *pissed off*.

"You shouldn't have done that, Malfoy," Harry growled. Draco looked up and at the look on Harry's face his eyes went wide.

He had suddenly realized that he had grown accustomed to a new Harry, a Harry that was sweet and insecure and spoiled Draco rotten.

And now *this* angry, jealous Harry was just like the old Harry, the Harry that, if pushed too far by Draco Malfoy, would snap and then kick Draco's arse.

"Turn off your powers," Harry ordered, and Draco's powers shut themselves off. The crowd of Gryffindors began to come back to their senses and looked at the scene in front of them, confused.

Draco's stomach did a little flip when he realized Harry was angry and jealous enough to use "the Voice," as he'd begun to think of it. That's about when he realized that he was in serious trouble.

"Stand up, and follow me," was Harry's next command, and Draco had no choice but to do what he was told. He gulped and followed Harry out of the common room. As soon as the portrait of the Fat Lady shut behind them, Harry whirled around.

The next instant, Draco found himself slammed up against the wall of the stone corridor and held in place by two strong arms locked on his own biceps. A pair of furious green eyes was staring into his.

"How could you?" Harry hissed in a low voice.

Draco tried to defend himself. "Harry, I was only - "

"I don't care what your reasons are," Harry cut him off. "I'm your mate, right?"

Draco blinked. "Of course you are."

"Alright. If I'm *your* mate, then you're *my* veela. *Mine*, and *mine alone* and I am *not* sharing you or your veela powers with anyone else. You got it?"

And Draco got it. A small surge of guilt rose up in him as he realized how upset and jealous Harry had become. "Harry, I'm really sor - "

"Shut up," Harry whispered fiercely. The next instant Harry's lips were on his, a hard bruising kiss that sucked all of the breath from Draco's lungs and left him weak in the knees. Harry's tongue slipped between Draco's lips, and then his hands left Draco's biceps, one snaking around his waist and the other burying itself in Draco's hair.

Draco's veela powers took on a life of their own as the blonde's sex drive went through the roof. He was so incredibly turned on by Harry's behavior that he was hard as a rock against Harry's thigh. Both of the boys made a noise of pleasure as Harry's hand found its way down to grip Draco's arse tightly.

Harry finally yanked away from Draco, panting.

"My bedroom. NOW," he ordered, grabbing Draco by the hand. Draco eagerly followed Harry as they forced their way back through the portrait of the Fat Lady (who'd been getting *quite* the eyeful), sprinted through the Gryffindor common room, and ran up the stairs to Harry's bedroom.

Neville and Seamus were both in the room, lounging on their beds.

"Out," Harry snapped. Neville and Seamus looked up in surprise.

"What?" Seamus asked dumbly.

"OUT!" Draco reiterated, pulling out his wand and brandishing it threateningly.

Seamus and Neville didn't have to be told again; they bolted. Harry slammed the door behind them and hit it with a locking charm.

"Strip," he said shortly, turning back around. Draco stalled.

"But Harry, I wanted to - "

"STRIP, Malfoy," was the order. With no choice but to obey, Draco's hands flew to the collar of his shirt of their own accord. He quickly loosened his tie, then pulled it off and dropped it on the ground. His hands began to unbutton his shirt, and Harry watched avidly, leaning back against the door of the bedroom as Draco slipped the shirt off his shoulders.

The belt with its silver buckle was next, followed by Draco's shoes and socks. When Draco's hands came to rest on the top of his trousers, Harry made a small keening noise in the back of his throat.

A button undone, a zipper unzipped, and then Draco's black dress trousers were pushed off his hips and fell in a puddle on the floor. Draco stepped out of them, standing in front of Harry in nothing more than a pair of black silk boxers, watching as his boyfriend's pupils dilated to the point where his green eyes were nearly all black.

"Fuck, Draco, you are so incredibly hot," Harry muttered, and before Draco could slip off his boxers Harry pushed off the wall and launched himself at Draco. Draco turned to escape, wanting to play, thinking he would run and make Harry chase him.

But Harry's arms wrapped around his waist from behind, and Draco was pushed forward by Harry's momentum until he hit a bed and went down on his stomach, with Harry on top, Harry's chest to his back.

And then Harry's mouth was placing hot, wet open-mouthed kisses on Draco's upper back and shoulders. Draco moaned into the mattress as goose bumps covered his sensitive skin. He shut his eyes tight, reveling in the feel of Harry's hands tracing over his bare skin and the feel of Harry's clothed body on top of his own nearly naked one.

Suddenly he felt Harry push himself up into a sitting position on Draco's thighs, legs spread on either side of Draco's legs. His hands rested on Draco's bare back for a moment, and then the slight pressure was gone.

"Harry?" Draco asked, his voice thick with arousal. "What're you doing?"

"Nothing, love," came the reply, just a little too innocent to be believed. Draco had just enough time to wonder what exactly Harry was planning to do with him when Harry's hand connected with his arse with a loud *smack!*

"Ow, Harry, what the fuck are you - ow, *Harry!*" Draco squealed, twisting underneath Harry as Harry gave Draco several sharp spanks.

"That was for using your veela powers on other people," Harry informed him. Draco moaned and wriggled under him, more turned on then ever. He wasn't going anywhere, though; Harry had him securely pinned on his stomach. Not that Draco minded in the slightest - he really was a kinky sort of veela.

"Harry, if this is your choice of punishment, you might find me using my powers on other people quite often," Draco said insolently, shuddering as Harry's fingers began to ghost over his lightly tingling arse.

"I'm not finished yet," Harry said meaningfully. The next thing Draco knew was Harry had moved off his legs, and his boxers were being yanked off. And then Harry's lips were on his spine, and then his lower back, and then Harry moved between Draco's legs, his lips now planting kisses on Draco's arse until -

Draco cried out, a harsh primal sound that rang from the stones in the room. His back arched in pleasure as Harry's talented tongue worked on him in place that Draco had never dreamed Harry would kiss.

Draco began biting down on the comforter, trying to keep in his cries, when he felt something else; something sliding inside him. He whimpered, and Harry stopped for a moment.

"Turn over," he said softly, his voice husky. Draco rolled willingly onto his back, and then that hot, talented mouth was on his cock, licking and sucking, driving Draco wild. He had long ago lost control of his veela powers, and now he was practically crying under the onslaught of pleasure.

Draco watched as Harry slide his finger out, only to slide two fingers back into Draco as he sucked him off. Draco moaned loudly and screwed his eyes shut, concentrating on the velvet of Harry's mouth and the new sensations of Harry's fingers when Harry hit something deep inside him.

Draco's eyes went wide and he half sat up. "Fucking hell, what was - "

Harry did it again. And again.

Draco's eyes fluttered closed and he lay back, panting. "Harry," he whimpered, not sure how much longer he could possibly last. "Harry, fuck me."

Draco felt Harry pause for the briefest second, before Harry's mouth found its way to Draco's.

He kissed Draco hard for a moment, then pulled back. "No," he said softly. Draco nearly cried with frustration.

"Please, Harry, please, I want you to, I need you to, please, I - "

"I know, but we *can't*," Harry said seriously. "I want to, God I want to *so badly*, but my roommates will come back and throw you out and ruin it, and you'll be miserable."

"I won't be," Draco protested, and then sucked in his breath when Harry started to move his fingers again.

"You will be," Harry whispered softly, placing the lightest of kisses on Draco's lips. "You will be, when you've just been bonded and thoroughly fucked and you want your mate and your mate isn't there. You'll be alone and miserable, and I won't let that happen to you, love."

And then before Draco could protest again Harry moved, and then he was sucking Draco off again, even more fervently than before, his fingers still sliding in and out and hitting that place deep inside Draco until -

Draco came, hard, twisting the comforter in his hands and crying out. The edges of his vision turned gold, then silver, then black, and then everything finally faded until it was just him and Harry.

They looked at each other for a minute, and then Harry reached up to plant a kiss on Draco's nose.

"Sorry," he said softly. "But I want you to be happy."

Draco just sighed. "Come here, Potter, my stupid, sappy Gryffindor." He held his arms open, and Harry moved into them, laying stomach to stomach on top of Draco.

"Oof," the blonde said inelegantly, as Harry's full weight was deposited directly on top of him.

"Oh hush," Harry said, with a happy grin. "I'm not heavy. That's what you always say."

"Mmm," Draco replied, his eyes closing. "You are heavy. But I like it. I like everything about you. Even your stupid, sappy, misplaced Gryffindor morals that keep me from getting laid."

They lay together in a contented silence for several minutes, before Harry propped himself up and kissed Draco on the nose again.

"So who's the bottom now?"

"Ha ha. Just you wait, Potter, just you wait," Draco replied, not bothering to open his eyes.

"Draco, I ought to tell you, there actually was another reason that I didn't want to do it just now," Harry confessed.

Draco opened his eyes. "Oh? And what would that be?"

"Well...maybe I should have mentioned this earlier...but it's not like he doesn't somewhat deserve it, taking away my bracelet like that..."

"What *are* you talking about?"

Harry looked torn between guilt and amusement. "We're on Ron's bed."

Draco's moan of horror was heard all the way down in the common room.

Author's Notes:

The diricawl is from JK Rowling's *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*.

Also, in case anyone was wondering, **prodigal** means "rashly or wastefully extravagant; giving or given in abundance; lavish or profuse."

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The Veela Enigma

Chapter 22: In the Muggle Club

.....

Hermione and Ron loved their friend Harry. They really, truly did.

That didn't mean they weren't ready to kill him.

"I wonder if Draco's okay."

"Harry, you spoke to him via floo *two hours* ago. He was okay then, chances are he's still okay now."

"But *Hermione*," Harry whined, in an amazingly good whine that his friends suspected he had learned from Draco, "it's been *two weeks* since we left Hogwarts and I *miss* him."

It was indeed two weeks into Christmas holiday. Hermione, Ron, Ginny and Harry were at Grimmauld Place, which now belonged to Harry. The Order of the Phoenix still had its headquarters here, but for the most part the kids had been alone as the adults went to work and did whatever it was they did for the Order.

Molly had left them with a cupboard full of self-cooking meals, but it didn't change the fact that Harry was extremely grumpy about having little to no adult supervision and no boyfriend to enjoy it with.

"So you really think Draco's alright? You sure Malfoy Senior is taking good care of him?"

"Of COURSE, Harry. Draco is perfectly safe at Malfoy Manor."

"But what if Voldemort tries to catch him again? We don't know what he's planning."

"Harry, you told us yourself that Snape said the potion couldn't hurt Draco. Maybe You-Know-Who has given up," Ron said reasonably.

Harry shook his head. "Voldemort doesn't give up that easily. He wanted Draco for some reason, and I doubt he'd give up just because his first scheme didn't work. And I don't care if Snape said the potion couldn't hurt Draco, I still have a bad feeling about it." He paused and looked out the window, watching the snow fall on muggle London. "Besides, I'm not just worried about Voldemort. What if he runs out of Cadbury Creme Eggs? It's not like he can get them for himself."

Harry was slowly introducing Draco to the world of muggle sweets, and the veela had become extremely attached to the wonder that is the Cadbury Creme Egg, claiming that the sweet fondant centre in the middle was possibly good enough to redeem muggles in his eyes.

"Harry, he'll be FINE," Hermione said with a forced smile.

"But what if Draco gets lonely, huh? What if he can't sleep without me? He's a veela, veela are sensitive, he's not supposed to be away from his mate for this long."

Ron and Hermione's eyes met. *We can't kill him, he's our friend, and he has to save the world*, their matching expressions seemed to say, and both sighed and went back to reassuring Harry.

At Malfoy Manor, Lucius was having an even worse time with Draco.

"Dad, can I go see Harry today?"

"No, Draco. I told you. It's too dangerous. What if the Dark Lord calls me to him during the break? He's a Legilimens, he'll realize instantly that I've sent you to the Order of the Phoenix headquarters to be with your mate, and he'll be terribly angry and suspicious about why I'm being so accommodating to you and Potter."

"But *Daddy*," and this was whined in Draco's very best whine, the one that got him his way nine times out of ten, "he's my *mate* and I *miss* him."

Lucius took a deep breath. "I know, son. I know." He took a moment to glance at his watch. One more week, and then he'd take Draco to visit Harry at Number 12 Grimmauld place. Surely, he could last that long.

"But *Daaaadddy*..."

On second thought, maybe not.

The next week crawled by for everyone. The days drug on, and no number of chess games or Exploding Snap could change the fact that Harry and Draco weren't together.

Finally Saturday rolled around, the next to last day of their break. Harry could barely sit still; Draco would be arriving at Number 12 Grimmauld place that evening and he could hardly wait.

"Harry, stop fidgeting, you're distracting me," Hermione chided, looking up crossly from the book she was reading.

"Sorry," he apologized, "I'm just excited about seeing Draco tonight."

"I just bet you are," Hermione muttered to herself, unable to fight back a smile. Ron and Harry looked up from their chess game with twin suspicious looks.

"What's that supposed to mean?" Harry asked warily. The faintest bit of color was blossoming on his cheeks.

Hermione slowly closed her book and set it down. "It just means," she began sweetly, "that I'm sure you're very excited about seeing Draco tonight."

"I am," Harry said, sounding a little sulky.

"Why are you making it sound like more than it is, Hermione?" Ron asked, sounding just as wary as Harry.

Hermione smiled at Harry. "Because I know why Harry's *really* excited to see Malfoy tonight."

"*Hermione*," Harry said warningly, but Ron was oblivious.

"What? Besides seeing him again, why else would Harry be excited to see Malfoy?"

"Because they're going to bond," she said smugly, before Harry could stop her. Then she sat back to watch the boys' reactions.

They were worth watching. Harry turned bright pink and Ron went white.

"I can't believe you just said that," Harry said, burying his face in his hands.

"I can't believe you just said that either," Ron agreed, looking like he might be sick. "I mean...oh ugh, that is so gross. And what makes you think they haven't already...you know...ew, I can't even say it," Ron said with a shudder.

"I know they haven't. Right Harry?" Hermione said sweetly.

Harry just buried his face further into his hands. "Urgh," he finally choked out.

Ron was staring at him. "Okay, all grossness aside for a moment - you really haven't, Harry?"

"It's all *your* sodding fault," Harry said, not lifting his head. "You wouldn't let us sleep together. When were we supposed to do it?"

"Um, during lunch, after school, during dinner, after dinner..." Ron said, making it sound very obvious. "Plenty of chances. Why on earth didn't you just do it?"

"Because Harry's a *romantic*," Hermione cooed. "He wanted to make Draco's first time *special*."

Ron burst out laughing. "Are you serious? Harry, you're such a *ponce* sometimes. What, did you need rose petals and champagne and lace? Were you going to write him endless sonnets of eternal love and devotion before you lost your virginities to each other?"

Hermione was laughing now as well. "No, but he did say he wanted to be able to hold Draco in the morning. Who knew the Boy Who Lived was so sentimental?"

"I hate you guys," Harry mumbled uselessly to his laughing friends, now red all the way up to his ears. "I really, really hate you."

"Oh, no you don't," Hermione said cheerfully. "Besides, you were absolutely right to wait."

"He was?" Ron asked, still giving Harry looks that Harry correctly interpreted to mean he would be mocked until the end of time for this one.

Hermione nodded. "The first time a veela and their mate...um...let's just keep saying *bond* so I don't have to say *shag*, yes?"

Both boys nodded fervently.

"Okay, so the first time they bond is very special. It creates a very close connection between the two that's very hard to break. It really *isn't* something to take lightly. That's why it's called *bonding* and not just *shagging*."

"What kind of connection?" Ron asked, interested in spite of himself. Harry knew everything Hermione was saying, but seemed content to let her explain it.

"Just the sort of connection that wizarding soul mates also have. They become closer, and there's sort of a sense of mind or emotion reading. Not real mind-reading," Hermione hastened to clarify. "Just being able to sense emotions from each other more easily. It's harder to lie to each other after that point. And the desire to be together grows."

"The desire to be together *grows*?" Ron said, looking flabbergasted.

Hermione nodded. "Yes. And that's why Harry was right to wait. Malfoy would have been a nervous wreck if they had bonded and then had to spend the night apart. He probably would have barged into Gryffindor tower and hexed every single one of us in a jealous rage."

"Really? Well, guess it *is* good that our Harry's such a ponce," Ron said, ruffling Harry's hair.

Harry sent him a well-placed punch to the leg.

"Ow, bugger!" Ron swore, rubbing his resulting Charlie horse and giving Harry a dirty look. Then he turned back to Hermione. "Are you sure about this?" he asked her. "I mean, I don't understand *how* Harry and Malfoy could possibly want to be together more than they already are."

"I think you'll find out tomorrow morning," Hermione said playfully, ignoring the boys' renewed moans of horror.

That evening, just before dinner, Harry, Ron, Hermione and Ginny were standing around the kitchen, sorting through the meals. The only adults in the house were Remus Lupin, who was upstairs under the influence of a Sleeping Potion, sleeping off the effects of a full moon the night before, and Mundungus Fletcher, who was in the basement examining some of the Black heirlooms for possible trade.

Needless to say, neither was really in a position to care what the kids ate for dinner.

"What should we have tonight?" Hermione asked, peering into the cupboard filled to the brim with Mrs. Weasley's ready made meals. "Corned beef sandwiches? Chicken and ham pie? Beans on toast?"

"How about treacle tart, ice cream and chocolate cake?" Harry suggested in a seemingly innocent voice.

"Harry!" three voices snapped.

"What?" he asked, batting long eyelashes at his friends.

"We're not having three kinds of dessert for dinner just because Draco has a raging veela sweet tooth," Hermione said pointedly.

"Why on earth not?" Harry demanded. "Just this once? Go on and tell me that doesn't sound good to you."

Hermione looked at Ron and Ginny pleadingly, but they seem intrigued by the idea of an all dessert dinner as well.

Hermione rolled her eyes. "We're not doing it because it's not a balanced and healthy diet, and because it'll rot our teeth, and because..." and here Hermione noticed that her friends were ignoring her and already digging into the ice box.

"I call the strawberry ice cream," Ginny called out.

"Damn!" Ron and Harry both cursed.

Hermione sighed. Oh well. When in Rome...

They had just put the "food" on the table when a loud noise was heard in the parlour.

A loud noise followed by, "Harry, I'm here! Where the hell are you?"

"Draco!" Harry said happily, abandoning the treacle tart. He dashed out of the kitchen. Ron rolled his eyes when he heard the commotion just out in the hall.

"Mmmm, I missed you..." *Loud kissing noise.*

"Mmm, missed you more..." *Even louder kissing noise, followed by some groping noise.*

"Nah-ah," *kiss kiss grope grope* "I missed you more..."

"That," Ron said, looking pained, "is the most disgusting thing I've ever heard. Don't you think?" he said, turning to the two girls standing next to him for support.

To his horror, they were nearly salivating.

Draco and Harry walked into the kitchen a few moments later, arms around each other's waists.

"Hello all," Draco said brightly. "Missed me?"

"No," Ron said, at the same time Hermione and Ginny said "Yes."

"Oh Weasley, you love me, you know you do," Draco said, blowing Ron a kiss. Ron stuck his tongue out at Draco as Harry sat down on the bench on one side of the table.

"Come here baby," Harry said, tugging on Draco's arm.

Draco rolled his eyes. "Potter, what have I told you about calling me *baby*?"

But by his smile it was obvious he didn't really mind, and then to Ron's utter horror Draco obligingly sat down in Harry's lap. Harry quickly wrapped his arms around Draco's waist and nuzzled the back of his neck.

"Harry, for the love of all that is holy don't call Malfoy *baby* in front of me, and Malfoy, don't sit on Harry's lap during dinner," Ron moaned piteously. "It disturbs me to no end."

"Get over it," Hermione said bluntly, watching them avidly. She passed them Ginny's strawberry ice cream. "Here, have some ice cream. There's whipped cream to go on it too, if you'd like. I'd be happy to get it for you. Just in case..."

The words *you want to eat it off each other* were muttered under her breath.

Draco looked at the food on the table with unconcealed delight. "Harry, did you plan this dinner just for me?" he said, planting a kiss on Harry's lips. "You're so sweet."

"Wait, wait, none of that," Ron said desperately. "No kissing at the table, no feeding each other at the table - "

"Hey, what a good idea. Harry, would you like me to feed you this ice cream?"

"Noooo, please, I'm begging you," Ron said, clutching his hands in desperation. He turned to Harry. "Please Harry, please? Please? We're *best mates*. I wouldn't do this to you."

"No, you wouldn't," Harry agreed. "But you *would* ban us from each other's bed for three weeks. I think you brought this on yourself."

And with that he put a hand on the back of Draco's head and pulled him into a deep kiss. Ron made a noise of horror and buried his head in his arms.

"Mmm," Draco said, breaking the kiss. He ruffled Harry's hair for a moment. "As much as I want to keep freaking the Weasel out, I need to go chat with my dad real quick. He wanted to talk via floo right after I got here to make sure I got here safe."

He regrettably slid off Harry's lap. "Can I use the fireplace I came through?"

Harry nodded. "But hurry back, alright?"

"Of course," Draco said, with one last parting kiss. Harry watched him leave with a smitten sort of look. Ginny and Hermione exchanged a private glance that clearly said *mmm, hot boys snogging*, and then Ginny went to get the rest of the food.

"Oy, Harry," she called from the kitchen where she was digging through the ice box. "Do you think Malfoy'd want chocolate raspberry or butter toffee ice cream?"

"Umm...I don't know," Harry said, standing up. "Let me go ask him real quick."

Harry quickly stood and walked out into the hall toward the parlour. He had just cracked open the door when he realized Draco was in the middle of a conversation.

"So I'm here safe and sound with Harry. Nothing to worry about, alright Dad?"

"Alright," said Lucius Malfoy's voice, coming from the large fireplace. "You tell Potter to take good care of you or I'll kill him." Lucius paused. "And I mean that, you know. I'm not just saying it to be threatening. I really will kill him."

"*Dad*," Draco said, sounding exasperated. "Stop being so overprotective. Besides, you can't kill Harry. He's my *mate*, don't you remember?"

"Draco, of course I remember. I'm the one who told your mother it was only natural that you chose Potter as a mate. Don't *you* remember?"

Those words made Harry pause. Only natural? What did Lucius mean? He knew he really shouldn't be eavesdropping on their conversation, but as anyone who's ever overheard a conversation about themselves can attest - it's almost impossible to stop listening.

"Oh yeah, I do remember," Draco replied. "Hey, I never got to hear the rest of that conversation. Why did you tell her that it was only natural? Seems an odd thing to say."

That's what Harry was thinking. He leaned in slightly closer to the gap in the door and listened intently.

"Well, when I found out you were a veela, and that I had veela blood, I started reading everything about veela that I could get my hands on. One of the things I discovered was that veela are attracted to high levels of magic, and as a rule only mate with the most powerful wizards."

Harry furrowed his brow. That was exactly what Cho had said, but he had dismissed it completely at the time. He hadn't thought there was any chance that Draco was attracted to him because of his magical abilities.

He wasn't sure he liked the way that idea felt.

"Yes, I suppose that would make sense," Draco was musing. "Harry is pretty powerful. He's the Boy Who Lived and all that. If I wanted a highly magical mate, I couldn't do better than Harry."

Harry's heart gave a slight clench. *It **doesn't** make sense*, he wanted to yell. *You're supposed to like me for me, not my magic.*

"It's more than that, Draco. You know how the Dark Lord is the only living descendent of Salazar Slytherin? Harry Potter is the only living descendent of Godric Gryffindor."

Harry took a staggering step backwards, stunned. He was *what*?

"Really?" came Draco's voice, sounding interested. "Is that why you joined up his side?"

"Yes," was Lucius' confirmation. "I figured that in a match between the two heirs, the Dark Lord might edge Potter out, but once Dumbledore is factored into the equation then the balance tips in Potter's favor. So I switched. And you see, once I had learned that veela choose mates for their high magic levels, knowing what I knew about Potter's heritage it made complete sense that you had chosen him."

By now, Harry had heard enough. He quietly backed away from the parlour door, a dull ache in his chest. He strode back to the kitchen, mind racing. Was it true? Draco had only chosen him for a mate because of his high magic levels? He couldn't have. He *couldn't* have.

But a nagging little voice in his head, the one that sounded a lot like his Aunt Petunia spoke up.

Of course that's why he loves you, the voice hissed. *There had to be some other reason. Deep in your heart, you knew he couldn't really love you, didn't you Harry?*

"He does," Harry protested, now feeling slightly sick. "He does love me."

Because you're the Heir of Godric Gryffindor. That's why he loves you. Because of your magic. Because you're the Boy Who Lived.

"No!"

*Yes. Did you really think he'd love you for **you**? Stupid, stupid boy. No one could actually love you.*

Harry clenched his fists and fought to keep his cool as despair welled up in him. He felt hurt and betrayed. His mind was whirling with a million different thoughts, and he was desperate and uneasy. Eating at him the most was the fact that he was supposed to bond with Draco tonight. What was he going to do?

He couldn't do it tonight.

He just couldn't. He needed more time to think. This was a big step. The bond would bring them so close, and it'd be so hard to sever. He had to know that Draco really loved him before they did it. He just had to.

Steeling himself, he knew what he had to do. He had to find a way to stall on the bonding until he could be absolutely sure. Draco would be furious, but there was no other way. He couldn't bond if he had doubts. That would be worse than lying.

He walked through the kitchen door, head held up resolutely. Hermione was sitting at the table slicing up cake while Ron and Ginny dug through the many bins of ice cream, debating which flavours to bring to the table.

"Hermione," Harry hissed as quietly as he could, sliding into the seat next to her.

"What?" she whispered back. "What's up?"

Harry ran his tongue over his lips to wet them. "Could you do me a favour?" he murmured, keeping a nervous watch on the door.

"Sure, what?" she asked, looking obviously puzzled by his strange behavior.

"Could you suggest that we do something tonight that will take us away from Grimmauld place for a good part of the night?"

Hermione looked at him oddly. "What, like go to a club or something?"

"Yes, that'd be perfect! We could all go to a club to...to celebrate one last time before going back to Hogwarts. The only adults here are Professor Lupin and Mundungus. Lupin will be out for another ten hours and Mundungus doesn't care what we do. That's perfect."

"But Harry, if we go to a club we'll probably be there pretty late. We might not be back until two or three in the morning. Don't you have an important date tonight?" she reminded him pointedly.

Harry winced.

"I know, I just..." Harry sighed and ran an irritable hand through his hair, wondering how much to tell her. "Look, I have my reasons, alright? Just do this for me? Please, Hermione?"

And he gave her his best pleading look, another thing he'd picked up from Draco, and smiled in relief as Hermione rolled her eyes at him but gave in.

"You've got some explaining to do, Potter."

It was about an hour later, and Draco and Harry were upstairs in Harry's room. After the meal of all dessert that included an oddly fidgety Harry, Draco was a bit suspicious.

Then Hermione had suggested they all go to a club after dinner. Draco had expected Harry to say "FUCK NO," and take him upstairs, lock the door and get on with it.

Instead, Harry had jumped at the idea. Now they were upstairs, and Draco was supposed to be getting ready to go out. Instead, he was glaring at Harry, who was busy pretending to pack and refusing to look at him.

"*What*, Draco? It's clubbing. It'll be fun. It's a good idea, I'm glad Hermione suggested it."

"Harry, we had *other plans* for tonight," Draco hissed. "Plans that only involved the two of us and a completely different kind of dancing."

"Draco, what's the big deal?" Harry asked, trying to sound casual. He placed a folded jumper in his trunk. "So we put off bonding for another day or two, why are you - "

"Another day or two? What's gotten into you?" Draco snapped. "You were as gung-ho about this as I was, and now all of a sudden you want to put it off?"

"Look, maybe I'm just not quite ready after all, okay?" Harry shot back, slamming the lid to his trunk.

"*Not ready*? What on earth else could you need to be ready? We've got a bed, a locking spell for the door, the whole night to cuddle afterward. What other ridiculous, sappy Gryffindor thing could you possibly be missing?"

Harry stood up and sent Draco a harsh glare. Draco winced.

"Alright, sorry, that wasn't a very nice thing to say," Draco hastily amended. "But Harry, please, I don't understand. I really want to do this. Why don't you?"

Harry took a deep breath. He felt horrible doing this to Draco. He could see that the blonde was highly put out, and he couldn't blame him. But he needed time to think about what he'd heard Draco and his father saying, time to read more information about veela and time just to *think*. What if Draco really did only love him for his magical powers? What then?

"Draco, I'm sorry," he finally said, agitatedly rubbing the back of his neck. "Can we please just go to the club tonight?"

Draco fixed him with an intense gaze. "What's wrong, Harry?"

"Nothing's *wrong*, I just want to go out tonight. It's our last chance to just cut loose before the school year starts up again." Harry inwardly winced. He didn't think that sounded very convincing. He quickly walked over to a stack of shirts and began sorting through them.

"Harry, something's wrong," Draco said quietly, now just watching him. "Please tell me what it is. I can help you."

At the concerned tone in Draco's voice, Harry wavered. Maybe he *should* tell Draco what he overheard. Maybe Draco could reassure him that it wasn't true, that his feelings for Harry were genuine and had nothing to do with magic.

"You want to help me?" Harry asked, finally looking Draco in the face.

"Yeah. If I don't help you, I'll never get laid, right?"

Harry's eyes narrowed. "Oh, just bugger off, Malfoy," he snapped, heading for the door.

Draco rolled his eyes. "Harry, come on, it was a joke - "

"It wasn't funny," Harry replied through clenched teeth, and then walked out the door.

By the time Ron, Ginny, Hermione, Harry and Draco got to the club that night, Draco was in a foul mood. He was extraordinarily pissed off at Harry, who continued to refuse to tell Draco what was bothering him.

"You'll just say I'm being stupid," Harry said angrily, after Draco demanded the fifth time to know why he had changed his mind. They were standing at the bar now, arguing as Harry drank something called a Coke and Draco sipped at his own fizzy nonalcoholic drink Harry had ordered him.

"You're being stupid *now*. I have a right to know, Harry," Draco said back. "You're my *mate*. If you don't want to bond you could at least tell me why."

"And risk you throwing it back in my face as some kind of idiotic, sappy Gryffindor thing? I don't think so," Harry replied, throwing down the last of his drink. "I'm going to dance."

Draco rolled his eyes, but he followed Harry's example with his own drink and then followed Harry out to the dance floor, determined to get to the bottom of things.

Ron, Hermione and Ginny were already dancing, and to Draco's great irritation Harry grabbed Ginny by the hand and spun her around a couple times before pulling her in to dance.

That was so not cool.

Before Draco could cut in and ask Harry just who the fuck he thought he was dancing with someone else, he heard a voice at his ear.

"Did it hurt?" said the voice, which sounded young and male.

"Did what hurt?" Draco shouted back over the music, confused.

"When you fell from heaven," the owner of the voice. Draco rolled his eyes at the utter cheesiness of that particular pick-up line, and turned to tell the owner off.

But the owner of that voice, a tall, muscled young man with very dark brown hair and blue eyes was grinning at him and before Draco knew it he was being pulled into a dance.

What the hell, Draco thought. *If Harry wants to dance with someone else, I'll bloody well do it too.* So Draco began to dance.

Two minutes later, he felt a hand grab him by the wrist and yank him off the dance floor. Harry pulled Draco all the way back to the bar before shoving him onto a barstool.

"What the fuck do you think you're doing?" he growled.

"What the fuck do you think *you're* doing?" Draco snarled back. "You're the one who bloody started it, dancing with Ginny Weasley. You're very lucky I didn't hex her."

"Okay, first, Ginny is like a sister to me, not some random stranger. Big difference. More importantly, didn't you notice that *everyone* in the bloody place was staring at you when you started dancing?"

"No," said Draco churlishly.

"Well they were," Harry said bluntly. "You're a veela. When veela dance, people fall under their spell."

"But I didn't have my powers on - "

"Don't need them when you dance. Look, don't expect me to explain it, ask Hermione if you want to know how it works. But unless you want all the muggles in here to suddenly jump your bones, you better not dance."

"Great, Harry. I can't drink, I can't dance, I can't shag my mate. What *exactly* am I supposed to do tonight?" Draco said, his voice icy.

Harry raked his hand through his hair and sighed. "Look, I'm sorry. I hadn't realized you wouldn't be able to dance. I'll sit here with you."

"No, don't bother," Draco said harshly. "I don't need a babysitter."

"Draco - "

"I'm serious. Just leave me alone for a bit."

"Oh come on, I can't just leave you - "

"For fuck's sake Harry, I want to be alone!" Draco snapped. "You won't fuck me, at least have the decency to fuck off!"

Harry took a sharp breath. "Fine. If that's what you want." He turned on his heel and strode back to the dance floor.

"Stupid mate," Draco muttered. He signaled to the bartender.

"Hello, gorgeous," the bartender said, looking at Draco appraisingly. "What can I get you?"

And Draco hesitated. He knew he wasn't supposed to drink. It made him completely out of control and let the veela take over his actions. He knew better. He did. He knew better. He knew it he knew it he knew it he kn -

"Scotch on the rocks," he suddenly said. The bartender nodded and busied himself making it.

Draco Malfoy, what the hell do you think you're doing, screamed his inner veela. *You can't drink!*

I'll fucking do whatever I want, thank you very much, Draco returned. He took his drink from the bartender with a nod of thanks, and downed it in three sips.

He set the glass back down on the bar and licked his lips. The bartender was watching him avidly.

"Can I get you another?" he asked. "For you, they're on the house."

"Aw, just for me?" Draco said, amused. "In that case, sure I'll take another. And make it a double."

Fifteen minutes and four double scotches later, Draco was completely smashed.

"Harry! Oh *Harry!*"

Harry turned, confused. Draco was standing on the dance floor next to him.

"*What*, Draco?" Harry snapped, still rather angry from earlier. "Decide you don't want to be alone anymore?"

"Exactly," Draco said, an odd grin on his face. "Don't wanna be alone, I wanna be with *you*."

Harry suddenly realized that everybody, even Ron, Hermione and Ginny, was staring at Draco.

"Draco, are your veela powers on?" he asked. Draco shrugged.

"Dunno," he said, then reached out and grabbed Harry's arm. "Come with me."

A bit bewildered, Harry let Draco drag him off the dance floor. Draco pulled him through the crowd and past the bar to the back of the club, leading him through a swinging door marked *Gentlemen*.

"Draco, why are we in the bathroom?" Harry asked as soon as they were in, trying to dig his feet into the tiled floor and stop Draco.

"Cause I wanna *be* with you, Harry," Draco whined, pulling at his arm again. Draco seemed intent on maneuvering Harry into the one stall the bathroom had.

Harry could feel his head swimming; Draco most definitely had his veela powers on, and now that they were away from the crowd the powers were getting to him.

Draco turned to the one other occupant of the bathroom, who had stopped washing his hands to drool in Draco's direction.

"Hi," he said brightly to the man. "Can you leave now?"

The man just nodded, his face slack and distant. "Yes, of course, anything you want," he said. Then Harry had a thought. If that man left there would be no buffers between himself and Draco's veela powers, and Harry wanted to keep his mind clear.

"Wait, I think you should stay," Harry said, but the man shook his head.

"I want to make the pretty blonde boy happy," he said. Draco beamed at him, and then yanked on Harry's arm with sudden, unexpected force.

Harry stumbled forward. Draco had amazing strength when he needed it, and right now Harry was no match for the veela's insistent pulling.

The next thing Harry knew he was closed into the one stall of the men's bathroom in a muggle club in a muggle London, and Draco was pressed up against him.

Harry shuddered at the contact, made undeniably pleasurable by the veela powers. "Draco, would you mind turning off your veela powers?" he said crossly. "It's hardly fair to expect me to talk to you with them on."

"Anything for my *mate*," Draco cooed, eyeing Harry with a look that Harry wasn't quite sure he liked. Draco's powers shut off just as Harry heard the door to the bathroom bang shut, and Harry felt slightly relieved. But they were alone now, so he had no protection if Draco turned his powers back on.

Harry was debating whether or not to forbid Draco to turn his powers back on, and also trying to figure out what exactly was going on when Draco surprised him.

"Kiss me," the blonde ordered, putting a hand behind Harry's neck and pulling him forward forcefully. Harry's eyes widened in shock, but as Draco jammed his tongue into Harry's mouth everything began to make sense.

"You're *drunk*," he said in comprehension, tasting alcohol in Draco's mouth. He pulled back, though he could barely move more than a few inches away from Draco in the tiny stall. He wiped his lips and made a face at the stale taste of alcohol left in his mouth. "Draco, what the *fuck*, you're completely hammered."

"So?" Draco said, licking his lips and giving Harry that look he didn't really like. "Can still kiss you."

And he lunged at Harry again.

Harry jerked his head to the side before Draco could kiss him. "Stop it," he said firmly. "I'm not kissing you right now. Your mouth tastes like shit and this bathroom is gross and smells horri - ow!"

Draco, not being able to reach his lips, had sunk his teeth into Harry's neck.

"Draco, you *bit* me!" Harry snapped, trying to twist out of range of the heavily drunk veela.

"Cause you like it rough," Draco slurred, putting his hands on the wall on either side of Harry's body to stop Harry from moving any further away in the tiny stall.

"I do sometimes, but not when you're drunk," Harry retorted, trying to sound more relaxed than he felt. In truth, Harry felt a bit trapped and claustrophobic. He was bigger but Draco was stronger, and he wasn't sure he liked how Draco was acting.

He took a deep breath, trying to remain in control of the situation. Draco was so drunk he no longer using complete sentences, and Harry was about two seconds from using the Voice on him, no matter how much he knew he'd hear Draco complaining about it the next day.

"Look," he said firmly, still trying to be reasonable, "you're drunk, you're acting weird and I don't know how well you're able to control your powers. Ron has a portkey from Mundungus to take us back. I'm going to find him and take you home and put you to bed, alright?"

"Know what?" Draco said, his face suddenly an inch from Harry's face. "I'm gonna put *you* to bed. *Here*."

And then the next thing Harry knew Draco was flush against him, pinning him to the stall wall, kissing him and grinding into him.

It took all of Harry's strength to push Draco off. "*Stop* it," he snapped, holding Draco away from him by the shoulders. "You're drunk. I think we should go home."

"No. Not home," said Draco, shaking his head. "We should *bond*."

"*What*? NO. No bonding. Not here," Harry said back, eyes going wide. Between Draco's words and the intoxicated look in Draco's eyes, Harry had a very, very bad feeling about this. "Draco, please, I want to go." He took a breath to use the Voice, to make Draco stop -

But Draco suddenly shoved him with all his veela strength. Harry slammed back against the wall of the stall again, hard.

Too hard.

Harry grimaced as all the air rushed out of his lungs. And then he gasped for breath, the wind knocked out of him, unable to speak. Almost instantly, Draco's hands grabbed Harry's wrists, and then Harry's wrists were held down, one on either side of his head. Draco thrust one leg between Harry's, and pressed him firmly against the stall.

"Bad mate," the veela scolded. "Not going anywhere."

Oh *shit*. Harry squirmed and desperately tried to take a breath, trying futilely to get air into his tortured lungs. He *had* to use the Voice -

But it was too late, because suddenly Draco's veela powers were back on, and Harry was lost.

Draco lunged forward and kissed him again, and this time Harry willingly opened his mouth, welcoming the kiss, arching up to meet Draco's face. Their tongues moved together sloppily as Draco moved between Harry's legs so they could grind against each other better.

Draco let Harry's wrists go, and Harry quickly tangled them in Draco's hair. Draco had other ideas, however, and Harry had barely touched that whisper soft hair he loved so much before Draco spun him around.

Harry's face was now turned, one cheek pressed up against the graffiti-covered wall of the bathroom stall, his palms flat against the stall to brace him. Draco was pressing into him from behind, his clumsy, drunk fingers working on the button of Harry's jeans. The next moment there was a slight ripping noise as Draco tore through the fastenings on Harry's jeans, followed by a muffled sound as they fell around his ankles.

Harry's mind was too far gone under the veela spell to comprehend what was happening as his boxers joined his jeans. He could feel air hitting his bare skin, could feel Draco's teeth on his shoulder, could hear the sound of Draco's own pants being undone. But all he could think about was the heat running through his veins.

And then he felt Draco's hands on his hips and shuddered; the veela touch was sending sparks of pleasure racing through his skin. He felt Draco forcefully moving him but he didn't know why. He couldn't think, he could only feel, and Draco's hands felt so good.

He felt Draco move behind him, and then suddenly there was the beginning of pain, a pain and pressure that hurt enough to penetrate through the haze of the veela spell.

It hurt badly enough to draw a whimper from Harry.

And immediately everything stopped. The pain and the pressure disappeared, Draco's hands left his hips, and then Harry felt Draco press up against his back.

"Harry?" the veela muttered anxiously, nuzzling into Harry's neck just under his ear. "Harry, m'sorry, sorry, you okay?"

Harry's eyelashes fluttered and he tilted his head, giving Draco better access to his neck. The veela powers burned underneath the flurry of kisses Draco now landed on Harry's skin.

"Love you," Draco breathed in a slurred whisper through the kisses. "Love you, don't want to hurt you. Love you Harry. Sorry, so sorry. You okay?"

"Yeah," Harry answered. And then Harry twisted in Draco's arms, coming face to face with the blonde, who began enthusiastically covering Harry's face with kisses.

"Love you," Draco repeated, his hands coming up to cradle Harry's face as he continued to rain kisses on Harry's cheeks, nose, forehead and anywhere else he could reach. "Love you so much."

"Love you too," Harry replied, not even realizing it was the first time he'd said the words in his life.

Draco made a happy noise and then the boys were kissing again, Draco's hands still caressing Harry's face, Harry's arms around Draco's waist. They kissed and kissed and kissed, drinking in each other through the haze of Draco's powers, when suddenly a noise cut through their bliss like a knife:

Ron Weasley's voice, calling out, "Hey, did you know I've invented a way to turn lead into gold?"

And instantly, Harry's mind came back to him and the world shattered around him.

Harry shoved Draco away from him, barely registering the hurt whimper coming from the veela at his rejection. Draco had just...he had almost...it had hurt so much and then...

Harry's breath started to come in quick shallow pants. He could hear Ron spouting complete gibberish from just outside the stall door, and he knew his friend was about to walk in on them. Had he come in just moments earlier he would have been there when Draco was about to force Harry and -

Harry felt horror and despair and disbelief and betrayal well up inside him. Draco had nearly raped him. Had nearly forced him to bond like an animal in heat.

But then when Harry had been in pain Draco had *stopped* and showered so much love on him. Draco *loved* him but had almost *raped* him and now Harry was disoriented to the point where he felt like he was about to throw up.

Love you Harry.

Love you so much.

It was just too much to comprehend. In one quick movement he yanked up his pants and grabbed his wand from his pocket, pointing it at Draco.

"*Dormiens*," he whispered, and Draco's eyes fluttered shut as he fell fast asleep. Harry reached out and caught him before he could fall.

Harry stood utterly frozen for a moment, the sleeping veela in his arms, confused and disoriented and *hurt*, hurt beyond belief that Draco would -

"Harry? Malfoy? Are you in here?"

Ron's voice shook Harry out of his daze. "Yes, Ron, just a sec," he called out, wincing as he heard his own rough voice. He didn't know what to do. Didn't know if he wanted to rage at Draco and throw him to the ground and never speak to him again, or hold him and cuddle him and smother him in kisses.

"Ugh, are you two *shagging*?" came Ron's voice, sounding disgusted. "If I just walked in on the two of you - "

Harry felt slightly hysterical at Ron's words. "No, Ron, Draco's asleep, just give me a moment..."

He was so confused, so *hurt* and *confused* and now the tears were coming, welling up in his eyes and he choked them back, forcing some self-control and forcing himself to function and forcing himself to open the stall door and talk to Ron as if everything was *perfectly normal*.

When Harry swung the door open Ron was standing right outside, arms folded. "We didn't know where you two had gone," the red head said. "Listen, are you ready to go?"

"I..." Harry had to get out of there. He *had* to. He just couldn't handle it anymore.

"Ron, listen, can you do me a huge favor? Draco managed to get completely drunk, so I put a light sleeping charm on him. Could you take him back to Grimmauld Place for me?"

Ron looked at him suspiciously. "You're not coming?"

"No, I am, but...please Ron, I just need a couple minutes outside to clear my head," Harry said frantically. The tears were coming back, and with a vengeance.

Ron looked reluctant. "How will you get home?"

With some difficulty Harry held up his wrist and indicated the silver bracelet. "If you can just put Draco on my bed I'll portkey straight to him. I really, I just need a moment. Please, take Draco and the girls home for me. Please, Ron," Harry pleaded again, knowing he was on the verge of falling apart in front of Ron.

Ron sighed. "Fine. Give me that veela of yours," he held out an arm and Harry passed him the sleeping Draco. Ron put one arm around Draco's waist and slung Draco's arm over his own shoulder. Harry held the door open to the bathroom and Ron staggered out under Draco's weight.

"Just come home safe, alright Harry?" he said, scanning the crowd for Hermione and Ginny.

Harry just nodded before turning and walking out of the club as quickly as he could, wiping angrily at his eyes.

The next morning Draco was awoken by a loud banging on the door.

"Malfoy, Harry, get up already, we're supposed to catch the Knight Bus in two hours!"

It was Hermione. Draco winced and clutched at his head.

"Alright, *alright*, Granger," he yelled, then winced again. His head was absolutely pounding. It took him a moment to get his bearings: Grimmauld place, Harry's room. Good. Now, what on earth had he drunk last night?

He rolled over, and then frowned. The bed was empty. That was odd; where was Harry? Maybe he was taking a shower. Draco sat up slightly to peer at the bathroom door.

It was wide open. The bathroom was empty.

Now Draco was *really* irritated. His head hurt, his body hurt, and his mouth tasted like shit. For Merlin's sake, he was still wearing his clothes from last night. Where was Harry? The last time he had woken up from being drunk, Harry had been there to make it better. Why had he left Draco to fend for himself this time?

Muttering a curse word under his breath, Draco managed to get out of bed. Grabbing some clothes from his trunk, he staggered into the bathroom for a long, hot shower.

About thirty minutes later, Draco was treading carefully down the stairs of Grimmauld place. He had one clear thought in his mind: coffee. He made his way into the kitchen where Ron, Hermione, and Ginny were all seated around a table, chatting and reading the *Daily Prophet*.

"Coffee?" Draco asked, still massaging his temples. Hermione pointed to the large pot on the counter. With a quick "thanks" Draco padded over to the pot. He opened up a cabinet and grabbed a mug, pouring himself a huge cup.

He was just steeling himself to take a sip of the bitter drink when Ron asked him a question.

"So when's Harry coming down? He's not still sleeping, is he?"

Draco froze. "What are you talking about?"

"Harry," Ron repeated. "Wasn't he upstairs with you?"

Draco shook his head no. "I thought he'd already gotten up."

Ron was looking a bit agitated. "No, he was supposed to be with you."

Draco furrowed his brow. "Well, I got home from the club, so he must be here somewhere, right?"

Hermione shook her head. "We brought you home. You were *drunk*," she said this with a disapproving look, "so Harry had to put a sleeping spell on you. Then he asked Ron to bring you home and put you to bed."

Draco lowered his cup in surprise. "Harry didn't come with us?"

Ron shook his head. "No. Said he needed a couple minutes to clear his head. Promised to portkey back with his fancy portkey bracelet." He narrowed his eyes slightly. "What exactly happened last night?"

"I don't know," Draco said, shaking his head in frustration. "I can't really remember." He lifted the coffee cup to his mouth and took a few large sips, wincing at the bitter taste. "Well, if Harry's missing we have to find him, we can't let anything hap...hap...oh God."

And the coffee cup slipped from his fingers and shattered on the floor as Draco suddenly remembered.

A distressed noise fled from Draco's lips and his legs gave out. He was vaguely aware of Hermione's shout of "Draco!" and Ron and Ginny jumping up from the table as he fell to his knees on the floor amidst the shards of china from his broken mug.

"Oh God," he whispered. "What have I done?"

It took the combined forces of Ron, Hermione and Ginny to make Draco stay in the house. He was desperate to go out looking for Harry.

"No," Hermione said firmly. "He can portkey to you. If he's not here by the time we're supposed to catch the Knight Bus, we'll get the Order to send out a search party."

"But, but Harry, he could be hurt, oh God, he probably is hurt, please, I have to find him!" Draco was a complete wreck, alternately fighting to get away from Ron and curling up in a ball, trembling.

"Malfoy, just stay still," Ron said, exasperated. "What exactly happened between you two last night?"

But Draco just shook his head, too distressed to explain. He was so afraid. What if Harry never came back? What if Harry never forgave him? Oh God, what had he *done*?

There were only fifteen minutes left before they needed to catch the bus. Ron and Hermione were looking anxious, Ginny kept peering through the curtains to look out on the street, and Draco was on the couch, clutching his knees to his chest and chewing on his lips.

And then suddenly there was a quiet pop, and Harry was there.

"HARRY!" Four relieved voices cried out, and Harry was suddenly being hugged tightly by Hermione and Ginny.

"Oh Harry, what were you *doing*, leaving like that!" Hermione scolded. Harry looked sheepish.

"Sorry," he said, addressing Ron, Hermione and Ginny. "I didn't mean to worry anyone. I just...had to think."

Ron shook his head. "Well, next time think where we can see you! Crikey, you were gone the entire night. Look how worried you've made Malfoy!"

Harry turned, but Draco was already there, throwing his arms around his mate in a relieved hug.

It would have been completely unnoticeable to anyone watching, but Draco could feel it. When he put his arms around Harry, Harry, instead of relaxing into his touch like usual, had stiffened slightly.

Draco felt a pain begin to grow in his chest.

"Oh Harry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm so sorry," he muttered, tears welling up in his eyes. "Forgive me, please forgive me, I'm so sorry, I'm so sorry."

Draco felt Harry's hands come to rest on his back. "It's okay, Draco, it's okay," he whispered. "You were drunk, you didn't mean to. I forgive you, love, I do."

They were the right words, the words Draco wanted to hear, but words are one thing, and actions are another.

Harry wanted to forgive him, Draco could tell, but he was still much too rigid in Draco's arms, unable to relax into the embrace. His hands were on Draco's back, but they weren't moving, weren't rubbing Draco's back soothingly like normal.

Despair rose up in Draco, and he wiped at his eyes angrily. Harry was talking to his friends now, reassuring them that he was fine. And then everyone was moving about, Professor Lupin coming back in the room, hustling everybody around to get their coats, get their trunks, and get moving.

They caught the Knight Bus back to Hogwarts. The others all took bunks and dozed off, but Draco refrained, choosing instead to sit quietly up front by the driver and watch the scenery. He was afraid to lie down; afraid because he wasn't sure he'd be wanted in Harry's bunk, and he didn't think he could bear to lie down by himself.

It was nearly curfew when they arrived at Hogwarts. The five students left their bags in the Entrance Hall for the house elves, and then Draco watched as out of habit Harry began heading up the stairs to Gryffindor tower with Ron, Hermione, and Ginny. Ron stopped him.

"Harry, you know you're not banned from Malfoy's room anymore, right?" he said. "You can go sleep with him if you want."

Draco didn't miss the way Harry tensed slightly.

"Oh...right Ron, I'd forgotten," he said, biting his lip. He turned and walked back down the steps he'd climbed until he was at Draco's side. "Well," he said to Draco, with a smile that didn't quite reach his eyes, "lead the way."

Draco and Harry walked back to Draco's room together in oppressive silence. Now that they were alone, there was so much to say and yet, neither of them wanted to say it. When they reached the dragon portrait, Draco said the password and it swung open. He walked through it, and then turned back around when Harry didn't follow.

"Harry?" he asked in a shaky voice. Harry had frozen in place, his eyes resting on Draco's bed.

"Harry?" Draco tried again.

Harry nervously licked his lips. "Um, Draco...you know...I was thinking...we really could get in a lot of trouble if we're caught sharing a bed...lots of detention and stuff...maybe we shouldn't risk it ...just to be safe...you know what I'm saying?"

And did Draco ever know what Harry was really saying.

Just to be safe.

Harry no longer felt safe around Draco. Draco's mate was afraid of him, and it broke Draco's heart.

"Sure Harry," Draco finally said softly. "Whatever makes you happy."

And as Draco watched his mate's shoulders sag with relief, as Harry turned around and practically ran away from Draco back to Gryffindor tower, the tears that had been threatening all day finally fell.

The Veela Enigma

Chapter 23: Secrets

Draco barely slept that night.

He tossed and turned, plagued by dreams, vague images floating through his head. Most of the time it was Harry's face, a scared look in his eyes as he pleaded with Draco to let him go back to Gryffindor tower where he'd be safe and Draco couldn't hurt him.

Sometimes Draco heard the whimper of pain Harry had made in the bathroom stall in the muggle club.

And sometimes it was just Harry's words, *Love you too*, that floated through Draco's head, those soft-spoken words that he had longed to hear and now was deathly afraid that he'd never hear again.

Finally he truly drifted off around 5am, only to wake three hours later to find himself late for class. He dully got up, splashed some water on his face and threw on his robes, hoping that maybe he could talk to Harry later.

The morning dragged by until his last class before lunch, Arithmancy, which he shared with Granger. They had been sitting with each other ever since her discovery that he was a veela, and today he was hoping to get some information out of her.

They both made it into their seats just as class started, giving each other a friendly nod hello before taking out parchment and quills. Draco figured he'd wait until about half-way through class before he grilled her for information.

To his surprise, she beat him to it.

"Malfoy," Hermione hissed, only fifteen minutes into class, "What the hell happened between you and Harry at that club Saturday night?"

Draco froze. "What did Harry tell you?" he whispered back, that familiar feeling of guilt bubbling in his stomach.

"Nothing," Hermione said, even her whisper sounding exasperated. "Which is the biggest lie he's told me in awhile. He is so obviously upset about something, and the vibes between the two of you are weird. And then he slept in Gryffindor tower last night. What the hell is going on?"

Draco swallowed and pretended to take notes, trying not to look as heartsick as he felt. "If Harry didn't tell you anything than I'm not going to either," he finally replied.

Hermione narrowed her eyes at him. "Harry is a wreck, Malfoy," she said coldly. "Ron heard him mumbling in his sleep last night, saying things like *no*, *stop*, and *don't*. And then this morning, Ron told me that when he saw Harry getting dressed - "

"Why the *fuck* was the Weasel watching my mate get dressed?" Draco snarled, before he could stop himself.

He said it just a touch too loudly, and Professor Vector stopped to send a pointed look at Hermione and Draco. Draco gave an apologetic smile, and Professor Vector softened immediately, as most witches and wizards are wont to do with veela.

Once the professor was writing on the board again, Hermione gave Draco an exasperated look.

"Get a grip, would you Malfoy? They're *roommates*, not illicit lovers. Anyway, Ron said that Harry has an enormous bruise on his upper back, a nasty purple one across his shoulder blades. Any ideas how that happened?"

Draco felt a sick sort of nausea beginning to build in his stomach. "Bruise?" he whispered hoarsely.

"Yes, bruise," Hermione said, studying Draco's face. "Wouldn't tell Ron the truth about where he got it from, either. Said he *tripped* and *fell* at the club." From the scoffing tone of her voice Draco could tell she didn't believe this for a second. "How about you, Malfoy? Can you tell me where this mystery bruise comes from?"

From me. Oh Merlin, from me. I bruised my mate. He felt properly ill now, and guilt was just eating away at him.

His memories weren't completely sharp, but he remembered everything that had happened Saturday night. He remembered getting hammered on free scotch, and then being horny as hell and wanting his mate. Somehow he had forgotten that Harry had wanted to wait to bond, and had thought that the sooner the better would be ideal.

He remembered luring Harry into the bathroom and in his drunken state thinking Harry was playing a game with him, playing hard to get. Draco remembered slamming Harry back against the wall at one point. He hadn't been trying to hurt Harry, he really hadn't. He'd just been trying to keep him in the stall. He was still so new at this veela thing, and so many of his powers were still a surprise. He hadn't realized he was so strong.

Harry had been trying to get away, Draco realized that now. Harry had been scared of Draco, and with good reason, because Draco had nearly -

Draco squeezed his eyes tightly shut and clenched his fists. He couldn't bear it.

"Malfoy?"

Cracking open an eye, Draco realized Hermione was looking at him expectantly. All Draco could do was shake his head, and then ignore her puzzled looks for the rest of class.

Draco couldn't face Harry and the Great Hall for lunch. Instead he went down to the kitchens, taking solace in a plate of cream cakes the elves happily got for him. He was so ashamed of himself, he wasn't sure he could ever bear to look his mate in the eyes again.

Still, time has a way of forcing people (and veela) to do what they'd rather put off, and soon enough it was Potions and Draco couldn't run away anymore. Steeling himself, he made his way into the classroom, sliding into the seat he normally sat in.

Harry came bursting in just moments before the bell as usual, and made his way over to the seat next to Draco.

"Hey," he said, dropping into the chair and giving Draco a smile. "I wondered where you were. I didn't see you at lunch."

Draco's heart clenched painfully. Harry was valiantly trying to pretend that nothing was wrong, but it was all so very, very wrong. Harry was smiling, but it wasn't the adoring, smitten smile he normally wore around Draco. And while he was sitting next to Draco there was still distance between them. Normally Harry would scoot his chair right up against Draco's and then risk Snape's wrath to kiss him or cuddle him or at the very least play with his hair for a moment.

And if Draco had missed lunch before, Harry would have come looking for him, and probably snuck him food into the classroom. There was normally so much love and affection in Harry's every word and action, and Draco was only now realizing how empty his life was without it.

When had he become so spoiled? When had their relationship grown into something where Draco took for granted a million little tiny displays of affection? And now without them he was lost and lonely, and he missed it so much. He found himself desperately wishing for one tiny kiss hello, a slight touch on his arm, or even an accidental slip of the nickname *baby* which Draco pretended to despise. Any of the stupid, sappy Gryffindor things he had teased Harry about that he now missed like he would have missed his right arm.

Instead there was Harry, trying his hardest to act like nothing was wrong, but the walls were there all the same, and Draco's heart was still broken.

"Wasn't hungry," Draco finally muttered back. Harry raised an eyebrow at this but didn't push. A moment later Snape started lecturing, and all discussion was put aside.

After about twenty minutes of lecture, Snape had them get ingredients and begin their potions. Harry went to get everything they needed while Draco set up their workstation.

Without a word, the two began working on the assignment, a fairly simple healing potion used to treat burns.

"Want to chop roots or stir?" Harry eventually asked.

"I'll chop," Draco volunteered, purposefully taking the job he knew Harry didn't like. Harry gave him a sort of half-smile and stood up, taking a position behind the large black cauldron.

Draco kept his eyes fixed on the ingredients in front of him. He longed to say something to Harry, anything. He wanted to beg and grovel for forgiveness. He wanted to throw himself at Harry's feet and plead with him not to leave Draco. He wanted to tell Harry that his life was meaningless without him and promise that he would never, ever, ever drink again.

He knew, however, that Harry didn't put much stake in Draco's promises, and though it pained him to admit it, he knew that Harry was right not to.

Finally, when Draco could no longer pretend there was anything left to chop or dice or mince or slice or crush, he stood.

"Everything's ready," he said softly, indicating the ingredients on the table in front of him.

Harry glanced over from the cauldron. "Great," he said simply. "I think we add the diced poppy stems first." He reached down towards the table for the stems, and as he did so his robe sleeve rode up his arm to reveal his wrist.

To Draco's absolute horror, Harry's wrist was dotted with several small, round bruises, the perfect shape and size to have been left by merciless veela fingers.

Draco made a small noise of despair, and Harry looked up sharply. His eyes flicked to Draco's eyes, which were still trained on his wrist. Realizing what Draco was staring at, he snatched his arm away.

"It's nothing," Harry said, his voice slightly sharp. "Don't worry about it."

Draco felt bile rising in his throat. More bruises. He didn't even have to see Harry's other wrist to know it was covered in matching small round bruises from where he had pinned Harry's wrists against the wall, squeezing them to prevent Harry from escaping.

Harry turned his head at that moment, craning his neck to see the instructions on the blackboard. Unbidden, Draco's eyes shot up to the pale neck that Harry was exposing, only to see a large angry red mark on Harry's neck.

A bite mark. From Draco.

That was the final straw. The sickness that had been rising in him since Hermione had told him about the bruise on Harry's back was bubbling up, rising now, and Draco couldn't hold it in anymore.

Without so much as a word he bolted from the classroom, aware that puzzled looks were following him as he left.

He ran until he reached a bathroom, stumbling over to the sink. There the sickness overtook him, and he threw up every last trace of cream cake he had eaten for lunch.

Shaking, he turned on the tap and let the water wash it all away. He stooped bent over the sink for a moment, hands on either side of the porcelain sink for balance. He closed his eyes, listening to the thudding of his heart, painfully aware that the last time he had thrown up Harry had been there to hold him and kiss him and take care of him.

He missed his mate so much.

Finally, he took some water in the cupped palm of his hand and rinsed his mouth before straightening and looking at his own reflection in the mirror above the sink.

He hardly recognized himself anymore.

The changes he had gone through since hitting veela puberty were astounding. Where he had once been pale and pointy, now he was ethereal and chiseled. His hair had lightened even beyond its original white-gold to nearly white, almost no traces of yellow left in the color. Most striking, his eyes were now an unnatural sort of silver, not the slate grey they had been in his childhood.

There were other physical changes as well. He had grown rapidly and now stood decently tall, although he suspected his more refined veela build meant that he would always be the slightly smaller than Harry. His muscles, still lithe rather than bulky, had become more defined, and not even his steady diet of cakes and chocolates and sweets could change his physique.

Harry had told him he was beautiful, and at one point Draco had come to believe him. He had been ashamed to be part veela at first, but gradually grown proud, blossoming under the affection and the looks of adoration that Harry had constantly showered on him.

But now when he saw himself in the mirror, he saw something dark and dangerous, something that could not be trusted. Beautiful on the outside, but rotten and evil on the inside. Something that was little better than an animal. Not even the darkest of wizards would do to their loved ones what Draco had nearly done to Harry at the muggle club.

He was a disgrace. He was a disgrace to the name of wizard, tainted with the blood of a magical beast. He was a disgrace to the race of veela, for he had done what no veela should ever do, hurt and bruise and nearly violate his mate.

Anyway you looked at it, he was a disgrace. A failure. A monster.

Dropping to his knees on the cold tile of the bathroom floor, Draco began to cry.

It was cold, so cold, and Harry squinted, trying to see through the fog that swirled around him.

"Draco? Where are you?" he called out. Harry couldn't fight back a shiver. Where was Draco? Why was Harry all alone?

"He's not coming," a familiar voice sneered. Harry turned to see his Uncle Vernon standing right next to him.

"He is coming. He loves me," Harry insisted, and Vernon laughed.

"He doesn't," Vernon sneered again. "Why would he? You're worthless."

Harry felt despair rise in his chest. "He does love me. He told me."

Harry heard laughter, and whirled around to see Dudley and Aunt Petunia standing behind him.

"He doesn't love you. He only wanted you because you're the biggest freak at your freak school," Dudley said, still laughing at Harry. "No one loves you."

"You didn't deserve him anyway," Aunt Petunia sniffed. "No one deserves to get stuck with the likes of you."

Harry's heart dropped as the Dursleys continued to laugh at him. "He's coming for me, you'll see," Harry said bravely, and then out of the fog Draco emerged.

"Draco!" Harry cried out happily. "You came, I knew you would. Tell them, Draco. Tell them they're wrong. Tell them you love me."

But Draco didn't answer. Instead he was changing, growing rapidly. Harry took a step backwards as Draco grew and grew and grew to many times the size of Hagrid. Harry shrank back as the now giant Draco advanced on him, a predatory look in his eyes.

"There you are Harry," he said, reaching down with one enormous hand.

As the hand reached for Harry he turned to run, but it was too late. Draco's hand wrapped around him and then he was lifted bodily off the ground.

"Draco, what are you doing?" Harry cried out, as Draco began to walk away, still carrying Harry in his fist. "Put me down. I don't want this, stop! You're not supposed to do this; you're supposed to love me!"

"Love you?" The giant Draco made a scoffing noise. "I don't love you. You're just my favorite fuck toy, Harry. And now I'm going to put you somewhere where you can't get away."

Harry twisted in Draco's fist and stared in horror as Draco began approaching a very familiar staircase with a very familiar cupboard under it.

"No, don't, please!" he cried out, squirming and trying to break free.

"Don't worry, Potter. I'll take you out when I want to play." And with that Draco reached out, stretching for the cupboard door.

"Draco, please, please don't, I love you, don't do this to - "

" - ME!" Harry shouted, bolting into a sitting position. Then he took a gasping breath and looked around wildly. He was in his room in Gryffindor tower, on his bed. The room was empty.

Harry continued to breathe rapidly for a moment, heart pounding. Then with a loud sigh, he flopped down onto his back on the bed, flinging an arm across his face.

That was the third time this week he'd had that exact dream. He wasn't sure what it meant, and he wasn't about to consult Trelawney either. Still, it was a horrible dream, proving to Harry beyond a doubt that while he pretended everything was fine on the surface, his subconscious was pretty fucked up.

Harry lay on his bed for a moment, waiting for the dream-induced panic to subside. This had been one of the worst weeks in his life. He and Draco had barely exchanged any words beyond Harry's attempts at small talk in Potions. Harry hadn't been going to meals, and from what Hermione told him (with a very suspicious look on her face) he knew Draco wasn't going either.

They had to talk at some point, and Harry knew it. He could see Draco's agony and desperation and he felt so terrible about it. He knew they needed to talk and badly, but talking to Draco would have meant being alone with Draco, and so far Harry hadn't been ready to face that.

Harry glanced at his watch. Today was Friday, and it was now around 8pm. He had spent all his free time this week in the library, researching veela, and he was no closer to understanding the enigma that was Draco than he had been when he first started.

One thing that had stood out in all his reading was that it was true that veela were attracted to mates with powerful magic. As much as it pained Harry to admit it, Cho had been telling the truth in that instance. High magic levels were definitely one of the defining characteristics of a veela mate.

Cho also said Draco would use his veela powers to try and rape you. Turns out she was right about that too.

"Shut UP," Harry told his mind fiercely. He had done extensive reading into the effects of alcohol on veela, and while he was still unbearably hurt by what Draco had almost done, he thought he could better understand it now. Alcohol affected veela much more strongly than humans. Not only did they lose their inhibitions and their control over their powers, but they also lost their grip on reality. Combine that with a substantially increased sex drive, and Harry understood why all veela books cautioned veela very strongly against drinking.

The veela metabolism is unable to handle even small quantities of alcohol, one text had explained. Extreme intoxication, delusions, susceptibility to suggestion and uncontrolled lust are all common results when veela drink. It is better to avoid it all together rather than risk the consequences.

That explains why both times Draco's been drunk he's been all over me, whether I wanted it or not, Harry thought, staring up at the canopy of his bed unseeing. He had never felt quite so confused in his life. On one hand he had a veela who wanted him for a mate - a veela who was uncontrolled, unpredictable, had gotten drunk and practically assaulted Harry in a muggle bathroom and probably only wanted him for a mate because of his relation to Godric Gryffindor in the first place.

On the other hand, he had Draco - sweet, affectionate and who loved him, and he couldn't believe only loved him because of his blood.

He missed Draco so much it physically hurt. He missed talking to him, listening to him complain, missed the way Draco would look at Harry like there was nothing and no one else on earth. And maybe it was because he was a stupid, sappy Gryffindor, but he missed just *touching* Draco. He missed the cuddling and kissing and being able to just reach out and touch a real live person whenever he felt like it. He'd never had that before, and now he was too scared and uncomfortable and uncertain around Draco to do it.

Harry was so confused and lonely and upset, and as he lay on his bed alone in Gryffindor tower his thoughts coalesced into one solid idea:

Fuck this; I'm getting out of here.

And in a whirl of motion he grabbed his invisibility cloak and his map and was out the door.

"Ron, where is Harry?"

"I don't know, Hermione. I haven't seen him since right before dinner. He said he was going up to our room to take a nap."

Hermione gave a frustrated sigh. It was now nearly midnight, and she and Ron were the only two Gryffindors still awake and in the common room.

"What has been going on this week?" she muttered, pacing in front of the fire. "He and Malfoy have been acting so strangely around each other."

"I know, even I noticed," Ron mused back. "And both of them look like total hell. Malfoy looks like he hasn't slept in months and Harry's just as bad."

"Something happened at the club, I know it," Hermione said, coming to a standstill and folding her arms over her chest. "Something bad. Whatever it was, it's eating away at them. Why don't they just talk it out?"

"Not everyone's as clever as you, Hermione," Ron pointed out. "It took me and Harry weeks to patch things up in fourth year, remember?"

"Yes, well, I thought Malfoy had a little more sense than the two of you," Hermione said crisply.

"HEY!"

Hermione rolled her eyes. "I just meant that as a veela this can't be good for his health. He's going to end up in the hospital wing if things don't change soon." She uncrossed her arms to look at her watch, and began pacing again.

"It's five minutes to midnight. If Harry doesn't show up by midnight on the dot, I'm going to Dumbledore."

Ron opened his mouth to protest, but just then the portrait door swung open and then swung shut.

Nothing happened for a moment. Ron looked up at Hermione, confused, but Hermione just narrowed her eyes.

"Take your bloody invisibility cloak off and come out where we can see you, Harry," she snapped, and a second later Harry revealed himself with a flourish.

"Ta-da!" he said with a stupid grin. Hermione took one look at his blank face and the bottle clutched in his hand and set her jaw.

"You're *drunk*," she hissed, and Harry looked confused.

"I am?" he asked, brow furrowed. He glanced down at his large bottle of Firewhiskey. "Oh yeah, I am!"

"*Harry James Potter*," and here Ron winced for Harry's sake, "you are in so much trouble." She pointed to the couch. "Sit. NOW."

Harry, even drunk Harry, knew better than to mess with Hermione and obediently stumbled over to the couch, dropping down nearly on top of Ron.

"Hi Ron," he said cheerfully. Ron just shook his head.

"Harry, what were you thinking?" he asked, reaching over and taking the bottle out of his friend's hand. He set it on the coffee table and turned back to Harry. "Honestly, out till midnight? Alone? *Drunk*? Does Malfoy know you're doing this? Do you know how pissed off he'd be with you?"

Harry winced. "So?" he said defiantly. "You should see what he's like when he drinks."

Hermione raised an eyebrow. "Why? What's he like?"

"Out of control," Harry said, gesturing wildly. "He's bloody scary."

Hermione and Ron exchanged a look. "Why is he scary?" Hermione prodded.

Harry seemed to hesitate. Ron looked at Hermione, and they shared an understanding: drunk, defenseless Harry was about to be subjected to a serious inquisition.

"Harry, we're your best friends, you can tell us anything," Hermione said, in her most soothing tone of voice. She moved onto the couch next to Harry and put a hand on his leg. Ron shifted a little on Harry's other side so that they were both facing Harry, and put his own hand on Harry's shoulder.

"Come on Harry," Hermione said encouragingly. "Tell us why Draco is scary when he's drunk."

Ron should have felt bad, manipulating his drunk best friend for information like this, but years of friendship had shown him that Harry didn't tell anyone when things went wrong. It was a stroke of sheer luck when he and Hermione discovered over the summer that a drunk Harry Potter was a Harry Potter with no more secrets.

Ron did his own bit of prodding. "Why don't you tell us what happens when Malfoy drinks, Harry? He was drunk at the muggle club last weekend, wasn't he?"

Harry licked his lips and then nodded hesitantly.

"Come on, Harry," Hermione said again. "Tell us what happened at the club. Tell us *everything*."

"That *bloody fucking bastard*. I'm going to fucking *kill* him."

It was about an hour later. Harry, under Hermione and Ron's gentle prodding, had spilled everything. He had told them what happened the first time Draco had drank, had told them about the conversation he overheard Draco have with Lucius, and told them every last detail about what had happened at the muggle club. He'd even told them about the nightmares he'd been having all week.

And now he was asleep, head on Ron's shoulder, dozing quietly between his friends on the large couch in the Gryffindor common room.

His friends who were just a little bit pissed off.

"I'm telling you, Hermione, I'm going to turn that veela into a throw rug the next time I see him."

Hermione pursed her lips. "I'm not saying I don't want to help you, but you have to consider a couple things first."

"Like what?" Ron seethed. "Like whether the veela throw rug would look better in the living room or the bedroom?"

"No," Hermione said, rolling her eyes. "Like the fact that Harry refused to tell Draco what was bothering him. I'm not blaming Harry for what happened, but Draco had a right to know. Harry has a really bad habit of keeping important information from the people who love him."

"Right, well, it sounds like Malfoy no longer fits into that category," Ron snapped.

"No, Malfoy loves Harry more than he loves himself. I'm sure of that," Hermione said, staring into the fire. "Even with all this Heir of Gryffindor business. Even if that was what initially made Malfoy want Harry as a mate, it's not why he loves him now. I've seen them together. Malfoy's for real. He does love Harry."

"Yeah, well he's got a great way of showing it," Ron sneered, putting a protective hand on the sleeping Harry's head. "Trying to rape Harry in a bloody muggle bathroom. Thank God I got there when I did or who knows what he would have done."

"Ron, he had already stopped, remember? He stopped the instant his drunk veela brain realized that he was causing Harry pain. He didn't really know what he was doing and he certainly wasn't trying to hurt Harry." Hermione looked at Ron. "He does love Harry, Ron. He does. And Harry loves him as well. That's why this whole mess has been so horrible for them."

"Yeah, well, just because I can kind of see why Malfoy did it doesn't mean I can't be pissed with him," Ron said sulkily.

"Fair enough," Hermione said. "Just remember that no matter how angry you are, he's more angry with himself. He committed the cardinal veela sin, Ron; he hurt his mate. I'm sure he's miserable right now."

Hermione looked at her watch. Just a little after 1am. "Listen, Ron, Harry's going to have the world's worst hangover when he wakes, and he's got Occlumency with Malfoy and Snape first thing tomorrow. He's going to need all his strength. Why don't you take him up to bed?"

Ron nodded, and together they gently woke Harry up.

"Harry, go with Ron, okay?" Hermione said softly. Harry whined in protest, but allowed himself to be pulled to his feet, one arm slung over Ron's shoulder.

"Stupid Harry," Ron mumbled, looking at his friend worriedly. "Why don't you *tell* anyone when bad things happen to you?"

Hermione watched as Ron carefully made his way upstairs, half-supporting and half-carrying Harry. Once they had disappeared, she went upstairs to her own bed.

In bed, Hermione tossed and turned for the rest of the night. She had spoken very reasonably to Ron and defended Draco, but she was furious in her own Gryffindor way. She couldn't really sleep, so finally, after dozing fitfully for about few hours, she got out of bed, threw on a dressing gown, and made her way downstairs.

Draco woke up to a loud pounding on his portrait.

"Malfoy! MALFOY! Get up and OPEN THE DOOR!"

He blearily glanced at his clock. 6am. Bloody hell, who was knocking on his portrait at this hour?

"I'm coming, I'm COMING!" he yelled back. "Keep your hair on," he muttered grumpily. He slid out from under the covers and stumbled his way to the entrance to his room. He hadn't fallen asleep until past 4am and he was exhausted now.

He reached the portrait and began to open it.

"Look, just who the hell do you think you - "

SMACK!

Draco staggered back slightly from the force of a hand connecting with the side of his face. He slowly brought one hand up to gingerly touch his cheek and winced. He didn't have to look to see who was at his door.

He knew that slap.

"Hello, Hermione."

"How *dare* you call me Hermione after what you did to Harry."

Obviously, Hermione knew what had happened. To Draco's surprise, inside of being upset by this knowledge, he was relieved. The stand-off between him and Harry was over. Hermione would never let things continue as they were.

"So Harry told you," he said, looking at Hermione properly for the first time. She was obviously too furious to sleep and had come straight from bed, a flannel dressing gown thrown over her nightgown and her bushy hair standing out in all directions.

"Yes, Harry told me. In a manner of speaking," she spat, still watching him angrily.

"What does *that* mean?"

"It means that the only way I got any information out of either of you two idiots is that Harry went and got himself piss-drunk last night. He'll tell you anything when he's drunk."

"Harry got *drunk* last night? *Alone*? He went out *alone* and got *drunk*? What the *hell* was he thinking?" Draco raged. "He could have been hurt, or kidnapped, or taken advantage of or -"

"Oh, I think Harry's more likely to get taken advantage of when *you're* the one who's drunk, Malfoy."

Ouch. Draco winced. "That was low, Granger."

"Yeah? So was what you did to Harry."

Draco had no defense for that. He hung his head.

"Shame on you, Malfoy," Hermione continued, arms now crossed over her chest and anger radiating from her eyes. "Here Harry waits and waits, wanting things to be perfect not for himself but for *you*, because he loves you and he worries about you and doesn't want your delicate veela nerves to freak out after you bond. And what do you do in return? You try to fuck him up against the wall of a filthy public toilet."

Draco closed his eyes in shame and leaned forward to rest his forehead against the wall. "You're right of course," he said quietly, not bothering to open his eyes. "Don't think I don't know that every word you're saying is true. Don't think I haven't been thinking all the same things you have. I'm horrible. I'm a monster. I don't deserve him."

"No, you probably don't," Hermione said unsympathetically. "But you love him and he adores you beyond all reason and you two need each other, so I hope you're prepared to grovel and patch things up."

"I am, I'm more than ready," Draco said desperately, opening his eyes. "I've been trying to apologize to him, Granger, I have. But he won't talk to me. I can't get him alone. He's afraid of me now, and I can't even blame him. I think he hates me."

"You were drunk, Malfoy. Harry doesn't hate you, because he knows that you can't help what you do when you're drunk. He doesn't blame you for that, and truthfully neither do I."

Hermione glared at him suddenly. "I *do* blame you for throwing a tantrum and choosing to drink when you knew it was a bad idea. I don't know what the hell you were thinking."

Draco sighed and stood upright again. "I don't know what I was thinking either. I just...I was really upset, and Harry had...well...hurt my feelings, childish as that sounds. I was really hurt, and I was mad at him. Not that that's any excuse," he added hastily. "I acted like an animal at that club and Harry has every right to hate me for it."

Hermione rolled her eyes. "Not *every* right. He should have told you why he suddenly refused to bond with you."

Draco's eyes flew open in shock. "He told you about that?"

"Like I said, open book when he's drunk, that one. He'll tell you *anything*."

"So *why*? What did I do? Why did he suddenly decide he wasn't ready anymore? Does he not want to be my mate after all?" Draco asked, anxiety, fear and hurt coloring his voice.

Hermione shook her head. "All I can say is that it has nothing to do with him not wanting you. Like I said, he adores you beyond all reason. It's not my place to tell you to tell you why he wanted to postpone things. He needs to tell you himself."

Hermione sighed and ran a frustrated hand through her hair in a manner that was, Draco noticed absently, exactly like Harry's. "Look, Malfoy, I'm sure you know that Harry has this God-awful habit of keeping stuff from people. He thinks he's protecting you but really he's just making everything worse by not telling anyone when things go wrong. Probably the Dursley's fault."

"The Dursley's? You mean his muggle relatives?"

"Yeah, who else?" Hermione said, giving him an odd look. "Really, growing up under those circumstances, can you blame Harry for never telling anyone anything?"

Draco felt the beginnings of an oddly suspicious feeling tickling his brain. "What circumstances?"

"You know," Hermione said dismissively. "Everything. The way they tried to squash all the magic out of him. How they lied to him about his parents. The starvation and neglect and letting his cousin beat him up and how his Uncle Vernon smacked him around and how they told him he was a freak his entire life. All that stuff they did that probably qualifies as child abuse. I'm positive it's the reason Harry's so traumatized in his personal relationships. Poor guy, he's even been having nightmares all week about you locking him back up in his cupboard."

Draco simply stared. Hermione's words about Harry's past hit him harder than her hand had earlier. Shock coursed through his system, slowly changing into comprehension, then to horror, and finally, to rage.

"Cupboard?" he asked in a low, dangerous voice.

"Yes, his cupboard. You know, where they made him live before he got his Hogwarts letter." Hermione suddenly paused. "Wait - didn't you know all this already?"

Draco slowly folded his arms over his chest and shook his head 'no.'

Hermione's eyes widened and her lips made a silent "oh" of understanding. "Er...sorry, maybe I wasn't supposed to tell you. But I had thought, what with Harry being your mate and all...." she trailed off.

"Never said a word," Draco said shortly. He was keeping his temper only with a supreme effort of will. "You pointed out he doesn't tell anyone when bad things happen to him. This is a textbook example."

Draco could see Hermione biting her lip nervously. He supposed he might look a bit scary right now, because his eyes were narrowed to slits, his teeth were bared, and he could feel fury beginning to ooze from his every pore.

"You know, this is another thing that I think you need to her from Harry, not me," Hermione said, taking a step backwards. "So, um...I'm just going to go now. Not that I'm scared of you - you know, brave Gryffindor and all that, I just um...yeah. I gotta go."

And with that she turned on her heel and walked off. Walked off, not ran off - but just barely.

"*Fucking...muggles...*"

After Hermione left, it had taken all of Draco's self-control not to batter down the portrait of the Fat Lady and barge into Gryffindor tower and shake Harry within an inch of his life until every last detail about his past came spilling out from between his fraudulent lips.

Instead, he had taken a shower, sitting under the steaming spray of hot water, his body quivering with rage. Harry had suffered. His mate, his beloved mate, had been abused.

And *Harry hadn't told him*.

"Bars on the fucking window...*standard muggle procedure, Draco, keeps the burglars out...*" Draco ground out in an imitation of Harry. Harry had *lied* to him. The bars hadn't been meant to keep anyone out. They'd been meant to keep Harry *in*.

Draco continued to replay conversations with Harry in his mind. "Why do you always wear those big, baggy beat-up clothes, Harry? *Oh, I don't know Draco...here, let me change the subject before you ask too many questions...* Why are you okay with all of this, Harry? *Believe me, Draco, I'm the last person who'd ever turn down a chance to love and be loved...* Why the fuck didn't you *tell* me, Harry?"

Well, Draco knew the truth now. Harry wasn't going to keep it from him any longer. He had Occlumency with Snape and Harry in an hour, and Draco was planning to find out every last thing those muggles ever did.

And after that, he had some serious muggle arse to kick.

"Harry? HARRY! Get up; you've got Occlumency in ten minutes!"

"Huh...wha...oh GOD MY HEAD..."

"No time to whine about your hangover, it's your own fault for drinking. Now get up and get moving. Snape will kill you if you're late."

"But *Hermione...*" Harry whined. She simply yanked the covers off of him in response.

"UP, Harry."

Harry tried to shoot her a dirty look, but it made his head ache too much. Instead, he rolled out of bed and grabbed his glasses. Hermione held out a school robe, and he took it, throwing it on over his pajamas.

He glanced at the clock and swore before running out of Gryffindor Tower, cursing his pounding head.

It was two minutes past 8am, and Snape and Draco were waiting not so patiently for Harry. Draco had just moved to check his watch again when Harry burst through the door.

"Hi, sorry I'm, ungh, late - " Harry was staggering a bit, one hand clamped to what was probably an aching head, if what Hermione had said about Harry going on a drinking binge the night before was true.

"Ten points from Gryffindor, Mr. Potter," Snape said sourly. "Now stand up straight, shut your mouth, and get into position in front of Mr. Malfoy."

Harry winced at Snape's voice and managed to nod once. Draco felt several emotions rise up in him at once - self-loathing and guilt, for what he had done to this beautiful creature in front of him; pity and sympathy for what was obviously one *hell* of a hangover; love and adoration, because he loved Harry, always, no matter what happened between them.

There was also anger; anger that anyone would ever try to hurt his precious mate, and anger that his mate was so self-destructive. His eyes swept over Harry's wretched state - the boy was still in his *pajamas*, for Merlin's sake - and then narrowed.

It wasn't nice, what he was about to do to Harry, but Harry had just proven beyond a shadow of a doubt that he didn't know how to take care of himself properly, and it was going to be up to Draco to make sure that from now on, *someone* was taking good care of Harry Potter.

Draco watched, his wand ready at his side, as Harry stumbled across the room, finally staggering into position across from him.

"Okay, Draco," Snape said smoothly. "Now, what we're going to be practicing today is - "

"*Legilimens!*" Draco shouted, hitting Harry square in the chest with his spell. He purposefully cast it before Harry was expecting it, hoping that in his hung-over state Harry would be weak and unable to fight off an assault on his mind.

"Mr. Malfoy, how dare you..."

Snape's voice faded into oblivion for Draco. He was in Harry's mind, racing through his memories, pushing deeper and deeper into Harry's subconscious, into Harry's past.

He was in Harry's third year...now fighting a basilisk, that was second...oh, a giant chess set that's first year...and then Draco hit a barrier. He pushed with his mind, as hard as he could, and then with a surge of power Draco broke through Harry's defenses and dove straight into his memories.

*Harry looked just as Draco remembered meeting him, a tiny, skinny thing, probably nearly eleven. He was making breakfast, cooking bacon on a stove that was much too high for him. His clothes were falling apart and enormous; the sleeves were rolled up three times just so Harry's hands could be seen. In the background a humongous blonde boy was screaming about thirty-six presents not being enough, and Draco could hear Harry's thoughts, about how on his birthday he would have given anything to have just **one**...*

"In your cupboard, boy, and no meals for a week!" a huge blonde man with a mustache was raging, gripping Harry's arm in a painful vice grip and throwing him into a cupboard underneath a staircase. Harry fell onto a small cot in the darkness, and Draco heard the door slam shut and a lock click into place...

Harry was even smaller now, and running, running as fast as he could, because his cousin and four of his friends were chasing him, and he knew if he was caught that they'd kick him and punch him and he'd have bruises for weeks and no one would ever stop them...

"If my sister hadn't gone and gotten herself killed in a car crash, we never would have been saddled with her little brat," a tall, bony woman was sneering down at a Harry who was maybe seven. "You ungrateful freak, how dare you complain..."

Now Harry was about five, on his hands and knees, scrubbing the kitchen floor. He was nearly done. Out of nowhere his cousin came running in, tracking mud all over the floor. "Dudley!" Harry shouted, but Dudley just laughed meanly and grabbed a cupcake before running out and leaving Harry to clean everything again....

Now five-year old Harry was locked in his cupboard. It was dark and there were things crawling on his arm, and quiet scratching noises in the wall. "I'm not scared," he whispered bravely, clutching his pillow tightly, "I'm not scared..."

And then Harry was a toddler, barely more than a baby, with tufts of jet-black hair sticking off his head in every direction and big green eyes. He was standing in a playpen and crying, and holding out his arms toward his aunt and uncle, begging to be picked up. His aunt and uncle merely sneered at him and then rolled their eyes at each other. "Ungrateful brat," they whispered to each other, turning off the lights and leaving Harry alone, sobbing in loneliness, not understanding why nobody loved him anymore -

And then suddenly Draco was thrown out of Harry's mind. He came back to the present to find himself backed up against the wall by a *much* bigger Harry, whose arms were on his biceps and whose face was inches from his own.

"What are you DOING?" Harry was yelling, glaring at Draco. Draco just looked at him, blinking slightly. He was in complete shock, his mind whirling with the memories that he had just seen.

It faintly registered with Draco that Harry had finally given up pretending that nothing was wrong.

Harry continued to glare at Draco. "What the FUCK is wrong with you? First you try to rape my body, now you have to rape my MIND?"

Harry then released Draco and stormed off, slamming the door to Snape's classroom.

"Mr. Potter? MR. POTTER! Get back here! Twenty points from Gryffindor! Mr. Potter - "

Somewhere in the distance, Draco could hear Snape yelling after Harry, but it all seemed so very far away. He continued to lean against the wall, staring into space.

His mind fixed on one image - baby Harry in the playpen, crying, arms held out to be picked up, just to be loved, and the Dursleys sneering at him, calling him ungrateful, refusing him love...

And then as the fog of shock began to lift, as Draco began to process the memories he had just seen, he became aware of a faint ringing in his ears. And then as his emotions began to coalesce, his shock becoming sheer rage, the ringing began to get louder, until the only thing Draco really knew was that he was angrier than he could ever remember being before in his life.

A faint pink tinge appeared on his cheeks, and his hands slowly clenched into fists.

"How dare you," he whispered to the muggles, as if they could hear them. "How *dare* you."

And then gripping his wand so tightly his knuckles turned white, Draco pushed off from the wall and left Snape's classroom.

There was going to be hell to pay.

The Veela Enigma

Chapter 24: Catharsis

Within minutes of leaving Snape's classroom, Draco had a plan:

Take the Knight Bus to the Dursley's house, and hex those fucking muggles within an inch of their lives.

It was a good plan, Draco thought, as he stormed through the empty corridors of Hogwarts. Draco had toyed with the idea of Apparating first - he could sort of Apparate now. After all, he was of age, so his father had taught him the basics over the Christmas break. He didn't have his license though, and he wasn't all that convinced that he could Apparate from Scotland back down to England without any splinching.

No, the Knight Bus was a much safer option, and he didn't want anything stopping him from arriving at those muggles' house fully intact.

Draco reached his dragon portrait, spat out the password, and stormed inside. He quickly threw on a warm cashmere jumper over the long-sleeved shirt he was wearing and grabbed his boots from the closet. It was January in Scotland, and he still had to walk to Hogsmeade in order to catch the bus. He laced up the boots, pulled on the hat Harry had given him for his birthday, and then snatched up his weather-proof cloak from its spot on his chair.

He was in the processing of heading out the portrait, pulling on the cloak as he went, when he suddenly cursed loudly enough to make the dragon in his portrait snort fire in shock.

He had no idea where the Dursley's lived.

Harry stood under the hot spray of the shower in Gryffindor tower, trying to let the water wash away his anger.

It wasn't working.

Just who the hell did Draco think he was? What made him think that he had the right to pry into Harry's deepest, darkest memories?

Ah, but if you had been honest with him all along, he wouldn't have had to pry, said the little voice of reason that lived in Harry's head.

"It was none of his business!" Harry practically snarled back, clenching his fists. "I would have told him eventually."

Sure you would have. The way you tell Ron and Hermione everything, right?

Harry hesitated. His best friends had repeatedly fought with him over keeping secrets from them.

"I don't have to tell people everything," Harry thought to himself defiantly. "I have the right to keep secrets if I want to."

The secrets you keep hurt you, and they hurt other people.

Harry shook the voice off angrily and reached for the shampoo. Some part of his mind decided this would be a great time to remember when he and Draco had showered together and he had washed Draco's hair. The look of bliss on Draco's face, whenever Harry's hands tangled in that soft, silky hair -

Harry grit his teeth and began washing his own hair, much more roughly than he had done to Draco.

"Fuck Draco," he thought, rising off. "I can't fucking trust him at all anymore." He reached for the conditioner that Draco had bought for him, sliding the slippery substance through his short, wet locks.

The same corner of his mind that reminded him of washing Draco's hair was now seriously contemplating the value of conditioner as a potential lubricant. It was slippery, not sudsy, and smelled good, but it did rinse away rather easily and then Draco might be left in an uncomfortable position and -

"Argh!" Harry shouted in frustration, driving his fist against the wall. Then he winced. "Fuck, that hurt," he said, bringing his knuckles up to his mouth.

Mental note. Add 'porcelain' to the list of things you shouldn't hit. Right after stone walls.

Harry took a deep, calming breath and reached for the scented bodywash that had replaced his old bar of soap - another purchase of Draco's.

"I don't want you drying out your skin," the veela had said in his imperialist way. "I insist you use something with moisturizing elements in this cold climate."

Harry shook his head. So very textbook gay, sometimes. The thought made his heart clench painfully.

"Damn it, Draco, why do you keep doing these things to me?" Harry said, leaning forward to rest his head against the tiles of the shower and letting the hot water beat down on his shoulders. His winced slightly as the hard pulse of water came in contact with the fading bruise on his shoulders. It was fading, but it still hurt.

Harry hadn't wanted to accept it before, but Draco's latest actions were proving to him that Draco probably didn't really love him. He wasn't drunk during Occlumency; there was no excuse for what he did. Harry couldn't even find a reason behind it.

He sighed and closed his eyes. This was it. He had thought Draco was the one, had practically worshipped the blonde who had suddenly began to shower love and affection on Harry. Snape had said that life with a veela wasn't a fairy-tale, but it had felt like one to Harry. Sure they had problems, but at the end of the day they had always kissed and made-up, and while Draco had been a danger to everyone else, he had loved Harry, and Harry would have died to keep that love.

But now...what Harry had thought was love was merely attraction to magic. Draco didn't love him anymore than any other crazed fan of the Boy Who Lived.

He pushed up from the wall and stood under the spray, letting it rinse the bodywash away. So much for fairy-tales and happy endings.

"His address has got to be on his student records...maybe Dumbledore's office...no, I'd never get in there, the old man's too sneaky...they'd know at the Ministry of Magic...maybe Dad could get the information...but then the Dark Lord could get it from Dad's mind, so that's no good..."

Draco paced back and forth in his bedroom, thinking hard, thinking...thinking...thinking...

And then a memory from Harry's mind came to him - the Weasley's floating in a car outside of Harry's window.

Harry's window...at Harry's muggle relative's house.

Draco smiled. Weasley knew Harry's address. Grabbing his cloak once more, he set off to find Ron Weasley.

"Harry? Can I talk to you?"

Harry, who was just on his way out the door of Gryffindor Tower, turned back around reluctantly.

"I don't really feel like talking, Hermione."

"I know, but I need to tell you a couple things," Hermione said, catching up to him at the door. "Come on, you don't have to talk. You can just listen if you want." And with that she followed him out the portrait.

They made their way silently up to the Astronomy Tower. Once there, they took up positions on the far side of the room by the largest window, both leaning against the wall and watching the Ravenclaw Quidditch team practice on the pitch below.

"I was crazy about her for two years, you know," Harry suddenly said softly. Hermione started, then realized that Cho was on the field, still playing seeker for Ravenclaw.

"I know," she said back simply, waiting to see where Harry would take this.

Harry's eyes followed the broomsticks of the players on the field below. "When we finally went out, I thought she was ridiculously complicated. Always crying or trying to make me jealous, or doing things I didn't understand. But now...that all seems so simple."

Hermione felt a moment of panic. Harry had a resigned look in his eyes that he hadn't had all week. It was almost as if he'd given up on Draco...but no...he wouldn't...would he?

A flash of realization hit Hermione. "Harry, did something happen in Occlumency this morning?"

She didn't miss Harry's wince at her words, but her friend just shook his head.

"No, course not," he said, not taking his eyes off the field.

Anger began to bubble up faintly in Hermione. "Nothing?"

"That's right," Harry replied.

"Just like nothing happened at the muggle club last weekend when Malfoy got drunk and tried to rape you?" she snapped.

Harry whirled around and stared at Hermione in shock. "Wha...how..." He swallowed loudly. "What are you talking about?" he said, in a would-be nonchalant voice now.

"Don't play games with me, Harry Potter," Hermione growled. "You were drunk last night. You know you're an open book when you're drunk. You told Ron and me everything."

Harry paled. "*Everything?*"

"Yes," Hermione replied, narrowing her eyes. "And what the hell were you thinking, keeping it all to yourself in the first place? God damn it, Harry, we're supposed to be your best friends!"

"It wasn't a big deal, all right?" Harry spat back.

"Wasn't a big deal?" Hermione asked incredulously. "Harry, he *almost raped you*. That is a *huge* deal. You must have been so upset and confused and miserable, and you didn't tell anyone?"

Harry shrugged. "You guys have other things to worry about," he said, turning back to look out the window.

"Yeah, like what's going on between our best friend and his boyfriend. You think we don't notice when things are wrong?" Hermione grabbed Harry's shoulder and spun Harry around to face her. "Listen to me, Harry. Ron and I love you. I know we don't usually say it in so many words, but we do. We love you like family, and what hurts you hurts us. I know the Dursley's really screwed you up and made you think that no one will ever love you, but that *isn't true*. We love you, Harry. I promise."

Harry just stared at her for a moment and bit his lip. Finally, he said in a shaky voice. "The Dursley's don't have anything to do with this."

"Liar," Hermione said back. "They have everything to do with this." She paused and looked at Harry intently. "Harry, what happened this morning? *Please* don't say 'nothing;' please *tell* me. Don't make me get you drunk to find out what's wrong."

"You really want to know?" Harry asked, sounding incredulous. Hermione nodded. Harry took a deep breath. "Fine. Draco used his Occlumency skills to penetrate my mind. He took advantage of the fact that I was hung-over and broke through all my barriers until he found all my memories about living with the Dursleys."

"Oh my God," Hermione said, looking shocked.

"I know. I was so pissed off. You just don't *do* that. You don't rape someone's mind like that." Harry ran his hand through his hair in a frustrated motion and turned back to stare out the window. "He didn't even know anything about my time living with the Dursleys. I don't know what the hell possessed him to dig through my memories like that."

Hermione fidgeted for a moment. "Well...I...uh...may have let a couple things slip this morning."

Harry slowly turned to look Hermione in the eyes. "You told Draco about the Dursleys?" he asked, voice hoarse.

"I didn't mean to!" Hermione burst out. "I figured he already knew. I figured you would have told him. Silly me, knowing that you *never bloody tell anybody anything*."

"You told *Draco* about the Dursleys?"

"Harry, I didn't say anything he shouldn't have already known! For God's sake, you were planning to bond with him for life and you hadn't told him you had an abusive childhood?"

Harry rubbed the back of his neck uncomfortably. "It wasn't really *abusive*..."

"It was," Hermione said angrily. "Between the neglect and the starvation and the cupboard - Christ, Harry, they locked you in a cupboard! THAT is child abuse, however you try to rationalize it. And you should have seen the look on Draco's face when I let that slip. I ran away, Harry, he was that scary."

Harry blinked a couple times. "He was angry?"

"Furious," Hermione confirmed. "And I know you're pissed at him for invading your mind, but realize that he was completely enraged when he learned how the Dursley's treated you. He knew you'd probably never tell him the truth and he needed to know what had happened to you. He needs to protect you, Harry. It's in his blood. You can't fault him for wanting to take care of you, and pulling the memories from your mind was probably the only way he could think of to do that."

"But it was my *mind*," Harry said, leaning back against the wall and squeezing his eyes shut. "He had no *right*."

"What would you have done? Say you found out Draco had been abused by his family growing up."

Harry looked up sharply. "What?"

Hermione fought back a smile. Harry might want to pretend that he was over Draco, but he still loved the blonde. That much was very clear. "*Hypothetically*, Harry. I highly doubt Draco was even scolded much as a child, considering the way Malfoy Senior dotes on him. But let's say he was abused. What would you do?"

Harry's eyes narrowed. "I'd find whoever had been abusing him and kick the shit out of them."

"Exactly. But suppose he never told you? Suppose he lied about it and tried to cover it up. Would you still try to find out what had happened?"

"Of course," Harry said instantly. "I'd do whatever I had to do. I could never let anyone get away with hurting him." Then he made a small noise of understanding. "Oh. That's what Draco just did to me, isn't it?"

Hermione nodded. "Remember when he first came to you, thinking he was under a love spell? He didn't want to tell you, because he loved you and wanted you to fall in love with him, but he was willing to because he didn't want you to be hurt in the long run if he stopped loving you. He was trying to protect you, even though it hurt you at the time."

Harry didn't answer, so Hermione pressed on. "He loves you. He wants to take care of you. And he's made a lot of mistakes and he has a lot of apologizing to do, but if you give him the chance, he wants to prove how sorry he is. Remember Harry, you're his *mate*. You'll always be his mate. And maybe you can fall out of love with Draco, but he can never fall out of love with you."

Harry looked at Hermione, then back down at the Quidditch pitch. Then he looked back at Hermione, and she had to suppress a smile.

For the first time in a week, the tension in Harry's shoulders was gone.

"Hey Weasley? Could I possibly have a moment of your time?"

It had taken most of the morning, but Draco had finally tracked Ron down in a large group of Gryffindors on his way up to Gryffindor Tower.

Ron sneered at him. "I don't think so," he said coldly, and turned away to walk up the stairs with Seamus, Dean and Neville.

Draco was ready for that. In a heartbeat he had his veela powers on. "Please, Weasley? Just one little moment?"

All four Gryffindors just stared at Draco for a moment. Then Seamus, Dean and Neville began spouting nonsense at Draco about their immense fortunes and amazing bedroom skills. To Draco's immense surprise, Ron didn't join in.

It seemed to cost him a huge effort of will, but Ron was keeping his mind intact. "Nice try," he said through gritted teeth. "But I've been doing my reading."

"You can defend yourself against my powers now?" Draco asked, impressed despite himself.

"Yes. And now if I were you I'd turn off those powers and get lost, before I rearrange your stupid ferrety face for hurting Harry."

Draco winced. Ron probably wasn't quite as strong as Draco was but he was big, and Draco preferred not to take chances with his pretty face. He reluctantly shut off his powers.

"Alright Weasley, you win, my powers are off," he said, mind racing. He needed that address from Ron. Maybe Ron could fight off his powers if Draco was just close by, but could the red-head resist it if he touched him?

Worth a try. "Look, I'm really sorry about trying to manipulate you like that. No hard feelings?" he said, sticking out his hand. Ron looked at it suspiciously, but with true Gryffindor guilelessness he stuck out his own in response.

The instant their hands connected, Draco turned his powers on again. Dean, Seamus and Neville instantly went back to their babbling while Ron gasped loudly.

"Now Weasley, I just have a quick question for you, alright?" Draco said pleasantly. Ron nodded dumbly, eyes trained on their clasped hands.

"Ron," he said.

"I'm sorry?" Draco asked.

"Call me Ron."

"Of course. Whatever you want," Draco said sweetly. It was rather disgusting, touching someone other than his mate in a manner that he knew felt highly sexual, but he had no other choice. "Ron, could you tell me Harry's muggle relative's address?"

"Harry's..."

"His address when he stays with the Dursley's. I know you know it. It would make me very happy if you told me."

"Um...I can't remember..." Ron said, eyes still glued to where his hand and Draco's were connected. Draco sighed.

"Try. For me?" he asked, placing his other hand on top of their joined hands. Fighting back a shudder, he began to stroke the skin on the top of Ron's hand, tracing small circles. "You like how this feels?"

"Uh-huh," Ron replied, taking a quick breath.

"Want me to keep touching you?"

"Yes...Merlin yes..."

"Then tell me Harry's address and I promise to touch you *anywhere you want.*" Draco grimaced inwardly. This was *revolting*.

Ron didn't seem to find it revolting, however. In fact, he looked rather excited. "It's...it's 4...Pri-Privet Drive, I think..." he stammered, his breath coming in heavy pants.

"Yes?" Draco said, increasing the intensity of his attack by sliding his fingers under the hem of Ron's jumper and running his fingers up and down the red-head's forearm. "Keep going, Ron, and I'll keep touching you."

"Mmm, yes...don't stop...it's 4 Privet Drive...Little...mmmm...Little Whinging...*Surrey!*" Ron finished triumphantly, giving Draco a lustful, expectant look. Draco smiled.

"Brilliant," he said softly. Dropping Ron's hand, he turned on his heel and walked off as quickly as he could. He didn't have time to deal with Ron's anger when the red-head came back to his senses.

After all, he had a bus to catch.

The day passed fairly uneventfully for Harry. His conversation with Hermione had given him loads to think about and he had spent the day milling about the castle, trying to avoid his friends and Draco.

He was still mad at Draco, but some small part of him had acknowledged that what Draco had done in Occlumency that morning hadn't been intended to hurt Harry, but to protect him. And if there was one thing Harry could sympathize with, it was wanting to protect the ones you love.

By the time dinner rolled around, Harry had found a tiny bit of inner peace. He was still mad, but he thought maybe he could try talking to Draco, just to see how things went.

Cheered by the thought, Harry walked into the Great Hall and joined Hermione at the Gryffindor table.

"And where have you been all day?"

"Out thinking."

"Ah." Hermione looked at him appraisingly. "You look a little better."

"I feel a little better, thanks," Harry responded, reaching for a bowl of mashed potatoes. At that moment, Ron burst through the doors and stomped over to the Gryffindor table.

He dropped into the seat next to Hermione, sent Harry a very pointed glare, and then reached for the roast chicken.

"What? What'd I do?" Harry asked, confused.

"Your stupid veela," was Ron's only reply.

"Oh." Harry and Hermione exchanged a look. "Um...what did Draco do?"

"He wanted to talk to me, and I said no. So then he turned his bloody powers on," Ron informed Harry, angrily biting into a chicken leg. "And when I wath able to rethitht him, he *touched* me tho it would thtill work."

"*What?*" Harry gasped. "He's not supposed to do that! After last time, I told him not to do it anymore." Now Harry was getting pissed off all over again. He had just reached an understanding about Draco's behavior, and now *this*?

Ron swallowed. "Yeah, well, he did it again. Felt up my whole bleeding arm until I told him everything he wanted to know. He *seduced* me into it! Conniving, manipulative little brat," Ron spat with feeling.

"What exactly did he want to know?" asked Hermione, in her orderly, methodical way.

"Harry's address back home with the Dursleys. Merlin knows why he wanted that. And he just kept *touching* me until I told him and then he ran off and - hey, why do both of you look so deathly pale all of a sudden? Wait, Harry, where are you going? Harry? *Harry!*"

"Oh my God, he's going to kill them, I have to stop him."

Those were Harry's main thoughts as he bolted from the Great Hall. He was also doing some quick mental calculations. Draco had found out right around lunch time. That was about six hours ago. He couldn't Apparate all that well, so he probably took the Knight Bus. Six hours was about as long as it took to get from Hogsmeade to London on the bus...

Harry pushed through the mobs of students and ran down an empty corridor. The instant he was sure he was alone, he wrapped his right hand around the silver bracelet on his wrist, and quickly shouted "*Portus veela!*"

The next instant he felt that familiar tug behind his navel, and he was flying through space. Shadows and colors were streaking by him until he finally stopped abruptly. Harry fell to his knees as his body stopped moving and glanced around him.

He was in the Dursley's living room.

Or what was left of it, anyway. The furniture had been blasted to pieces, the pictures of Dudley and the Dursley parents had been shattered, and the plaster was falling off the ceiling. Harry could only gape for a moment before he heard an angry voice in the kitchen.

"I should kill you all for treating him like that," the voice hissed. It was Draco. Harry sprang to his feet and ran to the doorway, only to freeze at the sight before him.

Aunt Petunia's normally spotless kitchen was spattered with broken glass and china. The cabinet doors (the few that were left) hung precariously on their hinges. The fridge had been over turned and the food from inside was now stuck to the walls or spilled on the ground. In one tiled corner the three Dursleys were huddled together in fear.

Standing over them, wand drawn, was Draco, looking to Harry like some kind of wrathful avenging angel.

"You three are not worthy of kissing the ground upon which Harry walks," Draco continued to hiss. "You are without a doubt, the lowest form of life I have ever seen, and you are going to suffer for hurting my mate."

It was the sound that Dudley made just then when he let out a particularly pitiful whimper and tried to scoot further behind Aunt Petunia's bony frame that jolted Harry out of his daze and spurred him to action.

"Draco," Harry said softly. Draco whirled around.

"You," he said shortly, narrowing his eyes, "are not going to stop me from giving these filthy muggles what they deserve."

Harry glanced over Draco's shoulder to the shaking forms of the Dursleys. He hesitated. They probably did deserve whatever horror Draco wanted to unleash on them. But Harry couldn't let Draco do it. Foul as they were, they were the only family he had left and despite what they had done to him, he would show them mercy.

"Don't hurt them, Draco."

Draco set his jaw. "Harry, it's wonderful that you want to be all righteous and noble, it really is," he said briskly. "But - and I mean this in the nicest possible way - *fuck off*."

And he turned away from Harry, his wand pointed straight at the three cowering Dursleys on the floor. Harry took a deep breath.

"I said *don't hurt them*."

Draco went rigid. Harry could see his shoulders heaving up and down, and could see his wand arm shaking as Draco tried to fight the power of the Voice.

But it was no use, and after a couple moments' struggle, Draco's arm fell harmlessly to his side.

The blonde turned back around, crossing his arms over his chest. He glared at Harry. "I fucking hate it when you do that, Potter."

"I know you do," Harry replied quietly, but he didn't apologize. After a glaring a second longer at Harry, Draco twisted back around.

"You muggles should be thanking your fucking lucky stars that I'm not going to kill you," he snarled. "You all deserve to rot in hell."

With that he strode out of the kitchen, past Harry, into the living room.

"So what now?" he said, icy eyes fixed on Harry. "Do you have another cache of lies waiting for me about how you're perfectly fine or are you ready to talk?" He took a step towards Harry. "Or are you still too scared of me?"

Harry bristled slightly at Draco's tone. "I was never scared of you," he retorted.

"Liar," Draco said softly, taking a step another closer to Harry. Harry flinched before he could help it.

Draco raised his eyebrows. "You are scared. You're terrified. You think I'm going to hurt you."

"Well, are you?" Harry burst out defiantly, fighting against every impulse in his body that wanted him to run away.

Draco took one more step towards him. He was almost close enough to touch Harry. "No," he whispered, meeting Harry's eyes. "I'd rather die than ever hurt you again."

Harry let out a breath he hadn't realized he was holding. "We should talk," he said, now avoiding the intensity of Draco's gaze. "But not here. There's a park a little ways from here, it should be empty."

Draco gave a short nod, and started to follow Harry out the door. Suddenly, he froze. Confused, Harry turned around.

Draco was staring at the cupboard beneath the stairs.

"Draco," Harry said softly, in what he hoped was a soothing voice. "It's okay. Please. Don't worry about it."

Draco raised his head to meet Harry's eyes. Harry was taken aback by the sheer fury in their silvery depths.

"It's okay?" he repeated in a soft, dangerous voice. "Don't worry about it?"

"That's right," Harry responded, not understanding why he was suddenly so nervous. "It's not a big deal. It's nothing."

"*Nothing?*" Draco's eyes narrowed. "*Nothing?*" He was practically snarling. "That's the last time you're going to fucking lie to me, Potter," he spat, and then whipped out his wand.

"*Reducto!*" he shouted, and a jet of light burst from the end of his wand and connected with the door of the cupboard. The result was instantaneous; the cupboard exploded. Harry had to duck behind the hat stand as the wooden staircase shattered into a million pieces from the force of Draco's spell.

"We're going," the veela growled, moving towards the door. Harry barely had time to register that they were leaving three shell-shocked Dursleys in the kitchen and the Dursley's house in complete ruins before Draco had grabbed his arm and pulled him through the door.

"Take me to this park," he said. The anger was flowing off him in waves. The boys were silent as Harry took Draco the few blocks to the little park he had visited so many times in his childhood.

They slogged through the patchy slush that dotted the playground to the copse of trees at the far end of the park. Harry fought off a shiver. It was dark out, and cold and damp. He had bolted from Hogwart's without any thought in his mind except to get to Draco, and all he was wearing was an oversized long-sleeved t-shirt that used to belong to Dudley, faded jeans and trainers. No cloak.

They ducked into the cover of the trees and then Draco cast a quick silencing spell around them. It was probably unnecessary, seeing as no one else was out on this dark, miserable winter day, but now there was no chance of them being overheard.

Draco then whirled on Harry, his features lit up by the waxing moon and the street light just on the other side of the trees.

"You *lied* to me," Draco said. His voice was soft and dangerous.

Harry threw up his hands. "That's the third time you've said that to me, and I still don't know what you're talking about."

"You *lied* to me," Draco repeated, crossing his arms over his chest. "You never said a word about your childhood. You led me to believe it was fine and dandy, rather than telling me the truth - that you were abused and starved and neglected."

Harry rolled his eyes. "It wasn't as bad as all that," he said defensively. "Maybe I just don't feel like being a drama queen about it."

The moment the words left his mouth Harry realized they were *not* the smartest words he could have chosen.

"I see," Draco said, still in that soft, dangerous voice. "You're going to keep lying to me. Well, sorry Potter, but I don't work that way."

He took a step towards Harry, who took a nervous step backwards.

"I won't let you lie anymore," Draco breathed. "You're my mate and my mate doesn't lie to me. You're going to tell me the truth about your childhood."

Harry shook his head. "There's nothing left to tell, you saw it all when you decided you were going for a stroll in my memories," he spat, unable to keep the bitterness out of voice.

Draco merely raised an eyebrow. "Are you mad at me for that?"

"Of course," Harry seethed, wishing he didn't feel quite so vulnerable.

"Really? Why don't you tell me how mad you are, then," Draco said, taking another step forward.

"I..." Harry hesitated. "Well, maybe mad isn't the right word..."

"Ah," Draco said. He took another step. "You're going to lie again."

With every measured step that Draco took forward, Harry took one back.

"Stop it, Draco," he said, fear rising up in him.

"Stop what, Harry?" Draco said, still walking purposely forward. Harry scrambled backwards, until to his horror he felt a hard tree trunk behind his back. He could go no further.

And still Draco came at him. "Am I scaring you, Harry?"

"YES, damn it," Harry said, squeezing his eyes shut.

"Why?" Draco was nearly on top of him now. "Tell me why, Harry. Stop pretending. Stop feeding me lies. If you're mad at me, tell me."

"Draco..." Harry said helplessly. He couldn't do this, Draco was asking too much, he didn't want to talk.

"Tell me," Draco commanded. "Stop keeping it all inside. No more secrets, Harry. I want to know everything."

"Why?" Harry asked, still keeping his eyes tightly closed. The tree behind him wouldn't budge, no matter how hard Harry pressed into it to try and get away. He couldn't look at Draco, couldn't bear it. He was faintly aware that his body was shaking with fear and cold.

"I want to know," Draco said softly, so close now that Harry felt his breath on his face, "because I love you."

It was too much.

Harry's knees gave out, and he slid down the scaly trunk of the tree until he hit the ground. He buried his head in his knees and wrapped his arms tightly around his legs, drawing himself into a ball.

"Don't say that," he whispered, but Draco heard him.

"Why not?" the blonde asked, and Harry could feel him kneeling down next to him.

"Because it isn't true." Harry could hear the heartbreak in his own voice, and he could feel Draco's body tense in surprise next to him.

"How can you say that?" Draco whispered incredulously. "There's never been anything more true in all the years the world has existed."

"Because I heard you," Harry whispered back. He couldn't keep it a secret any longer. He was too tired and too cold now, the wet ground seeping in through his jeans, shivers wracking his body. "I heard you talking to your dad. At Grimmauld place. He told you that you're attracted to me because I'm related to Godric Gryffindor."

Harry could feel the tears beginning to well up in his eyes, and kept his face hidden. "And he's right, you know," he continued. "I read up on it. You're attracted to my powerful levels of magic. That's it. You don't really love me, you love the Boy Who Lived."

Draco was silent for a moment, then spoke softly. "That's why you didn't want to bond."

Harry nodded, but remained silent, unwilling to lift his head and look at Draco.

"Oh Harry," Draco sighed, and it was so heartfelt that Harry raised his head. He saw Draco gazing at him with an expression of utter tenderness. "You've never been more wrong."

Harry blinked in surprise; a mistake, as it caused a tear to escape from his eye. He wiped it away angrily before Draco could see it. "What are you talking about?"

"First off, magic levels are only one very small part of why veela choose the mates they do. But for the sake of argument, let's say it was the only reason." Draco cocked his head to one side. "So what? What on earth would make you think that has anything to do with the reasons I love you now?"

Harry furrowed his brow. "Well, why else would you want me?"

Draco's expression became a little sad. "My poor baby," he said, using Harry's own pet name for Draco. "Why can't you believe that anyone could really love you?"

Harry wanted to protest that, but a particularly hard shiver hit him, and he passed up speaking to clutch his arms tighter around his body. Draco's eyes suddenly swept over his body, and Harry winced. He knew what was coming next.

"Where's your cloak, Harry?"

"Hogwarts," he replied dully. Draco made an impatient clucking noise and reached up to the fastenings of his own cloak.

"Stupid Gryffindor," he said, rather affectionately. The next instant he was tugging off his own cloak. Harry immediately protested.

"Draco, no, don't give me your cloak, you'll freeze," he said desperately. Draco gave him a withering look.

"Veela, remember?" he said, pointing to himself. "I'll be fine. I've at least got a jumper on under here, and boots. You, on the other hand..." He made a disgusted noise. "I won't scold you now. But later, you're in for it."

Harry was suddenly enveloped in warmth as Draco draped the cloak over his shoulders and pulled it closed in the front.

"Better?" Draco asked quietly.

"Yes, thanks," Harry replied shyly.

"Good. Now about this 'you don't really love me' business," he said, fixing Harry with a stern look. "That's rubbish, Potter. I love you. I adore you. And it has nothing to do with your magic."

"You can't fight it, Draco," Harry said, in a resigned tone of voice, leaning back against the tree and closing his eyes. "All the books I read said that's while it's not the only thing, it's still one of the main things that veela look for in a mate."

"Irrelevant," Draco said with a dramatic wave of his hand. "Listen, remember when we were first together, and I asked you why you were okay with everything? Do you remember what you said?"

Harry nodded, pulling the marvelously warm cloak a little more tightly closed. "I said I was the last person who'd turn down a chance to love and be loved."

"Exactly. So should I be upset right now? Is that the only reason you love me? Because I'm a veela who will offer you, someone who'd never had love before, a lifetime of undying adoration and devotion?"

Harry's mouth dropped in shock. "*What?* No! Of course not! Maybe initially I was willing to give the whole thing a go because I was really desperate for love, but now I love you for so many other reasons it would take me days to list them all!"

"Exactly," Draco said softly. "So even if your heritage *was* part of the reason I chose you for a mate, it has nothing to do with why I love you now. Don't you see? You could be a squib for all I care. You'd still be perfect in my eyes, and I'd still love you till my dying breath."

Draco hoped against hope that Harry would believe him, that Harry would understand. It broke his heart that Harry felt so unworthy of being loved that one little overheard conversation could make him doubt their relationship. He cursed the stupid muggles again for what they'd done.

He still wanted to make them suffer, but unfortunately Harry's command had been quite clear: *Don't hurt them, Draco.* Stupid, noble Gryffindor. Still, there were ways around that...

But that wasn't what was important right now. What was important was Harry, and the pain and confusion that Draco could read so clearly in his eyes.

"Harry, my love, how could you ever think I didn't love you?" he said, resisting the urge to brush Harry's fringe off his face. They hadn't touched in a week, and Draco was scared that if he initiated the connection, Harry would bolt.

Harry made a non-committal sort of shrug, refusing to speak. Draco sighed and took a shot in the dark.

"Do you think you don't deserve to be loved?" Draco asked.

By the way Harry suddenly tensed, Draco knew he'd hit on the root of the problem.

"You do, don't you?" he whispered, his words becoming mist as they evaporated in the cold air. "Harry," he said softly. "They were wrong about you. You do deserve to be loved, and you are. I love you."

Harry raised his head, and Draco was startled to see the tears in his eyes.

"If you love me, why did you hurt me?"

Harry's whisper was so quiet it was almost silent, but Draco heard it as loudly as if Harry had shouted it.

And in an instant all of Draco's anger and bravado vanished, and all that was left was a frightened veela who had accidentally hurt his mate.

"Oh Harry, I'm so sorry, so very, very sorry." The words flowed from Draco's lips unbidden, an apology wrenched from the very depths of his soul. "You have no idea how sorry I am. I hate myself for what I did. I love you so much, so much, and I don't know if my promises still mean anything to you but I promise, I *swear*, that I am never going to drink again because I hurt you, and oh God, I don't deserve to live after hurting you the way I did. I'm never going to hurt you again, Harry love, never. I love you. I'm sorry, I'm so sorry."

Now that he finally had the chance, Draco wasn't sure he'd ever be able to stop apologizing. Tears brimmed in his eyes and then spilled down his cheeks as the words brimmed in his throat and spilled from his lips. Desperate sorrow and misery wracked his heart, and he kept his head down, unable to look his mate in the face. The words continued to stream out of him, promises of love, unspeakable depths of self-loathing, and an apology repeated over and over until it became a mantra:

"I'm sorry, Harry. I'm so sorry, so sorry, so very, very very sorry - "

And then suddenly Draco was nearly knocked to the ground from the force of Harry crashing into him.

"It's okay, Draco," Harry whispered. His voice was trembling and his shoulders were shaking. His hands were clutching at Draco's jumper and his face was buried into the soft cashmere that covered Draco's chest.

"I was so mad at you, I didn't understand," Harry was babbling. "I was so confused, and so hurt, and I thought you didn't love me anymore, or that you'd never loved me in the first place."

Harry took in a shuddery breath, and Draco realized that Harry was shaking because he was *crying*, crying as if his very heart was broken. Instantly Draco's arms came up and encircled Harry, and he began to rub Harry's back soothingly.

"It's okay, love," Draco said softly, cradling Harry against his chest. "It's okay."

"I was so hurt. I thought you didn't love me, and I was so sad and lonely..."

"I know, my love, I know, but it's okay. I'm yours, you know, and I'll always be yours..."

"I'm tired of being alone, Draco. I'm always alone. I don't want to be alone anymore."

"Don't worry, you won't be. You'll never be alone again. I won't allow it." Draco placed a soft kiss on Harry's hair to punctuate his statement.

Harry continued to clutch at Draco desperately. "If you want to know about me, I'll tell you." His voice wasn't more than a shuddery sob. "I'll tell you whatever you want to know. I'll tell you everything."

"I want to know, love."

Harry took another deep shuddery breath, and then it all came out. Ten years of neglect and loneliness and living unwanted in a cupboard. Ten years of torment and resentment and starvation.

Then an introduction into the wizarding world and his sudden fame, and then six years of celebrity, of crazy fans and vicious lies and how through it all, all he wanted was to be normal and loved.

And then how he had found Draco, and how the veela had seemed like something from a fairy-tale. How much Harry had loved him, and how desperately he had needed him. And then how much it had hurt, when he had believed that love to be a lie, and when Draco had assaulted him in the club, the betrayal he'd felt.

And through it all Draco held him tight and let him speak, let him pour out fifteen years of pain and loneliness into his jumper. He didn't say a word beyond muffled apologies, just continued to hold Harry close, to rub his back and kiss his head and offer Harry every ounce of love and affection he had.

And so after their week of hell, the veela and his mate finally made up. And in the cold darkness of Little Whinging, just a few blocks from where Harry had spent his wretched childhood, Harry was showered with affection and love and for the first time truly believed that he deserved it.

Chapter Warnings: Make-up sex! WOOT! (Please note that this chapter takes the story to an NC-17 rating)

The Veela Enigma

Chapter 25: Oh What a Night

Harry didn't know how long they stayed together in the cold, under the odd mixture of the pale winter moonlight and the golden light of the street lamp. Even after he'd stopped talking he'd kept his head hidden against the extraordinarily soft jumper Draco was wearing, and Draco seemed content to let him do whatever he wanted, though his hands never stopped rubbing Harry's back.

Finally, Harry took a shuddery breath and moved back slightly from Draco's chest.

"Wow," he said, wiping at his eyes. "Sorry about that. Don't know what came over me."

"Shut up, Potter," Draco said, leaning in and pressing a kiss to Harry's forehead. "We should have had this conversation ages ago."

Harry sniffed a little, looking sheepish. "I think I ruined your jumper," he said, looking at the large wet spot on Draco's chest a bit self-consciously.

"I don't give a fuck about the jumper," Draco said seriously. He ran his hand up Harry's back to tangle it in the thick black locks at the base of Harry's neck. "How do you feel?"

Harry looked at him. Draco's eyes were shining with concern, his hands were still cradling Harry, and his voice was soft and gentle. Harry didn't think anyone had ever looked at him with so much love before in his life.

"I feel better," Harry said softly.

And then he kissed Draco.

Draco's eyes flew open in shock when Harry's lips met his. He hadn't expected this. Not at all. He would have been thrilled just to have the chance to touch his mate again. That would have more than satisfied him.

But Harry's lips were now pressed insistently against his own, and Draco's initial shock quickly gave way to sheer pleasure. It had been an entire week since they had even touched each other, and three weeks of Christmas Holiday spent apart before that.

It felt so good to kiss Harry it almost hurt.

"Harry," Draco nearly whimpered, both hands coming up to clutch at Harry's face. Harry responded by moving his hands into Draco's hair and raking his fingers through the silky strands. Draco nearly swooned.

"Ohgod, that's so...mmmm..." Draco couldn't even articulate words as Harry's hands continued their assault, combing through the soft blonde hair, letting his fingernails trail ever so gently against Draco's scalp. Instead, Draco settled for shudders of pleasure under Harry's touch.

"I missed you," Harry said softly, against Draco's mouth. Their tongues were intertwined now as both boys kissed almost hesitantly. It was magical, kissing Harry in that strange muggle park under the strange yellow glow. The cold swirled around them but Draco didn't notice. His entire body was on fire.

Draco's veela powers began to slip out of his control at that moment, but he clamped down on them, letting them simmer just below the surface. He wasn't ready to give up complete control yet. Harry seemed to understand, and broke the kiss to give Draco a moment to compose himself.

They stared at each other briefly, the surrealness of the moment engulfing them, and then Harry suddenly leaned forward and gave Draco a short, hard kiss on the mouth.

"Let's do it," he said, and Draco stared at him.

"Do...what exactly?"

"Bond."

"BOND? Here? *Now?*"

"I don't want to wait anymore," Harry said meaningfully. "Unless...unless you don't want to?"

"No, no, I want to, *believe me*, I want to," Draco said quickly. "But...are you sure?"

"Completely," Harry answered. He glanced around the copse of trees, looking slightly nervous. Then he took a deep breath and started to move past Draco.

"Where are you going?" Draco asked.

"Well, if we're going to shag I ought to lie on my back, right?"

"What?" Draco said, shocked. "No, I don't think so. You're topping, Harry."

"*What?*" Harry said back, obviously just as shocked. "But...I thought you wanted to top."

Draco shook his head. "No, I think you should top."

"But..." Harry looked a little lost. "But you're the veela. You should top first."

"Yeah, but you're my *mate*. You should top me first."

Harry folded his arms over his chest. "You're older, and stronger. You top."

"You're taller. *You* top."

"You're the one with the veela powers."

"You're the one who can control what I do."

Harry narrowed his eyes. "You're more possessive. That ought to make you the top."

"You *punish* me when I'm too possessive, which *obviously* makes you the top."

"Draco, I *can't* top you," Harry said earnestly. "It hurts so much, and I can't bear to hurt you like that, and..." Harry trailed off at the horrified look on Draco's face.

"I really hurt you badly that night, didn't I?" Draco said, his voice shaky. He closed his eyes. "How can you possibly still want to be with me? I'm a monster." His voice was filled with guilt and self-loathing.

"No, you're not," Harry snapped back. Draco looked up in shock. "You were drunk, and while you ought to know better than to get drunk, it wasn't all your fault. I should have told you the truth."

"Yes, you should have," Draco said seriously. "It's all very well and good to try to be a hero and put on a brave face and all that, but you shouldn't hide things from the people who love you. You need to tell us when things are wrong. It's too big a burden to bear on your own and you wind up hurting other people."

"Sorry," Harry replied, looking rather ashamed. "I'll stop keeping secrets, I promise."

Draco had a thought. "Can I punish you if you keep self-destructive secrets?"

Harry raised an eyebrow. "Punish me? Why on earth would you want to do that?"

"Because you get to punish me when I hex people. It seems only fair that I get to punish you if you do bad and hurtful things too," Draco said, somewhat petulantly.

Harry rolled his eyes. "Draco, I don't look at it as *getting* to punish you. More like *having* to punish you. I don't *enjoy* it, you know."

"Maybe you ought to," Draco retorted.

"Maybe I ought to enjoy it?" Harry repeated incredulously. "No way. I felt terrible last time. Here you were all jealous, poor baby, so it wasn't even your fault that you hexed that girl, and I had to punish you just because you were jealous and...why do you look so shifty all of a sudden?" Harry asked suspiciously.

"Oh...nothing..." Draco said, as casually as he could, looking anywhere but Harry's face.

"Draco Malfoy..."

"Okay okay," Draco said, wincing. He glanced up at Harry, and then promptly hid his face in his hands. "I sort of...um, I um...um...didn't hex her because I was jealous."

"What?"

Draco peeked out cautiously over the top of his hands. "I didn't hex her because I was jealous."

Harry blinked. "Course you did. Why else would you hex her?"

Draco muttered something that Harry couldn't hear.

"What was that?"

Draco muttered again, even quieter.

"Draco, don't make me use the Voice."

"It was a power trip, alright?" Draco finally snapped. "I hexed her because I bloody told her to stay away from you and she was looking for you anyway. So I got a little pissed off and the power went to my head and I hexed her. And I thought you wouldn't really do anything to me because you're kind of a cute pushover like that."

Harry stared at him. "But you weren't actually jealous?"

"No," Draco said sulkily.

"You hexed her because you were on a power trip?"

"Maybe." Draco's voice got even sulkier.

"An eleven year old little girl?"

"Maybe..."

"And you didn't think I'd actually punish you for it because I'm a pushover when it comes to you?"

Draco felt the distinct urge to hide. "Maybe."

"I see," Harry said, and Draco reluctantly met his eyes. "You know, Ron's right. You really *are* a bad veela."

Draco rolled his eyes and folded his arms over his chest, feeling rather cross.

"Well," said Harry, in a rather intriguing voice. "That settles that."

"What?" Draco asked suspiciously.

"You're definitely bottoming now."

And then Harry tackled him. Draco was flat on his back on the cold wet ground before he knew what hit him.

Harry belatedly realized that the grounds of an English park in January were not the ideal place for anyone's first time. He was too caught up in emotions to stop now, though. Draco had apparently been quite turned on by Harry's sudden maneuver, and his veela powers had kicked in slightly, filling Harry with that familiar veela heat.

Still, he couldn't just fuck Draco on the cold wet ground. His mind cast about for a solution even as his eyes drank in the sight of Draco on his back, hair messy from Harry's fingers, looking excited and ready for anything Harry wanted to do to him.

Inspiration hit, and he quickly tugged off Draco's cloak from his own shoulders.

"Harry, what are you doing? You'll freeze!" Draco snapped at him.

"No, just watch," he said, and pointed his wand at the cloak. "*Engorgio*."

And instantly Draco's weather-proof cloak became four times its normal size.

"Good thinking," Draco said admirably. Harry threw the cloak down on the ground, its soft fuzzy lining facing up. Draco quickly scurried over to it and lay down on his back on the cloak. Harry joined him, laying on top of him and pulling the other edge of the cloak up and over so that it covered them completely. It was like being rolled up in a large, fuzzy sleeping bag.

"Cozy," Draco said, arching up to press a kiss on Harry's lips. "Now let's get on with the fucking."

Harry kissed him back, then pulled away uncertainly. "Draco, I was just joking about the bottoming thing. You don't have to if you don't want to, I'll do it, I don't mind - "

"Oh, for the love of Merlin," Draco snapped. "I'm not topping. I hurt you last time I tried."

"It was an - "

"I don't care if it was an accident," Draco said harshly, grabbing Harry's wrist. Harry winced ever so slightly as Draco's fingers put pressure on the fading bruises. "There, you see? You see what happened the last time I thought I'd top? I hurt you, and if you think for one instant that I'm going to put you through any kind of pain ever again then you're crazy."

"But - "

"Besides, maybe I *want* to bottom. Did you ever think of that? Maybe I want you to fuck me. Maybe I get turned on by the idea of you moving inside me. Maybe that thing that you did to me with your tongue and your fingers right before Christmas Holiday was so fucking hot and felt so fucking good that every time I wanked over the Holidays I used my own fingers to do it again."

"Oh Holy *fuck*, you did *not* just say that."

"Yeah, you didn't think about that, did you Potter? Didn't think that your veela boyfriend gets off on the thought of being thoroughly fucked by his mate? Well guess what? I do. I find it unbearably sexy. I want nothing more at this moment than to have you fuck the daylights out of me right here, right now, wrapped in my cloak in this muggle park."

Harry stared at him, and then in a strained voice said, "You know, I don't think I've ever been quite so turned on before in my life."

"Good," Draco said simply, and then grabbed Harry's arse. "So fuck me." And with that he pulled Harry's groin against his own and thrust purposefully.

"Ohmygod," Harry slurred, as pleasure shot through him. "Okay, okay. I'll fuck you. Shit, what have we got for lube?"

"Hand lotion. In my cloak pocket. Make sure you coat your fingers really well, and do that thing you did before Holidays where you were sucking me off and had your fingers inside me and you moved them in that way that felt so bloody good."

"Yes *sir*. You know, I think somehow you're managing to top from the bottom," Harry said, dodging the playful swat Draco aimed at the back of his head before twisting up and reaching into the cloak pocket. He brought out the small tube and pulled it under the cloak with them. "We've got to get your pants off," he said, panting slightly. "Unless you want to do it on all fours?"

Draco actually had a serious moment of hesitation at Harry's suggestion. The thought of being on all fours outdoors, head down, arse up, completely at Harry's mercy...

It made Draco's cock twitch under his pants and his veela powers flare slightly, but he shook his head. "No, facing each other for our first time. Besides, we wouldn't both fit under the cloak if I got on all fours."

"Okay," Harry said, and then began attacking the laces on Draco's boots. Draco reached down and began to help, and the boys quickly made short work of the boots. Draco kicked them off to the side, then slid out of his trousers and boxers.

Harry sat back on his legs slightly to give Draco room to strip, and the motion let in a bit of the cold, pale light outside. Draco's pale features and skin were illuminated briefly, and it made Harry shudder.

"Fuck, you're so hot," Harry breathed, and then the next instant Draco cried out, because Harry had taken him in his mouth.

Every shred of control he'd been exercising over his veela powers disappeared in that instant, and both boys moaned as their pleasure was heightened by the powers. Draco whined deep in the back of his throat as Harry slid his lips and tongue over him. Then Draco felt a cool sensation against a very hot part of his body.

Draco propped himself up on his elbows slightly and watched Harry rapturously. Harry's mouth was doing amazing things to him as the Gryffindor slowly worked his fingers inside him. They were slick with lotion and Harry was gentle and Draco's veela powers took the edge off of any pain he might have felt.

Draco quickly lay back down flat on his back and submitted himself to the pleasure. He opened his eyes and looked straight up at the night sky, at the twinkling stars overhead, before his eyelashes fluttered shut and he moaned softly. It all felt so good, the slow in and out movement combined with that hot mouth and the frequent brushes against that spot inside that made Draco shiver and cry out.

Moments before Draco would have come, the fingers were removed. Draco opened his eyes to see Harry fumbling with the buttons on his jeans. Harry managed to get them undone and shoved them down, kicking off his trainers before pushing the jeans all the way off his legs. He reached for the tube of lotion again, and then hesitantly met Draco's eyes.

"Ready?" he asked softly.

"Absolutely."

Despite their earlier urgency, Harry went slow. He was careful as he could be, watching Draco's face for signs of pain, stroking the soft blonde hair and pressing soft kisses to the veela's face. He knew that Draco trusted him, and he knew that there was no force on earth that would have made him lose that trust.

But aside from the occasional wince, there was no pain on Draco's face, and when Harry began to move slowly within him, both of them cried out with pleasure.

It didn't last long at all. Both boys were too close to the edge from their weeks of separation, and their emotions were running too high. Harry managed to hold off until Draco came beneath him, hips bucking into Harry's hand, but he followed seconds later.

They lay together afterward in an overwhelmed silence, Harry's nose in Draco's neck, Draco's hands on Harry's back. A great feeling of contentment now rested in place of all of Harry's whirlwind emotions from earlier.

"I love you," he finally said, lifting up his head to give Draco a happy, utterly smitten look.

"Me too," Draco said, bringing a hand up to Harry's face. He stroked Harry's cheek for a moment and Harry leaned into the touch. "So this is what it feels like to be bonded. I'd expected...I don't know, fireworks or something. I don't really feel much different."

"No, me neither. We're supposed to not want to be apart more than before, but I didn't want to be apart from you anyway. And the emotions thing..." Harry shrugged. "You sort of seem like you're very content, but we don't need to be bonded for me to know that. That's to be expected, seeing as I just rocked your world," he finished with a playful smile.

"Oooh, cocky, aren't we?" Draco said, lifting an eyebrow. "What makes you think that was good for me?"

"I..." Harry faltered. "It was, wasn't it? Oh God, was it really horrible? Did I totally bugger everything up and make it awful for you and - wait." He narrowed his eyes at Draco's poorly hidden smirk. "You're screwing with me."

Draco laughed outright. "Yeah, I am. You're too easy, Potter." Harry was going to make a scathing remark back, and it was going to be brilliant and cutting, but Draco was kissing him again, and that was *ever* so much more important than any retort he might have made.

They kissed for a few moments and then broke apart. Harry happily laid his head down on Draco's chest and snuggled even closer into Draco's warm body.

It could have been a minute later, or maybe even an hour, but Draco was shaking him gently.

"Come on, Harry, wake up. We can't sleep out here, you'll catch a cold."

"Mrph," was Harry's only response to Draco's gentle mother-henning, and he attempted to burrow deeper into Draco's jumper.

"Now who rocked whose world?" Draco asked rhetorically. Harry's only response was a whine of protest when Draco tried to wriggle out from underneath him. "Harry," the blonde said, sounding exasperated. "We need to go home. Come on, love, get up."

Harry chose to ignore him in favor of pressing himself more tightly to Draco's body. Draco sighed.

"Okay, well, I hate to do this, but..."

And with that Draco stuck out his right arm in a meaningful gesture that every true witch and wizard knows.

And a moment later, Harry woke with a horrified start as a huge purple bus appeared right in front of them.

"That was mean, Draco," a sleepy Harry said a little later, as they rode the Knight Bus back to Hogsmeade. He attempted to glare from his spot sitting on one of the beds, but the combination of Harry's post-shag hair and his sleepy face rather ruined the effect. Harry looked more like a cranky kitten than anything remotely scary.

"I had to get you up somehow," Draco responded, rather affectionately

"Mean. Very mean."

"Fine. Let the record show that Harry Potter thinks Draco Malfoy is very mean."

"That's right. Bad veela," Harry added, with drowsy emphasis. "Now come over here and let me cuddle you."

"Bossy, aren't we?"

"Yes, we are. Get your arse over here." Harry lay back against the pillows and held out his arms meaningfully.

Unable to resist, Draco obligingly joined Harry on the bed. He lay on his side, curling into Harry's body, resting his head on Harry's chest. After a moment, he stretched his arm out over Harry's chest and threw his leg over Harry's leg to cuddle the Gryffindor more properly.

Harry's arms immediately found a home around Draco, one at the small of his back and one in his hair. "Mmmm, perfect. Good veela," Harry said fuzzily, the drowsiness more pronounced than ever. Draco bit back a laugh. He wondered if a post-coital Harry was always going to be so adorably out of it.

"So soft," Harry was now saying, as his hand began to play with Draco's baby fine hair. "I like your hair, you know. It's soft."

Beyond his control, Draco could feel his entire body beginning to melt. "Thank you," he said softly.

"Soft, soft hair," Harry said, sounding sleepy but happy. His other hand slipped underneath Draco's jumper and shirt to rest against the skin on Draco's back. "Soft skin, too. I like it. I like everything about you. Even if you *are* kind of bad."

"I'm *not* bad," Draco objected, trying to muster up the energy to be offended. He failed, miserably, if only because Harry's hand was still carrying on its damnable petting of Draco's hair.

"Yeah you are. Hexing little girls because you're on a power trip. You're very bad," Harry said in what might have been a stern voice if he hadn't been so outrageously sleepy. "But I still like you. I think you're cute."

"Of course you do. I'm a veela. My entire species has been specially bred to be cute. You are powerless to resist me."

"I'm *not* powerless to resist your cuteness," Harry protested. Draco could feel Harry's hand slowing its motion, coming to simply rest against his head, strands of Draco's hair entwined between his fingers. He was nearly asleep, his heart beat slow and steady under Draco's ear. "I can resist you just fine. Maybe you *are* adorable but I'm in charge here."

Draco turned his face into Harry's shirt to hide his grin. "Course you are, Harry," he said soothingly. "Course you are."

It took the Knight Bus longer than usual to make it back to Hogwarts, since the previous occupant was on her way to Wales. Consequently, Harry and Draco slept soundly nearly the entire night together on the small bed on the second level of the large purple bus.

They awoke when the Knight Bus finally made it to Hogsmeade, in the early hours of the morning. The sun hadn't yet risen but by Draco's estimates it would only be a couple more hours before it did so. Together they crunched through the snow back to Hogwarts, Harry yawning every couple moments and leaning heavily on Draco. Draco's still enlarged cloak was wrapped around them both, trailing on the ground around them but keeping them both warm against the freezing chill around them.

"Harry, do you have any idea how hard it is to keep walking when you're carrying on like this?"

Harry paid Draco no attention and continued to plant soft kisses on every inch of the side of Draco's face that he could reach, indeed slowing their progress as they walked.

"Haarrry, come on," Draco whined. "The sooner we get to the castle, the sooner we get to a bed, right?"

Stopping the onslaught of kisses for a moment, Harry tilted his head to give Draco an appraising sort of look. "I can't help it. You're so kissable," Harry said, his voice slightly rough from sleep.

Draco glanced at him, amused. "What on earth does that mean? I'll have you know I'm a nasty bastard, and without my heightened veela sexual appeal most people would not describe me as the least bit kissable."

"But you *are*," Harry insisted. He brought one of his hands out from the warmth of the cloak to touch Draco's face, making them both nearly stumble. "Look at you. You've got the softest hair and skin and these perfect pink pouty lips that are just so *cute* and then your cheeks and neck are like porcelain and - "

"Much as I appreciate the ridiculously girly sentiments, Potter, *do* watch where you're going. We've nearly fallen twice now," Draco said, sounding much more pleased than upset. "What's with you waxing all poetic, anyway? Do you get like this every time you're shagged?"

"I dunno," Harry said thoughtfully, pulling his hand back into the warmth under the cloak. "You're my first and my only, and of course my best."

Damn straight, Draco wanted to say, but a cruel voice had suddenly sprung up in Draco's head.

Harry's first shag was nearly rape at your hands, the voice reminded him. *You don't deserve his forgiveness, you know. Filthy animal.*

And desperate, miserable guilt welled up in Draco again, and he remained silent the rest of the way back to the castle.

When they reached Draco's room, the dragon in Draco's portrait gave Harry a pointed look that almost seemed to say *where've you been all week?* Harry smiled back at the portrait.

"He's such a pretty dragon. I like dragons, you know," he said, feeling quite a bit more awake after his hours of sleep on the bus and his subsequent walk through the snow. "Oooh, can I made a dragon/Draco joke?"

"No."

"But - "

"NO."

"Oh very well," Harry sighed in resignation. He followed Draco into the room, raising his eyebrows when he noticed the normally immaculate space was completely trashed. "Wow. Your room looks like Ron's."

"Gee, thanks. That's exactly what I want to hear," Draco said, though without his usual bite. "I just had other things on my mind this week besides cleaning."

Harry watched Draco suspiciously. By now he recognized all the signs- slumped shoulders, wringing hands, skittish movements and refusal to meet Harry's eyes. Harry knew what all that added up to:

Guilty veela.

Draco began to walk towards his closet, but Harry grabbed his wrist before he could get away.

"It's okay now, you know," Harry said in a gentle, persuasive manner.

Draco looked anywhere but directly at Harry. "What are you talking about?" he said nervously.

"It's okay, love," Harry said, tugging Draco gently towards him. "I'm not mad anymore. I said I forgive you, and I meant it."

Draco wrenched his wrist out of Harry's grasp and took a step back from Harry. "Look, Harry, you might be able to forgive me - although I'm sure I don't know how - but I'll never forgive myself for what I did to you."

"But you have to," Harry said earnestly. He reached out and snagged Draco's wrist again, pulling the veela close to him. "Look, we're both learning, right? It's only been a few months since we even found out you were a veela. You can't expect everything to go perfectly."

"I can expect myself not to try to force you in filthy public toilets," Draco spat vehemently, trying to pull away.

Harry made a frustrated sigh and yanked Draco back to him. "I'm not going to pretend that it wasn't horrible," he said. "I promised you I wouldn't pretend anymore. But as horrible as it was for me, I know it was worse for you."

"How could it be worse for me?" Draco asked, aghast. "*You* are the one who suffered, not me. My God, I left *bruises* on your skin, Harry!"

"Look, Draco, it was horrible for me, and yes, I suffered, but believe me, I know that sometimes it feels worse to hurt people than to be hurt. Especially if you love them and you didn't mean to hurt them," he finished softly, wrapping his arms around Draco's waist and effectively trapping him.

Draco remained rigid in Harry's arms for exactly thirty seconds before slumping against him. "I do love you," he whispered, letting his head fall onto Harry's shoulder. "And I didn't mean to hurt you."

Harry reached up and began to stroke his fingers through Draco's hair. "I know, baby, I know," he said gently. Harry carefully placed a kiss on the silky strands on Draco's head. "How can I convince you that everything will be okay? How can I make you feel better?"

Draco seemed to hesitate for a moment, then without looking up from Harry's shoulder he said, "Don't ever let me drink again."

Harry snorted. "Believe me, I don't intend to."

"No, I'm serious. Don't let me. Use the Voice. Forbid me."

Harry froze, one hand on the small of Draco's back, one hand tangled in his hair. "What?"

"Do it, Harry. Please."

"But...but you hate the Voice..." Harry tailed off, confused. Draco lifted his head, and Harry saw to his surprise that Draco's eyes were suspiciously watery.

"Please, Harry. You asked me what would make me feel better. Knowing that I could never do that to you again would make me feel a million times better."

Harry tightened his grip on Draco ever so slightly. "Are you sure?"

Draco nodded. "Please."

"Okay, then," Harry agreed, because he could never have said no to anything Draco wanted when the veela looked so sad. He took a deep breath and chose his words carefully. "I forbid you to drink alcohol - without my knowledge."

Draco shivered slightly, then closed his eyes. "Thank you," he said with heartfelt conviction.

Harry moved his hand to stroke Draco's face, noticing properly for the first time the dark circles that shadowed Draco's eyes like bruises, the limpness of his fine flaxen hair, the washed-out look of his skin.

"Draco, when was the last time you had a proper night's sleep?"

Draco fidgeted slightly in Harry's arms. "We just slept together on the Knight Bus."

"You know what I mean."

There was a pause.

"The last night I was at the Manor," Draco finally said dully.

Harry nodded slightly. "And a proper meal? And by 'proper' I don't mean cream cakes nicked from the kitchens."

A longer pause.

"Same," he finally answered, staring at his feet. And then, in the barest of whispers: "I didn't deserve to eat."

Harry tightened his grip around Draco, crushing the blonde to him. "Hush, you. Don't say things like that."

"S'true," Draco muttered, his face now tucked into Harry's neck. "I don't deserve anything. I'm awful. It...it made me so sick, Harry, what I did...I threw up you know, during Potions, when I first saw your bruises, and then this whole week...I've never felt so horrible in my life. I've never felt like such scum. All I could think of was those books and people who claim veela are just animals, and that they were *right*, that only an animal would do what I did...only a *monster*..."

He was crying again now, his tears hot against the bare skin of Harry's neck, and Harry held him tight and let him cry out his pain and grief, with whispered promises that everything was going to be alright.

Draco knew that at some point during his sobs Harry had gathered him up and moved him to the bed. They lay together on their sides now, Draco's face buried in the space where Harry's neck and shoulder met and his arms locked tightly around Harry's neck, Harry's hands underneath Draco's shirt rubbing at the bare skin of his back.

"It's okay, Draco, everything's okay...you didn't mean to hurt me, I know you didn't...I love you...it's okay, baby, it's okay..."

Draco gradually became aware of the pleasant rumbling of Harry's voice, of his soothing murmurs and reassurances. He drew in a shaky, shuddery breath.

"Thanks, Harry," he whispered. He felt Harry kiss his hair.

"You okay now?" Harry asked. His voice was very sweet.

Draco made a shrugging motion with his shoulders as best he could, unwilling to relinquish his grip on Harry's neck. "I'm better, I think," he said softly. He sniffed slightly. "Sorry I'm so emotional all the time. Must drive you mental."

"Not at all," Harry said reassuringly. "It's...it's rather nice to be needed, actually."

"I suppose it is," Draco acquiesced. He sighed. "So did I just ruin *your* shirt now?" he asked, making Harry laugh.

"Course not. It's just cotton, not that poncey stuff you wear. And even if you had, I wouldn't care, it's just one of Dudley's old shirts."

"Hmmm, yes. Your charming muggle family again," Draco muttered, tensing up slightly.

Harry reached over with one hand and gently tilted Draco's face up to meet his own. "You don't have anymore plans for my Aunt and Uncle and cousin, do you?"

Draco didn't answer immediately.

Harry raised his eyebrows. "You did enough, Draco. You terrified them out of their wits and trashed their house. You're not doing anything else."

"I know I'm not," Draco said sourly. "You bloody went and forbid me to with your stupid Voice."

"I had to, you might have really hurt them and then where would we be? In prison?"

Draco pushed Harry onto his back and lay directly on top of him, stomach to stomach. He propped himself by arms folded on Harry's chest. "My lawyers would have made short work of the case. I'm a veela, and I was sorely provoked." He furrowed his eyebrows slightly. "Come to think of it, are we still going to be in trouble for scaring them a bit?"

"And destroying 4 Privet Drive?"

"And that."

Harry shook his head. "No, I won't let them make trouble. I'm going to send them a letter in the morning. I'll tell them not to say a word to anyone about what you did or I'll report them to both the muggle and the wizarding authorities for child abuse. *And* I'll let you have at them again."

"Nice," Draco said approvingly. "Oh, now I almost hope they *do* tell someone."

"I bet you do, you vicious little wanker," Harry said affectionately.

Being reminded of Harry's muggle family, Draco pushed up until he was straddling Harry, so he could get a proper look at Harry in his muggle cousin's clothes. He wrinkled his nose. Harry was wearing an old long sleeved t-shirt, at least two sizes too big, with the odd word *Smeltings* on it in bright orange. The jeans he had paired the shirt with were threadbare and faded with several rips, and they only stayed on Harry's narrow hips by a securely fastened belt.

Draco shook his head. He had assumed that Harry dressed that way because he chose to, so he had never interfered. Now that he knew the truth, something had to be done.

"So you do know that you're getting an entire new wardrobe now, right?" Draco said, feeling much cheered up at the prospect of outfitting his mate in all new clothes.

As Draco expected, Harry balked. "What? No, wait, don't be silly. I don't need anything else," Harry protested. "And even if I did, I have money you know. You don't have to buy me anything."

"Harry, this *not* negotiable," Draco said rather sharply, folding his arms over his chest.

Harry rolled his eyes. "Draco, you can't boss me around. If I don't want new clothes I won't have them. End of story."

Draco raised an eyebrow. "Oh, so you're just going to continue wearing your muggle cousin's clothes right in front of me, and expect me not to remember how abused you were as a child and get pissed off every time I see you in them?"

"Umm..." Harry floundered.

Draco continued to stare him down.

"Oh, very well, alright," Harry said a bit crossly, giving in to the blonde currently sitting on his stomach.

"And I'm not having you going about in your cousin's castoffs ever again. You'll be wearing my clothes until your new ones come."

"But *Draco*..." Harry whined. "Your clothes are too *tight* on me."

Draco was secretly impressed with how good Harry's whine had become. *I taught him that*, Draco thought rather proudly. Still, the student had yet to surpass the master, and Draco wasn't buying it.

"Stop whining, they fit you fine," Draco replied. "You're not that much bigger than I am, you can deal. Although..." and here Draco looked at Harry speculatively, "I think you may have grown a little since we started dating. So you can borrow all my biggest stuff now."

"Great. But it doesn't change the fact that I still look outrageously gay in your clothes," Harry muttered resentfully.

"Well, Harry, in case you've forgotten, you just *fucked a man* this evening. I believe that rather qualifies you as 'outrageously gay.'"

There was a moment of silence.

"Yeah, well...maybe."

Something in Harry's tone of voice suggested to Draco that his words might have gotten Harry just a bit stirred up.

How...*interesting*.

Draco decided to pursue this line of conversation just a bit more. "Oh, I would definitely say you qualify as outrageously gay now. I mean, you didn't *just* fuck me. You had me on my back, your mouth on my cock and your fingers inside me until I was nearly coming and *begging* you to fuck me."

There was another, longer moment of silence.

"Oh...oh wow..." Harry finally said, sounding slightly out of breath, and Draco realized with incredible satisfaction that Harry was hard.

How *delightful*.

"You know, I could actually go for being fucked again right now," Draco said wickedly. "I'd love to strip naked, throw my legs around your waist and have you screw me into the mattress."

"Oh God, STOP," Harry gasped, closing his eyes. "Oh, you have to stop *saying* things like that. Fuck, you have no idea how much you're turning me on."

"Like it when I talk dirty, do you? Knew you had some kinks."

Draco was still gloating over his new discovery when Harry twisted under him, managing to upset Draco's equilibrium and upend Draco from his position on Harry's stomach. Draco tumbled onto the mattress and then Harry was on top of him, pushing on Draco's shoulders and climbing on top of him until Draco was on his back underneath Harry.

"But don't you want to top this time?" Harry asked, hands already tugging at Draco's jumper and long sleeved shirt underneath.

Draco obligingly sat half way up and stuck his arms in the air, allowing Harry to pull his clothes over his head. "Not yet. I will sooner or later - and probably sooner rather than later - but not right now. Right now, I just want to relax, lay back and have you stud service me."

"Your wish is my command," Harry said quickly, tossing Draco's clothes to the side and yanking off his own t-shirt. "But are you sure you're not too sore to do it again?"

Draco shook his head. "No, not too sore. I told you, I did it to myself when I wanked over the holidays." He ran a hand over his bare torso, enjoying the way Harry's eyes followed his every move. "I'd wait until I was all alone, maybe in the bath, then I'd run my hands all over my body, the whole time fantasizing it was *your* hands, *touching* me and *caressing* me and *stroking* me and - "

"Oh Merlin are you *ever* going to get it now."

And then Harry was on Draco like white on rice.

Far away from where the boys were thrilling themselves with the discovery of each other, a tall skeleton of a man with glowing red eyes and a snake on his lap was sitting in an armchair in Riddle Manor.

Another tall man with black stringy hair and a noticeable hooked nose was kneeling before him.

"The potion you desire is nearly finished, my Lord," the man said, carefully keeping his eyes on the floor.

"Excellent, Snape. That is good news indeed. You may go."

Severus Snape nodded, and in a swirl of black cloak took his leave.

Lord Voldemort remained in his chair after Snape had left, one hand absently stroking the head of the large snake resting on his lap.

"*The time is nearly here, Nagini,*" Lord Voldemort hissed in Parseltongue. "*That veela will be mine.*"

Chapter Warnings: NC-17 Sex. The whole chapter is basically one long sex scene. Light bondage and wanking as well. Again, **NC-17 rating**, I'm warning you.

The Veela Enigma

Chapter 26: Go Go Gryffindor!

When Draco finally woke up, he found himself lying on his stomach, nestled under Harry's arm and half of Harry's body. Harry's head was resting on his back between his shoulder blades. It should have been uncomfortable, being squashed a bit like that, but it wasn't. It was wonderful. Draco wanted to wake up squashed by Harry everyday for the rest of his life.

On top of him, Harry was coming awake as well.

"Morning," he muttered, nuzzling his face against Draco's back.

"Afternoon, actually," Draco corrected, managing to catch a glimpse of his bedside clock with a little bit of difficulty. "And late afternoon at that."

"Mmm, is it really?" Harry said, sounding unconcerned. He planted a couple kisses on the bare skin beneath his mouth. "Nice to finally get some decent sleep."

"Yes," Draco agreed, closing his eyes. A smile that would not be stopped played on his lips. Harry tightened his arm around Draco's body and rolled back on his side, pulling Draco with him. Draco immediately snuggled backwards into Harry's chest, and Harry snaked his other arm under Draco's neck so he could wrap him up in both arms.

"Last night was..." Harry trailed off, opting to kiss the hair under his lips instead of speak.

"Yeah." Words were overrated, Draco felt. Kisses said more than words ever could.

"Are you sore?" Harry asked with concern a bit later, as they stood under the hot spray of the shower together.

Draco shrugged. "Maybe a little," he confessed. "But I don't mind."

Harry kissed him, gently, slipping his tongue into Draco's mouth. "Sorry," he said, finally breaking the kiss. "We shouldn't have done it that second time."

"But I wanted to," Draco said, putting a hand on the back of Harry's head and drawing him back into the kiss. They kissed, tongues and freshly brushed teeth and hot shower water swirling together, and Draco giddily thought that snogging someone after you've woken up with them was the most wonderful thing ever.

"Mmm, Harry," Draco moaned into the kiss. His slid his hands up Harry's wet back, down the arms resting around Draco's waist, over Harry's chest and stomach. He let his veela powers slowly build as he touched Harry, and the more they increased the more desperate Harry's kissing became, until he finally wrenched away from Draco, panting.

"No more," he pleaded. "No more, please. I can't take it."

"But Harry, I thought it felt good," Draco said innocently.

"It does," Harry assured him. "Too good. If you keep it up I'll shag you again, and you're too sore."

"Who said I'm too sore to shag?" Draco asked, his voice still innocent. He slowly entwined his arms around Harry's neck and his fingers in Harry's hair, deliberately letting his veela powers flare up a little higher. "I certainly don't remember saying that."

Harry groaned. "Stop," he begged, though he made no more attempts to get away. "Stop it, Draco, you're teasing me."

"No I'm not," Draco purred, pulling Harry against him so that their bare chests were touching. He leaned his head forward until his lips were nearly touching Harry's. "It's only teasing if you don't intend to follow through."

Harry had no more fight left in him, and he began devouring Draco with hot, hungry kisses. They fumbled out of the shower, barely managing to turn the water off as they kissed and groped their way to the bed. Dripping, Draco pushed Harry down on the unmade sheets and crawled on top of him.

"So...fucking...hot..." Harry managed to say through their kissing, his hands roaming over every inch of Draco he could reach. "Want you so bad..."

"So take me," Draco whispered back, leaning down to kiss Harry's neck.

Harry shook his head. "No," he whispered. "You take me."

Draco froze with his lips against Harry's skin. Harry tilted his head to one side to better expose his neck, trying to get Draco to continue the kiss.

"Harry..." Draco began, nervousness welling up in him. "I don't think I can. What if I - "

"You won't," Harry simply. "You won't hurt me this time."

Draco screwed his eyes shut. "I can't, Harry, I - "

"Shh," Harry said softly, reaching up to twine his fingers in Draco's wet hair. "You can. I trust you. I want you to."

Draco swallowed hard. "Okay," he whispered. "Okay. But we do it my way. And we go slow. And if it hurts you *at all* I'm stopping. Agreed?"

Harry nodded. Draco took a deep breath, and then began to kiss Harry's neck again.

"Fuck...ohfuck...ohmyGod..."

Draco was doing something new with his veela powers. That was the only coherent thing Harry could grasp with his extremely lust-muddled mind. Draco had his powers on, but he wasn't out of control and all over Harry like he normally would have been. Instead he was calm, his actions controlled, and Harry was completely lost.

"Tell me what feels good," Draco whispered, gently sliding the fingers inside Harry's body out and then back in.

"Every...everything..." Harry panted. "Shit, what are you *doing*?"

"I'm trying to channel my powers," he explained. "Trying to focus them on you. But stop asking me questions, I have to concentrate or I'll lose it."

"Whatever you want," Harry gulped. His entire body was on fire, and Draco was working him like an instrument. Every where that Draco's hands touched his body sang with pleasure.

"So fucking good, Draco..." Harry managed to say. Draco's fingers bumped his prostate again, and Harry bit down on his knuckles to keep from yelling out loud. "Fuck me Draco. Please, come on, I'm so ready..."

"Not yet," Draco said softly, leaning over so his mouth hovered inches from Harry's cock. "I might still hurt you."

Harry groaned. "Draco, *please*..."

But then Draco's mouth was on him again, and Harry lost his ability to form coherent words.

"OhmyGod," Harry groaned, as he lay limp on his back underneath Draco some time later. "Oh my God, I didn't know you could *do* that."

"There's a lot of things you can do with veela powers," Draco informed him, rolling off Harry onto his back and opening his arms. Harry shakily crawled into them before collapsing back against Draco chest. "Did I hurt you, Harry?"

"What? Are you crazy? You took over an *hour* to get me ready before you finally fucked me, of course you didn't hurt me! God, that was so good. Your veela powers are incredible. I can't believe people aren't like...hunting for veela, trying to keep them as sex slaves or something."

There was a moment of silence, then Draco said quietly, "They used to."

"What?" Harry said, looking up sharply. "I was joking."

"I wasn't. Wizards used to think of veela as animals...well, some still do, I guess...but it was perfectly acceptable for powerful medieval wizards to keep veela as concubines. I saw pictures in one of the history texts. The wizards would keep their veela in collars and everything."

"That's the most horrible thing I've ever heard," Harry said, shocked. "What about their mates?"

Draco shrugged. "They'd kill the mate, or imprison them. Made the veela vulnerable and incredibly pliable. A half-decent Imperious Curse and you had the world's most perfect fuck-toy, a magical creature with amazing sex powers and no will of their own."

Harry swallowed hard. "I'd never let anyone take you from me," he said seriously. "I'd die first. I can't believe wizards used to...Christ, that's so *sick*..."

"You don't have to tell me that," Draco said, closing his eyes. "Even my experience with Nott...he made me kiss him, made me use my veela powers on him...it was so *disgusting*..."

"I'll fucking *kill* him if I ever see him again," Harry swore.

"You'll have to beat me to it," Draco muttered, keeping his eyes closed. "Let's change the subject, okay?"

Harry looked at Draco, pale as the moonlight against the deep green of his bed covers. He looked beautiful, vulnerable, and infinitely precious to Harry. Something to treasure and protect. The thought of someone exploiting him and his veela powers, keeping him as a toy...

It infuriated Harry, and he wanted to know more, so he could guard Draco from all the demons that the wizarding world possessed. But since Draco had asked for it, Harry swallowed down his rage and respectfully changed the subject instead.

"So that new stuff you did to me...that was pretty amazing," he said.

Draco smiled and peered down at Harry through blonde eyelashes. "Yes, well, don't expect that every time. It's really bloody difficult." He yawned. "I'm completely worn out now." He opened his eyes more fully to look at Harry worriedly. "You're *sure* it didn't hurt?"

"Positive," Harry promised, reaching out to touch Draco's face with one hand. "Where on earth did you learn to do that?"

Draco seemed reassured. "The *Veela Kama Sutra*," he answered, closing his eyes again.

Harry lifted his head up and looked at Draco in shock. "The what?" he asked dumbly.

"The *Veela Kama Sutra*," Draco repeated, eyes closed.

Harry was speechless. His mouth opened, then shut, then opened, then snapped shut.

"It's a very helpful book," Draco added, his voice beginning to get a little rough with drowsiness.

"Draco," Harry began, sounding bewildered. "Where on earth did you get a copy of the *Veela Kama Sutra*?"

"My dad sent me every book there is on veela. Remember?"

"Your *dad* sent it to you?" Harry yelped.

Draco smiled and opened his eyes again. "It's not like he realized it, silly. He just put in an order for all known veela books at Flourish and Blotts and they sent it to me directly."

"And you didn't tell me about this *why*?" Harry demanded.

Draco yawned. "Wanted to surprise you. I took it home to the Manor over the break and studied the whole thing. I was going to blow your mind when we bonded." He swallowed hard. "Of course, then I had to go and get drunk and nearly - "

"Shush," Harry said, putting his finger over Draco's lips. "No more guilty veela. Tell me more about this book. Do you have it? I want to see it."

Draco obligingly stretched out an arm and pulled open the nightstand drawer. He reached inside and pulled out a small black book with the words *The Veela Kama Sutra* on the front in silver lettering.

"It's got loads of stuff that I can't possibly imagine doing," Draco said, handing the book to Harry. "But I guess if we've got all our lives we'll probably eventually try it all. What I just did to you was really basic stuff."

Harry took the book and turned onto his back, resting his head on Draco's shoulder and snuggling into the crook of Draco's arm. He grabbed his glasses off the nightstand, slipped them on and opened the book with something akin to reverence. As Harry paged through the text, Draco rested his head on top of Harry's and closed his eyes.

"This is brilliant," Harry said, eyes widening at one particularly unimaginable illustration. "Would you really let me shag you in this position?"

"Hmmm?" Draco said, cracking open one eye to look at the picture. "Oh, page 16. Yeah, sure. I'd let you shag me anyway you wanted." He closed his eye again.

Harry was silent over the next few minutes, studying a few of the positions intently. Much of the book was gibberish to him, since it instructed the veela on how to most effectively use their powers in a given situation or position and he had no clue how Draco used his powers in the first place.

"What about this one, Draco?" He indicated the position on page 27 and its amazing tangle of limbs. "This looks bloody impossible to me."

There was no answer.

"Draco?" Harry repeated, looking up. Then he smiled tenderly; Draco was fast asleep. Harry carefully sat halfway up and grabbed the blankets, pulling them up to cover them both.

He took off his glasses and set them with the book on the night table, before turning on his side and fitting himself along Draco's body. He looked down at Draco's sleeping form, protectiveness and possessiveness welling up inside him.

"You're mine, you know that. No one will ever separate us," he whispered. "And I'll *never* let anyone hurt you. I promise, love. I promise."

And gently pressing a kiss to Draco's temple, he wrapped his body around the sleeping veela and drifted off to sleep.

"So fucking hungry," Draco moaned, as he and Harry tore through the corridors on their way to the Great Hall for breakfast the next morning. "Why the fuck didn't we eat yesterday?"

"Too busy sleeping and eating each other," Harry answered, as ravenous as Draco. They burst through the doors of the Great Hall and headed straight to the Gryffindor table.

"Hey Ron, Hermione," Harry said, grabbing a plate and loading it up with scrambled eggs, fried eggs, sausages, bacon, ham, toast, tomatoes, mushrooms and potatoes.

"Weasley, Granger," Draco said with a polite nod, piling one plate with strawberries, devon cream, sugar, honey and two kinds of jam, then grabbing a bowl and filling it to the top with maple syrup.

Ron and Hermione simply stared as the boys dug in.

"Hungry?" Hermione ventured, as Harry and Draco tore into their respective plates.

"Starved," was the clipped reply, as Harry chased three fried eggs on a piece of toast with a glass of orange juice.

Hermione glanced at Draco, who was devouring his bowl of maple syrup with a large spoon.

"Um...Draco?"

"What?" he asked, looking up. He'd already finished half the bowl.

"Shouldn't you like...put that on a waffle or something?" she ventured.

"What, this?" Draco looked at his bowl of maple syrup and shook his head. "Nah, s'good how it is."

He poured a cup of tea and added cream and about eight teaspoons of sugar. Ron and Hermione both winced.

"So...seems like you two made it up," Ron said. He loved sweets as much as the next sixteen year old, but really, Draco was taking it a bit far. He could barely watch.

Harry and Draco exchanged a private glance.

"Yeah, we made it up nicely," Harry said, grinning. He stabbed three sausages with a fork and downed them in two bites.

Hermione raised an eyebrow. "You mean you fucked," she said bluntly.

All three boys promptly choked.

"*Hermione!*" was the scandalous cry.

Hermione just grinned. "Explains why you're so hungry," she said sweetly.

Ron looked like Christmas, with his red hair and green face. "Hermione, please, *please*, don't ever say something like that at the breakfast table again. Or lunch table. Or anywhere where I'm around food. Or how about just never under any circumstances?"

"Oh, don't be such a drama queen, Ron," Hermione said. "Look at them. They're so perfect for each other, aren't they? I mean really, have you ever seen a cuter couple?"

Against his will, Ron took a good look at Harry and Draco. They both looked up from their food and batted their eyelashes at Ron.

"Well..." Ron hedged. "I suppose that maybe they do look sort of good together."

"Damn straight we do," Draco said, attacking his bowl of maple syrup again.

"See Ron?" Hermione said. "Admit it; you think they're sweet together."

Ron looked. Harry and Draco had apparently forgotten that Ron and Hermione were there and were staring into each other's eyes and smiling.

"I suppose they are," Ron admitted.

At that moment, Harry discovered what Draco was eating.

"Draco Malfoy, you've barely eaten for a week. You cannot have a bowl of maple syrup for breakfast. It's not good for you. Eat some scrambled eggs instead."

"But Harry, I don't *want* eggs, I want *maple syrup*..."

"I know, baby. You don't like eggs as much as maple syrup. But will you eat them if I feed them to you?"

"I take it all back," Ron said vehemently. "Harry and Malfoy are positively vile."

The day flew by, and soon it was Ron's last class of the day. And Ron had no earthly clue why they were getting away with it, but there it was: it was the middle of Advanced Divination, which Ron knew for a fact Draco *wasn't even taking*, and Harry and Draco were snogging.

And not surreptitiously either. Draco, who wasn't bloody supposed to *be* in this class, was sitting in Harry's lap on one of the puffs with his arms around Harry's neck, and they were using *tongue*.

Professor Trelawney saw them, too; Ron knew she did. But apparently Professor Trelawney was a perky sort of Seer, because not only did she not stop them, she bloody *encouraged* them.

"I have received premonitions from my Inner Eye," she had said mysteriously, after Draco had sauntered into the classroom and planted himself in Harry's lap. "The position of Venus, the planet that guides Earthly love, has suggested to me that if you have black hair, the best way to ensure longevity is to engage in relations with someone with blonde hair."

The class had gaped at her.

"The Inner Eye is never wrong," she had said haughtily, and taken a seat at her desk to watch.

That was twenty minutes ago, and Harry and Draco showed no signs of slowing down. Most people in the class were just watching them in awe.

"That's quite a show," Terry Boot commented to the large group of students that had gathered nearby to enjoy an unobstructed view of the hot boy action at the next table.

"Mmm-hmm," Hannah Abbot agreed, cocking her head to one side. Draco had moved so that rather than just sitting on Harry's lap, he was now straddling his boyfriend, knees on either side of Harry's legs. Harry's hands had long ago disappeared under Draco's shirt.

"They've got such an interesting relationship, being a veela and his mate," Padma Patil remarked. "Which one do you reckon is more whipped?"

"Malfoy," said Terry and Hannah, at the same time that every Gryffindor in hearing muttered, "Harry."

Terry, Padma and Hannah exchanged confused looks.

"But...but Malfoy is a *veela*," Terry said, puzzled. "Harry has that special voice he can use to get Malfoy to do whatever he wants. Harry's got tons of power over Malfoy. Obviously Malfoy has to be more whipped."

Seamus shook his head. "Malfoy doesn't need a special voice to get Harry to do what he wants. Harry would bend over backwards to do anything that would make Malfoy happy. He's got Harry wrapped around his finger."

"But - "

"Terry, if you were dating a veela, don't you think they'd have you completely whipped?"

As if to prove Seamus' point, at that moment Draco pulled back from snogging Harry.

"Harry, I want chocolate. Will you get me some from the House Elves? They like you better."

"But Draco, I'm in class! I can't just skive off to get you sweets!"

"Please, Harry?" Draco punctuated this with a ridiculously cute face, and half the class melted.

"Yeah okay," Harry said, caving immediately. "Let's go."

Draco beamed and kissed Harry on the nose, and then they left the classroom.

"Perhaps I see your point," Terry mused.

The week passed rapidly, and on Friday evening Harry and Draco could be found in Draco's room, sprawled amicably on Draco's bed. Harry was reclining against the pillows, and Draco was propped against him.

"So, that was our first week as like...a bonded couple," Harry said. "Did you feel any different?"

"Other than wanting to shag with you every minute of the day?" Draco asked rhetorically. "Oh wait, that part's not any different."

"Cheeky," Harry said, bringing his hand up to rest in Draco's hair. Draco slid a couple inches lower on the bed and practically began to purr. "I've got a Quidditch match tomorrow."

"So you do," Draco agreed.

"Gonna cheer for me?"

"Like a good little girlfriend? I suppose I might," Draco said playfully.

Harry grinned. "Are you going to wear Gryffindor colors?"

Draco blanched. "Of course not. What are you, mental? Do you know how awful I look in red?"

"Please," Harry scoffed. "There is not a single color on this planet you would look awful in."

"I look awful in red, Potter. Trust me. Totally washes me out."

"I don't believe you for a second."

"It's true," Draco protested, sitting up right. "I look ridiculous. I think that's why the Sorting Hat put me in Slytherin so quickly; it knew how awful I'd look in the other house colors."

"You're so silly," Harry said, amused.

"Don't believe me?" Draco asked, arching an eyebrow. "I'll prove it to you."

He slid off the bed and over to Harry's discarded school uniform. Draco was still wearing his school trousers and uniform shirt, so he merely picked up Harry's striped Gryffindor tie, his sweater vest and his Gryffindor cloak.

Harry watched with interest as Draco slipped Harry's tie around his neck and began to tie it.

Interest that very quickly began to shift into something a little more...*needy*.

Draco had tied the red and gold striped tie in a perfect Windsor knot, and was now tugging the grey sweater vest with the red and gold trim over his head. By the time he picked up Harry's black cloak with the Gryffindor emblem on it, Harry was gripping the comforter so tightly his knuckles were turning white.

Draco pulled the cloak on and did the fastenings, and then turned to model for Harry.

"There, you see? I look ridiculous." He did a double-take. "Potter, are you...*drooling*?"

"Draco...Gryffindor...hot..." was all Harry managed to reply.

Draco stared. "You think I look hot in your uniform?"

Harry nodded profusely.

A slow smirk spread over Draco's features. "Kinky bastard."

"Don't care," Harry said, standing up. "You look good enough to eat."

"So eat me," was Draco's cocky reply.

And with that invitation Harry pounced. He crossed the room in two strides and grabbed Draco, who squealed in shock when Harry tossed him over his shoulder.

"Potter!" he shouted, pounding at Harry's back with his fists. "You are not Tarzen, and I most certainly am not Jane! Put me down this *instant*!"

Harry obliged by throwing him down onto the bed. Draco landed in a heap on his back and then Harry was on top of him, smothering him in kisses.

"So hot," Harry muttered, hands ripping at Draco's belt. In a matter of seconds Draco's trousers and pants were at his knees and Harry had taken him in his mouth.

"OhmyGodHarry!" Draco yelped, as heat traveled through his body straight from his cock. Harry paid him no mind, just continued to lick and suck. He took Draco as deep in his mouth as he could, and Draco began to whimper.

"That's so good...oh don't stop...don'tstopdon'tstopdon'tstop..." Draco continued to babble. All too soon his muscles were tensing and he came, hard, with an unintelligible cry.

He lay still, panting for a moment, and then flung an arm over his eyes.

"Bloody hell, Potter," he said, when he had caught his breath. "Now I wish I'd been sorted into Gryffindor after all. Give me just a sec, then I'll return the favor."

Harry fidgeted above him. "Don't worry about it," he said rather sheepishly.

"What? Don't be a prat, of course I'll - "

"No, I mean...you don't have to worry about it."

Draco could hear Harry's embarrassment, and he moved his arm and looked at his boyfriend. "Did you already come?" he asked incredulously.

Harry blushed. "It's your fault," he said accusingly. "You were too sexy. I couldn't keep my hands off you."

"Or yourself, apparently," Draco said, taking in Harry's open fly. Harry's blush deepened.

"Shut up," he muttered.

"Oh, don't be embarrassed, Harry. I'm quite flattered. Now can we cuddle, please?"

Harry nodded, and they both stripped down to their boxer shorts and climbed under the covers. Harry lay on his back and Draco promptly climbed on top of him, laying stomach to stomach against him.

"Goodnight, pervert," Draco said sleepily, laying his head down on Harry's chest.

"Hey! If either of us is the pervert in this relationship, it's you, you heavy tosser," Harry said indignantly, but it was too late. Draco was already asleep.

The next morning, Harry and Ron left right after breakfast to get ready for the Gryffindor versus Hufflepuff game, leaving Draco and Hermione to walk to the stands together.

"He's so hot when he plays Quidditch," Draco said to Hermione, as they walked. "But what if he gets hit by a bludger or something? I'm not sure I could take that." He looked rather horrified at the prospect.

"He'll be fine, Draco," Hermione said soothingly. "Even if he did get hurt Madame Pomphrey could fix him right up."

"I suppose," Draco said grudgingly. He looked over at Hermione, a mischievous gleam in his eyes. "Want to see something funny?"

"Okay," Hermione said, wondering what he was going to do.

Draco glanced around and then pulled her arm, guiding her off to a more private area under the stands.

"Look at this," he said, opening his robe. He had a plain white button up shirt underneath, and as Hermione watched he began to slowly unbutton it.

"Um...Draco? I know you're the one with the jealousy problem, but somehow I don't think Harry would be very happy if he found out you were stripping in front of me," Hermione said nervously.

Draco shook his head. "I'm not stripping. Look." He held open his shirt, and Hermione clapped a hand to her mouth.

Underneath his fussy-looking, starched dress shirt Draco was wearing a bright red t-shirt that said *Go Go Gryffindor!*

"Draco, that's brilliant! Where did you get that?" Hermione asked, laughing.

"Stole it from Harry," Draco said smugly, buttoning his shirt back up. "He's got a kink for it. I put on his Gryffindor uniform last night as a joke and he practically mauled me. I think this'll get him really hot."

"You are wicked," Hermione said, shaking her head. They made their way out from under the stands and up, finally coming to sit together at the front of the Gryffindor section.

Draco bought popcorn for Hermione and fairy floss for himself, and they sat down just in time to see the game start.

Gryffindor versus Hufflepuff was usually a decisive victory for Gryffindor, but the Gryffindor teams was playing unusually sloppy. Within fifteen minutes Gryffindor was losing 80-10, and finally Harry called a time-out.

Madame Hootch blew her whistle, and the Gryffindor team all flew together to hover in a circle in front of the Gryffindor stands. In their front row seats, Hermione and Draco could actually hear what Harry was saying.

"Alright, what's going on?" Harry demanded of his teammates. "You guys are much better than this. Why are you all playing so lazy?"

Ginny exchanged a look with Andrew Kirke. "Well, it's just that we don't have much to worry about, do we? I mean, we'll win because you *always* catch the snitch, Harry."

"*What* did you just say?" Harry spat, narrowing his eyes. "Ginevra Weasley, you just earned the team 50 extra laps at practice on Monday."

"Aw, *Harry*," came the chorus, but Harry shut them up with a look.

"Not a word," he snapped. "You all bloody deserve it if you're holding back because you're so damn sure I'll catch the snitch."

"But Harry - "

"You just made it 75 laps, Kirke. Anyone want to try for 100?"

The team was silent.

"Good." Harry glared at his team. "Now listen up. You are all going to do *exactly* as I say. Ron, guard your left side, it's your weak point and they're exploiting it. Kirke and Sloper, quit letting the Hufflepuff Chasers make you their bitch. The rest of you, play like you bloody mean it. If I see anymore sloppy playing, I'll be taking it out on your hides at our next practice. *Are we clear?*"

"Yes, Captain," came the sheepish chorus, and they soared back out onto the field.

Hermione shivered slightly. Harry was usually so sweet. He only got riled up like this during fights and Quidditch. She had to admit that she found this commanding, authoritative Harry awfully hot. No wonder Ginny Weasley looked forward to Quidditch practice almost rabidly.

And if *Hermione* thought it was hot...

She glanced to her right. Draco's eyes were wide, and he was practically salivating.

"Did you hear that?" he whispered. He closed his eyes and moaned. "Bloody hell, bloody bugging, fucking hell, he's so fucking *hot* when he gets like that."

"Mmm," Hermione agreed, choosing not to go into too much detail. After all, one didn't want to appear to think a veela's mate was too hot, no matter how hot said mate was.

"Oh, I want him to *shag* me," Draco said fervently. "I want him to get bloody pissed off at me and then shag me through the mattress."

Hermione closed her eyes with a shudder. "Wow," she said softly. A bit louder, she said, "Why do you want him pissed off first?"

"Didn't you just *hear* him?" Draco demanded. "He's so *hot* when he's mad. And I should know. I've got the market cornered on pissing off Harry Potter."

"You do indeed," Hermione agreed. "So, got a plan?"

Draco chewed on his bottom lip. "I need to get him really riled up...you know, pissed and sexually frustrated...I could tease him, that would drive him mad but he's got that bloody Voice he can use on me..."

"Want me to help you brainstorm?" Hermione offered.

Draco looked surprised. "You'd help me figure out how to tease Harry until he's sexually frustrated enough to shag me to the wall? You'd talk about all the little kinky details with me and help me come up with a plan to drive him wild?"

"Sure," Hermione said brightly. "What are friends for?"

Harry was very pleased to note that Hufflepuff did not score a single goal more the rest of the game. He caught the snitch as well, sealing a decisive victory for Gryffindor. As he made his way towards the locker room through the congratulating crowd, he suddenly felt a hand on his shoulder.

"You're so fucking hot when you fly," Draco's voice whispered right in his ear. "Gets me so fucking hot for you. All I can think about is how I wish it was me you were riding instead of your broom. Get down to my room as fast as you can because I want you to fuck me until I forget my name."

And then he was gone, leaving behind a panting and wide-eyed Harry in a sea of Gryffindors.

It took Harry fifteen long minutes to get away from everyone as they cheered Gryffindor's win. He begged off the victory party in the common room and finally was running down towards the dragon portrait, Draco's words in his ear.

"*Dragon Fire*," he blurted, and pushed through the portrait as fast as he could.

Draco was sprawled on his stomach on the bed, reading a magazine.

"Oh hello," he said, glancing up. "Took you long enough."

"Came...as fast...as I could..." Harry said, out of breath from running. He crossed the room in two steps and was about to jump on Draco when Draco suddenly sat up.

"Why don't you sit in the armchair?" he suggested innocently. "Then I can ride you like a broomstick."

"Yeah, sure, anything," Harry panted, flinging himself into the chair. He faced Draco on the bed and patted his lap expectantly.

Draco just smiled. "This should be fun," he purred.

And the next thing Harry knew Draco's wand was out and pointed right at him.

"Draco, what are you - "

With a *bang* ropes shot out of Draco's wand and attached themselves to the armchair, winding their way around Harry's forearms and wrists. Matching ropes twined around his ankles.

Harry's mouth fell open and he began to struggle against the ropes. "What the fuck are you doing?"

"What, like you've never wanted to try a little bondage?" Draco said innocently.

Harry appeared to be quite turned on by this little twist, even as he began to pull at the ropes that bound him.

"Of course I've wanted to try it," he replied. "But right now I just want to fuck you. Don't have the patience for anything new."

"Oh. Shame," Draco said, casually picking up his Slytherin tie off the bed. "Because I do."

"Well, I don't see how that matters," Harry challenged. "Because you know damn well that I can use the Voice on you and make you untie me in ten seconds flat."

"You could," Draco agreed, sliding off the bed to stand in front of Harry. The tie was still clutched in his right hand. "But, of course, you'd have to be able to speak first."

And in one lightning fast movement he slid the tie into Harry's mouth and tied it behind his head.

The look on Harry's face was almost comical.

"Raro Ralroy!" he tried to say, but the tie made an effective gag. His eyes were wide with shock.

"Guess someone's not going to be able to use the Voice on me, are they?" Draco said innocently, sitting back down on the bed. "In fact, I'd guess you don't have any say in what we do at all."

Harry's eyes were narrowing now, as he realized he'd been tricked. "Unrie ree!"

"Sorry, I didn't quite catch that," Draco said pleasantly.

Harry glared at him. Draco merely unfastened his wizard cloak in response.

"Face it Harry, you're just going to have to give me with what I want. And what I want right now is to wank."

If Harry's look before was nothing compared to his look now.

"Rank?" he managed to say.

"Yes, wank," Draco confirmed. He slid off his cloak and tossed it to one side. "I want to wank, and I want you to watch."

He didn't wait for Harry's response before standing up and unfastening his belt. Harry seemed to be out of words as Draco kicked off his shoes and then slid his trousers off. His boxers went next, and Harry moaned under the gag.

Draco merely smiled, and began to unbutton his shirt. As his red Gryffindor t-shirt came into view, Harry began making little sputtering noises.

Finally sliding the white oxford shirt off his shoulders, Draco stood in front of Harry in nothing more than a red t-shirt that read *Go Go Gryffindor!*

Harry was speechless. He stared at the shirt, momentarily immobile. And then he began frantically straining at the ropes that bound him.

Draco was delighted, but instead of freeing Harry he merely sat back down on the edge of the bed. "Like the shirt?" he said innocently. "It's yours, you know." He leaned over and reached into the drawer of the night-table and pulled out a jar of lubricant.

"I think I'll leave it on during the show," he said, deliberately setting the jar down next to him in full view of Harry.

Harry redoubled his efforts to get free, but the ropes held firm. Draco casually scooted back on the bed, bringing his legs up and bending his knees, placing his feet flat on the bed. He leaned over and pulled two pillows down behind his head. He wanted to be able to watch Harry watch him.

He picked up the jar and slowly unscrewed the cap. He dipped his fingers in, coating them well. Reaching down, he took his cock in one hand and began to stroke it slowly. Harry shuddered.

"Raro," he pleaded through his Slytherin tie gag. "Unrie ree."

Draco shook his head. "Nope," he said, and continued his actions. Continuing his strokes, Draco brought his other hand lower between his legs, pausing with two fingers poised to enter himself.

"Oh ruck ree," Harry groaned.

And then, because if Draco was going to be a tease he was going to go all the way, Draco slid his fingers inside at same moment he turned on his veela powers.

Both boys moaned loudly as everything suddenly became that much hotter. Draco began thrashing back and forth on the bed, his movements quickening. Harry was straining to get to him, cursing against the gag and pulling so hard that the ropes were actually shredding his long-sleeved shirt.

When Draco realized he was maybe ten seconds away from coming, he used all his will-power to stop. He shut off his veela powers and slowly sat up on the bed, meeting Harry's lust-darkened eyes.

"Want to watch me come?" he purred. "Or do you want to *make* me come?"

Harry shuddered. Draco deliberately picked up his wand and stood up in front of Harry.

"You look a little frustrated," he said, as he slowly put his right knee on the chair along Harry's left thigh.

Harry growled at him. "Rou're in rig rouble," he said, as menacingly as he could through the tie gag.

"Am I?" Draco said conversationally, sliding his other knee into place along Harry's right side so that he now straddled Harry's lap. He wrapped his arms around Harry's neck, holding his wand behind Harry's head.

"RIG ROUBLE," Harry promised.

"Really?" Draco said, sounding pleased. He slowly and deliberately brought his left hand to Harry's collar bone and dragged one finger carefully down Harry's chest. He traced his finger over pectoral muscles straining under the thin cotton Gryffindor Quidditch shirt, and then back up before sliding his hand down Harry's arm.

"Potter, where did these muscles come from? Have you always had them or have you finally hit puberty?" Draco said, becoming even more turned on by the play of Harry's muscles beneath his hand as Harry struggled to free himself.

Draco moved his hand to the hem of Harry's shirt, and then slid it under the thin material. He touched his hand to Harry's bare stomach, and Harry shuddered as Draco's fingers began a merciless journey across his skin.

And then because he was having way too much fun with this, Draco turned his veela powers back on and tried to concentrate them in the tips of his fingers. It worked; Harry's eyes closed and his head tipped back with a moan as Draco began to trace figure eights on the hyper-sensitive skin of his stomach.

Placing his wand between his teeth for a moment, Draco reached down with both hands and unfastened Harry's Quidditch trousers.

"Lift up," Draco instructed, and Harry obeyed, his hips coming off the chair just enough for Draco to slide his trousers down to his knees.

Grabbing his wand again, Draco called out, "*Accio lube!*" The jar of lubricant shot into his hand and he unscrewed it and dipped his fingers in. Harry watched him, wide-eyed.

After setting the jar on the night-stand, Draco let his slick hand drop to Harry's cock.

Harry swore through the tie gag as Draco began stroking him at a maddeningly slow pace, still concentrating his powers into his touch. As soon as Harry was thoroughly coated Draco stopped and raised himself onto his knees, grasping Harry's cock in one hand.

Harry made a strangled noise in the back of his throat when he realized Draco's intentions, and then both boys gasped as Draco lowered himself onto Harry.

Draco froze. "Just a second," he said, his voice a tiny bit strained. He lowered his head to Harry's shoulder and grimaced slightly. "You're just...it's big, I need a second..."

Harry nodded, though Draco could see the strain he was under by the little beads of sweat appearing on his forehead.

After a few moments, Draco experimentally moved, sliding himself up Harry's cock and then back down onto it.

Harry groaned loudly and his head fell forward, resting against Draco's chest. His own chest was heaving, and Draco could see his pulse in his neck beating rapidly.

Draco slowly moved a couple more times, sighing in bliss as his body relaxed and previous pain became pleasure. "Okay, I'm ready," he said, pointing his wand at Harry. "I want you to give it to me hard. *Finite Incatatum.*"

And the bonds holding Harry disappeared.

Harry's hands immediately shot to Draco's arse and pulled him down, burying himself deep inside. Draco moaned and leaned forward to kiss Harry. The Slytherin tie was still around his mouth, blocking Draco from a proper kiss so Draco yanked it down, freeing Harry's mouth.

"Wanker..." Harry ground out, as they kissed. He was thrusting into Draco now, arching off the chair with every stroke. "Tease..." He punctuated his comments with a hard smack on one of Draco's arse cheeks.

Draco shuddered as pleasure shot through him. "Yes, fine, whatever you want, I'm a wanker and a tease, just don't stop fucking me!"

Harry, now that he was *finally* getting it, was obviously not going to stop fucking Draco anytime soon. He grabbed Draco's arse again and then in one fluid movement that must have been possible purely through adrenaline, he stood up, taking Draco with him.

Draco's eyes went wide, and he instinctively locked his legs around Harry's waist. The next instant Harry had him on his back on the bed, legs over his shoulders. Draco cried out as Harry continued to drive into him. Sparks of color appeared behind his eyes each time Harry hit that spot inside, and then when Harry's hand wrapped around his cock he was lost.

He and Harry came at the same time, Harry deep inside Draco. Harry managed to hold himself up for exactly three seconds before collapsing on top of Draco. Draco's legs promptly fell off Harry's shoulders and he lay limp and sprawled under Harry, completely spent.

Draco's room was silent but for the loud panting of the two boys. Finally, Draco spoke.

"You're very heavy," he informed Harry, who was still sprawled directly on top of him.

"Suck it up," was Harry only response. He didn't so much as budge. Draco sighed and wriggled a bit under him.

"Harry," he whined. "You're squashing me."

"Good. I ought to do a lot more than squash you. Vicious little brat."

"There's no need to call names," Draco said haughtily. At that, Harry propped himself up on his elbows and stared down at Draco.

"I'm going to get you back for that," he promised.

Draco patted his head. "Course you are."

Harry glared. "I mean it. You *will* be punished."

And I look forward to it, Draco thought to himself. Out loud he said, "Budge up, Harry. You're supposed to cuddle me now."

"Oh I am, am I?"

"Absolutely. Whoever bottomed gets to be cuddled and made much of afterwards by the top. It's the rules."

"What rules?" Harry asked, but he was moving off Draco. He kicked off his shoes and shucked his trousers before looking bemusedly at his shirt.

"My Quidditch shirt is ripped," he said, looking at the places where the ropes had shredded the shirt.

"Nothing a good *Reparo* won't fix. Though you could leave it ripped you know. Might be for the best really, seeing as Gryffindor clothes are so hideous."

"Didn't stop *you* from wearing them, I notice. Where'd you get my shirt?"

"Your trunk, obviously. I just couldn't resist exploiting my pervert boyfriend's latest kink."

"*I'm* the pervert boyfriend?" Harry said, pulling off his shirt. "You're the one with the apparent bondage fetish."

"Please," Draco scoffed, pulling off his own shirt. "You got off on it as much as I did."

"Did not," Harry muttered resentfully.

"Such a bad liar, Harry, really," Draco chided, as he slid under the covers and looked at Harry pointedly.

Harry took the hint and joined him under the blankets. He held open his arms and Draco slid into them. As soon as Draco's head of silky blonde hair was resting on his chest, Harry's hands began playing with it.

"Yeah well...you still like getting spanked. That makes you the pervert here, not me," Harry said, running his fingers through baby soft strands of hair.

"Maybe," Draco agreed, already beginning to melt under Harry's touch. "Speaking of spanking, wouldn't that be a great way to get me back for this? I'd really learn my lesson about being a naughty cocktease if you turned me over your knee."

"I'll keep that in mind," Harry said with amusement. "Though I rather think you might enjoy it too much."

"Rubbish, Potter." Draco shifted so that he was lying fully on top of Harry. "Naptime?"

"All we've done all week is shag and sleep," Harry pointed out, even as he let his eyes flutter shut.

"Problem?" Draco asked, nuzzling into Harry's neck.

"Nope," Harry replied. He sighed with contentment and cuddled Draco closer. After a few moments, Harry yawned.

"I liked you in a Gryffindor t-shirt, it was hot," he said sleepily. "I'll be sure to wear a Slytherin t-shirt at your next match."

Draco, who'd been nearly asleep, was suddenly wide-awake. "Wait, *what?* You in Slytherin clothes? Are you serious?"

"Mmm-hmm," Harry murmured. "Go Go Slytherin."

"Harry, that's so *hot*. Screw the nap. Go put my Slytherin uniform on right now, would you? You'd look edible in Slytherin clothes. Come on Harry, I want you again. Please? Harry? You can't be asleep! Go Go Slytherin, remember? Harry? *Harry!* Damn you, Potter!"

The Veela Enigma

Chapter 27: Possession

February 2

Lucius,

I have a new mission for you. You will be going to Romania to open dialogues with the vampires. It is most imperative that we have them on our side.

You will leave for Romania Saturday next, and be gone one month. Please make the necessary arrangements.

I do not need to tell you to destroy this letter.

LV

"Where is Harry again?" Draco asked, as he sat at the Gryffindor dinner table with Ron and Hermione. "I wanted to show him this letter I just got from my dad. Says he's going to go to Romania for a month on a mission for the Dark Lord."

"Harry's talking with Professor Dumbledore," Hermione answered, neatly dishing some mashed potatoes onto her plate. "Dumbledore will tell him; I'm sure your dad sent a letter to him as well."

Draco nodded. "He did. Says he told everyone he'd be gone and not to worry about him." He glanced over to where Ron was sitting and made a face. "Well, I just hope Harry hurries or Weasley will have eaten all the steak and kidney pie."

Ron, who was indeed shoveling amazing quantities of steak and kidney pie into his mouth, stopped to glare at Draco.

"Thod off," he snapped through a full mouth.

"Anything for you, *Ron*," Draco cooed. "You know I can't resist over-sized, ginger ogres like yourself."

Ron's glare increased. "I haven't forgiven you, you know."

"Why Ronald, what on *earth* are you talking about?" Draco asked, his eyes wide and innocent.

Hermione noted Ron's red face and Draco's sarcastic attitude, and contemplated intervening. Then she shrugged. Might as well enjoy the show.

"I haven't forgiven you for getting Harry's home address from me by using your bloody powers on me the way you did," Ron seethed. "You could have just asked."

"No I couldn't have. You told me to get lost," Draco countered. "I had no choice."

"No, you had a choice. You're just a manipulative brat. You *enjoy* doing that kind of stuff to people."

Draco narrowed his eyes. "I'm going to tell Harry you called me a brat."

"Fine," Ron said spitefully. "I'll remind Harry you used your veela powers on me. You know how jealous he gets when you do that."

"Fine," Draco spat. "Then I'll tell Harry I only used them because you threatened to *hit* me."

"Then I'll tell Harry I was only going to hit you because he's my best friend and I was defending him."

"I'll tell Harry you made fun of me for being a veela."

"Now you're just making shit up!" Ron said hotly.

"I'm not. You did once. In my room, remember? You said Harry ought to keep me as a pet on a leash and collar."

"I was *joking*," Ron stressed, sounding extremely annoyed. "And anyway, that was like...three months ago!"

Draco made a sad face and put a hand over his heart. "And it still hurts, Ronald." He sniffed loudly. "It still hurts."

Ron was turning an impressive shade of red by this point, but lucky Harry chose that moment to appear at the Gryffindor table.

"Hey," he said, sitting down next to Draco, across from Ron and Hermione. "Oh good, steak and kidney pie."

Draco immediately scooted close to him. "Hi Harry," he said sweetly. "I like your jumper."

Harry smiled at him. "You should, you picked it out. Along with everything else I'm wearing."

Harry was dressed from head to toe in gorgeous clothes, and not a single item had ever belonged to Dudley. Draco had made good on his promise to outfit Harry in new clothes that actually fit.

Draco beamed at him, and Ron rolled his eyes. "Kiss-up," the red-head muttered under his breath.

Draco narrowed his eyes and tugged on Harry's sleeve. "Harry," he whispered urgently. "Harry, the Weasel's being mean to me."

Ron was outraged. "I am *not*! Your boyfriend is just a complete tosser, Harry. He's getting on my nerves."

"There, you see?" Draco said, his voice pitiful. He snuggled up to Harry and wrapped his arms around Harry's torso. "Mean."

Harry looked at Ron suspiciously. "Were you being mean to Draco?"

Carefully turning his head so that Harry couldn't see it, Draco stuck his tongue out at Ron, who immediately began sputtering.

"What? No! NO! *He* was making fun of *me* first, Harry."

"I wasn't," Draco said righteously, tongue back in his mouth. "I merely told him to save some steak and kidney pie for you, Harry, because I know how much you like it."

Harry looked back and forth between them. Draco decided to fight dirty. He climbed into Harry's lap right at the Gryffindor table and put his arms around Harry's neck.

"You're not going to let Ron be mean to me anymore, are you?" he asked.

Ron could see Harry melting at the power of his inhumanly gorgeous boyfriend, and swore under his breath.

Hermione chose that moment to speak up. "Harry, I know Malfoy has you completely whipped, but really, you're not going to fall for this, are you?"

Ron gazed at Hermione with reverence and gratitude. Draco had just enough time to shoot her a dirty look before Harry was protesting.

"I'm *not* whipped! Why does everyone think I'm whipped?"

"I don't think you're whipped, Harry."

"Oh, shut up Malfoy. Of course you'd say that, you're the one who's got him whipped in the first place."

"I don't remember anyone asking for your opinion, *Weasley*."

"Enough!" Harry said. "Ron, don't be mean to Draco anymore. He's my boyfriend and it pisses me off when people upset him. And Draco..."

Draco gave Harry a pair of big, sad puppy dog eyes and Harry was momentarily flustered. Ron and Hermione cleared their throats expectantly.

Harry jumped slightly. "Right," he said, "Draco, you behave yourself and don't give Ron any of your bad attitude."

"I don't have a *bad attitude*," Draco said indignantly.

"You do," Harry said sternly. "It wouldn't kill you to be more polite to Ron."

Now Draco's dirty look was turned on Harry, and he pointedly slid off Harry's lap. "I am always unfailingly polite," he said snottily. "I can't help it if Weasley didn't learn any manners in that hovel he was raised in."

"Draco!" Harry snapped. "That was really rude. You should apologize to Ron."

"No," Draco sneered, standing up. "A Malfoy would *never* lower himself to apologize to a Weasley."

Three faces at the Gryffindor table darkened at this, and Draco belatedly realized how cruel and snobby he was being.

Still, he had his pride, so instead of apologizing he stuck his nose in the air.

"I'm leaving," he said pointedly.

"Good," Harry shot back. "I don't want to be anywhere near you if you're going to act like this."

That *really* stung. Draco's eyes widened slightly, but he quickly narrowed them.

"Don't think you can guilt-trip me into apologizing, Potter," he warned.

"I'm not trying to guilt-trip you. I'm stating a fact," Harry said, annoyance clear in his voice. "I don't care what our relationship is; you don't get to treat my friends like dirt. So go. And if you ever feel like apologizing, you can find me in Gryffindor tower."

"You're bluffing. You'll come running back to me first," Draco predicted. "Groveling and begging and apologizing."

"Try me, Malfoy," was Harry's only response, and Draco finally stormed off to his room.

"Harry, Harry, I'm *sorry*, please don't be mad at me anymore," Draco sobbed into Harry's shoulder two hours later in the Gryffindor common room.

Harry rubbed his back soothingly. "Shh, I know baby, its okay."

"No, I was really rude to Weasley and it upset you and I feel so *bad*..."

Harry kissed his head while Draco shifted in Harry's lap to better hide his face in Harry's neck. Ron and Hermione watched in slight awe.

"This explains a lot, actually," Ron said, as Draco went into yet another torrent of apologies.

"Explains what?"

"Well, I've been wondering about Harry. Not that he's a shallow guy, but he did lust after Cho for three years mostly because she was pretty. And he's made such a big commitment to Malfoy, who really is still such a prat. I just wondered some times if Harry really knew what he was doing or if he was just sprung on Malfoy's looks. But this..."

He gestured to the couple a few feet away on the couch, cuddling and making up.

"Malfoy really loves him," he said, as if he had just realized it.

Hermione smiled. "He does."

"Like...he *loves* him. I didn't...I didn't really understand until now. But I get it. I get why Harry will put up with anything. Harry might be whipped, but Malfoy...Malfoy *needs* Harry. He's really good to Harry, isn't he?"

Hermione watched Harry and Draco with soft eyes for a moment. "Yes. He is."

Harry whispered something to Draco, and Draco sniffed and nodded. Harry gently guided him off his lap to the couch, and Draco sat huddled in a ball, knees drawn to his chest, as Harry got up and went up the staircase.

Ron wasn't even aware he was still staring at Draco until the blonde lifted his head. Draco's eyes were red-rimmed and his hair was mussed from Harry's hands, and he looked very small and forlorn.

"Hey Weasley," he said in quiet voice. "Sorry."

Ron, though it might pain him later to admit it, completely melted.

"Hey, it's okay, don't worry about it," he said quickly. "No harm done."

"Yeah?" Draco asked, voice wavering slightly.

"Oh yeah," Ron hurriedly assured him. "I'm completely over it. I'll be sure to tell Harry that."

Draco actually smiled slightly. "That'd be great, thanks." He sat on the couch, staring blankly into the fire, until suddenly all three of them heard a loud CLICK!

Draco looked up with a start. "What the - Creevy? Did you just take my picture?"

Colin looked excited. "Oh yeah. It was perfect. You were staring into the fire and your eyes were all shiny. You looked gorgeous."

Ron knew that Draco normally would have responded acerbically to the younger student for taking his picture without asking, but he looked like he didn't have the energy to fight.

"Creevy, just...ask next time, alright? I'm not a landscape or bowl of fruit."

"No, but you're a *veela*," Colin said eagerly. He brought the camera to his eyes and took a couple more pictures.

Draco gave him an irritated look. "Creevy, I just told you to ask. Knock it off."

"But Malfoy, you're so beautiful. You can't tell people not to take your picture!"

"I can," Draco said. His voice was starting to get a little angry. "It's disrespectful to take my picture when I don't want it."

Colin snapped yet another picture.

"*Stop it!*"

"But you look *good* angry. Hold that pose, will you?"

"Scram Colin," Ron said, stepping in. "He told you he doesn't want his picture taken."

"But Ron, he's like, artwork or something. He doesn't have the right to tell people not to take his picture."

"Yes he does," Hermione said, trying to be patient. "He has as much right to say so as the next person."

"But he's not a person, he's a *veela*," Colin protested. "Come on Malfoy, look into the fire again."

Ron and Hermione stood dumbstruck for a second. They had heard Harry mention Cho's prejudices but never really heard anyone before treat Draco like he wasn't fully human. Draco himself looked torn between hexing Colin and bursting into tears again.

At that moment, a low tenor sounded behind all of them.

"What did you just say, Colin?"

It was Harry.

Colin craned his head to look over his shoulder. "Oh, hi Harry. I was just telling Ron and Hermione that Malfoy has to let me take his picture."

The rest of the common room had fallen silent at this point. An angry Harry Potter was something most of them were somewhat accustomed to, but that didn't mean they weren't going to watch the scene in front of them.

Harry narrowed his eyes and folded his arms across his chest. "Draco doesn't have to do anything he doesn't want to do," he informed Colin, his voice low and angry.

"But I really want to take his picture. It's like...getting the chance to take a picture of a unicorn or something."

"Colin," and here Harry's voice became practically a growl. "Draco is not a unicorn or some other kind of magical beast."

"But he's a veela," Colin said, sounding puzzled. "Isn't that a type of magical beast?"

Ron and Hermione made offended noises, Draco reached for his wand, but Harry beat all of them to it.

He grabbed Colin by the front of his shirt and lifted him bodily off the ground. Colin squealed in fright.

"Draco is not a beast of any kind," Harry said menacingly into Colin's face. "He is my boyfriend, and you will treat him with respect. Understood?"

Colin was nodding rapidly, but suddenly Draco was standing next to him.

"I appreciate your righteous indignation on my behalf, really, but can we just get out of here?" he said to Harry. Harry looked at him, noting the angry flush on his cheeks and the way he was gritting his teeth.

"Of course love," he said, letting go of Colin's shirt. Colin fell to the ground and stumbled a bit. They walked to the portrait hole, and then Harry turned to the watching crowd.

"Listen, all of you," he snapped. "I don't want to hear anyone spewing filth like that again. If I heard word that Draco has been treated with anything less than the utmost respect, you will have me to deal with."

One last angry glare in Colin's direction, then Harry followed Draco out of the common room.

Draco was walking as fast as he could, and Harry had to almost jog to keep up with him. They didn't speak, but Harry could tell from the pink tinge on Draco's cheeks that he was highly pissed off.

They reached the dragon portrait and went into Draco's room. As soon as they were in, Draco slammed the portrait shut.

"Fucking Creevy," he said bitterly. "Fucking voyeuristic little wanker."

"I'm so sorry, Draco," Harry said seriously, wanting to hug Draco but giving him his space.

Draco set his jaw. "I hate it when people treat me like that. Like I'm some kind of animal. I'm not, Harry, I'm not."

"I know you're not," Harry said, completely honestly. "I've never thought you were."

Draco ran a frustrated hand through his hair, a gesture he had picked up from Harry. "But I'm not human either," he said resentfully. "So what am I, Harry? What am I?"

Harry crossed to him and looked straight into his eyes. "Mine," he whispered. "And bugger everything else."

Draco responded to this by grabbing Harry by the face and yanking him close. "Yours," he whispered, tilting his head up to kiss Harry.

"Yes," Harry said against Draco's lips, arms automatically going around Draco. Draco's hands found their way into Harry's hair and he held on tightly as he started pushing Harry backwards. Harry went without a fight, letting Draco push him until the back of his knees hit the bed and he fell down on it.

Draco climbed on top of him, clever fingers working at Harry's clothes. "Yours," he said again, lifting Harry's shirt over his head. "And you're mine."

"All yours," Harry agreed, his hands on the fastenings of Draco's trousers.

"Say it again," Draco demanded, leaning down to suck on Harry's neck.

Harry closed his eyes in pleasure. "I'm yours. Only yours."

Draco ripped open Harry's belt and unzipped his pants.

"I'm going to make you come so hard," Draco whispered, as he began to trail kisses down Harry's chest and stomach. "I'm going to make you scream my name. Because maybe I'm not human, but no human could do to you what I'm about to do. I'm proud of what I am."

"Veela," Harry said, his voice hoarse as Draco's tongue circled his bellybutton.

"Veela," Draco agreed. "And yours."

Harry wanted to respond to that with eloquent and heartfelt words, but then Draco took him in his mouth and the only word he could say was, "*Draco!*"

On the appointed Saturday he was to leave for Romania, Lucius had everything in order. He had told everyone he knew that he would be abroad for a month. The House Elves had packed his trunk, which was currently the size of small book and fit easily in his cloak pocket.

"I don't like it when you go on missions for the Dark Lord," Narcissa said, leaning against the doorframe and watching him double-check that he had everything. "At least Dumbledore cares for your life."

"I know, love," Lucius said. "But I cannot turn the Dark Lord down. I wish I could. I'd much rather stay with you."

"I know," she said, walking over to him. "Just be careful."

"I will be," he promised, wrapping arms around her waist and pulling her into a tight embrace.

She flung her arms around his neck and hugged him back. "Come home safe to me," she said, softly, inches from his lips. "I'll miss you."

"I'll miss you too," Lucius echoed, and kissed her.

When he could delay it no longer he Apparated to Riddle Manor. Voldemort had not told him exactly where in Romania he was to go, so Lucius followed the Dark Lord's plan to have him Apparate to Riddle Manor first and learn the details.

He appeared just outside the front gates of the house with a small *pop*. He felt extremely uneasy about this, and he couldn't quite put his finger on why. Naturally, working as a spy leant itself to a sort of constant sense of uneasiness from fear of discovery, but this was different.

This wasn't fear that he would be discovered as Dumbledore's spy. This was a much more primal, basic fear. A fear for his own safety.

Lucius shook his head. He wasn't being rational. He wasn't in any more danger from the Dark Lord now than at any other time during his service. The Dark Lord was known for his cruel treatment of even his most loyal followers, it was true, but he had always been notably lenient with Lucius.

Especially since learning Lucius was part veela.

Lucius frowned as he began to walk towards the house. He wasn't blind, and he wasn't stupid. He had seen the way the Dark Lord looked at him, the way he contrived flimsy excuses to have Lucius visit Riddle Manor, the way he would sometimes reach out and touch Lucius' hair. It all made Lucius uneasy. There were times when he could have sworn that he saw lust reflected in those burning red eyes.

But surely not? Lord Voldemort, who preached blood purity and loyalty and who was responsible for killing dozens of half-bloods and muggles, could not possibly lust after someone who was only three-quarters human.

He reached the front door, and lifted his hand to knock. Then he hesitated. Every nerve in his body was screaming at him to run, run fast, run as far away as he could. Shaking his head, he berated himself for being a coward and knocked on the large wooden door.

The door was answered by another Death Eater wearing a hood and mask like his own. He opened the door widely to let Lucius in and efficiently ushered Lucius into the parlour.

"The Dark Lord will be with you in a moment," the unknown Death Eater said. Lucius nodded in comprehension and took a seat on the large, hard couch across from the fire.

To his surprise, the other Death Eater took a seat across from him.

"You are to join me on my mission?" Lucius asked, with some surprise.

A short nod was his answer.

"Very well. Then perhaps the Dark Lord has told you where we are to go in Romania?" Lucius asked, hoping to acquire details from his new companion.

"Romania? Why would we go to Romania?" the other Death Eater answered.

Lucius was taken aback for a moment. "We are to meet with the Romanian vampires and convince them to fight for our cause. Surely the Dark Lord told you."

"Oh. Right," the other Death Eater said carelessly. "Vampires. I forgot."

Something was off here.

Lucius felt decidedly uneasy. "Who are you?" he demanded of his unknown counterpart.

"Does it matter, *Malfoy*?" the hooded figure asked, and beneath his mask Lucius' eyes went wide. This other Death Eater knew who *he* was. Lucius didn't like that.

"Show yourself," he commanded, rising to his feet and drawing his wand. "Unless you need pain to convince you to remove your hood?"

The other Death Eater held up his hands. "Easy, Lucius." He slowly reached up and lowered his hood and removed his mask, revealing a gaunt face with sunken brown eyes and limp brown hair.

Lucius' eyes narrowed in hate. "Nott," he spat, the very word foul on his tongue. "You worthless piece of scum, I should *kill* you. Do you realize what your son did to mine?"

"On the Dark Lord's orders," Nott said defensively. "Because your son is a filthy beast and a blood-traitor."

Lucius' eyes blazed. "*Cruci* -"

"*Expelliarmus!*"

Lucius' wand flew out of his hand and arced across the room, landing neatly in an outstretched palm.

"Good evening, Lucius," the Dark Lord said softly.

"So how come you've been alone all evening, Harry?" Hermione asked, looking up from her armchair at Harry, who was sprawled across the couch in front of the fireplace in the Gryffindor common room. "We haven't seen you up in Gryffindor tower since the incident with Colin last week."

"Yeah, where's your veela?" Ron commented from the chair next to Hermione.

"Quidditch practice. Dorian MacNair, that Seventh-year tosser, is the Slytherin captain and he won't let me watch Draco's practices. So I left Draco a note and told him I'd be up here." Harry looked at his watch. "They should have finished by now, so he'll probably be along any minute."

Ron and Hermione nodded, and just then the portrait of the Fat Lady swung open.

"Harry? Are you in here?"

Several pairs of eyes turned to the portrait hole as Draco walked in. His blonde hair was damp and slightly messy, and he wearing his pajamas with one of Harry's new jumpers thrown over the top. He looked put-out and a little grumpy and almost ridiculously adorable, and you could actually see every Gryffindor in the common room dissolving into mush.

Harry craned his neck up and looked over the back of the couch. Ron rolled his eyes at the sappy expression that formed on Harry's face at the sight of his boyfriend.

"Over here, love," he called out, waving.

Draco gave him a dirty look and walked over to the couch.

"Granger, Weasley," he said politely, and then narrowed his eyes and folded his arms over his chest. "You weren't in my room," he said to Harry accusingly.

"I know, but I left a note - "

"Not good enough," Draco snapped. "I got back from practice dirty and exhausted because MacNair made us do 75 extra laps around the pitch. And do you know *why* we did 75 extra laps? Because *somebody* made the Gryffindor team do extra laps and he heard about it. So it was all your fault I had such a lousy practice and then when I finally get back to my room you're not even bloody there!"

Harry looked truly contrite. "Sorry. I should have been there," he said, setting his book down on the table next to the couch.

"Yes, you should have," Draco said pointedly. "I had to take a shower *by myself*, and then climb *all those stairs* just so I could see you."

Before his revelation last week Ron might have been aggravated that Malfoy was such an incredible spoiled brat. Now instead he noticed little things about their relationship he wouldn't have before - how Draco was so focused on Harry and unconcerned with everyone else, and how soft Harry's eyes became when he looked at Draco, cute and vulnerable in his pajamas. He also noticed that far from actually throwing a tantrum, the blonde just seemed extremely tired.

Harry scooted back against the arm of the couch and opened his legs to a "v". "Come here," he said, holding open his arms.

Draco dropped onto the couch and snuggled up against Harry, resting his back and head against Harry's chest. Harry immediately wrapped his arms around Draco and rested his cheek against Draco's damp hair.

"So why'd you steal my jumper?" Harry asked affectionately. He squeezed Draco in a tight hug. "You have lots of your own."

Draco's whole body was relaxing against Harry's. "Cause it smelled like you," he mumbled, turning on his side to nuzzle his face into Harry's chest. "And I missed you."

Oh God. Even Ron thought that was adorable.

Harry started kissing him over and over on his head. "You're so cute when you're sleepy," he said between kisses.

"Shutup," Draco mumbled. He seemed to be nearly asleep. "Can we lie down?"

Harry very carefully began to ease his legs out along the couch, sprawling out on his back. Draco wriggled a bit until he was directly on top of Harry, still curled up slightly.

"Better?" Harry asked, beginning to play with Draco's hair.

"Mmm," Draco responded, and in what seemed like seconds Draco was fast asleep, chest slowly rising and falling.

"Isn't he squashing you?" Ron asked, trying very hard to feel disgusted. "He's not small."

Harry glanced over at Ron and shook his head. "Not really, no. He's not all that heavy."

"Or maybe you like it so you just don't care," Hermione said sagely.

Harry's cheeks flushed ever so slightly and he quickly changed the subject. "He's been so tired this last week. I'm getting a little worried, actually."

"You don't need to worry. It's perfectly normal," Hermione said, her quill scratching across her parchment. "After all, it is February."

She was met by blank stares from both Harry and Ron. She sighed, put her quill back in its inkpot and looked at them witheringly.

"Mating season is almost here."

Harry and Ron's eyes widened comically.

Hermione seemed to take a perverse joy in their shock. "He's got to get his sleep now, doesn't he? He won't be sleeping much over the next couple weeks."

"Ma-Mating season?" Harry said, his eyes still bulging behind his glasses.

"Yes, Harry. We talked about this, remember? Veela go through a mating season in late winter or early spring. It's already February. He's sleeping more than usual to prepare for it." She raised an eyebrow. "Are *you* prepared?"

Harry exchanged a glance with Ron. "What do I have to do to prepare?"

"Harry, he's going to want sex, and lots and lots of it. You're going to get exhausted. You probably should ask Professor Snape for an energy potion now. I think there might even be potions designed especially for a veela's mate."

Harry shook his head rapidly. "No. No way. I'm not asking Professor Snape for anything. *Especially* not that. I'll be fine. I don't think it's possible for me to get too much sex anyway."

Hermione looked worried. "Harry, you don't understand. You *will* need a potion. You're not going to be able to meet Draco's needs otherwise."

"I can meet my boyfriend's needs just fine without a potion, Hermione," Harry said, a little too hotly. Draco stirred on Harry's chest and made a small whine of protest.

Harry softened immediately. "Sorry, baby, sorry. It's okay. Go back to sleep." He resumed his petting movement in Draco's hair, and Draco relaxed immediately.

"Harry, do you have to call him that?" Ron asked, pleased to find *something* about Harry and Draco's relationship that he still found icky. "He's not a baby, you know."

"I can't help it," Harry said sheepishly. "I mean, I know he's not a baby. I do. Everyone's always telling me how scary he is and Snape was right, he can be *really* dangerous. But then he does something like *this* - " Harry indicated Draco sleeping on top of him " - and I can't stop myself. He's so cute and vulnerable and I just want to protect him and keep him safe, because he *is* my baby, sort of, if that makes sense...not like, my actual baby but my little baby veela and...um...yeah."

Harry trailed off at this point when he realized that Ron and Hermione were staring at him.

He flushed bright red. "So..." he said desperately. "Uh...how about those Canons?"

"Have a seat, Lucius."

Lucius did not sit. "May I have my wand back?" he asked politely.

The Dark Lord looked amused. "So that you can curse one of my Death Eaters? I think not, Lucius. Sit, please. And take your hood off."

Reluctantly, Lucius sat back down to the couch. He slowly removed his mask and lowered his hood.

As his hair and face came into view, he found Lord Voldemort staring at him intensely. "Nott, get Lucius a drink," he commanded, not taking his eyes off Lucius.

"No thank you Nott," Lucius snapped. "I will not drink anything touched by filth like yourself."

"Is that the real reason you're declining, Lucius?" Lord Voldemort asked, red eyes still fixed on Lucius' face. "Or could that be because you do not hold your liquor very well?"

Lucius' cheeks took on the slightest pink tinge, exactly like Draco's did when he was angry.

"Come, Nott and I know you are part-veela," the Dark Lord said almost soothingly. "We will not hold it against you if you get drunk on a single malt scotch."

Voldemort signaled to Nott, who nodded and crossed over to a large glass cabinet filled with bottles.

"My Lord, I am quite anxious to begin my mission. Perhaps you could inform me where I am going?" Lucius was decidedly uncomfortable, and he wanted to leave Riddle Manor as soon as possible.

Nott appeared at his side, a glass of scotch resting on a silver tray. Lucius snatched it off the tray angrily, feeling very much in need of a stiff drink in order to keep his temper in the face of Nott's presence and Voldemort's intense gaze.

Lord Voldemort watched with a pleased look as Lucius swallowed the contents of the glass.

"You are anxious to leave for Romania, then?" he asked.

Lucius nodded. He felt alarmingly light-headed after his drink, but did not think too much of it. The Dark Lord was right. He did not hold his liquor well.

"That is good," Lord Voldemort said, steepling his fingers. "But there has been a change in plans. You will not be going to Romania after all."

"Oh," Lucius said, trying to process this. His mind was beginning to feel distinctly hazy. "Am I to go elsewhere, then?"

Lord Voldemort shook his head. "No. You will be staying right here."

Lucius rubbed his temples for a moment to try to clear his head. "So...I am free to go home?"

Voldemort smiled. "No," he repeated softly. "You will be staying right here. In Riddle Manor."

"What?" Lucius said, blinking. His vision was beginning to cloud, and his tongue felt three times its normal size. "But...but I thought..." He swallowed hard. "I can't...I can't think..."

"No, of course you can't," Voldemort said. "Because Nott has put a Knockout Drought into your scotch. You have maybe 30 seconds of consciousness left."

"Wha...why..." Lucius had no time say anything else. The last thing he remembered was the sound of glass breaking as his scotch glass slipped from his fingers and shattered on the floor.

When Lucius came to he was in a large room, lying in the middle of an enormous bed. He had no idea where he was. He was unbound and apparently unharmed, but he had no idea how long that would last.

He sat up, wincing at the ache in his head. He quickly took stock of his surroundings. Besides the bed the room had a large wardrobe, desk and dresser, as well as several filled bookcases. Next to the wardrobe was a partially open door, and Lucius could see it apparently led to a bathroom. Directly across from the bed was a closed door.

There were no windows.

Gingerly, he got to his feet. His head was pounding and he still felt very dazed, but his strength was slowly returning. He walked around the room. It was tastefully furnished, with lush wall hangings, a thick rug on the floor and plush bedding and pillows on the bed. The bathroom was also outfitted luxuriously, with scented soaps and fluffy towels.

It appeared to be someone's bedchamber, and however lavish it might have been Lucius had no desire to stay there. He quickly crossed to the closed door and tried to yank it open.

As he had suspected, it was locked.

Lucius warily sat back down on the bed. He had no idea what time it was or where he was being held. He had no wand or weapon. He was absolutely vulnerable.

Suddenly, he heard a commotion at the locked door, and jumped to his feet. The door swung open, and Voldemort and Nott entered the room. Nott was carrying another silver tray with a goblet on it.

"I see our little veela has finally woken up," the Dark Lord said pleasantly.

"I am *not* a veela," Lucius snarled. "Where am I? How long was I unconscious? And why did you drug me and lock me in a bedchamber?"

"Patience, my dear Lucius, patience. To answer your first question, you are still at Riddle Manor, in a guest room that I had specially prepared for you. Is it nice, is it not? As to your second question, you have been unconscious the entire night. It is now morning, and save for myself and Nott, the rest of the world believes you to be in Romania."

Lucius stared at him. "You set me up."

"I did," Voldemort confirmed. "I wanted to be sure no one would come looking for you before things were finished."

"Before what was finished? You still haven't told me why I'm here."

"And I do not have to tell you. But I am feeling generous." He gestured at Nott. "You see this goblet here?"

"I'm not blind," Lucius snapped.

Instead of hitting him with the Crutiatius curse for his cheek, Voldemort merely smiled.

"This goblet contains a draught of the *Mutosis* potion. Are you familiar with it?"

Lucius shook his head. "Never heard of it," he said tersely.

"The *Mutosis* potion is a most ancient and complicated potion, predating even Salazar Slytherin. It takes months to brew, and requires difficult to find ingredients. It was originally meant for werewolves. The potion would be nearly complete, and as a final ingredient the Potions Master added three hairs from the back of a transformed werewolf. Once ready, the potion would be given to the werewolf for the three weeks following the full moon, while he or she was in their human state."

"And what would happen to them?" Lucius asked, becoming increasingly worried as he eyed the goblet on Nott's silver tray.

Voldemort's eyes gleamed. "They transformed back into their wolf state - *permanently*."

Lucius gasped. "*What?*"

"Yes," Voldemort confirmed. "The wolf blood would come to dominate the human blood, and the werewolf would never again regain its human form."

Lucius stared. "Why would someone wish to do such a thing? It's simply monstrous."

"Come Lucius, they're only werewolves," Voldemort said, amused. "I would never have taken you for the tender type."

"I'm not," Lucius bit out. "But I have seen werewolves, and to force what was once a human to live in that condition permanently is worse than torture."

Voldemort shrugged. "It is Dark Magic, Lucius. Surely you are accustomed to it by now?"

Lucius chose not to answer, instead staring at the goblet again. "But I am not a werewolf. What does that potion have to do with me?"

"I am coming to that," Voldemort said. "About two hundred years after the invention of the potion, someone startled onto a most surprising discovery: the werewolf fur could be replaced with veela hair."

Lucius froze. "What?" he whispered.

"Oh yes. But not just any veela hair. When the potion is made with the hair of a true veela and given to back to that veela, what do you think happens?"

Lucius shook his head. "I don't...I don't know..."

"Nothing," Voldemort said simply. "Absolutely nothing. You see, Lucius, the purpose of the potion is *mutation*; to transform something into something else. A true veela with veela powers, such as your son, cannot be transformed any further. He is already in his evolved veela state. Likewise the potion does nothing to humans; there is nothing within them for the potion to change."

Voldemort took a step forward, eyes gleaming. "But a part-veela such as yourself..."

Lucius took a step back, realization hitting him. "You took my hair," he said accusingly. "Is this what you've done with it?"

"Yes," Voldemort confirmed, stepping towards Lucius again. He pointed at the goblet again. "That potion was made with your hair. And when the hair of a part-veela is added to the *Mutosis* potion and the potion given back to that part-veela, the part-veela will evolve into a full veela."

"No," Lucius said, shaking his head. "I don't believe you."

"It's true," Voldemort said, taking another step towards him. "Naturally, the process does not happen overnight. You must drink the potion everyday for twenty-one days to reach your full potential. But it will happen."

"No," Lucius repeated, stepping backwards again. "I don't have enough veela blood in me. I won't transform."

"You will," Voldemort replied calmly. He continued to advance on Lucius, who continued to retreat. "I checked already. Remember how much it pained you to remove your own hair? That was the test. You have enough active

veela magic in your blood for removing your magical hairs to cause you pain. You are veela enough for the potion to work."

"You're mad," Lucius said furiously. "Why do you want this? What on earth would you gain if I become a full veela?"

He felt the hard press of stone as he hit the wall behind him. He had nowhere else to go and the Dark Lord was right in front of him.

The Dark Lord stretched out his hand and slowly ran one finger down the side of Lucius' face.

"A fuck-toy," he said with a horrible smile.

Lucius' eyes bugged out. "WHAT?" he yelped.

"A fuck-toy," Voldemort repeated. "A beautiful, magical, easily controlled fuck-toy. You've done your reading, Lucius; I know you know the many different uses for veela powers. Why should I - the most powerful wizard since Salazar Slytherin - content myself with ordinary humans when I can have a veela to warm my bed?"

Lucius stared dumb-struck at him. "You're going to mutate me into a veela so I can be your *fuck-toy*?"

"Exactly. You should feel honored. Many Death Eaters would give their right hands to trade places with you."

Lucius' mind was spinning. "I won't do it," he said defiantly.

"You will."

"I *won't*. I won't take your potion and I won't become a veela for you. I'm no good to you like this; I may be part-veela but I have no veela powers."

"You will by the time I'm done with you. The potion will activate all the veela powers that lie dormant within you. And as for taking the potion - I think you will. I could easily put you under the Imperious curse and force you to, but I have a better method for ensuring that you take it."

He pointed his wand at Lucius' temple and muttered a spell.

A Memory-Charm reversal spell.

Immediately the memory of an Obliviated conversation flooded back into Lucius' mind:

...It is so very rare, you know. A male, being born with the powers of a veela. Draco is quite a unique and extraordinary gift... Such a beautiful boy, and with such powers. If he were mine..."

...The ancient wizards used to keep veela as concubines, you know...Without their mates they go mad, and are easily manipulated under the Imperious curse...

...I'm merely observing that Draco would make the most perfect fuck-toy a dark wizard could ever ask for...

...So beautiful...If I didn't know you had a son, Malfoy, I'd take you. You are stunning, and I could work to bring out the weak veela traits you do possess. But Draco is the real prize, and I can wait. If he looks half as erotic tied up and struggling as you do, it will be worth it...

Lucius eyes were wide and he was panting with the horror of his regained memories. "You unimaginable bastard..." he snarled.

"I was so set on having Draco," Voldemort said calmly. "Male veela with true veela powers are very, very rare. I was quite furious when my carefully planned attempt to get him failed. But then I stumbled onto this little potion here, and realized it would work perfectly on you."

Voldemort reached out and lifted one long lock of Lucius' hair, sliding it through his fingers. "So you see now, my dear Lucius, why you will take the potion without a fight? If I have you, I don't need Draco. Willingly turn yourself into a veela for me, and I will spare your son."

Lucius stood stock still for one moment, and then glared at the Dark Lord with burning hatred.

"*Damn you,*" he hissed, snatching the goblet off the silver tray. "Damn you to the farthest reaches of *Hell.*"

He threw back his head and downed the contents in three gulps, slamming the goblet back down on the tray so hard that Nott lurched forward.

Lord Voldemort watched him with a pleased smile. "Good boy, Lucius," he said softly. "You have three weeks, and then...*you will be mine.*"

Chapter Warnings: Sex and more nefarious schemes

The Veela Enigma

Chapter 28: Only Human

"Draco? Draco love, are you awake?"

There was no answer from the blonde head resting heavily on Harry's shoulder. Harry sighed and looked across the breakfast table at Ron and Hermione.

"He's asleep," Harry said, sounding slightly bemused. "Again. When exactly is this mating season thing supposed to start?"

"Any day now," Hermione answered. "So let him sleep. He needs it."

Harry ran his fingers briefly through Draco's hair in a soothing motion. "Well, of course I will. But I had kind of hoped we could spend the weekend together and he wouldn't be asleep the whole time."

"You could use the weekend to talk to Professor Snape about that potion you're going to need," Hermione said pointedly.

Harry blanched, and Ron looked a bit amused.

"Yes, Harry, why don't you do that? Go tell Professor Snape you need a potion because you're not going to be able to meet Malfoy's needs in the bedroom otherwise. That won't make you look like a pathetic loser at all."

Harry flinched at those words, causing Hermione to glare at Ron.

"Ron!" Hermione snapped. "Leave him alone. Harry's a human; he physically cannot keep up with a veela in heat. It's not his fault."

"Yeah, but what's Malfoy going to say when Harry has to take a potion to satisfy him? You really think he'll understand?" Ron pointed at the sleeping blonde. "Malfoy might not say it out loud, but he'll think of Harry as less of a man if Harry has to take that potion."

"He won't," Hermione insisted. "Give him a little more credit, Ron."

"No, Ron's right," Harry said, swallowing hard. "You're not a guy, Hermione, you don't understand. He'll be disappointed in me if I have to take a potion to satisfy him. And yes, Draco probably won't actually say it, but he'll think it, and that's bad enough."

Hermione rolled her eyes. "You two are so stupid sometimes," she said, crossing her arms. "One, Draco isn't going to think that Harry is less of a man for being only human. Two, if you don't take a potion you will collapse from fatigue probably five days into Draco's heat. THREE, remember how I told you that Draco is going to be more jealous and possessive than usual? You are going to need to protect the rest of us, and you can't do that if you're completely exhausted. You have to take that potion, Harry."

"Don't do it, Harry," Ron advised. "Malfoy will never look at you the same. You're his hero right now. If you take a potion, you'll just be that bloke who couldn't handle shagging him."

"Ron!" Hermione snapped again, but she had lost. Harry was shaking his head.

"I couldn't bear that," he said softly, playing with Draco's hair again. "I have to be what he needs without a potion, Hermione. I have to."

Hermione opened her mouth to retort but Draco chose that moment to wake up.

"Harry?" he asked, lifting his head up from Harry's shoulder. His eyes were soft and sleepy and his hair was a mess from Harry's fingers. "Hi Harry," he said, giving Harry a happy, if drowsy smile. He turned his head slightly. "Hermione, Weasley," he said politely, and yawned. He laid his head back down on Harry's shoulder. "So what are we talking about?"

The other three exchanged quick glances before Harry kissed his head.

"Nothing important," he answered, and that was the end of the discussion.

BANG BANG BANG!

A loud knock at the door of his locked room startled Lucius Malfoy awake. He sat up in bed just as the door swung open. Nott was entering with the familiar goblet on a silver tray.

Lucius rolled his eyes and got out of bed. "Treacherous, cowardly sycophant," he snarled at Nott, as he walked over. "I cannot believe the Dark Lord has vermin like you guarding me."

"I'm not the one who's part-animal," Nott retorted, but something was slightly different about his voice today. Normally Nott spoke to Lucius in tones of complete disgust, but today he sounded a little distracted. He was staring hard at Lucius.

Lucius looked down to realize that he was wearing only a pair of silk pajama pants he'd found in the wardrobe. He vaguely remembered being hot and throwing off the top at some point during the night.

"Like you've never seen a man's chest before," he snapped, as he snatched the goblet off the tray. He downed the contents and slammed the goblet back down, only to find Nott still staring at him. "*What?*"

"You look different today," Nott replied, cocking his head to one side. "This is Saturday, so you've just had your fifth dose. I wasn't expecting it to work so fast."

Lucius set his jaw. He did look a bit different. Nothing had happened to him over the first three days, and for a fleeting moment he hoped that Severus had somehow sabotaged the potion.

Then after his fourth dose the day before, he had been seized by a powerful shaking fit that lasted through most of the night. When it finally passed, Lucius found that his entire body seemed to have undergone a slight physical adjustment. Muscles which had been well-defined before were now perfectly chiseled. His stomach was completely flat and his arms more muscular. His face had altered a bit as well. His sharp, almost pointy features had softened just a little, leaving him almost blindingly handsome and looking more like Draco than ever before.

Lucius had looked in the mirror, dreading what he might see, and had been shocked to discover that he looked incredible. He hadn't looked this good at twenty-five. Under any other circumstances, he would have been thrilled with the change.

But the thought of becoming a fuck-toy for a Dark Lord left him wishing he'd become ugly and fat instead.

"You're just like your son," Nott said, an almost awed tone in his voice.

"Go away, Nott," Lucius growled, growing uncomfortable with Nott's constant staring. "Or are you just like *your* son - a filthy pervert with a veela fetish?"

That snapped Nott out of his trance. He glared at Lucius for a moment before disappearing out the door, slamming it shut behind him.

Early Monday morning Draco suddenly snapped awake. He blinked a couple times, eyes open wide in the darkness. For the first time in nearly two weeks he felt perfectly rested and marvelously *awake*. He turned his head to the side and glanced at his clock. 5:30am. The sun wasn't even close to rising yet, but Draco was energized to his very core.

He turned his head the other way and smiled; Harry was fast asleep, on his side and sprawled half on top of Draco. One arm was resting heavily across Draco's chest, and his face was tucked securely against Draco's shoulder.

Draco watched him for a moment, noticing how Harry's hair fell in thick locks around his face and contrasted starkly with Draco's own pale shoulder. Draco lifted the arm not pinned by Harry's body and gently pushed Harry's hair off his forehead. His soft, black hair. Jet-black, really. So beautiful and dark against Draco's pale fingers, and so silky, and so cute when it was messy and -

Before he knew it, Draco found himself growing hard over how attractive he found Harry's hair.

He carefully sat up, placing a hand on Harry's shoulder and rolling Harry off him. Harry put up no resistance; he let Draco arrange him on his back and slept on.

Draco shifted to all fours and moved on top of Harry, one knee and one hand on either side of Harry's body. He continued to stare, entranced by the sleeping vision beneath him. Harry was so vulnerable and trusting like this. So sweet and innocent. So pure and fragile.

So *hot* and in need of a seeing to.

Without further ado Draco abandoned his plan of awakening Harry with soft kisses and bent down to take Harry's cock in his mouth.

"Huh...wha...ohmyGodwhatareyoudoing?" Harry yelped, eyes flying open. Draco's lips quirked up in triumph around Harry's nearly instant erection. Veela powers certainly had their advantages.

"What, don't you like it?" he asked innocently, pulling back to use just the tip of his tongue on Harry.

Harry groaned. "Yes...I...ohfuck," he swore, hands reaching down to grasp Draco's hair. "Don't stop."

Draco had no intention of stopping. Over the past two weeks they'd done nothing much beyond cuddling; Draco had been too tired. Now, however, he was anything *but* tired, and he intended to start making up for those two weeks *right now*.

"*Accio* lube!" he called out, and the jar came sailing into his hand. He quickly twisted it open and slathered some on his fingers.

Harry shuddered as Draco's fingers found their way inside his body. "Fuckfuckfuck," he moaned. "Fuck, just fucking *fuck me* already."

Draco loved how Harry was reduced to near-incoherence every time they had sex, and quickly moved to comply with Harry's request. He removed his fingers and positioned himself before carefully sliding into Harry.

Harry winced, and Draco froze.

"Oh God," he whispered. "Oh God, Harry, are you alright? I'm so sorry, love, did I -"

Harry reached up and grabbed Draco behind the head, yanking him down for a kiss.

"M'fine," he muttered against Draco's lips. "Now fucking get on with it or I'll use the Voice on you and *make* you get on with it."

Shivers went down Draco's spine at Harry's threat. "That's pretty kinky," he said, voice thick with arousal.

"Like that, do you?" Harry asked. "Pervy bastard. Now *fuck me*."

And whether that was a direct order or not was irrelevant; Draco couldn't have held back a second longer either way. He drove into Harry, and moments later they both were swearing and biting at whatever bits of each other their mouths could reach. Draco felt Harry come in his hand beneath him, and squeezed his eyes shut as he came seconds later. He felt his arms give out and he fell forward, crashing down on top of Harry.

Harry, by now completely used to Draco's weight on top of him, didn't complain at the sudden pressure of Draco's body. Instead, he wrapped his arms around Draco's back and squeezed tightly.

There was silence for a moment.

"Fuck," Draco finally said, nose buried in Harry's neck. "I think mating season just started."

"You think?" Harry asked rhetorically, sliding a hand up Draco's back to rest in Draco's sweaty hair. "We haven't had sex in two weeks and you suddenly jump me at" he squinted at the clock "what time is it? I can't see without my glasses."

Draco glanced up. "5:42am."

"Right. So as I was saying, no sex for two weeks and you jump me at -holy *shit*, is it really 5:42am?"

"Yup."

"Wow. What time did you get up?"

"5:30."

"5:30...wait, are you saying that it took exactly twelve minutes from the time you woke up to the time we both got off?"

"Er...yes."

"Wow. Should we like...work on that or something?" Harry asked, starting to run his fingers through the damp strands of blonde hair. "I mean...twelve minutes isn't exactly a marathon sex session."

Draco wanted to purr at Harry's actions, but he settled for nuzzling Harry's neck. "Nah," he said, licking at a pink mark he'd left just below Harry's jaw. "It's understandable. We're seventeen, after all."

Then Draco grinned. "Oh wait," he said, lifting his head. "I forgot. You're not seventeen, you're only sixteen. No wonder you have no stamina. You're only a baby."

"Hey!" Harry said, sounding offended. "I'll be seventeen in July, you prat."

"Seventeen in July, really?" Draco cooed patronizingly. "You're such a big boy, aren't you?"

"Shut up, Malfoy," Harry growled. "At least I'm bigger than you."

Draco was positively delighted at Harry's apparent annoyance at their age difference. "But I'm older," he teased. "And I'll always be older. Perhaps I should be the one to call you *baby*."

He leaned down and began planting kisses on Harry's face. "My little baby Harry," he cooed between kisses.

Harry glared up at him. "You stop that. You're the baby in this relationship."

"Am not," Draco contradicted, pulling back slightly to study Harry. "You're the one who looked so sweet and innocent this morning. So cute and vulnerable while you slept. I'm a Malfoy, Harry. You should know better than to look that way around me."

"What are you talking about?"

"Malfoys can't allow cuteness and innocence to continue to exist un-ravished. I absolutely had to debauch you. It's my nature." He placed a kiss on the tip of Harry's nose. "So how does it feel, my sweet little baby Gryffindor, to have been thoroughly debauched by an evil Malfoy?"

"You," Harry said sternly, "had better shut your trap about the baby thing or my sweet little baby veela is going to find himself thoroughly debauched by an *evil Gryffindor*."

Draco's eyes lit up. "You mean that?"

Harry rolled his eyes but a grin found its way onto his lips. "Let's go shower. Get nice and squeaky clean and then I'll give you an up close and personal look at how Gryffindors do debauchment."

Sitting down with Ron and Hermione at breakfast, Harry had to try very hard to keep a smug look off his face. After all, he'd already gotten laid twice and class hadn't even started.

"Morning," he said brightly, loading up his plate with copious amounts of everything within reach.

Hermione took one look at his full plate and slightly flushed cheeks and knew exactly what was going on.

"I take it mating season started," she said dryly.

Ron and Harry both winced.

"How do you *do* that?" Harry asked.

"It's a gift," Hermione replied. "So where's Draco?"

Harry jerked his head over his shoulder in the direction of the Slytherin table. "With his Slytherin friends. I'd join him, but you know, mortal enemy of half of their parents and all that."

Hermione and Ron nodded in understanding.

"So now that it's started, do you still think you don't need the potion?" Hermione asked, looking at Harry pointedly.

"Oh yeah," Harry said confidently. "I'll be fine. I'll be great, actually. This morning was amazing. And you said this will last two to three weeks? I think I'm going to enjoy this, Hermione."

"That's what you think," Hermione muttered, but let it drop.

Ron was watching Draco at the Slytherin table. "You're actually letting him eat alone?" he asked Harry. "Aren't you worried that he'll just pick up the sugar bowl and start devouring it?"

Harry's eyes widened. "He wouldn't, would he?" he asked, whirling around. Draco was chatting with Pansy Parkinson, but he must have felt Harry's eyes on him. Draco looked up at Harry and grinned, then held up the piece of toast he was eating, pointing at it meaningfully.

Harry breathed a sigh of relief and turned back to Ron and Hermione. "He's fine, he's eating toast," Harry said, digging back into his own plate.

Ron and Hermione watched in amusement as behind Harry's back Draco reached for the jam and slathered a layer an inch thick on the top of his bread.

"Hey guys."

The trio looked up as they were joined by Seamus, Dean and Neville.

"Hey," Harry said back, as Neville took the seat next to him.

Hellos and good mornings were exchanged all around and everyone continued to eat.

"So where's Malfoy this morning?" Dean asked.

"Slytherin table," Ron answered.

"Oh," Seamus said, nodding. "So does this mean we actually can enjoy a meal with Harry without the risk of getting hexed?"

"Hey, Draco's been really good for the last couple months," Harry protested.

Ron snorted. "Yeah, ever since your little discipline session. You sure taught him a lesson, Harry."

"What'd Harry do?" Seamus asked with interest.

"*Nothing*," Harry stressed, shooting Ron a dirty look across the table. "We just straightened some things out. And now Draco doesn't get jealous as often and nobody has to worry about getting hexed anymore."

"I wouldn't be too sure of that," a cold voice said from above. Six pairs of Gryffindor eyes looked up to find one narrowed set of Slytherin eyes glaring down at them.

"Longbottom," Draco spat. "Did it occur to you that you are sitting within two feet of Harry and are thus encroaching on his personal space?"

"Draco, he's fine, it doesn't bother -"

"It bothers *me*, Harry," Draco said icily. "Because I consider *your* personal space to be *my* personal space. So *move*," he snapped at Neville.

Neville squeaked and scooted four feet down the bench. Harry opened his mouth to chew out Draco when Hermione kicked his shin.

He glanced at her, and she mouthed *mating season* at him. Harry made a silent *oh* of understanding then grabbed his plate.

"Come on, Draco," he said soothingly. "Let's finish breakfast together, just the two of us."

Draco's face lit up. "Okay," he said happily. He grabbed the sugar bowl off the Gryffindor table. "Let's go."

They left the Great Hall, Harry extracting a promise from Draco to eat some of Harry's food and not just sugar.

Ron shook his head. "Is he going to be like this the whole time?" he asked Hermione, looking pained.

She shook her head. "Oh no. This is just the beginning. He's going to get much, much worse."

Ron, Seamus, Dean and Neville's eyes all widened in horror.

"God help us all," Ron muttered.

The rest of the day passed rather surreally for Harry. He'd started his day by getting laid twice before breakfast. Then Draco managed to last through exactly two classes before showing up in the middle of Harry's Transfiguration class and explaining to McGonagall in his most earnest voice that Harry's assistance was most desperately needed and couldn't she please spare him just one moment?

Harry quickly found out that what Draco needed Harry's assistance for was a quick wank in an empty classroom.

Lunch was spent watching Draco eat fourth helpings of chocolate custard before Draco suggested that maybe Harry would like to try the custard.

Licked off of every square inch of Draco's body.

He was late to his next class, and spent the afternoon in a hazy sort of daze with a goofy grin on his face.

Dinner was spent at the Gryffindor table, with Harry feeding Draco off his own plate until Draco made some odd comment about *hot, sexy muscled arms* and dragged Harry back to his bedroom where he shoved Harry on the bed and straddled him. Before Harry knew it, he was deep inside Draco and Draco was kissing him and biting him and experimenting with his veela powers and oh holy *hell* Harry had missed having sex.

After midnight and three rounds later, a thoroughly spent Harry fell asleep with Draco in his arms and a content smile on his face. Hermione had been wrong. He didn't need a potion. He could satisfy his boyfriend just fine.

"Harry? Harry wake up. I've just had the most amazing wet dream and we *have* to act it out. I want you to pretend you're a vampire and I'm your helpless prisoner."

Harry cracked open one eye. "Draco?" he asked the blonde mass above him, his own voice fuzzy from sleep. "What time is it?"

"I dunno...4:00, 4:30, maybe? Anyway Harry, you're going to be a vampire, and you've captured me and are going to drink my blood. But then I plead and beg and say *no, don't kill me, I'll do anything you want*, and you say *anything*? And I say *yes, anything!* And then you make me suck you off and then you fuck me, alright?"

Harry desperately wanted to make a snarky comment, but he was actually still too tired to tease Draco about his latest deviant kink.

"Alright," he said, struggling to push himself up on his arms. "But I'm still half asleep here, so maybe you should be the vampire."

"No, we're acting out my dream, so you have to be the vampire," Draco said, shaking his head. "And don't worry about being tired; I can get you in the mood right quick."

And he turned on his veela powers, and Harry was indeed in the mood "right quick."

Harry dozed all through Divination that morning, and skived off Double Care of Magical Creatures to nap in his Gryffindor bed. By lunch, he was feeling more or less back to normal and cheerfully headed down to the Great Hall.

He was walking down an empty corridor when he felt strong hands grab him from behind.

"Where were you all morning?" Draco's voice asked accusingly. "I couldn't find you. You weren't with anyone else, were you?"

"What?" Harry said, dumbfounded. "No, I was in bed."

"In *bed*?" Draco snarled, spinning Harry around and glaring at him.

"Yes, in - oh, no, NO! Not like that! Sleeping! *Sleeping*. Okay?"

Draco looked at him suspiciously for a moment. "You promise?"

Harry held up a hand. "Gryffindor honor. Sleeping. *By myself.*"

-

Draco folded his arms across his chest. "Bad mate," he said, narrowing his eyes.

"What?" Harry asked, confused. "What'd I do?"

"I wanted to shag you, and you were nowhere to be found," Draco said, voice taking on a noticeable dominant tone that Harry recognized as one of Draco's bedroom voices.

Draco pointed at a door. "Get in there and get on your knees. You're going to be punished."

"Yes, Master Malfoy," Harry said meekly. Inwardly, he cursed Hermione. She'd gotten the increased sex drive and the increased jealousy, but forgotten to mention the increased kink factor.

Still, Harry could handle this. His inhumanly hot blonde bombshell boyfriend wanted kinky sex multiple times a day?

No problem.

After lunch, Harry ran into a slight snag.

"Draco, I already told you *no*," Harry hissed, as he sat behind his desk with Draco on one side and Hermione on the other. They were waiting for Snape to arrive and start their Potions class.

"Oh, come on Harry!" Draco whined. "Please? I really want it."

"What's going on?" Hermione asked.

Harry's cheeks flushed slightly. "Nothing," he muttered, looking determinably at the front of the room and not at Hermione.

"Oh, this has to do with sex, doesn't it?" Hermione asked, almost eagerly. "Oh, do tell me."

"No way!" Harry protested.

Draco shrugged. "You may as well tell her, Potter. If you don't, then I will."

Harry glared at him. "Fine. Hermione, Draco is asking me for another spanking."

Draco hastened to clarify Harry's words. "A *proper* spanking," he emphasized. "The kind you gave me when I hexed Weasley. An over-your-knee, bare-arsed, *Draco-you've-been-a-bad-little-veela* spanking."

Hermione's eyebrows shot up. Harry winced.

"Draco, must you be quite so *descriptive*?" he asked, burying his head in his arms on the desk in embarrassment.

Draco appeared not to have heard him. "Not that I don't appreciate the occasional swat on my arse during sex," he mused. "It's very sexy, in that *I'm-Harry-Potter-and-I'm-so-macho-and-dominant* kind of way. Gets me hot for you every time. But I want the real deal again, Potter."

All that was visible of Harry as he tried to hide in his arms were his ears, which had gone bright red up to the tips.

"*Draco!*" he pleaded, sounding mortified. "Hermione is right here! She can hear every word you're saying!"

"Oh, don't pay me any mind," Hermione said brightly. She picked up her quill. "I'm not even listening. Just sitting here taking notes for class."

"Class hasn't *started* yet," Harry muttered resentfully into his arms.

"Really? I hadn't noticed. Do continue."

Harry took a deep breath and reluctantly left the refuge of his arms.

"Listen," he whispered to Draco, glancing all around to make sure they weren't being overheard by anyone other than Hermione. "I told you. I can't spank you like that again."

"Oh come on! Why not?" Draco said this loudly, obviously unconcerned with the thought of an audience.

"*Because*," Harry said, keeping his voice low, "you haven't done anything. Last time I was legitimately trying to punish you. You'd hexed my best friend and I was supposed to discipline you for it. Now you're being a prat but you haven't actually done anything bad. How am I supposed to spank you?"

Draco raised an interested eyebrow. "So you're saying that the only way you would give me a spanking is if I do something bad first?"

"Yes," Harry said, sounding relieved that Draco understood. He leaned back in his chair and sat relaxed for exactly two seconds before he realized what he'd done.

"Oh *shit!* Wait Draco, no, I didn't mean -"

It was too late.

"*Impedimenta! Petrificus Totalus! Furnunculus! Rictusempra! Tarantallegra! Stupefy!*"

Six Gryffindors fell from their desks and hit the floor, writhing or frozen, just as Snape walked into the classroom.

"MR. POTTER! You are supposed to be responsible for Mr. Malfoy! How dare you let him hex your classmates like this! 50 points from Gryffindor and Detention!"

Harry sat perfectly immobile before turning his head to look at Draco, who was smirking devilishly next to him.

"Bad enough for you?" Draco asked sweetly.

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"What's with you tonight?" Ron enquired of Draco later that evening at the Gryffindor dinner table. "You're so...*squirmy*."

Draco gave Ron an irritated look through his blonde fringe even as he wriggled uncomfortably on the bench.

"I just never realized how bloody hard the benches at your fucking table were," he said haughtily.

"Suck it up," Harry muttered, swallowing the last of his steak.

Draco turned to Harry, all big sad grey eyes and honeyed voice.

"But Harry, it really hurts," he said plaintively. "Don't you think you could maybe...*kiss it better*?" he asked, lowering his voice seductively.

Harry stared. "But we just...not half an hour ago...in that empty classroom..." He dropped his voice to a heated whisper so Ron and Hermione couldn't hear. "You wanted to be spanked and then you wanted to be shagged! Twice! And we did! Aren't you tired?"

"Not a bit." Draco made no effort to keep his voice down at all, and every nearby Gryffindor heard him. "I get so turned on when you spank me; just talking about it has me all hot and bothered again. I want a rim job then another blow job and then I want to ride your cock until I can't walk anymore."

"Oh my God," said Harry.

"Bloody hell," said Ron.

"Holy shit," said Dean.

"Good Lord," said Neville.

"Saints in Heaven," said Seamus.

"Can I watch?" asked Hermione.

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"How is my captive?" Voldemort asked, his red eyes gleaming in the darkness. "Has he begun to change?"

"Yes, my Lord," Nott answered. "He took his tenth dose today. I can see him slowly transforming before my eyes."

"Excellent," Lord Voldemort answered. "I trust you are taking good care of him?"

"Yes, sir."

Voldemort looked at him appraisingly. "You desire him."

Nott's eyes went wide. "I do not, my Lord," he protested immediately. "I am not interested in animals."

"You insult my taste?" Voldemort asked, a little too calmly, and Nott's face went pale.

"N-no sir," he squeaked, panicked. "Please, I did not mean -"

"I will forgive you, Nott," the Dark Lord said. "Because I know you are lying. I can see your attraction to him in your mind; you cannot hide it from me. Animal or no, you wish to possess him. Each day he becomes closer to a true veela, and each day you want him more."

Nott's cheeks flushed. "He is yours, my Lord."

"Yes," Voldemort said harshly. "He is mine. You would do well not to forget it, as your son did."

"Yes sir," Nott said. Then he took a deep breath and asked a question that had been plaguing him for months. "Will you...will you ever release my son from the dungeons?"

"Still a father, I see," Voldemort said, sounding amused. "You risk my wrath for your child. Your concern is almost touching, though your worthless son does not deserve it." He wrapped his cloak around him and stared down his nose at Nott.

"Yes," he said, in a cold voice. "Your son will be released. I have a new mission for him which offers him the chance for redemption."

Nott could feel his heart pounding. "And what is that, my Lord?"

Voldemort smiled mirthlessly. "To act as the bait in my trap to capture Draco Malfoy."

Nott's eyes went wide. "But you told Lucius...you told him you no longer needed Draco."

"I told him what he needed to hear," Voldemort said softly. "He needed an incentive to make him take the potion. But there is no reason not to capture the boy as well. After all, no wizard in history has ever had two veela in his power at one time, much less two male veela. I shall be the first. It befits me, no? The most powerful wizard of all time?"

"Yes, my Lord. It does," Nott answered. "Are you so powerful you can control two veela with the Imperius curse at once?"

"It will not matter," Voldemort said carelessly. "There are always restraints. And you would be surprised what a father or son would do willingly if I promise to spare the other. These fools who love can be manipulated so easily."

He fixed Nott in his burning red gaze. "You may release your son from his cell, if you wish. Prepare him for his mission. Do not let him fail me again."

"Yes sir," Nott said, and scampered off.

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"Harry, wake up! You said you just need a quick nap and then you'd shag me!"

Harry groaned and looked at the clock. 2am on the fifth day of mating season.

"What if I let you shag me instead? I'll just lay here and you can have your wicked way with me," Harry suggested, closing his eyes. "I'll even pretend I don't like it and beg you to stop, if you want to make it a bit kinky."

"I fucked you three times last night," Draco said sulkily. "It's my turn to get fucked. I want you to top me, Harry."

Even though those words normally would have had Harry panting in lust, right now he was so incredibly tired he couldn't even make a coherent response.

"Mmph," was all he said back.

Draco looked at him suspiciously. "Can you not handle all this sex, Harry? Tell me the truth - are you too tired? Do I need to let you sleep?" He swallowed hard. "I suppose I could let you sleep for a while, maybe just toss off while fantasizing about you or something..."

Harry heard the disappointment in Draco's voice, and he couldn't bear it.

"Nonono," he said, forcing his limp, exhausted body into a sitting position. "I'll do it, I'll shag you. Whatever you want, love."

Draco beamed at him. "Need a hand to get in the mood?" he purred suggestively, and wrapped his hand around Harry's cock. "Good thing I've got these powers, isn't it?" He turned his veela powers on, and within seconds Harry was hard.

Hard but still exhausted beyond words.

"Right," Harry said, slapping his face lightly to wake himself up. "So you want to get fucked, do you?"

"Oooh, yes *please*. And I like your idea of pretending not to like it. I'm going to pretend that I'm trying to get away, alright? But you hold me down and give it to me anyway. Be real forceful, okay?"

"Real forceful. Right," Harry said, swallowing hard. He rubbed his eyes to try and wake himself up. Unbidden, Hermione's voice floated through his head.

You're going to need a potion. You won't be able to meet his needs otherwise.

Harry gritted his teeth. *I don't need a potion*, he told himself. *I will be everything Draco wants without one.*

And summoning up his last reserves of energy he grabbed Draco and flipped him on his back. Draco squealed happily and began to struggle playfully under Harry, who just prayed he wouldn't fall asleep while actually inside his boyfriend.

Hermione walked over to her favorite table in the library, the one in the back corner by the window, only to find it taken.

She started. Nobody took her table. Ever. The entire school knew that was her table. It might as well have had a sign that read property of Hermione Granger on it.

Taking a closer look to see who could possibly have the guts to steal her table, she relaxed. She'd recognize that messy black head anywhere.

She walked up to the table and looked down at Harry. He had his head folded on his arms and he was fast asleep.

"Harry?" she said softly, setting down her books.

He didn't budge.

"Harry?" she said again, a bit louder.

No response.

Nodding in understanding, she took the seat across from him. After a moment, she kicked him gently under the table.

"Wake up, Harry," she said, in a fairly loud voice.

Harry didn't even flinch. Pulling out her wand, Hermione pointed it at Harry.

"Ennervate."

Harry's body twitched, then he slowly lifted his head to stare at Hermione.

"Hullo," he said blearily. Hermione tutted in response. Harry had circles under his eyes that were nearly black. His lovely green eyes were completely blood-shot behind his glasses. His skin was pallid and sallow. He looked like hell.

"You look like hell, Harry," Hermione said.

"I know. You'd think that'd be enough, but he thinks I'm hot, even like this." Harry closed his eyes again.

"What are you doing in the library?" Hermione asked, even though she knew the answer.

"Hiding from Draco," Harry muttered against his arm, already drifting back to sleep.

"No!" Hermione said, pretending to be shocked. "Let me guess...he wants more sex than you can give him?"

"Maybe," Harry admitted. He kept his eyes closed. "We can still do it, because he can use his veela powers to get me off or get me hard but I'm so bloody exhausted Hermione that I can't...I just *can't* anymore..."

Hermione nodded sympathetically. Harry must have been desperately exhausted if he could talk about sex with Hermione without blushing or stammering.

She sighed. It was the fifth day of mating season. Her predictions had been astoundingly accurate. She was nice enough not to actually say the words *I told you so* to Harry, but she knew what he needed to do.

"Go see Snape, sweetie," Hermione said gently.

"Can't," Harry mumbled. "What would Draco think of me?"

"Harry, he won't be upset. Trust me, okay? Trust Draco to understand. Don't do this to yourself."

Harry's only answer was slow, deep breathing. Hermione reached across the table and tenderly smoothed his hair.

"Harry," she said again, but that was as far as she got. She froze as a wand jammed into her neck.

"I should incapacitate you permanently for this, Granger." Draco's voice was cold and scary. "The only thing that's saving you is I know you think of Harry as a brother and I happen to consider you a friend. But neither of those means that you can touch my mate. Are we clear?"

There was a rustling movement across the table.

"Draco, are you threatening *Hermione*?"

Draco and Hermione both turned to see Harry, looking somewhat awake, staring at Draco in shock.

"Well look who's decided to wake up," Draco sneered. "What's going on here, Potter? Don't have the energy to shag your boyfriend but you can meet up in secret with your little bit of crumpet here?"

"Don't be fucking ridiculous," Harry snapped. "This is Hermione, for God's sake. What's wrong with you?"

Hermione winced. Harry was so clearly exhausted and unable to handle Draco's jealousy with his usual tact and kindness. This was a bad situation, and judging by the pink tinge appearing on Draco's cheeks it was about to get worse.

"What's wrong with *me*?" Draco asked dangerously, moving towards Harry. "What, you can't handle this, Potter? Have you gotten tired of being with a veela? When push comes to shove it's too much for you? Going to run off with some little girl? Maybe Granger's going to be your new bitch, is that your plan?"

"You watch your mouth," Harry snarled, standing up. "Don't you *ever* say that about Hermione again. You know better, Draco. I'm with you and only you. I love you."

"Good," Draco said. His voice had changed from angry to lustful in a heartbeat. "Come here then. Be with me. Show me how much you love me."

He advanced on Harry, veela powers flaring high and wrapping around Harry's exhausted mind and body, forcing it into lust. Harry felt stifled, he couldn't breathe, he couldn't think, he couldn't take this *anymore* -

Without thinking, he said the first thing that came to mind. "Damn it, just *stop*, Draco. Turn off your veela powers and *don't touch me*."

Draco froze. His veela powers shut themselves off and he stopped moving towards Harry.

Harry breathed a sigh of relief and relaxed.

Until he saw Draco's face.

Draco could not have looked more hurt if Harry had physically slapped him. He was slowly walking backwards, tears welling up in his eyes.

"Did you just use your Voice so you wouldn't have to have sex with me?" Draco asked, his voice very small and slightly choked.

This time Harry froze, because that was exactly what he had done.

"Oh God," he said, horrified. "Oh Draco, I'm so sorry, I didn't mean -"

Draco didn't even wait to hear the rest of Harry's apology. He turned and fled the library as fast as his feet would carry him.

"Oh fuck me, fuck *me*; I cannot believe I did that. I am the biggest asshole ever," Harry moaned, as Hermione dragged him by the arm down the corridors that led to the dungeon. "Let me go find Draco and apologize."

"No," Hermione said shortly. "You're so tired you can barely walk. You are going to get that potion, and then you can go apologize properly."

"But he must be so *hurt*!" Harry cried, shame permeating his voice. "Hermione, I have to go to him right now, I can't bear this. I am *such* an insensitive asshole."

"Yeah, you were pretty awful," Hermione said bluntly. "Which is why you need the potion. Listen, Harry: you're human, he's not. Get over yourself and realize that you're doing this for Draco. Do you want to hurt him again like you did today?"

"No," Harry said, frantically shaking his head. "I don't ever want to hurt him again."

"Then *take your fucking potion*."

Harry froze for a second at Hermione's words, then slumped against her.

"Alright," he whispered in defeat. "Alright. I'll do it. And maybe I'll be embarrassed and humiliated in front of him, but I'd trade my pride to protect Draco's feelings any day."

"You really are romantic sometimes," Hermione said. Harry opened his mouth to retort but snapped it shut as he realized they had reached Snape's office.

Hermione knocked. There was a few moments pause, then they heard steps approaching. The door was flung open, and Snape was standing before them.

"May I help you?" he asked in a cold, steely tone.

Harry took a deep breath and summoned all his Gryffindor courage, but Hermione beat him to it.

"Harry needs that potion I spoke to you about last week, sir." Harry gaped at her. She'd already gone to Snape and arranged all this?

"Ah yes," Snape replied. "The one meant for a veela's mate during mating season. Finally deflated your arrogant head enough to realize you needed it, Potter? Realized that a human cannot possibly keep up with a veela in heat?"

Harry sighed and stared at his feet. "Yes sir."

Snape disappeared for a moment, then returned with a large flask. "This potion is designed to simulate the effects of being a veela during mating season. It is two parts energy potion, one part extra-strength stamina potion, three parts lust potion and one part insomnia potion. There is a good amount of a potion designed to remove your inhibitions as well. You must take it twice a day to ensure that it keeps working; the effects wear off after twelve to sixteen hours, and you will most likely fall instantly asleep from exhaustion the moment they do. I have given you enough to last two weeks, which should be enough for the remainder of Draco's heat. Do you understand all this, Mr. Potter?"

Harry nodded, taking the flask from Snape.

"Good," Snape snapped. "Now get out of my sight. I have work to do and cannot afford to spend my free time pandering to little boys with more pride than common sense."

And he slammed the door shut.

""

"Could have been worse," Harry admitted, as he and Hermione stood together in front of the portrait of the Fat Lady. He uncorked the potion, then sniffed it and made a face. "Here goes nothing," he said, and took a large sip.

The potion burned slightly going down his throat but it wasn't bad, and the taste was bearable. Harry stood for a moment, unsure of what exactly to expect. He was still so tired he could have easily slept standing up against the stone wall.

Suddenly, his eyes sprang wide-open. Energy started flowing through his blood, into his brain, perking his mind up until he felt almost hyper-alert. Sleepiness and lethargy fell away, to be replaced with vigor - and lust.

He glanced over at Hermione. "Wow, Hermione," he said, stepping towards her. "You're gorgeous. Where have you been hiding that body all these years?"

He immediately clapped a hand over his mouth, but Hermione just looked amused.

"Well, we at least we know the potion works," she said. "Though Snape might have overdone things by adding an inhibition-removing potion."

"Considering that I want to shag you up against the nearest wall, I'd say so." Harry immediately blushed. "Oh my God, I can't believe I just said that," he moaned. "I do not want my best friend. I'm a one-veela kind of guy." A look of pain crossed his face. "If my veela will ever forgive me for what I did."

"He will," Hermione promised. She held out Harry's map, which was their entire reason for returning to Gryffindor tower in the first place. "He's out on the Quidditch pitch, Harry. Go talk to him."

"On my way," Harry said, and turned to run. Then he paused for just a moment. "Hey Hermione, could I have a hug for good luck? And maybe a kiss on the cheek too?"

"Oh, sure you -*Harry!* You...you *cad!*"

"Sorry, sorry," Harry said, wincing. "It's the potion talking. I better find Draco right away. Oh God, I hope he forgives me."

And with that he took off running.

""

"Draco! Draco, please come down!"

"NO!"

"Please! I want to apologize!"

"I said NO, Harry! I don't want to hear your apology!"

Harry dropped to his knees on the grass of the Quidditch pitch and clasped his hands imploringly. He looked pleadingly up at Draco, who was hovering a few feet above on his broom.

"Please, Draco, please. Hear me out. I'm such scum, such worthless scum. I don't deserve to be your mate. You deserve someone who can treat you like a prince and won't ever hurt your feelings the way your horrid mate did this afternoon."

"Yes I do!" Draco snapped, folding his arms over his chest. "I don't want anything to do with you. I'll just toss off for the rest of mating season if the idea of shagging me is so distasteful to you that you have to use your God damn fucking Voice on me to avoid it!"

Harry winced. "No love, please," he begged. "That wasn't it."

There was nothing to it; Harry had to make a full confession.

"I was just so tired. It wasn't that I didn't want *you*. I just...I can't handle as much sex as you can, Draco."

Draco regarded him suspiciously. "So you're saying you stopped me because you haven't got the stamina that I do?"

Harry nodded, watching what was left of his pride disappear down the proverbial toilet. "Yes. Exactly. You're a veela, and a veela in heat at that, and I can't keep up with you. There, I've said it. And I'm horribly embarrassed about it but it's true."

He reached into his robes and pulled out the flask from Snape.

"I went to Snape," he explained desperately. "Asked him for a potion."

"You WHAT?" Draco said, obviously shocked. He flew a couple feet closer. "You went to *Snape*?"

Harry nodded again. "He gave me a potion designed specifically for a veela's mate during mating season. Got energy potion, stamina potion, lust potion and insomnia potion all rolled into one. Little bit of an inhibition-removing potion too, could have done without that one. But it makes me feel like you do right now." He popped off the cork. "I just took one dose back at the castle; I'm taking a second dose now."

Draco watched in slight awe as Harry shivered while the potion coursed through him. Then Draco gasped; when Harry looked back up at him his eyes were on fire.

"I want you so badly," Harry said. His body was actually shaking with need. "I want you, I want you, I want you. I'm sorry I need the potion to keep up with you, Draco. I wanted to be what you need without it. But I can't, and I'm sorry I hurt you because of my damnable pride."

He swallowed hard. "So I'll take the potion everyday for the rest of mating season. And maybe in your eyes that will make me less of a man, but it's better than hurting you. I'm so sorry. I love you. I didn't mean to hurt you."

Draco stared for a moment at Harry. Harry, who thought Draco would be disappointed in him for being only human. Harry, who had sold his pride to spare Draco's feelings. Harry, who loved him beyond words and who was still kneeling on the grass, eyes begging and pleading for Draco to come back to him.

Overcome with emotion, Draco jumped off the broom and fairly dove the remaining couple feet into Harry's arms.

Harry went flying backwards with the force of it, but his arms quickly went around Draco. They rolled together in the grass, turning over and over, tongues meeting and hands buried in hair and murmured words of apology and forgiveness passing between their connected lips.

"Idiot," Draco said, rolling Harry onto his back. "You're an idiot, Potter."

"I know," Harry said, rolling them back over to press Draco into the ground. "I'm so sorry baby, I'm so fucking sorry."

"No," Draco said, both hands in Harry's hair to pull him down into a firm kiss. "You're an idiot to believe I'd think you less of a man because you need a potion."

"What?" Harry asked, pulling back to stare at Draco.

Draco rolled his eyes. "Really. If anyone is less of a man around here, it's me. Because I'm *not* one. I'm something else. And for all of the understanding and compassion you've shown me about being different than you, you think I can't handle one little thing that makes you different from me? Give me some fucking *credit*, Potter."

Harry stared at him for a moment. "I fucking love you."

"I know you do," Draco replied. "I love you too. Now that we've got the sappy Gryffindor bit out of the way, can I *please please please* have a thorough shagging? You've been too tired to really do it properly the last couple days."

"I'll shag you through the ground right here," Harry muttered, forcing open Draco's cloak. "I'll shag you till you can't walk." He slid his hands under Draco's jumper, meeting the baby soft skin of his stomach. "I'll shag you until you feel my cock in the back of your throat and you're moaning and begging and whimpering my name beneath me. I'll make you come so hard you see stars and then I'll bloody do it all over again."

"Christ, what was *in* that potion, Potter?" Draco said admiringly, beyond turned on by Harry's words.

"Ready for the shagging of your life then?" Harry asked, pushing up Draco's jumper and covering his stomach with kisses. "Let's do one of your fantasies, those are hot. What do you want? The vampire fantasy again? Or that one where you're my captive?"

Draco smiled at him. "How about the fantasy where I'm a veela and you're my mate, and we're madly in love and you're about to shag the daylights out of me?"

"Oh what do you know?" Harry said, stretching up to kiss Draco. "That's my favorite one."

Chapter Warnings: NC-17 sex, long chapter

The Veela Enigma

Chapter 29: Not Going Anywhere

Lucius Malfoy grimaced as he swallowed the contents of the goblet in his hand. Even after fourteen doses Lucius was not accustomed to the potion, and it left a bitter aftertaste in his mouth.

Nott watched him with something almost akin to sympathy. "It tastes bad, doesn't it?"

"Your powers of observation astound me," Lucius said testily. He set the goblet back on the tray. "What does it take to get some breakfast in this hellhole?"

"Of course, right away," Nott said eagerly. "Whatever you want."

He slipped out the door. Lucius rolled his eyes. Nott's behavior was as transparent as glass.

Lucius took a seat at the desk and paged through a book, awaiting Nott's return. He didn't have to wait long. Nott was back quickly, bearing a tray laden with food.

"What swill have you brought me this time?" Lucius snapped dishonestly. Truth was, the food had been excellent and this morning was no exception. His plate was filled with fresh fruit, poached eggs with hollandaise sauce and Earl Grey tea. It was as good as anything he might have at his manor. Everything about how he was treated was exceptional - first class food, accommodations and service.

This only made him angrier about the whole situation. Had he been treated like the prisoner he was and confined to a cell in the dungeons, he would have felt more dignified. Now he had the uncomfortable sensation of being treated like a pampered pet, and it did not sit well with a man of Lucius' temperament.

He motioned for Nott to put the tray down. Nott acquiesced, then looked at Lucius hesitantly.

"I got you a bit of chocolate to go with your breakfast," he said uncomfortably.

Lucius narrowed his eyes. "Don't do me any favours, Nott."

"No, it's just...Theodore mentioned that veela liked sweets, and I thought..." he trailed off at the furious look in Lucius' eyes.

"Do not mention your son's name to me," Lucius snarled. "I will never forgive your bastard child for soiling my son with his filthy lips."

"You cannot blame him," Nott said accusingly. "Your son is a veela who most likely had him bewitched. Theo could not help himself."

"Is that what you think?" Lucius said, pushing his chair back and standing up. "Or is that what you tell yourself to justify lusting after an *animal* like me?"

"I do *not* lust after you," Nott protested, but he was far from convincing.

"Really?" Lucius said. "Because I think you do. And were you not such a pathetic, shriveled excuse for a man, I do believe I might have cause to fear for my virtue." He said the last part with dripping sarcasm, and Nott bristled.

"You'll not be so cocksure when the Dark Lord gets his hands on you," he hissed. "He has told me what he plans for you. All manner of perverted, deviant things. And you will do it all, you filthy half-breed. You deserve to be his plaything."

At the reminder of his fate, dread filled the pit of Lucius' stomach, but he sought to drown his fear in anger.

"Get out," Lucius growled, advancing on Nott.

Nott glared at him hatefully. "You don't want to hear it, do you? Don't want to hear how the Dark Lord plans to fuck you? Oh, he pampers you now - like a rich woman does her toy dog. But that will not save you in his bed. Nor will it save your -"

And he promptly shut his mouth.

"My what?" Lucius demanded. "What were you going to say?"

Nott bit his lip. "Your virtue," he said mockingly, after a moment.

Lucius sent him a glare that should have leveled him in an instant. "Get out of my sight," he hissed.

"Gladly," Nott spat back, and took his leave.

Lucius sat back down in his chair and buried his face in his hands. He took several deep, calming breaths. It would not do to panic now.

After breakfast, during which he polished off the chocolate bar and then fervently wished that his eggs were made of chocolate too, he spent the rest of the morning reading. Lucius was in the middle of *Ancient Wizards of Egypt* when the first bout of nausea hit him. He barely made it into the bathroom before retching into the sink. Then tremours hit, followed by more nausea, and very shortly afterwards Lucius' shaking body passed into unconsciousness.

When Lucius came to he was back on his bed, and Nott was hovering over him with a worried expression on his face.

"You again," was all Lucius said, closing his eyes in disgust.

"Whom did you expect?" Nott asked rhetorically, slipping an arm under Lucius head and lifting him up. He held a bowl to Lucius' lips. "Drink."

Lucius took a tentative sip. Broth. It went down smoothly, though Lucius would have greatly preferred something sweeter.

After he had swallowed a good portion of the broth, Nott laid his head back down against the pillow.

"That was a rough change you went through this morning," Nott said, almost gently. "You should rest now."

A biting, acerbic reply was on the tip of Lucius' tongue, but he didn't have the energy to say it. The room was still spinning, and his insides were twisting in knots. He felt decidedly odd, almost as if his body were glowing slightly.

He cracked open his eyes only to see Nott watching him raptly.

"Do you need something?" he managed to croak, not nearly as scathingly as he would have liked.

Nott shook his head. "No. But is there anything I can do for you? I'm an amazing healer, better than any mediwitch. I could heal any problems you have in a second."

Lucius summoned up a bit more strength to sneer at him. "That's utter rubbish," he said disdainfully. "You couldn't heal a paper cut."

Nott furrowed his brow. "You're right," he said quietly, almost to himself. "I don't know why I said that."

Lucius shook his head and closed his eyes. "Because you're -"

He froze, the insult dying on his lips. There was only one force in the world that would make people spout ridiculous babble to impress him:

Veela powers.

And if Lucius was getting veela powers and Nott could become affected by them...

Lucius cleared his throat. "I'm tired," he said, purposefully speaking in a much politer tone than usual. "Will you leave me to sleep?"

"Of course," Nott said agreeably, and stood. "I'll be back to check on you later," he promised.

"You do that," Lucius said, the beginnings of a plan tickling his mind. "You do that."

"Malfoy, we have Arthimancy in *three* minutes. Honestly, if I have to pull you two apart one more time -"

"Harry, let's go, we've got Divination and we're going to be late -"

Harry lifted his head from the Draco's neck for just a moment. "Go on, Ron, I'll catch up," he said. He purposefully slipped his hands beneath Draco's shirt. "I just want to finish saying goodbye to Draco."

He moved in between Draco's legs, pushing the blonde more firmly against the stone wall of the corridor. Draco moaned softly and arched into him.

"Yeah, Granger, go ahead, I'll be right - *there!*" he squeaked, as one of Harry's roving hands found a nipple and twisted it.

Ron looked green. "How can you do that right in front of us? Harry, where is your sense of *shame?*"

"Drowned it in Snape's potion," Harry replied. His other hand had dipped down to cup Draco's arse.

"No one's making you watch us, Weasley," Draco said, panting now. "Or you, Granger. You can go to class. You don't have to just stand there with that dazed look on your face."

"Right, right, of course. Going off to class now," Hermione said, a little too quickly. She gave Ron a little shove. "Let's go Ron. See you two there?"

"Yeah sure," Draco, hooking one leg behind Harry's and pulling the Gryffindor even more firmly against him. "But don't wait up."

Hermione and Ron finally disappeared, leaving Harry and Draco alone in the corridor.

"You're so hot," Harry whispered, sliding his other hand down to join his first hand on Draco's arse. "I could take you right in this corridor."

"Sounds good to me," Draco shot back, heart speeding up. He wrapped his arms around Harry's neck and then demanded "Up."

Harry obliged, lifting Draco up and against the wall. Draco quickly wrapped both legs around Harry's waist for support, and both boys groaned as their cocks brushed together. Harry thrust into him again, the friction sending shudders of pleasure through both boys.

The bell for class sounded, echoing through the empty corridors.

"We're late," Draco murmured, arching against Harry.

"Point?" Harry asked, squeezing his arse.

"No point," Draco panted.

The boys didn't make it to a single class that day.

That night Harry had Quidditch practice, and Draco paced anxiously around the Gryffindor common room, waiting for him to return.

"Where *is* he, Granger?" Draco snapped, glancing irritably up at the large clock in the corner of the room.

Hermione took a deep breath and spoke as patiently as she could. "Draco, Quidditch practice is usually two hours long. Harry has only been gone an hour. That means he won't be back for yet another -"

"Draco, are you here?" Harry burst through the common room portrait, looking frantic.

Draco ran at him and practically knocked him over. "What took you?" he growled, pushing Harry towards the common room couch.

"Hey, I cut practice short, alright?" Harry snapped. As the back of his leg hit the couch he twisted and swung Draco down, throwing him on his back.

And incidentally, right on top of Neville, who squawked loudly.

"Not short enough," Draco snapped back at Harry, reaching up and grabbing his shirt. With a hard tug he yanked Harry down on top of him.

"Hey, would you guys mind terribly if -" Neville began, but the two boys ignored him.

"You're so hot when you're angry," Harry said, putting one leg between Draco's and pinning him down. Neville opened his mouth, shut it, opened it again, and then sighed resignedly as Draco's head came to rest in his lap and Harry's hand came to rest on his thigh next to Draco's head.

"I'm going to do you right here on the couch, you know," Harry mumbled, sliding the hand not balanced on Neville's thigh under Draco's shirt. "That's the price you pay for making me cut Quidditch practice short."

"Oh, no," Neville moaned. "Not in my lap." He made no move to stop them though, nor did anyone else, as Draco's flaring veela powers had the whole room merely watching and drooling in his general direction.

"Oh no you're not," Draco said, and shoved up. Harry tumbled off the couch, and Draco rolled off Neville right on top of him. "You're bottoming. I'm giving you a hell of a seeing to for making me wait, Potter."

"But -" Harry only got one word out before Draco starting kissing him, veela powers as high as they could go. Harry immediately melted from the waves of pleasure scorching his body. "Yeah okay, whatever you want," he panted. "Bedroom?"

Draco nodded once, before jumping to his feet. He reached down and pulled Harry to his feet, and then a second later they were thundering up the stairs to Harry's bedroom.

Neville gave Hermione a pained look. She smiled weakly back.

"It might only last six more days," she said, as cheerfully as she could. "That's not so bad, right?"

Before Neville could respond, a loud shout of, "Bloody fucking hell, Draco, do that again!" tore through the common room.

Neville just sighed.

On. Off. On. Off.

Lucius stood in front of the mirror on his wardrobe and watched his reflection avidly, trying to see if he looked different when he had his veela powers on.

On.

He furrowed his brow. He couldn't see any physical change exactly, but there was an overall impression of looking better - skin nearly glowing, hair fanning out from his face without any wind, eyes radiant.

Off.

Lucius *felt* the change happen inside more than seeing any change in the mirror. He shrugged. It wasn't a physical change that was important anyway; it was the magic that he oozed.

He reached out with one hand and touched a finger to his reflection in the glass. His mind raced, trying to assess all the changes he had undergone since beginning the mutation process. After seventeen doses, he figured most of his physical changes were complete. His muscles were more defined, his skin was flawless, his eyes glowed silver rather than grey. The only thing that had yet to alter was his hair; it was still a bit darker than Draco's.

And now he had the veela craving for sweets, and even more importantly -the beginnings of veela powers. And with his new powers had come the first breath of hope Lucius had had in two and a half weeks:

An escape plan.

Lucius' heart began to speed up. Today was the day. He had a tentative control over his powers, enough that he could turn them on and off at will. It should be sufficient to get Nott under his control and escape from his prison.

He glanced at the clock on the wall. Nott was due to bring him dinner any minute. He began pacing nervously, thoughts whirling. He could do this, he'd be alright, Nott already seemed to have a crush on him, it would be an easy matter to seduce him then use his veela powers, he *would* do this -

And then a knock on the door interrupted his thoughts. Taking a deep breath, Lucius readied himself for escape.

"Hi Harry. Where's Draco?"

"I dunno," Harry said, looking around the Great Hall with obvious anxiety. "But I hope he shows up to dinner soon."

"Why's that?" Ron asked. "I mean, honestly, can't you use a break?"

Harry shook his head frantically. "No. This potion doesn't let me take breaks. If Draco doesn't show up soon..." He trailed off, looking panicked.

"What? What's going on?" Ron demanded.

"The potion Harry takes has some...um...side-effects," Hermione explained as tactfully as she could. "Harry is Draco's mate, so Draco's lust is focused only on Harry. Harry, however, doesn't have any boundaries. And thanks to Snape, he's got almost no inhibitions left either."

Ron's eyes widened. "Combine that with Malfoy's mad jealousy..."

"Exactly," Harry moaned. He buried his head in his arms on the Gryffindor table. "I'm not going to look up," he muttered. "Not until Draco gets here. That way I won't see how many hot, single, gorgeous people are sitting in the Great Hall and would be willing to get off with the Boy Who Lived."

Ron looked amused now. "It can't be that bad."

Harry didn't look up. "It is, Ron. Trust me."

Ron shook his head. "Yeah, well, you haven't put the moves on me or Hermione yet. Until that happens, I'm not worried."

Hermione gave a sort of cough.

"What?" Ron asked suspiciously.

"I might have tried with Hermione," Harry said sheepishly, from his arms.

"Harry!" Ron shouted. "You're fucking kidding, right?"

Hermione shook her head. "Nope. He's a total rogue right now, Ron. You might not want to get too close."

"Nutters, both of you," Ron said shortly. "Well, he hasn't tried anything on me."

At Ron's words, Harry lifted his head.

"Do you want me to?" he practically purred.

Ron's eyebrows nearly left his forehead. "What?" he asked dumbly.

Hermione rolled her eyes. "Here we go again," she muttered.

"Do you want me to try something on you?" Harry repeated, voice soft. "I'd do it if you wanted, Ron. After all, we're best mates. You're the thing I'd miss the most, remember?"

"Yeah, I remember," Ron said, looking confused. "But what are you talking about?"

"I'm talking about you," Harry said meaningfully, reaching across the table and putting his hand over Ron's. "You...me...us...best mates, experimenting together..."

"Oh I *know* you didn't just hit on the Weasel, Potter."

Harry froze. "Draco...er...hi love...just uh....chatting with uh...my amazingly platonic best mate here..."

"So I see," Draco hissed. "My room, now. I'm going to kill Snape when this is all over for adding that inhibition-removing potion." He whirled on Ron. "And *you*," he snarled. "You just be glad I know that Harry is under the effects of a potion and would never fancy a disgusting ginger oaf like yourself."

"Hey!" Ron said, offended. "He might. I'm not that bad-looking, and Harry and I have been friends forever and -"

He stopped short at the furious look in Draco's eyes.

"*What?*" the blonde snarled, drawing his wand. "I'll kill you, Weasley, I'll fucking kill you. How dare you imply that my mate might -"

Harry tackled him from behind, sending both of them crashing right on top of the Gryffindor table.

"You're so fucking hot when you're jealous," he mumbled. He pushed Draco down, right on top of a plate of chicken legs. "You look so scary and vicious and it just makes me to throw you down and shag you or get shagged or bloody anything that involves getting my hands on you..."

Draco shoved Harry up and over, rolling him into the bread basket and knocking over a bowl of chocolate pudding in the process.

"Think you're going to shag the Weasel behind my back?" he asked, yanking Harry shirt open, popping off every button. "Think I won't fuck the daylights out of you for even thinking it?"

Harry groaned as Draco bit his neck. He pushed up, sending Draco sprawling onto his back, right into a jug of pumpkin juice. Harry was on Draco's now orange, sticky body in a heartbeat.

"I'd never shag anyone but you," he breathed, even as he plundered Draco's mouth and ripped at Draco's belt. "I'm all yours, you know that. God, look at you, I could never want anyone else."

"Good," Draco said, eyes glittering. He brought one hand, covered in chocolate pudding, to the back of Harry's head and pulled him down for a kiss. Then he rolled them over so he was on top again. They nearly fell off the table, but managed to remain precariously balanced on the edge, Draco pushing Harry into the mashed potatoes, Harry smearing gravy on Draco's stomach and back under his shirt, both kissing and moaning and swearing and completely oblivious to their sizable audience until a loud voice brought them to reality.

"Mr. Potter, Mr. Malfoy," Snape said, irritation clear in his voice. "Much as I'm sure many of your fellow students appreciate the show, I do not. I would suggest you clear off to your room before you find yourselves saddled with *several* detentions."

"It's your fault," Draco accused, tearing away from Harry's lips for just a moment. "You gave him a de-inhibiting potion. Are you mad?"

"Draco, quit yakking and kiss me!" Harry demanded. "Or I'll flip you back over and fuck you. I don't care if people are watching; I'll do you bent over this table right here. I mean it, I will!"

Snape rubbed his temples, his expression pained. "Yes. In hindsight, I can see where that might have been a bit excessive. He obviously now lacks the ability to control himself, much less you.

"Time's up," Harry said, rolling Draco back over. "Prepare to be debauched, Malfoy."

"NO!" Ron fairly screamed. "No debauching on the table! Harry, go debauch Malfoy elsewhere! Please!"

Harry and Draco gave Ron dirty looks, but the interruption did the trick. They jumped up from the table and sprinted from the Great Hall.

"Can't you do something, Professor?" Hermione asked desperately as she watched Harry and Draco disappear.

"No, Miss Granger, I cannot," Snape snapped. "Veela mate potions are highly complicated and individualized. By the time I could create a new one, mating season will be over. We will all just have to make do." His eyes swept over the ruins of the Gryffindor dinner table and narrowed. "Merlin help us, in the meantime."

"Good evening, Nott," Lucius said politely, as Nott slipped through his door with his usual silver tray.

"Evening Lucius," Nott answered, his voice unctuous. "I've got your dinner."

"Indeed," Lucius said, trying his best to remain polite though he longed to spit vitriol at Voldemort's fawning lackey. "How thoughtful of you."

Lucius did not fail to notice how Nott's eyes lit up at his compliment. He hoped he could do this. He was not accustomed to seducing men, and had yet to test his veela powers on someone other than himself.

Nott set the tray on the desk. "I had the House Elves make you Crème Brule," he said, pointing at it. "You said it was your favorite."

Lucius blinked in surprise. It would seem Nott was already completely whipped, and Lucius had yet to use his veela powers on him. Forget the seduction part of the plan. Lucius would just go for it.

"That was *very* sweet of you," Lucius said, dropping his voice to a husky purr. "I really appreciate it."

"You...you do?" Nott said. He looked as if Christmas had come early.

"Oh yes," Lucius asserted. He took a deep breath and let the veela powers come on. "I appreciate it more than you know."

Lucius watched in awe and triumph as Nott's eyes glazed over.

"I'll get you any sweets you want," Nott promised, sounding as if he were speaking from a distance. "I have connections with famous bakers and with Honeyduke's itself. I'll get you so many sweets, you just wait..."

Lucius nearly dropped his control on his powers in thrill, but clung to them. Concentrating hard, he smiled at Nott.

"I don't need sweets," he said, voice dripping with honey. "But there is something you could do for me..."

"Of course," Nott said eagerly. "Anything for you, anything at all..."

Lucius crossed his fingers. "You could let me out of this room for a bit."

Please work, please work, please work...

"Of course I...." Nott trailed off and furrowed his brow. Lucius' heart sank. "Wait...I don't know...I think I'm supposed to keep you in here..."

NO! Desperate, Lucius reached out and put his hand over Nott's.

"Please," he begged. "Please...I haven't been out in ages...I just want a quick stroll..."

Nott was staring at the place where Lucius' hand was touching his.

"That feels....that's amazing..." Nott breathed.

"Please, Nott," Lucius implored. "Please, for me..."

He could feel his powers coming on stronger now, the strongest he had ever felt them and he held his breath as he watched Nott's brow slowly relax.

"Okay," Nott finally said agreeably. "But keep holding my hand, alright?"

Lucius nearly collapsed in relief. "Of course," he said, releasing his breath. "Now why don't you lead the way?"

Lucius continued to hold Nott's hand, letting his dazed guide lead the way through the many halls of Riddle Manor. It would seem he had been kept in the West Wing, and they were now heading back to the center of the house.

"Do you like your walk so far?" Nott asked. "I'll take you anywhere. This is my house, you know, I own all of this."

"Do you?" Lucius responded, indulging Nott's lies. "You must be so wealthy."

"Oh I am," Nott replied eagerly. He waved a hand around, indicating the empty hall and rooms around them. "All of this is mine. But it can be yours if you want it. I'd give it to you in a heartbeat."

"I know you would," Lucius said sweetly. His confidence was slowly returning as he realized that Nott was completely under his spell. "But what I'd really like is to see what your grounds look like. Can you take me outside?"

"Yes, of course. This way."

Nott took Lucius down another empty hall and Lucius felt his heart leap. The parlour was dead ahead, and through it was the entrance hall. And after that, all he had to do was exit Riddle Manor and get past the anti-Apparition wards, and he could be back in his home.

He unconsciously sped up, so that now he was the one pulling Nott by the hand towards the parlour, towards his escape, towards freedom. Nott did not notice, but merely began babbling about how many galleons he made a year to be able to afford such a house.

They burst through the doors of the parlour, and Lucius saw the doors on the other side standing wide open. The entrance hall seemed to glitter tantalizingly just beyond. Lucius dropped Nott's hand and broke into a run.

He crossed the parlour in seconds, heading for that open portal to freedom, when the doors in front of him suddenly slammed shut with a loud *BANG!*

Lucius froze. Then he very slowly turned.

Standing in the middle of the room, looking highly annoyed, was the Dark Lord.

"You," he said shortly to Lucius, "are not going anywhere."

And before Lucius could say a word he heard an incanted "*Stupefy*" and his world went dark.

Lucius slowly returned to consciousness, aware that he was back on his bed. Heated whispers filled the room.

"It was negligent of you nonetheless," Voldemort was hissing. "You should have informed me the instant you suspected he was developing veela powers!"

"But Master, please, I did not know!" Nott's whiny voice pleaded. Lucius suspected he was prostrate on the floor. "Lucius has been hiding his powers from me! He must have planned to manipulate me with them."

"I don't doubt that," Voldemort said shortly. "He is a great deal more intelligent than you are. Perhaps I was mistaken in thinking you could handle this duty."

"No, my Lord. I can guard him," Nott promised. "The Nott family has served you well in the matter of your veela. Please, sir. Let me guard him."

Lucius wanted to continue listening but his stomach gave a lurch as a bout of nausea flooded him. He grimaced and groaned out loud, curling into a small ball on the bed as his body began to react to the *Mutosis* potion yet again.

Voldemort was at his side at an instant.

"Leave us, Nott," he commanded, and Lucius heard the door open and close. Voldemort was staring down at him.

"So you are awake, my tricky little veela," he said coolly. "Thought you would escape from my bed?"

"That was the idea, yes," Lucius snapped, wincing as his insides writhed and twisted.

"Such a sharp tongue on such a pretty creature," Voldemort commented regretfully, reaching down to touch his hand to Lucius' temple. "You are sweating."

"No!" Lucius gasped in mock-horror. "Am I really? I wonder if that could be due to the fact that I am kept as a prisoner and being turned into an ANIMAL!"

He snarled the last part, frustrated at both his failed escape attempt and at the painful changes happening to him.

"Lucius, you wound me," Voldemort said, moving his hand to lightly stroke Lucius' hair. "You have a beautiful room with twenty-four hour service and the choicest of food. You are not my prisoner."

"No," Lucius said bitterly. "I'm your *pet*."

"Hmmm," Voldemort said, still stroking his hair. "I suppose you are."

"I hate you," Lucius growled. He wanted to pull away. Voldemort's touches were making him feel even sicker, but his body felt like lead. "You are foul and loathsome and I *hate* you."

"Shh, pet, don't say that," Voldemort whispered. He moved his hand and reached into his robes. "It hurts me to do this to you, but I have no choice. You cannot be trusted not to use your veela powers on your guard."

Lucius craned his head up and watched in a sort of horrified stupor as Voldemort withdrew something shiny from his pocket.

"What are you -?"

Lucius did not have the chance to finish his sentence before Voldemort was leaning over him. The Dark Lord's hands went around his neck and Lucius heard him hiss something unintelligible.

The cool sensation of metal against the skin sent Lucius' hands shooting up to grab and tug uselessly at the collar that now resided around his neck.

"You...you wouldn't..." Lucius' eyes were wide, unable to believe that even the Dark Lord would go so far as to keep him collared like an animal.

Voldemort shook his head. "It's your own fault, you know. Had you not tried to escape such drastic measures would not have been necessary. As it is, I have to ensure that you will not try manipulating your guard again."

He gestured to the collar Lucius was now wearing. "That is no ordinary collar. While it is plated in silver, so it will not irritate your skin, the core is pure copper. Surely from your reading you have discerned that copper has a destructive effect on veela magic. With a band of copper around your neck, you will be unable to use your newly discovered veela powers of your own free will."

"This collar will destroy my veela powers?"

"Not...destroy. Modify, perhaps. You will no longer be able to control them, but with the right spell, I will."

Lucius stared. "You?"

"Oh yes. There is a spell - *Compello Magus Veela*. Not widely known, but in this case very useful. It forces a veela to use their veela powers. I discovered it in the same place as the *Mutosis* potion. I was most pleased to hear of it. It will spare me the effort of having to constantly keep you under the Imperius curse, and now Nott will have nothing to fear."

Lucius was speechless.

"You are gorgeous," Voldemort said softly, his eyes roving up and down Lucius' body. "And knowing you have begun getting your veela powers...it is difficult to deny myself your company tonight. But you have only four doses left. I can wait. I'm sure the end result will be worth it."

He leered slightly at Lucius, who thought he might throw up.

"Monday night, pet," the Dark Lord purred in a voice that made Lucius' skin crawl. "We have a date."

And then he was gone, locking the door behind him.

"Nice to spend a little time with you," Pansy said, as she walked down the corridor Friday night next to Draco. "I don't see much of you anymore. You're always with Potter."

Draco smiled before he could stop himself. "Yeah, with Potter," he echoed. "Which, speaking of Potter, would you mind terribly if I cut my rounds short tonight?"

"You mean can I cover for you so you can go shag your mate?" Pansy asked, sounding amused.

Draco smirked at her. "Well, it *is* mating season. And I haven't had a shag in nearly two hours and I'm starting to get restless."

Pansy sighed dramatically. "The things I do for you. Fine. Just finish this floor with me, then you can go."

"Thanks Pansy." They turned a corner, eyes peeled for students out past curfew. "So is there anything going on in Slytherin that I should be aware of?" Draco asked conversationally.

Pansy shrugged. "Not too much. Crabbe and Goyle miss your pretty face in the dorms. Daphne Greengrass got caught by Snape in Blaise's bed, both of them have a week of detention. Oh, and Mayana Rookwood was telling me she heard from Theo the other day."

Draco felt his blood turn to ice in his veins. "She heard from Nott?" he asked, struggling to keep his voice level.

Pansy nodded. "Yeah. No one's heard from him in ages. Remember when he just disappeared back in November? No one knew what had happened to him, but apparently he's been living with his dad this whole time. That's what he said in his letter, at any rate."

"Did he say anything else?" Draco pressed.

"You know, he did mention that he'd be dropping by the castle to pick up the rest of his stuff. He told May not to tell anyone about that though. Bit stupid of him, really. Everyone knows Mayana Rookwood is the biggest gossip in Hogwarts. Any secret you tell her will immediately spread to the rest of the school."

"So he's coming back? When?" Draco demanded.

Pansy looked a bit taken aback by Draco's vehemence. "Why do you care so much?"

Draco thought fast. "Uh...just...never got to properly say goodbye," Draco said, only half lying. "I'd love the chance to get to see him again."

"Oh, okay," Pansy said, placated. "Well, the letter said he'd be dropping by Sunday. He should be coming by the Slytherin dorms, want me to owl you when he comes by?"

"Yes, Pansy," Draco said, as pleasantly as he could through clenched teeth. "That would be lovely."

Saturday came, a welcome event for both Harry and Draco, because it meant they could spend the entire day in Draco's room, alternately sleeping and shagging.

"So, have we covered all your kinks then?" Harry asked playfully late that evening. They were sprawled fully clothed on the bed, having just come back from a visit to the kitchens for dinner. Harry had just taken another dose of the potion, and was obviously ready to go again.

Draco furrowed his brow and thought seriously. "Mmm, we've gotten most of them. There is one we haven't tried though."

"Oh?" Harry said, immediately sitting up. "There's one left? And what would that be?"

"Have I mentioned that there are upsides to you taking an inhibition-removing potion?" Draco asked rhetorically, grinning at Harry's eager attitude.

"Come on, come on. Stop stalling. What's this last mystery kink you've got?"

"Well," Draco said, clearing his throat purposefully, "you've never tied me up and then...you know...had your wicked way with me."

Harry raised an eyebrow. "You want to be *tied up*? And then *dominated*? You kinky sod, that's like... like an S&M, bondage kind of thing."

Draco immediately pouted slightly, something he knew Harry found nearly impossible to resist.

"No it's not," Draco said petulantly. "I just thought it might be fun to try it." He watched in satisfaction as Harry completely melted at his pout. "You know, I tied you up once, Harry," he pointed out. "I think you ought to return the favour."

And then a funny thing happened. Harry's expression altered, from sappy and smitten to something mischievous and slightly wicked.

"Alright then," Harry said softly. Draco felt a funny sort of flutter in his stomach at his words. Harry reached out and pushed Draco down onto his back on the bed.

"Okay, Harry," Draco said bossily, taking charge like usual. "The spell to conjure ropes is -"

"Don't need it," Harry replied meaningfully.

"What, the Great Harry Potter doesn't need spells anymore?" Draco scoffed. "Honestly, you can be so -"

"*Don't move, Draco.*"

Draco froze, his body obeying his mate's command without question.

"Oh *shit*."

"That's right, love," Harry cooed, shifting to all fours. He moved so that he was hovering over Draco's inert body, staring down hungrily at him. "You're mine now. Completely at my mercy."

Draco's eyes were wide. This was unexpected. He hadn't thought that Harry would do this, have him so completely and utterly vulnerable.

Still, he had his veela powers, so he was actually, truthfully, still completely in control of the situa -

"No veela powers until I give you permission, either."

"Bugger," Draco swore out loud, feeling his powers shut themselves completely off. He swallowed. "Harry, I -"

"Shhh," Harry said, sitting back on top of Draco's stomach, reaching forward towards Draco's shirt with his hands. One by one his hands plucked open the buttons on Draco's shirt, pulling it un-tucked from his pants and spreading it open. Draco gasped slightly as his bare chest came under Harry's view. Though he was still almost completely clothed, he wasn't sure he'd ever felt so naked.

"Harry, what are you going to -"

"Hush, Draco," Harry said forcefully. "Or do I have to command you to be silent too?"

Draco bit his lip, one of the few movements he could still make under Harry's command. And then he gasped; Harry's hand had come to rest on his stomach and was lightly tracing circles around his belly button.

"Are you going to be a good veela and do what I tell you to do? Or are you going to make this difficult for me?"

Draco closed his eyes. Even without any veela powers, his mate's touch sent fire through his nerves. "Good veela," he whispered.

He felt Harry place his hands on the bed on either side of Draco's torso. "Excellent," the Gryffindor replied softly. "Raise your hands over your head."

Draco obeyed, opening his eyes to watch Harry watch him as he stretched his flawless body out over the bed.

"Gorgeous," Harry breathed, and then bent over and took one of Draco's nipples in his mouth. Draco yelped, though it quickly became a moan as Harry used his mouth and tongue to tease the nipple hard. He did the same thing to the other one before licking and kissing his way down Draco's flat abs to the obvious bulge in his trousers.

Harry sat up and began to stroke him on top of the cloth, sending teasing pleasure shooting through Draco. He laid still, Harry's command still preventing him from moving except when Harry told him to. In what seemed like seconds Harry had him stripped below the waist and was swallowing him whole.

Draco groaned loudly. "Fuck, Harry," he panted, as Harry's tongue caressed him. "Oh fuck, that's so...oh God, do that thing you do with your hands when you -"

Harry immediately stopped and sat up, looking at Draco sternly.

"You said you were going to be good," he said meaningfully.

Draco's eyes widened again. "I'm sorry Harry. I didn't mean -"

"Turn over, Draco."

"But -"

"I said *turn over*."

Draco rolled onto his stomach immediately.

"Hands and knees."

Gulping, Draco pushed himself up to all fours. He wasn't used to this. True, he bottomed a lot more than Harry. But that was because he genuinely liked it, and even so Draco still had most of the control in their sex life. As Harry put it, Draco liked to top from the bottom. But right now, Harry was in complete control of Draco's every move, and Draco felt distinctly defenseless and vulnerable.

He was also completely, totally, and almost painfully turned on, and he distantly wondered if all veela became this horny when their mates took charge.

Fingers were sliding into him now, slick with lube, and Draco felt slightly more secure as he realized that despite Harry's dominating actions, his boyfriend was being as gentle as ever. He cried out as Harry's fingers hit his prostate, and then bit his lip as Harry entered him.

Whispers of, "it's okay, relax baby, I won't hurt you," drifted to Draco's ears, and the blonde followed Harry's instructions. He closed his eyes and let Harry fuck him, let Harry take care of everything, torn between wanting control of the situation again and actually getting off on the helplessness of being at Harry's mercy.

Harry's hand wrapped around his throbbing cock, and then Draco heard him softly say, "Okay, you can use your veela powers again." Immediately Draco's powers turned on, shooting sparks of pleasure through both boys. Draco screwed his eyes tightly shut, not thinking, just feeling and submitting and oh holy *hell* Harry was hitting *that spot* with every goddamn stroke -

And then Harry, though it was somewhat strained, still managed to use that magic Voice on Draco:

"Come for me, Draco."

And Draco's body exploded in a burst of ecstasy. He was vaguely aware of Harry crying out his name and falling on top of him, but his attention was caught in the waves of pleasure coursing through his body.

He heard Harry mutter something, and then Draco found himself able to move again. His arms and legs gave out almost instantly and he fell onto his stomach, Harry still heavy on top of him.

They lay completely still and silent for several moments, pressed together tightly. Finally, Harry rolled off him to one side.

"Wow," he said, sounding completely blown away.

"Yeah," Draco echoed softly. He didn't move or look up. Now that the sex was over he felt more vulnerable than ever. His body was trembling in the aftermath, and he had the distinct urge to hide himself under the pillows.

"You are so amazing." Draco heard Harry rolling onto his side, and felt Harry's hand come to rest on his back. "I'm so lucky to have you. You're so - Draco? Draco, love, why are you shaking?" Harry finished anxiously.

Draco gave into temptation and tucked his head under a pillow to hide from Harry. "M'not shaking," he protested, voice muffled.

"Yes you are," Harry said, wrapping himself around Draco's trembling body. "Are you okay? Are you cold?"

Draco shook his head, though Harry couldn't see it under the pillow. "No. Not cold."

"Then why...oh Draco, is it...were you...I mean, was that too much?" Harry asked, arms sliding around Draco's rib cage and clutching him tightly. "Did I hurt you?"

There was a pause while Draco still held himself slightly rigid in Harry's arms. "No," he finally said, hands coming up to pull the pillow even more tightly over his head.

"Did I...did I scare you?" Harry asked hesitantly, planting kisses on Draco's shoulders.

Draco didn't answer.

Harry immediately sensed that he'd struck home. "I did, didn't I? I was too dominating. Oh baby, I am so sorry," he said contritely. "Come here." He began tugging at the pillow covering Draco's head.

"No," Draco replied petulantly. He was now felt embarrassed as well as vulnerable, and clutched the pillow even more tightly to his head. "Go away."

"Draco please, I thought you wanted that. I never would have done it if I'd known I'd scare you."

"I wasn't *scared*," Draco lied, scooting away from Harry on the bed. "It was just...different."

"Different in a scary way?" Harry said, a little too astutely. Draco finally ripped the pillow from his head and sat up to glare harshly at Harry.

"I wasn't *scared*," he snapped, trying to sound scary himself but forgetting that his sex-mussed hair and still trembling body weren't going to scare anyone.

Harry reached out and snagged his wrist, and then suddenly Draco found himself tugged against a warm chest and wrapped up in strong arms.

"Poor baby," Harry said, covering Draco's face with a flurry of kisses.

Draco seethed at him. "Don't call me *baby*, Potter. I'm not a baby. And I *wasn't scared*."

He made no move to pull away, though, letting Harry hold him close and continue to kiss him.

"Course you weren't scared," Harry said soothingly. He moved to kiss Draco's hair, and Draco tucked his face into Harry's neck.

"That's right. Not scared. I'm the big, dark magical creature here. I'm the scary one."

"You're very scary," Harry agreed. "You scare me all the time."

"Yes I do. Because I'm scary."

'Right. You're scary."

"Yes. I'm scary. Not you, Potter."

"Nope," Harry confirmed cheerfully, now stroking Draco's hair with one hand. "I'm not scary at all."

Draco snuggled ever closer, his body relaxing in Harry's arms. Harry reached down and pulled the covers up over them to keep them warm.

They lay quietly together for a couple moments, before Harry planted another kiss on his head.

"I won't do it again," he promised, and Draco could feel Harry's voice rumbling in his chest. The blonde stayed silent for a moment before slowly lifting his head.

"You can do it again if you want to," he said shyly. Harry regarded him seriously for a moment before reaching up and tenderly brushing a piece of hair out of Draco's face.

"No, it scared...um...*me* too much," he said softly. "I won't do it anymore."

Draco chewed his lip for a moment. "Are you sure it *scared* you?" he finally said. "I mean, maybe it really just made you a little more vulnerable than you're used to. But maybe that's okay. Maybe you kind of liked it too. Maybe it kind of turned you on and got you really hot but was just a little...you know..."

"Scary?"

Draco blushed. "Shut up," he mumbled, scooting back down to curl up on his side and bury his face against Harry's chest.

Harry laughed. "God, you're so *cute*," he said affectionately, covering Draco's head with even more kisses. "I can't get enough of you."

"Shut up, Potter, and don't call me cute," Draco said imperiously.

"But you *are*. You're my cute little baby vee -"

And before Harry could finish his sentence Draco pounced, pushing Harry onto his back and locking his lips over Harry's in a deep kiss.

"I'll show you who the baby is here," Draco growled in a mock-threat, and he and Harry showed each other at least three more times before finally falling asleep for the night.

Early the next morning, Draco was woken by the soft rapping noise. Carefully sliding out from underneath from the arm that was wrapped around him, he made his way over to the window.

"Hi Artemis," he said softly, opening the window and letting Pansy's barn owl fly into the room. As quietly as he could he extracted the letter from her leg, gave her an owl treat, and sent her on her way.

He carefully unrolled the parchment and read Pansy's words with a pounding heart.

Draco,

Nott just arrived. He was heading up to the boys' dorms last time I saw him. If you hurry, you can probably catch him. I didn't get a chance to tell him you wanted to see him, but I bet he'd be glad of the chance to say goodbye to you.

Pansy

Draco looked up from the parchment to Harry's peacefully sleeping body, sprawled trustingly across Draco's bed. His grey eyes narrowed. This time Nott wasn't getting away. The bastard had signed his death sentence the moment he had fucked with Draco Malfoy's mate.

He set Pansy's note down on the desk and grabbed his cloak. Silent as the grave, he slipped out of his room.

Once out in the corridor, Draco broke into a run. His fleet pace took him quickly to the stone wall marking the entrance to the Slytherin common room.

"*Basilisk*," he snapped, and the wall slid open. He strode into the common room, one hand on his wand in his pocket and the word *Crucio* on his lips.

The common room was disappointingly empty, save for Pansy lounging with a book on one of the couches. "Draco, hi," she said. "You *just* missed him."

"What?" Draco whispered, eyes wide and horrified.

"You might catch up with him though," Pansy continued, glancing up from her book. "He said he was going to head into the Forbidden Forest and Apparate from there. If you run, maybe you can..."

Draco didn't wait to hear the rest of Pansy's sentence before tearing off towards the Forest.

Cold. Definitely cold.

Harry shivered slightly in the huge bed as a chill spread through him. He was normally so warm when he slept in Draco's bed. He reached out blindly, seeking Draco's warm body and welcome veela heat.

Harry felt all over Draco's side of the bed, all the way to the edge. His hand came in contact with nothing but the mattress. Puzzled, he opened his eyes.

The bed was empty.

Squinting, he glanced towards the bathroom. The door was wide open and the room was empty.

Harry felt a bit uncomfortable without Draco there. He had no idea where the blonde could be. Grabbing his glasses off the night stand and slipping them on, he climbed out of bed. Shivering, he was wandering over towards the closet to grab a jumper when he noticed a piece of parchment lying on Draco's desk.

He ambled over and picked it up. He glanced at the words on the paper.

"*Shit!*"

Not pausing to grab a jumper, his chill forgotten, Harry took off running towards the Slytherin common room.

Nott was back.

"Yeah, Draco was here. Nott too. But Nott already left. I told Draco he was heading down to the Forbidden Forest to Apparate. You might be too late, but maybe if you really run you can catch -"

"Thanks Pansy!" Harry interrupted, already sprinting away from the entrance to the Slytherin common room. It'd be a cold day in hell before Harry would let Draco face that son of a bitch Nott alone.

Draco paused for a moment to catch his breath, leaning against a tree that bordered a small clearing. He made a frustrated noise. He'd been searching the forest nearly fifteen minutes, and he could have *sworn* he saw a flash of movement in this clearing. But it was empty, nothing but the wind in the trees and Draco's heavy breathing.

He glanced to his right, staring down off the edge of the clearing into a ravine. He scanned it, hoping to catch the slightest movement that could mean Theodore Nott was lurking down there. Suddenly, a snapping branch on the left side of the clearing caught his attention. He whirled around, wand out -

And then Harry emerged, looking highly pissed off.

"*There* you are. What were you thinking?" he hissed at Draco, stalking over to him. "Running off to find Nott alone? Are you trying to give me a heart attack?"

Draco glared at him. "I can handle Nott. I wasn't going to risk you getting hurt, you stupid git!"

"How do you think I feel?" Harry said back furiously. "One good *Imperio* and you'd be putty in Nott's hands. What if he made you use your veela powers? What if that pervert *touched* you again? There's no bloody way I'm risking that."

As the boys argued by the edge of the gulch, the air suddenly prickled around them.

"What the -"

To Draco and Harry's absolute horror three figures in black robes and masks suddenly Apparated into the clearing.

"Draco get DOWN!" Harry shouted, shoving Draco to the ground behind the tree and drawing his wand simultaneously. "*Expelliarmus!*" he shouted at the closest Death Eater, who went flying backwards and hit the ground of the clearing with a loud *thud*.

Draco winced in pain as he sprawled on the hard ground. He immediately went to stand back up and defend his mate -

Only to find that Harry's words had been a direct command. He couldn't stand up.

"Potter, you son of a bitch, let me *fight*," Draco snapped up at Harry while groping in his robe pockets for his wand.

"*Stupefy!*" Harry sent a Stunning spell towards another Death Eater, who ducked and then fired back with "*Impedimenta!*"

Harry quickly cast *Protego* and the spell rebounded on the caster, freezing the second Death Eater in place. "No, stay DOWN!" Harry growled at Draco, dodging behind the tree to avoid a jet of light. "I'm not letting you get hurt!"

Draco tried to stand again, and couldn't. "Damn you, Potter! Let me UP!"

"NO!" Harry shouted, jumping back out from behind the tree to face the last Death Eater.

Draco located his wand and with difficulty extracted it from his pocket. He aimed it from the ground and sent a Trip Jinx at the third Death Eater, who was advancing towards Harry.

The Death Eater went sprawling, much to Draco's satisfaction.

"See Potter? I can fight. Now LET ME UP!"

"No chance in HELL! Stay down where you're safe!"

Draco clenched his teeth. "Fucking Gryffindors," he snarled. He rolled onto his back and pointed his wand straight at the sky. With a quick spell he sent red sparks shooting up directly overhead, a sure signal to anyone looking that they were in trouble.

"Potter, for the last time, let me - OW!" Draco suddenly yelped, as a biting pain shot up his leg. He glanced down.

A brightly colored snake that looked just like Harry's old friend Isis was rearing near his ankle, and by the snake's bared fangs Draco figured he could guess what that pain was.

Almost immediately a woozy feeling came over Draco, and he vaguely remembered Harry saying that Isis had been a highly poisonous snake.

"Draco?" He heard Harry saying. "Draco, what just - oh fuck!"

Distantly Draco was aware of a distressed hissing noise coming from Harry, directed at the snake that was slithering away from Draco's ankle.

"Harry?" Draco said weakly, as nausea flooded through him. He reached out towards Harry, who had crouched anxiously next to him.

"Draco? Draco, love, hang in there, okay? Please, I -"

A jet of light streaked past Harry's face and he whirled around, wand in hand -

And the instant his back was turned, there was a crash behind Draco.

Draco cried out as Theodore Nott had jumped out from the bushes at the side of the ravine and grabbed Draco, hauling the veela to his feet. In an instant he was trapped, Nott's arms around his waist and Nott's wand at his throat.

Harry turned back around a second too late.

"You *fucker*," Draco heard Harry snarl at Nott.

"Love you too, Potter," Nott shot back. "But I love your veela more."

Harry growled in anger and lunged at Nott, who took a step back and jabbed his wand meaningfully into Draco's throat.

"Don't piss me off," Nott warned. "Or I'll take it out on Blondie here."

Harry froze for a moment, just long enough for the last remaining Death Eater to fire off a spell.

The spell hit Harry in the back and the force of it sent Harry reeling. He stumbled several steps forward and then, to Draco's horror, lost his footing and fell off the side of the ravine.

"HARRY!" Draco, nauseous and terrified, watched through the thick fog in his brain as his mate tumbled down the rocky slope and then lay still at the bottom. He struggled to free himself, his poisoned limbs like lead in Nott's iron grip. "Let me go!" he screamed. "Harry! HARRY!"

"You're not going anywhere," Nott snapped. Then he reached into his pocket and pulled out a familiar looking medallion.

"Didn't bother with time activation this time," he said nastily. "Just needs one little word. *Portus!*"

And almost immediately Draco felt a familiar tug behind his navel. The last thing he saw was Harry's crumpled body at the bottom of the ravine as the Forbidden Forest disappeared from his view.

He hadn't even finished flying through space before the darkness took him.

The Veela Enigma

Chapter 30: Veela Rescue 101

"Mr. Potter? Mr. Potter, are you awake?"

A pause.

"He's not responding. Miss Granger, can you try?"

"Harry? Harry, can you hear me? We need you to swallow something, okay? Can you wake up enough to swallow?"

Harry could hear Hermione's voice but it was garbled, the words difficult to interpret. He felt like he was listening to his friend from underneath the lake. He wanted to respond to her, to tell her yes, he could swallow, but he was so tired...so very tired...

"Can't we just use Enervate on him, Madame Pomfrey?"

"I'd rather not risk it, Mr. Weasley. Not so soon after he's been healed. Miss Granger, please try again."

"Harry? Harry listen to me. I need you to swallow something. That's all. Can you do that for me? Please Harry?"

Harry wasn't sure if he was dreaming or awake. His muscles felt like lead, and his eyelids seemed to have weights on them. But Hermione was pleading with him, and so with a great effort of will Harry managed a croak.

"...Her...mi..."

"Oh my God, did you hear that? That was Harry!" Hermione's voice said eagerly, sounding excited. "Oh Harry, you're awake. Here, Madame Pomfrey has something for you, alright? You just lie there and swallow, okay?"

"...kay..."

Harry felt his jaw gently pried open, and then a bitter liquid was poured into his mouth. He would have choked but Hermione was right by his ear, gently coaxing him to swallow.

Harry managed to swallow the unknown elixir, and then relaxed again. He immediately began drifting back to sleep, back into that heady dream world of exhaustion and -

Suddenly, he was wide awake.

"Whoa," he said, sitting upright on the bed. He blinked at the fuzzy room, feeling energy surge through his veins. "What just happened?"

"You have barely slept over the last couple weeks, Mr. Potter. Your body was only functioning because you are taking a potion twice a day. It would seem that while you were injured, the potion you were taking wore off and your body

absolutely would not wake. So, we gave you an Energy Potion," Madame Pomfrey explained, handing Harry his glasses.

Harry gratefully slipped his glasses on to find himself in the hospital wing, lying in bed. Madame Pomfrey was already bustling off, presumably to get more potions or do more tests. Ron and Hermione leaned anxiously over him.

"The Energy Potion was Hermione's idea," Ron said, nodding his head in Hermione's direction. "She's the one who realized why you wouldn't wake up. We were all so confused - you were healing just fine but you were out like a light and wouldn't wake no matter what we did. Then Hermione remembered that Snape's potion had probably worn off so of course you were still sleeping."

"Well, I should have thought of it sooner," Hermione added. "Anyway, that's just a regular energy potion in you now, not the one Professor Snape gave you. Didn't seem right to give you the lust potion part when Draco's not even -"

"Jesus Christ, Draco!" Harry swore, everything rushing back to him. "That fucker Nott took him. Shit, I've got to get to him!"

Harry quickly wrapped his right hand around his left wrist, the spell on his lips -

Only to find that his Portkey bracelet was not on his wrist.

He stared at his bare forearm. "Where's my bracelet?"

Hermione and Ron exchanged a look.

"Okay, um...don't be mad, Harry," Hermione said cautiously.

Harry's head snapped up to look at her. "Did you take my bracelet?" he asked angrily. "Give it back! I've got to get to Draco!"

"We know you do, mate," Ron said, putting a hand on Harry's arm. "We figured you'd try to Portkey to him as soon as you woke. But you can't, Harry, you can't. We don't know where he is."

"Who cares *where* he is, it's *who* he's with!" Harry growled. "He's with that fucker Nott and probably Voldemort too! Now give me that fucking bracelet!"

"Harry, listen to us," Hermione said urgently. "It could be a trap. Voldemort could be waiting for you. You need to wait until we have some kind of plan."

"Fuck any plans! God only knows what they're doing to him," Harry said, throwing the covers aside. "Where is the bracelet?"

"I have it in my bag, Harry, and I'm not giving it to you until we know at least where you'd be going," Hermione said firmly.

Harry grit his teeth. "Hermione, this is not the time to fuck with me. The last time I saw my boyfriend he'd been bitten by a snake and Nott had him. I *promised* him I would never let anyone hurt him, and right now he could be hurt or scared or DEAD! I NEED TO GO TO HIM!"

Harry looked truly scary right then, his hair standing in all directions and his eyes glowing. But Hermione stood her ground.

"Draco is most likely okay because he's probably still unconscious right now," she said, ever the voice of logic. "Dumbledore talked to some of the beings in the Forest who saw the whole thing. He's the one who went in to get you guys, you know. He saw the red sparks in the sky and went after you. Got there to find Draco gone, your body

crumpled and broken at the bottom of a ravine and the Dark Mark in the clearing. But he knows about the snake bite, Harry."

Harry closed his eyes in dread. "Is Draco going to be okay?"

"Yes," Hermione hastened to reassure him. "A bite from that snake would have killed any of us humans, but luckily he's not a human, he's a veela. He'll be unconscious for at least a day, but he'll be fine. So wherever he is, he's probably still out cold."

Harry glanced at the windows, at the pale grey sky. "What time is it, anyway?"

Hermione glanced at her wristwatch. "About 10am Monday morning."

"MONDAY?" Harry shouted. "How long was I out?"

"Dumbledore found you yesterday before breakfast, so about a full day yourself. We were frantic when you wouldn't wake up, Harry."

"But that means it's been over 24 hours since Draco was bitten," Harry said, sounding panicked. "He could wake up any minute now, and who knows what he'll be waking up to? What on earth does Voldemort even want with him? Does Dumbledore have an idea?"

Ron shook his head. "He doesn't know. Snape doesn't know. But they'll figure it out, Harry, trust them."

Harry took a deep breath and set his jaw. "I can't risk that. I can't make Draco wait. Give me back that bracelet," he said pointedly to Hermione.

"Oh right. You're going to rush into Death Eater territory in your pajamas with no wand. Brilliant move, Harry."

Harry looked down to see that he was indeed still wearing the pajamas he had gone to bed in Saturday night, and that his wand was across the room.

"Harry," Hermione said patiently. "Draco will be unconscious for *at least* 24 hours. He's not a very big guy, so it's likely the snake's venom will keep him out for more several hours more. In the meantime, I brought you some clothes. Take a shower, get dressed, rest and eat. Dumbledore is calling in some of the Order members and then we're all meeting in a couple hours. Okay Harry?"

Harry didn't answer, only buried his head in his hands. "I hope he's okay," he finally said softly.

Hermione and Ron joined him on the bed.

"We do too, Harry. We do too."

"Lucius? I've got your last dose here. Why don't you come take it?"

Lucius rolled over in bed and glared at Nott, who was leaning against the door to Lucius' cell. He was holding the silver tray and patiently waiting for Lucius to acknowledge him.

"Oh yes. Why don't I take it and become a veela so I can be literally fucked?" Lucius said sarcastically, sliding out of bed.

"Don't be like that," Nott said, sounding pained. "You're so pretty. I don't like it when you're sarcastic."

"Nott," Lucius said evenly, walking over to him. "I don't give a flying fuck what you like."

Nott furrowed his brow. "But -"

"Just shut up," Lucius snapped, grabbing the last goblet of the *Mutosis* Potion from the tray in Nott's hands.

Nott obediently closed his mouth. He watched as Lucius threw back his last draught and then put the goblet back on the tray.

"I'm not angry with you, you know."

Lucius sighed long-sufferingly. "I wouldn't care if you *were* angry with me."

"I just thought you'd like to know. Even though you manipulated me with your veela powers. I'm not angry. I forgive you."

"That's just lovely, Nott, really," Lucius said. His voice dripped sarcasm. "But guess what? I'm angry with you. You're a disgusting sycophant who has watched me turn into an animal for the Dark Lord's pleasure and done nothing to stop it. You better pray that I never get free Nott, because I'll come after you."

And here Lucius bared his teeth and drew himself up to his full height. "And I promise, if I find you - *I'll kill you.*"

Nott's eyes grew huge and he squeaked. A second later he had bolted out the door and locked Lucius back in.

Lucius glanced over at the wardrobe mirror and was surprised by his reflection. Furious, glowing eyes, sharp white teeth, and his inhuman, unearthly veela appearance all combined to make him positively frightening to look at.

He smiled. Apparently there were some advantages to being a veela.

"Ugh. Oh God, what happened to me?"

Draco slowly opened his eyes, conscious that his whole body was aching rather heavily. He felt like he'd been hit repeatedly by bludgers. He stared at the canopy above him, the deep black soothing to his aching eyes.

He closed his eyes again and brought his hands up to his temples to try and massage away the uncomfortable buzz of a headache. He could really go for some water right now. Or tea, actually, with lots of sugar. Maybe if he acted pitiful enough he could get Harry to go get him -

Harry.

HARRY!

Draco sat upright, suddenly registering the fact that he had a *green* canopy over his bed and Harry had a *red* one and he didn't know anyone with a *black* canopy so where the fuck was he and oh Christ was Harry alright?

Draco's breath started to come in quick pants as he glanced around the room. He was in the middle of a large bed with an ornate headboard. The canopy and covers were a rich black, sumptuous and luxurious. The room itself was spacious and finely furnished, with shelves upon shelves of books and a large wardrobe in the corner.

There were two doors along the walls. One looked very solidly closed while the other stood open. Draco could see a large claw foot tub and pedestal sink in the washroom beyond. Jumping out of bed, Draco sprinted over to the closed door and pulled as hard as he could.

Locked.

Growling in frustration, Draco turned and leaned back against the locked door. He was in what appeared to be a bedroom, alone and apparently unharmed. Could the same be said for Harry?

He closed his eyes, and immediately saw Harry's crumpled body from the bottom of the ravine. He was deathly worried about Harry. Had someone seen the sparks he sent up and found Harry? Was Harry in the hospital wing? Or was he still in that ravine, cold and in pain and alone and -

With a shuddery gasp Draco shoved himself off the door. It would do no good to panic now. He had to keep his head. He walked back over to the bed, thanking all the gods that for the first time since mating season had begun he actually felt somewhat normal. He wasn't sure if mating season had ended, or if worry and anxiety over the state of his mate had superseded the lust he would normally be feeling.

Or maybe Harry's dead and that's why you're not horny, his mind interjected.

Shut UP, Draco returned fiercely. If he let himself believe that, he'd fall into a deep depression and then he'd *never* manage to escape.

On the other side of the bed was a large writing desk with a sparkling silver tray on it. The tray was covered by a big round cover. Curious, Draco wandered over to investigate.

Lifting the lid off the tray, Draco raised an eyebrow as he uncovered a decadent looking meal comprised entirely of sweets. Petite Fours sat on the tray, along with éclairs, napoleons, a slice of chocolate torte and a fruit tart. Whoever was keeping him here certainly had done their research on veela.

A small folded piece of parchment accompanied the meal, so Draco picked it up.

My dear little Malfoy, the note began. The wording sent unpleasant shivers up Draco's spine. *This room is yours, as is everything in it. Should you require anything, simply ask the little Nott. He is standing guard outside your door.*

I shall be visiting you tonight. I look forward to finding out if the "pleasures of the veela" are everything they are lauded to be. Potter did not deserve your touch. I do.

LV

Draco stared at the note. He wasn't quite sure he understood what it meant.

But he knew it couldn't be anything good.

After his friends left, Harry took a quick shower and got dressed, pulling on the khaki trousers and the thick, warm cashmere crew neck jumper Hermione had brought for him. Wool socks and trainers completed the outfit, and then with nothing left to do and energy to spare, Harry began to pace.

He had been back and forth across the small room at least five times when he heard the voice.

"*Harry Potter?*"

"*What?*" Harry snapped, whirling around. He furrowed his brow. No one was there.

Then the voice came again. "*Harry Potter...may I speak to you?*"

Following the sound of the voice, Harry looked down at the floor. There, curled near the foot of the bed, was a brightly colored snake that looked awfully familiar.

"*You,*" Harry hissed, dropping to his knees. "*What the hell are you doing here? Come to bite me now and finish the job?*"

The snake looked, if it were possible, ashamed. "*I am sorry,*" he said. "*I did not know he was your veela.*"

Harry narrowed his eyes. "*I told you that yesterday when you bit him. I asked you why you would bite my mate and you didn't answer me.*"

"*I was shocked by your Parseltongue,*" the snake replied. "*It wasn't until I talked to Isis that I realized that you were the one who had saved her before.*"

"*Is Isis your kin?*" Harry asked.

"*Yes,*" the snake confirmed. "*Our family owes you for bringing her home. I should not have bitten your veela. But I was commanded to.*"

Harry felt something in him snap to attention. "*Commanded to? By whom?*"

The snake's tongue flicked in and out as it slithered uncomfortably. "*By the Dark Lord.*"

"*The Dark Lord told you to bite Draco?*" Harry said in surprise. "*What did he say exactly?*"

"*It was not the Dark Lord himself, but Nagini, his snake. She told me I was to bite the veela youngling in the Forest. She said it would not kill him.*"

"*No, it won't kill him, but you did hurt him,*" Harry snapped. He knew Nagini. He remembered her from the graveyard. "*Did Nagini say anything else? Did she tell you why he wanted Draco?*"

"*She said that the Dark Lord wished to own the young veela. She said that he wanted the veela for mating.*"

Harry was confused for a moment. "*He wants to breed Draco with other veela?*"

"*No. He wants to mate with the veela himself.*"

There was absolute silence for a moment, and then the glass vials of potion standing on shelves about the room began to vibrate.

"*Voldemort wants to fuck Draco?*" Harry said, his teeth clenched, his hands balled into fists. Anger, furious, uncontrollable anger was welling up in him. The thought of that foul, disgusting half-man laying one single finger on Draco made Harry so angry he couldn't think straight.

The snake bobbed its head in confirmation. "*Yes. My bite was supposed to tranquilize him so that he could be taken to the Dark Lord's headquarters.*"

The snake paused to glance with worry at the bottles rattling around the room. "*You are angry, young wizard,*" it said. "*Is it because the veela was yours to mate with?*"

"Yes," Harry spat, trying desperately to reign in his magic. "*I'm his mate.*"

"*I am sorry,*" the snake said again. "*I came here to apologize. If I can help you get him back I will.*"

Harry closed his eyes and took several deeps, trying to get himself under control. To say he was furious would have been the understatement of the year.

And suddenly, an idea occurred to him. "*Actually, there is one thing you can do for me...*"

Draco spent at least an hour sitting in the bath. He felt very vulnerable, very young, and very, very alone. He wanted Harry; he did *not* want to be trapped in someone's bedroom with no idea why he was here or what was going to happen to him.

For at least the twentieth time, Draco's hands reached up to his neck to tug uselessly at the silver collar residing there. He'd discovered it when he'd undressed for the bath, a thin band of silver that sat snugly on his neck. What its purpose was he didn't know, but he did *not* appreciate a tangible reminder that some people thought him less than human.

Finally, he pulled the plug and let the water drain from the tub. He stood and wrapped himself in a large towel. He considered pulling his pajamas back on, but wrinkled his nose at their dirty state. He'd been wearing them since Nott captured him...whenever *that* was.

He went back into the main room and pulled open the wardrobe. It was packed with wizard robes of the finest materials. He grabbed a pale blue one and tugged it on. It was slightly too big, the sleeves partly obscuring his hands, but in his unprotected state Draco preferred it to a form-fitting robe. He fastened it all the way up and pulled the hood over his hair, somehow taking refuge in covering as much of himself as possible.

He walked back over to the enormous bed and crawled onto it, curling up in the very center.

"Harry," he whispered, pushing up his sleeve to look at the silver bracelet that still rested on his wrist. "Harry, are you okay? Please be okay, love."

He swallowed hard.

"I hope you're okay. I hope someone found you. And I hope -" Draco closed his eyes. "I hope you come for me."

"Awwww, how positively *touching*. The poor ickle veela hopes his mate will save him?"

Draco's head snapped up in horror at that voice.

Theodore Nott was standing in the door frame.

After Madame Pomfrey had brought him lunch (and practically forced him to eat under her watchful eye), Harry ran back to Gryffindor tower. He quickly grabbed a bag and stuffed his invisibility cloak into it. As a second thought he located his new winter cloak and packed that as well.

Draco'd be proud, he thought, then his heart clenched painfully. Who knew what horrible things could be happening to Draco at that very moment? He had to get that bracelet and he had to get Draco out of there.

Harry glanced around, making sure he was totally alone in the dormitory. Then he leaned down and pulled the cuff of his jumper away from his wrist to glance at the snake within.

"*You alright in there?*" he hissed to the reptile that was currently coiled around his forearm.

"Yes," the snake confirmed. "*Nice and warm.*"

"*Excellent. And you remember what I need you to do?*"

"*Of course.*"

"*Alright then,*" Harry said, zipping his bag shut and standing resolutely. "*Let's go to Dumbledore's office.*"

"You stay the fuck away from me," Draco hissed, quickly moving off the bed. He stood behind it, as if keeping the enormous bed between himself and Nott would act like a shield.

Nott put a hand over his heart. "That hurts, Draco, really."

"Oh fuck you," Draco spat.

"Actually, I always figured you'd be the bottom in our relationship," Nott said with a leer, shutting the door firmly behind him.

"How *very* witty," Draco sneered. "You sure know how to woo a man."

"Veela," Nott corrected lazily. "You forget yourself. You're not a man."

Draco narrowed his eyes. "Go to *hell*, Nott. Unless..." Draco dropped his voice to a sultry purr. "Unless you'd prefer to show me the way out of this room?"

And with that he turned on his veela powers.

Except he didn't.

"What the -" Draco's eyes widened in horror when his veela powers wouldn't come on. He tried again, and again, but it was no use; his powers were not working.

A chuckle brought Draco out of his efforts. Nott was watching him with an amused expression.

"Oh that's *right*," he said dramatically. "I forgot to tell you that your veela powers won't work right now."

"Why the hell not?" Draco blurted out, feeling horribly defenseless without the power he'd come to cherish.

Nott tapped his throat meaningfully. "Collar," he said sweetly. "Pure copper core. Sorry, ducky."

Draco's hand shot back to that mysterious silver band around his neck and he tugged at it frantically. It wouldn't budge.

"Fuck," Draco whispered, in dread and dismay. "What are you doing here?" he snapped at his captor.

"Guarding you, obviously," Nott answered. "It's my reward for capturing you. Honestly, I don't deserve a reward. You were much too easy to capture."

He pushed off the door frame and took a step towards Draco, who tensed.

"What are you talking about?" Draco said harshly.

"I bet you thought *you* were coming after *me*. I bet you thought you'd accidentally stumbled on the fact that I was coming back to Hogwarts. You didn't find it odd that I wrote to Mayanna Rockwood - the certified biggest gossip in Hogwarts - and told her I was coming back? Obviously I knew you'd find out if I told her. And I knew you'd come for me."

"But *why*?" Draco snarled. "What on earth do you want with me?"

"It's not what *I* want with you - although believe me, lovey, there is *plenty* I want with you. You're for the Dark Lord. Didn't you get his note?"

"Yes," Draco seethed. "But I don't know what it means."

Nott grinned, a horrible, nasty grin. "You're such an innocent, aren't you?"

"I'd hardly call myself innocent," Draco spat back. "Considering half of what Harry and I get up to."

"Oh, but you *are*," Nott said, now walking towards Draco. "You're quite innocent, really. You've lived a sheltered life under your daddy and now you've got Potter protecting you. Potter dotes on you, doesn't he Draco? Doesn't let anything bad happen to his precious veela. I'd love to see his face when he finds out what the Dark Lord is going to do with you."

"And what exactly would that be?" Draco asked, heart pounding.

Nott ignored his question and continued to stalk towards Draco. "God, I bet you're a walking wet dream for Potter," he said softly. "A pretty little thing that he can pamper and protect. Tell me, does our Boy Wonder have to rescue you from something before he can get a hard-on?"

"Leave Harry out of this," Draco hissed. His fear was turning to anger as Nott insulted his mate. "You're not going to get a rise out of me by talking about Harry protecting me. I'm a Slytherin, not a Gryffindor. You can insult my courage all you want. I don't give a shit. But don't you *dare* slag off Harry, you filth. You're not fit to speak his name."

Nott paused. "You're so beautiful when you're angry," he said reverently.

"Answer my question, Nott," Draco snarled. "What does the Dark Lord want with me?"

"Why, the only thing anyone ever wants with a veela," Nott replied.

Draco sneered at him. "And that would be..."

But then a horrible realization occurred to Draco, and he thought he might throw up when Nott confirmed his worst fears.

"Sex, sweetheart. He wants you for sex."

"So, do we have a plan yet?" Harry snapped, the instant he walked into Dumbledore's office.

Dumbledore gestured to an empty chair. Harry dropped his bag by the chair and sullenly flopped into it, joining Professor McGonagall, Professor Snape, Auror Kingsley, Mad-Eye Moody, Tonks, and Ron and Hermione.

Harry nodded a curt hello to Kingsley, Moody and Tonks.

"We are working on it, Harry," Tonks said earnestly. "Moody was just telling us that he suspects Draco was taken to Riddle Manor, as that is where Theodore Nott has been for the past few months."

"Hmmm," Harry said, lips tight. "And do you know *why* Draco might have been taken to Riddle Manor?"

The adults in the room exchanged looks. Harry could hear Ron and Hermione whispering to each other on the other side of the circle. He took an opportunity to check - yes, Hermione had brought her bag with her. Good. The plan could proceed.

"Well, there are several possible reasons," Kingsley said in his deep voice. "We think the most likely one is that the Dark Lord wishes for the young Malfoy to join his ranks as a Death Eater. It is, however, possible that..."

As Kingsley spoke, Harry slouched low in his seat. He casually dropped his right arm down so it was hidden behind the bag he'd placed on the floor next to the chair.

And behind the bag the small, brightly colored snake slithered out from the cuff of Harry's jumper and onto the floor.

"*I will find it*," the snake hissed, though no one could hear but Harry. And it slithered off.

Harry waited until Kingsley had finished speaking, giving the snake time to get a distance away. Then he spoke.

"I know why Voldemort wants Draco."

The room fell silent as everyone turned to stare at Harry.

"You know?" Tonks said, surprised. "Then what...but how...?"

"I wanted to know if you knew," Harry said. Out of the corner of his eye he saw a bright flash of color near Hermione's bag and his heart sped up. "And as for how I know...a little snake told me."

Confused looks were exchanged all around.

Harry hastened to explain, mostly to keep everyone distracted and to give the snake time to look. "The snake that bit Draco came to see me in the hospital wing. Apparently it bit Draco because of orders from Voldemort's snake Nagini. And Nagini told this snake what that..." Harry bit his lip to stop himself from swearing in front of his professors. "What Voldemort wants with Draco," he finished.

"Well?" Snape demanded irritably, fixing Harry with a cold stare. "What does he want?"

"He wants...he wants..." Harry couldn't say it. Rage was flaring up in him again. His fists were clenched and an expression of utter loathing crossed his face.

"Harry?" Hermione said fearfully. "Harry, what is it? Is it really horrible?"

Harry let out a controlled breath and closed his eyes. "Yes," he whispered. "It's the most horrible thing I can possibly think of. He wants to turn Draco into..." he swallowed down another flare of rage. "Into his sex slave."

"No," Draco whispered. "No, you can't be serious."

"Oh, but I *am*," Nott insisted. "Honestly, I'm surprised you didn't guess sooner. There's only one thing veela are good for, and for that they're very, very good." His eyes glinted. "I haven't forgotten, you know."

"Forgotten what?" Draco asked. He was leaning forward on the bed, struggling to keep his food down, battling the extreme rush of nausea that had overtaken him.

"Forgotten what it's like to kiss you."

Draco froze. Then he slowly looked up.

Nott was just on the other side of the bed, watching Draco hungrily.

"I could go my entire life, and I'd never have a kiss like that again," he said, drawing his wand. "Do you know what a prize you are?"

"Fuck off," Draco snapped, hoping he sounded more powerful than he felt. He had no wand and no veela powers. He was quite defenseless.

"Potter really doesn't deserve you," Nott said, fingering his wand lightly. "All your power and beauty wasted on that pathetic hero boy."

"Shut up," Draco said fiercely, feeling the hairs on the back of his neck rise. "I *told* you not to insult my mate. It pisses me off."

"But I only speak the truth, Draco," Nott crooned in saccharine tones. He unwisely ignored Draco's growing fury. "Potter is an egotistical half-blood, a self-righteous prick, an insufferable bastard who -"

"I said *shut up*," Draco snarled, and then he attacked.

He lunged across the bed, heading straight for Nott's throat. He crashed into Nott, knocking him backwards, and then the two hit the wall, struggling against each other. Draco clearly had the upper hand with his superior strength, and he quickly pinned Nott to the wall, squeezing his throat between both hands.

"I should kill you," Draco hissed, as Nott struggled under him. "You filthy scum, disgusting swine, loathsome vermin. How dare you say those things about my mate. *How dare you*."

Nott gasped and then stopped struggling. He lay still against the wall. Wondering if he had indeed killed him, Draco loosened his grip slightly.

And then Nott snapped back to life. He wrenched his wand arm up and jabbed his wand into Draco's chest.

"*Expelliarmus!*" he shouted, and Draco went flying backwards. He landed on the bed with Nott right behind him.

"*Ferratis!*"

Iron handcuffs appeared in the air and then attached themselves to Draco's wrists. He cried out as he was jerked backwards, the handcuffs attaching themselves to the headboard of the bed.

In an instant, Draco was shackled to the bed. He struggled, pulling uselessly at the metal cuffs that bound him.

"Let me go," he shouted at Nott, who was watching him with narrowed eyes.

"No," Nott spat, rubbing his injured neck. "It didn't have to be like this. If you had just given me what I wanted I wouldn't have had to tie you up. But you attacked me, Draco. I can't trust you."

Draco made a snarling sound and pulled harder than ever at the handcuffs. Nott watched him struggle with his arms folded.

"I can't believe you attacked me like that, Draco," he chided.

"Believe it, you ugly dog. You're just lucky I didn't kill you," Draco growled.

Narrowing his eyes, Nott pointed his wand at the handcuffs. "*Transmutus*," he incanted, and the metal around Draco's wrists grew warm and changed.

And then suddenly Draco cried out as his wrists began to prickle uncomfortably. The sensation was absolutely unbearable, bordering on painful. He tugged harder at his handcuffs, which only succeeded in bringing the metal closer to his skin.

"You bastard, what did you do?" he gasped, as he struggled uselessly. To his embarrassment he was mewling now, the metal of the handcuffs biting at the delicate skin of his wrists as he twisted on the bed.

"I made your handcuffs copper," Nott said nastily. "And it serves you right."

Draco cried out again as a particularly nasty twinge shot up his arm. "Take them off," he begged Nott. "Please, take them off!"

"Not so cocky anymore, are we?" Nott sneered. Instead of removing the handcuffs, he climbed onto the bed and right on top of Draco. He straddled the blond's stomach and mercilessly watched him writhe.

Draco yelped in pain as tremours shook his arms. "Nott, *please*, I'm begging you," Draco pleaded. His entire body was shaking. "Take them off!"

Nott stared at him for a moment, then sighed.

"You're really too damn cute for your own good. *Transmutus*," he repeated, and the copper turned back to iron.

Draco's relief was so great that he sagged against the pillows and closed his eyes. He was still securely shackled, but the handcuffs no longer stung and burned his wrists.

"I can't believe I caved to you," Nott said, shaking his head. "You veela. You make such suckers of us humans. Even the Dark Lord can't resist your power."

Draco cracked open one eye. "What are you blathering about now?"

"Be polite," Nott snapped. "Unless you want me to change your handcuffs back to copper?"

Draco shrank against the pillows and shook his head.

"Good," Nott said testily. "I'm talking about how the Dark Lord treats his veela." He gestured around him. "Look at this room. It's ten times nicer than anything any Death Eater might get. He gives you the best clothes, feeds you the best food, spoils you like a pampered pet. You are so lucky."

"Lucky?" Draco repeated, incredulous. "*Lucky?* He wants me to FUCK ME, Nott."

Nott reached out and patted his head. "Of course he does. That's what veela were made for, after all."

Draco growled deep in his throat. "Veela are not made to be fuck-toys, Nott."

"Of course they are," Nott contradicted. "Look at you. You're positively gorgeous - soft hair, soft skin, perfect features, perfect body." He traced his finger lightly down Draco's cheek as he spoke. "You draw me like a magnet and leave me dying to touch you. And then your powers - you can reduce anyone to a blathering idiot because they want to impress you, or subject them to unbelievable ecstasy through your touch. You are the perfect fuck-toy, Draco. How can you believe you were ever meant to be anything else?"

Draco had no answer for this. He'd never thought of himself like that. He had powers, yes, but they were for his mate. Everything that Nott had described was meant for his mate. He didn't like the idea of using them on anyone else.

Nott's words made him slightly insecure, however, and Draco hastened to reassure himself. He was Harry's; his powers were for Harry. He wasn't born and bred to be a fuck-toy for who ever managed to get their hands on him. He *wasn't*.

Nott was still touching him, fingers now carding through Draco's silky hair. Draco seethed quietly, unable to pull away because of the handcuffs.

Nott stared at him dreamily. "You're absolutely irresistible, darling," he said softly. "Even with the threat of death, I can't stop myself."

And before Draco could say a word, Nott was kissing him.

At Harry's news, the room exploded.

"You can't be serious, Potter," Snape said, sounding utterly sickened. "That's...even for the Dark Lord that's depraved..."

"Dear God," Tonks said, horror in her voice. "That is the vilest thing I've ever heard! Draco is only seventeen!"

"Bloody hell," Ron gasped, face going red with anger. "How could he...that's *disgusting!*"

Hermione looked like she might cry. "Oh, oh poor Draco..."

"Merlin's beard," Dumbledore whispered, looking more appalled than Harry had ever seen him. "I had no idea...I never would have guessed..."

"Shoulda known," Moody growled menacingly. "You-Know-Who doesn't have a shred of decency in him. What else would he kidnap a veela?"

"We have to rescue him immediately," Professor McGonagall said, her face white as a sheet. "We cannot possibly leave a student to that fate. Lord have mercy..."

Harry stared at the floor as the voices whirled around him. He felt surreal. Draco, his Draco, was somewhere out there, probably in the hands of one of the Darkest wizards the world has ever known, and he was sitting here safe in Dumbledore's office.

He had to get to him.

And fortunately, he was going to.

Because at that moment he heard a hiss on the floor beside him. Looking down, he saw the little snake had returned with a familiar silver bracelet magically sized to fit around its body.

"*I found it*," the snake hissed triumphantly. "*I found your bracelet for you*."

As Nott's lips moved against his, Draco began sputtering in protest.

"Grmph mphe," he growled threateningly. "Stmph!"

He kept his lips tightly clamped shut, though Nott's tongue was tracing them hungrily. Finally, Nott stopped and sat up, looking disappointed.

Draco made a face at him. "That was disgusting," he snapped. "Vile and revolting. How *dare* you kiss me, you filthy bastard."

Nott fingered his wand pointedly in front of Draco's eyes.

"Copper," he said warningly.

Draco winced in memory and shut his mouth.

Then Nott leaned down for another kiss. Draco panicked.

"Wait, why are you kissing me?" he said hurriedly. "I haven't got any veela powers; there's no point!"

"You still have powers. You just can't control them with that collar on," Nott said, pausing inches above Draco's lips. Then he raised an eyebrow. "But you're right; these kisses would be nicer with your powers on."

Draco sighed in relief. Then he gasped in horror; Nott's wand was pointed straight at him.

Draco shrank against the pillows, trying to move away from Nott's wand. "What are you *doing*?" he whispered.

"There's a spell," Nott said calmly. "A spell that can force you to turn your powers on. I found it. The Dark Lord allowed me to research for him while I was a prisoner here, and I found out everything he wanted to know about veela. I know the spell. Want to see?"

"No," Draco said, shaking his head frantically. "No, no I *don't*, I -"

"That's too bad," Nott said succinctly. "*Compello Magus Veela!*"

And then Draco yelped.

"Jesus Christ," he gasped, screwing up his face as a suffocating sensation tore through him. It felt like someone was reaching inside him and squeezing his chest. "Oh my God, that's *awful*."

Draco twisted and writhed under Nott, eyes beginning to water. Normally his veela powers felt *good*, and he enjoyed using them. But *this*...

He cried out again, as that invisible hand twisted inside him and forcibly wrenched his powers out from his body.

"Nott, stop it, please..." he whimpered, but Nott was in another world as Draco's powers addled his mind.

He leaned down and kissed Draco soundly.

"Did I ever tell you how beautiful you are?" Nott breathed, pulling back for a moment to stroke Draco's face. "So beautiful. The most beautiful thing I've ever seen. I'd do anything for you. I want you so much, Draco. I can't wait to show you how much. You feel so *good*..."

"Let me go," Draco pleaded. The initial fiery pain in his chest had faded to a burning ache all over his body, but it still hurt. "Please, let me go."

"Beautiful creature," Nott whispered reverently, now plucking at the fastenings of Draco's robe. "I can please you. I'll make it good for you, I promise love..."

Nott spread his robe open, and Draco let out a shaky sob as Nott kissed his bare chest. This was it, no one was coming for him, he was at the mercy of Theodore Nott...

"*Thank you, thank you so much, oh God you have no idea how grateful I am,*" Harry babbled to the snake as he discreetly reached down and pulled the bracelet off the colorful body. The other occupants of the room continued to talk wildly, paying no attention to Harry.

"*It's nothing. I'm sorry I bit your veela in the first place. Good luck, Harry Potter.*"

And with that the snake slithered away.

Harry carefully slid the bracelet onto his left wrist, welcoming the return of the cool touch of metal as it sized itself to fit him perfectly. Then he grabbed his bag, picked up his wand and stood up.

"Well, it's been wonderful talking to all of you," he said loudly, drawing everyone's attention. "But I can't leave Draco at Voldemort's mercy one second longer. I'll be back."

And before anyone could stop him, he wrapped his right arm around his left wrist.

"*Portus Veela!*"

Harry felt that familiar tug behind his navel and then he was flying through the air. Seconds later his journey stopped abruptly and he lost his balance and tumbled to the ground.

Harry quickly jumped to his feet and surveyed his surroundings. He had just appeared in a huge bedchamber, and straight in front of him was a huge bed with -

"Get the *fuck* off him!" Harry shouted, diving for the bed.

He'd just portkeyed into a nightmare.

Draco was on a huge bed, whimpering in pain and struggling against the handcuffs binding him to the headboard, and Theodore Nott was leaning over him, kissing him, *touching* him and -

With a snarl Harry knocked Nott off of Draco.

"I'll kill you," he spat, as he and Nott rolled off the bed and hit the hard stone floor. "I'll fucking *kill* you, you son of a bitch."

He had the somewhat dazed Nott on his back on the floor in seconds. Nott's eyes were glazed, but they were rapidly returning to normal as he lost control of the spell he'd put on Draco.

After a couple seconds Nott stared up at Harry in disbelief. "Where the *hell* did you come from?" he demanded, totally coherent now that Draco's veela powers were off. "Honestly, do you have some kind of special *Someone's In Trouble, I Must Rescue Them* power? How the fuck did you get here?"

"Magic," Harry sneered.

Theo narrowed his eyes. "Has the big hero come to rescue his worthless little fuck-toy?" he simpered. "Are you going to -"

Nott's words were stopped by Harry's fist crashing into his face.

"You shut the fuck up," Harry snarled. "How dare you talk about Draco like that? How dare you *touch* him? You fucker, I should kick your arse."

Nott turned his head slightly to the side and spit blood. "He deserves it," Nott said recklessly. "He's nothing but an animal. An animal that was bred to be a *whore*."

At that, Harry saw red and lost it completely. He began to drive his fists into Nott's face, chest, anywhere he could reach, raining punches on the filth who had dared to hurt Draco.

"You bastard," he swore, as his punches struck home. "If you've hurt him I swear I'll *kill* you, do you hear me?"

After a few moments of fighting, Harry became aware of two things; one, Nott wasn't moving anymore, and two, Draco was calling his name.

"Harry! Harry, damn it, free me, I want a shot at him! Harry! HARRY! Harry, you stupid Gryffindor, come get me! *Harry*! For God's sake let me go! *HARRY*!"

Harry stopped and jumped to his feet. Nott lay immobile on the ground, so Harry simply picked up his wand and dashed to the bed.

"Draco," he said anxiously, crawling onto the bed next to his boyfriend. "Draco my love, are you alright? Did he hurt you? Are you okay?"

He reached out and touched Draco's temple, relief over-powering him for a moment. Draco looked close to tears.

"Yes, love, I'm okay," he said, voice a little shaky. "Quite a bit better now that you're here."

Harry let out a shaky laugh, then dropped his head to rest his forehead against Draco's.

"You're alright," he whispered, his voice shaking. "I was so scared, love. So afraid of what might have happened to you. I came as soon as I could. I love you so much, I'm so glad you're alright."

Draco shut his eyes and let out a trembling breath. "I love you too. I was scared you were hurt. I didn't know. But I knew you'd come. I knew it."

"Always," Harry promised, and touched his lips to Draco's.

They kissed and kissed, drinking each other in, relief at each other's safety coursing through them so strongly it made them weak. Finally, Draco pulled back.

"Harry, I love you and I'm really happy to see you, but could you *please* undo these handcuffs now?"

Harry smiled sheepishly. "Right. Sorry. Got carried away. Just let me -"

"*Crucio!*"

Harry screamed in pain and tumbled off the bed. Draco looked up in horror to see Nott back on his feet, standing over Harry with wand in hand.

"Let him go!" Draco screamed, unable to bear the sound of Harry in pain. "Let him GO!" He began to strain at his handcuffs harder than ever, his mate's scream sending strength and adrenaline through his veins.

"No," Nott said shortly. "I've had just about enough of Hero Boy here."

"LET HIM GO NOTT!" Draco shouted again, straining so hard at his handcuffs that his wrists began to bleed and the headboard of the bed began to creak dangerously.

"Alright," Nott said, a look Draco didn't like at all on his face. He lifted the Crutiatius Curse from Harry but kept his wand trained on the Gryffindor.

Harry lay on the floor after the curse was lifted, panting. "Jesus," he said weakly, aftershocks of pain coursing through him. He glanced up into the crazed, bloody face of Theodore Nott and swallowed in dread. He'd dropped his wand when the curse hit him and Draco was still handcuffed to the bed.

"You've fucked up my plans for the last time," Nott said wildly. "I cannot wait to show your dead body to the Dark Lord. No more heroic, last-minute rescues for you." He pointed his wand at Harry's heart.

"DON'T NOTT!! STOP!" Draco screamed.

"Say goodbye to your veela, Potter," Nott said gleefully. "*Avada* -"

There was an enormous crash just then - the sound of metal shattering and wood splintering. And before Theodore Nott could finish the Killing Curse Draco tackled him, sending him sprawling to the ground.

Draco had managed to snap the heavy oak headboard and his handcuffs. With a rush of veela strength and veela magic he'd broken free to save his mate.

He landed on top of Nott and wrenched the wand out of his grasp. He quickly pinned Nott to the ground, straddling his stomach. With eyes glowing madly, Draco pointed the wand straight at Nott's heart.

"You will *never* hurt my mate again," Draco snarled. "*AVADA* -"

"NO DRACO!"

Draco froze at Harry's Voice. Then he very slowly turned.

"Potter," he said, voice strained. "I love that you're a hero, I really do. But this time, you really should let me kill him. He *deserves* to die. For God's sake he was three syllables away from killing *you!*"

"I know," and here Harry swallowed hard, "but we can't. We're supposed to be the good guys, Draco, and we just...we can't," he whispered.

Draco stayed perfectly rigid for a moment. And then he sighed.

"Fine, Harry," he said. "I won't kill him. But then what should we do with him?"

"One single sound and I'll let Draco do anything he wants to you," Harry threatened, jabbing his wand into Nott's back as they crept down the tower stairs.

"That's right," Draco sneered. He jabbed his own wand - stolen from Nott - into Nott's back again for good measure. "And I promise I won't just kill you - I will *fuck you up* first."

Nott's body shook with fear and nodded quickly to show he understood. He was bound, gagged and silenced, as well as tied securely to both Harry and Draco, who were taking no chances.

All three were pressed tightly together under Harry's invisibility cloak, and Nott was leading them through Riddle Manor, out beyond the Anti-Apparation wards.

As Harry and Draco had explained, it was in his best interest to co-operate. Sure, if he came with them he'd go to prison. But at least he'd be alive. If he attempted to expose them or lead them the wrong way, they would kill him without hesitation.

It was logic a Slytherin could appreciate.

So Nott lead them truly, taking them down empty halls and past closed doors, until finally they reached the backdoor to the Manor. Guards were posted, but a simple Sleeping Spell cast from beneath the invisibility cloak took care of them.

Once outside, the threesome trudged across the cold, soggy grounds. The gates of Riddle Manor stood imposing at the other end but they slowly trekked their way there. When they finally reached the gates, more sleeping spells knocked out the guards and then they were past the gates and beyond the Anti-Apparition wards.

Harry sighed with relief.

"Thank God," he whispered, finally able to breathe freely again. "Okay, here's the plan. Draco, you Apparate to Hogsmeade and then I'll use my bracelet to follow with Nott here. We'll drag him up to Dumbledore's office and -"

"Can you use the Voice to help me Apparate? I'm not perfect yet and I don't want to Splinch myself."

"Oh, sure," Harry said agreeably. "So anyway, the plan is -"

Nott began to thrash about. Harry and Draco ignored him.

"We get Nott to Dumbledore and then - oh, fuck! Nott you son of bitch, that was my shin!" Harry snarled, whirling on their captive.

Nott continued to thrash, eyes wide and plaintive, mouth moving silently behind his gag.

Draco raised an eyebrow. "I think he's trying to tell us something. Should we listen?"

"No," Harry said shortly. "I don't want to hear a word he has to say. So, are you ready to Apparate th - FUCK, not again!" he said, wincing.

Nott was gesturing wildly. Harry clenched his teeth.

"I take it you think what you have to say is really important?" he said.

Nott nodded emphatically.

Harry and Draco exchanged a glance. Then Harry sighed.

"Fine," he said. He cast a Sound-Proof Bubble around them so Nott couldn't scream for help and then lifted the Silencing Spell and removed the gag.

"I want a reduced sentence," Nott spat immediately, as soon as the spell and gag were gone. "In exchange for this information I want my punishment mitigated. You tell that old coot Dumbledore that I want -"

Harry's wand was at his throat.

"First," Harry said dangerously, "don't insult Professor Dumbledore, you piece of shit. He's ten times the wizard your stupid Voldemort is. Second, let's hear your information. If it's any good, then we can talk reduced sentence. But not before."

Nott glared at him. "How do I know I can trust you?"

Harry held up one hand. "Gryffindor honour. If your information is good, I will personally make sure your sentence is lessened. Deal?"

Nott thought this over for a second. "Fine. Deal." He took a deep breath, then dropped his bombshell.

"The Dark Lord's got another veela."

Harry and Draco stared.

"What?" Harry whispered, stunned.

Nott nodded fervently. "He does. He's keeping another veela for the same reason he wanted Draco here."

Draco paled. "He's got another veela sex slave?"

Nott nodded again. "But it's more than that. This man wasn't a veela originally. The Dark Lord has been feeding him the *Mutosis* potion for the past three weeks."

Harry and Draco exchanged another look.

"That was the potion Snape said he was working on. The one with the veela hair. But he said it was harmless," Harry said suspiciously.

Nott hastened to explain. "It's harmless to humans and veela, yes. But not to part-veela. The potion was originally created to mutate werewolves into their wolf state permanently."

Harry gasped, thinking of Professor Lupin. "But that's horrible!" he said, aghast.

Nott shrugged. "Most Dark Magic is. But it works on veela too. If you give the potion to a part-veela everyday for three weeks, they will mutate into full-veela with veela looks and veela powers."

"So you're saying," Draco said slowly, "that the Dark Lord captured a part-veela and has been transforming them into a full veela for the past three weeks so he can use them as another fuck toy? He wanted two of us?"

"That's the gist of it, yes," Nott confirmed. "Today was the part-veela's last dose. He will be a full-veela by nightfall and with you gone the Dark Lord will surely go to him."

Harry shut his eyes. "I think I'm going to be sick," he muttered. "That disgusted, perverted psychopath. Why does he do this to veela?" He looked at Draco. "We can't leave this other veela to Voldemort's mercy. We have to rescue them. I can't believe Voldemort did this to him."

"It's really not even what the Dark Lord did that is so shocking," Nott said carefully. "But who the Dark Lord did it too."

"What do you mean?" Draco asked.

"Draco - the part-veela is your father."

Chapter Warnings: Very mild slash between adult/minor (minor is 16)

The Veela Enigma

Chapter 31: Veela Rescue 202

A moment of utter stillness followed Theodore Nott's words, as neither Harry nor Draco moved or spoke.

Finally, Draco broke the silence.

"What did you just say?" he whispered, clutching his wand tightly.

Nott took a deep breath. "I said the part-veela that Voldemort has been mutating is your father, Draco."

"You fucking *liar*," Draco snarled, raising his wand. "The Dark Lord would never do that to my father. My father has been his loyal servant for *years*."

"Then surely you can understand that he sees this as just another form of service," Nott said, unable to stop himself from shrinking back slightly in fear from the maniacal look in Draco's eyes.

"Lucius Malfoy is in Romania right now," Harry said logically, putting one hand on Draco's arm to calm him slightly. "There's no way he's actually in Riddle Manor."

"You Gryffindors are too trusting by half," Nott said with exasperation. "The whole Romania bit was a ruse to lure Lucius to Riddle Manor and have everyone he knows believe him elsewhere. He's been here for the past three weeks, taking his potion every day."

"My father wouldn't take a potion to change him into the Dark Lord's sex toy," Draco snapped. "You're just trying to get us to go back into that Manor where we'll be captured."

"You father took that potion for *you*," Nott snapped back. "The Dark Lord promised that if he transformed himself into a veela that he would stop trying to capture you. A lie, as it turned out, but your father took his potion believing he was saving you. But if you can't be arsed to go in and rescue the man that is sacrificing himself for you, suit yourself. It's not my dad who's going to get fucked by the Dark Lord."

Draco made a growling noise and would have lunged at Nott, but Harry held him back by a tight grip on Draco's arm.

"If you're lying to us Nott, I *will* kill you," Harry said coldly. "If I go back into that Manor and there is no Lucius Malfoy then I *promise* I will let Draco kill you *any way he wants*. Do you understand this?"

Nott swallowed and nodded.

"And you still say that Mr. Malfoy is in that Manor?" he asked pointedly.

Nott took a deep breath and nodded again. "In the West Wing."

Harry watched him closely for a moment, then pursed his lips. Finally, he turned to Draco.

"I'm going in," he said firmly. "You stay here with Nott while I go get your dad."

"Oh *fuck* no," Draco said immediately. "If you think for one instant that I would let my mate go into that Manor *alone* -"

"You don't have a choice," Harry interrupted. "It's too dangerous for you in there. If Voldemort got his hands on you again -"

"Harry, it's *my* father and -"

"I'll use the Voice, Draco. I will forbid you to go into that Manor ever again," Harry threatened. "I will *not* let you go back in there!"

"Don't you fucking pull that Voice shit on me now, Potter," Draco said warningly. "I will find a way around it somehow and I *will* come after you. You can't leave me out here while you go in to that snake pit and try to rescue my father. I'm coming."

"You're *not*," Harry said, his eyes narrowed. "I love you too much and I *will not* let you get hurt. I absolutely *will not* let you come with me into the Manor."

"You *will*, because you *need* me, Harry. I know as many spells and hexes as you do," Draco argued. "And I've got my veela powers I can use in case -"

"No you don't," Nott cut in.

Draco whirled and glared at their prisoner. "Nott, you are *not* helping," he hissed.

But Harry's attention was caught. "What do you mean, Draco doesn't have his veela powers?"

"He doesn't mean anything, Harry," Draco said quickly. "He *doesn't know what he's talking about*." The last words were directed at Nott and accompanied by a meaningful look.

"Actually, Draco, I think he does," Harry said, glaring at Draco. "I think he knows something you don't want me to know. What is it, Nott?"

"Keep your mouth shut if you know what's good for you," Draco snapped at Nott immediately.

"Draco, stop it. Tell me, Nott."

Theodore Nott looked back and forth between Harry Potter and Draco Malfoy, who were both glaring at him expectantly. He swallowed and made his choice.

"Draco's wearing a collar that prevents him from using his veela powers," Nott explained to Harry.

Draco groaned as Harry's eyes bulged.

"WHAT?" Harry yelled, twisting to stare at Draco's neck. "Let me see that."

Draco tried unsuccessfully to yank his robe up to hide the silver collar.

"You just *had* to tell him, didn't you," the veela sneered at Nott. "Do you know what you've just done? Do you know how over-protective he's going to get now?"

"Damn straight," Harry snapped, forcing Draco's hands away from his neck. He stared angrily at the silver collar. "I can't believe those bastards would *collar* you like some kind of...of *pet*."

"They're the bad guys, Harry," Draco said crossly. "They do bad things. Get used to it."

"You're definitely not going anywhere near that manor now," Harry said firmly. "You're not going back into a place where people think you're an animal who ought to wear a collar. In fact, I think you shouldn't be anywhere near here at all."

Draco didn't like the sound of that.

"What are you talking about, Harry?" he asked suspiciously.

Harry didn't answer. He simply touched the collar around Draco's neck.

"How does this come off?" he asked Nott pointedly.

Nott shook his head. "I don't know. The Dark Lord put it on while Draco was unconscious."

"Who cares, Harry," Draco said impatiently. "I want to know what you meant by *I shouldn't be anywhere near here at all*."

Harry was staring at the collar hard, rotating it with his fingers. He raised an eyebrow when he found the small clasp that held the collar together. It was shaped like a snake.

"Figures," he said softly, and then he hissed.

A moment later the collar opened and fell off Draco's neck into Harry's waiting hand.

Draco gasped in relief, his hands going immediately to his neck.

"Parseltongue-triggered clasp?" Draco said, soothing his neck with his hands. "How did you know?"

Harry shrugged. "Voldemort is very proud of being a Parselmouth," he explained. "It makes sense."

"So glad that's off," Draco said sincerely. "Now there's no reason for me not to go with you."

"There is still *every* reason for you not to come with me," Harry immediately said sharply.

Nott sighed. "Not again," he whispered irritably.

"Harry," Draco said, crossing his arms over his chest. "I am coming into that Manor with you and that's final. No matter what you do, I will come with you."

"No," Harry said. Harry's tone caused Draco to snap to attention. Harry was using the Voice. "You're *not* coming. On the count of three I'm ordering you to Apparate to the gates of Hogwarts and *not* to Apparate back."

Draco's eyes widened almost comically. "Harry, you *fucking* Gryffindor, you wouldn't -"

"One -"

"Potter, I swear to you, I will *kill* you if you do this," Draco said, stomping his foot. "Don't you *dare* -"

"Two *three*," Harry finished quickly.

Draco gasped. And then with a crack he Apparated away.

Nott and Harry both stared at the spot where Draco had been not a moment before. Finally, Nott turned to stare instead at Harry in awe.

"Wow. You're ruthless."

"Oh, shut up," Harry said irritably. "I'm not letting him get hurt."

"Such a hero," Nott simpered.

Harry pointed his wand at him. "Now is not the time to fuck with me, Nott," he said warningly. "Tell me exactly where Lucius is being kept."

Nott gulped nervously. "West wing. Go through the parlour and keep heading west down corridors until you come to a door with my dad in front of it. He's in there."

Harry nodded curtly. "Thank you." He recast the silencing spell on Nott and then bound him to a nearby tree, out of view of the Manor. After securing Nott, Harry gave a silent prayer that Draco would think to go to Dumbledore's office and would get there safely.

Then he pulled his invisibility cloak tightly around his shoulders and set back off for Riddle Manor.

Lucius winced as yet another set of shocks coursed through his body. This was the last dose, and he could feel all of the last little changes occurring. He tried to keep reading, to distract himself from the uncomfortable sensation of his body mutating.

It didn't work. He could no longer focus on the book as his hands began to shake. His entire scalp was tingling violently, and after a moment's fight he gave in and buried his head under the pillows of the bed. He pulled a fluffy, down-filled pillow tightly against his head to try and mitigate the feeling. His hair didn't hurt exactly, but the sensation was highly irritating.

He bit his lip as his stomach gave an uncomfortable lurch. And then he gasped loudly; his entire body was suddenly on fire.

He cried out as he twisted and writhed on the bed, aware that his cries would probably bring Nott running but unable to stop them. Just before he blacked out, he had a sudden impression of bright blue eyes and long blonde hair.

"That's her," something in his subconscious said. "I want her."

And then the darkness took him.

"Stupid, fucking Gryffindor mate," Draco swore, as he strode angrily across the castle grounds. "I'm not sleeping with him for a *week* after this."

He stomped his way into the castle and up the stairs until he finally reached the gargoyle outside Dumbledore's office. Then he paused.

Shit, it's always some random candy, he thought irritably.

"Ton-tongue toffee, Droobles Best Blowing Gum, Chocolate Frogs," Draco snarled. "Bertie Botts, Ice Mice, Sugar Quills...damn it!" He kicked the gargoyle in frustration. "It must be a muggle sweet. Uh...Cadbury Cream Eggs?" he tried hopefully, the one muggle sweet he was very familiar with.

To his surprise, the gargoyle leapt aside.

"*Finally*," Draco muttered, and then stormed up the stairs.

As soon as the Headmaster's large wooden door was in front of him, he began banging on it.

"Professor Dumbledore, it's Draco Malfoy! Let me in!"

The door immediately opened, and Draco was shocked to see the office filled with several others besides Dumbledore.

"Draco!" Hermione cried, rushing to him. "Oh thank God, you're alright!"

"Oy Malfoy, you're here," Ron said in relieved tones, also hurrying to him. "Harry told us the most horrible thing. Said that You-Know-Who was going to...um..." he swallowed his words, apparently unsure of how to express to someone his sympathy that said someone had been slated to become the sex slave of a Dark Lord.

Draco nodded grimly. "If what he told you was that the Dark Lord is a *sick pervert* with a veela fetish, then he was right. He had me, but right now the bastard's got my *father* and my stupid boyfriend has gone in after him and someone needs to go rescue him because he ordered me to come home and not to Apparate back and I don't want anything to happen to him or my dad!"

Confusion erupted in the room, and it took a loud cry from Dumbledore to shut everyone up.

"Friends," Dumbledore said loudly. The room fell silent. "I think we need to hear this story in its entirety." He gestured at Draco. "Draco, if you wouldn't mind..."

Licking his lips nervously, Draco began the story - how Nott captured him, how Harry rescued him, what Nott had told them about the *Mutosis* potion. Dumbledore's eyes widened in surprise at that.

"I had no idea," he mused. "That potion was designed for magic at its cruelest. To transform humans into mindless, soulless beasts -"

"Hey, turning someone into a veela isn't *that* cruel," Draco protested indignantly. "I personally rather like being a veela. Everyone thinks you're madly fit and you get all these special powers and a mate who *worships* you - and said stupid mate is still at that bloody *Manor* so if we could hurry this up and get *moving* -"

"I was talking about the original intent of the potion," Dumbledore corrected. "When it is used on werewolves. But I agree, Harry is our main concern, so please continue telling us what happened."

"Yeah, tell us how you came to be here without Harry," Hermione put in.

Draco rolled his eyes. "Because Harry is a stupid, over-protective Gryffindor git with no manners and a martyr complex," he tried to sneer, but the anxiety and concern written on his face meant no one was fooled.

Quickly he spilled the rest of the story. When he finished, he saw his own worried look duplicated on the faces around him.

"So Malfoy Senior was going to be the Dark Lord's...plaything as well," Tonks said, wincing at the word. "And Harry's gone after him. We can't leave them in there."

"No," Dumbledore said slowly. "We can't and we won't. What I propose is -"

And then Dumbledore was cut off as Narcissa Malfoy burst through the door of his office.

""

Harry crept as quietly as he could through the halls of Riddle Manor, holding his invisibility cloak tightly around him. This was possibly the creepiest thing he'd ever done, skulking about Voldemort's headquarters like this. He had no choice, though. He simply could *not* abandon Draco's father to his unspeakable fate.

He was through the parlour now, following Nott's directions to keep heading West. He had yet to see a man guarding a door, and briefly considered whether Nott had deliberately led him on a wild veela chase. He discarded the idea, however, and continued to search. He'd find Lucius if it took all evening.

Because once the night came...Lucius Malfoy might be better off dead.

""

"Come on Lucius, wake up...wake up...I've got some tea for you, with lots of sugar, just how you like it...come on lovey, wake up ..."

As Lucius regained his consciousness he became aware of a low voice was cooing near his ear, and a hand gently stroking his hair.

Oh for fuck's sake, was his first thought.

"Nott," he said, without opening his eyes. "What exactly do you think are you doing?"

There was a moment of silence.

"I brought you tea," Nott finally answered. His hand continued its motions in Lucius' hair.

"Nott," Lucius sneered, opening his eyes to glare at his guard. "You are *petting* me."

"I can't help it," Nott protested. "Your veela charms are affecting me again."

Lucius pulled away, moving out of Nott's reach. He winced as his head gave a violent throb.

"My veela charms are not currently in working order," Lucius said coldly. "Thanks to this collar. Your actions are the result only of your deviant mind."

Nott looked hurt. "But I can't help myself. Look at you." His eyes glazed over a bit. "You're amazing. You've finished changing. Your *hair*...its real veela hair now...it's *beautiful*..."

He stretched a hand out towards Lucius' hair again. Lucius slapped his hand away.

"Don't touch me," he growled warningly.

Nott froze. "But..."

"Don't touch me," Lucius repeated. "Only my mate can touch me like that."

As the words left his mouth, Lucius froze.

Nott stared at him in shock. "Your mate? So you do have a mate?"

"Bollocks," Lucius spat. "Don't be ridiculous. I have no mate." Even as he said the words, something twisted within him. Guilt rushed to his stomach and Lucius bit his lip. *I'm sorry*, he mentally apologized to the beautiful mystery woman in his head.

Nott was looking thoughtful. "You said mate. You must have a mate. We wondered if you would." He paused. "The Dark Lord will be most interested to hear of this."

"NO!" Lucius shouted, panic assaulting him. "No, don't tell him! Please, I beg of you!"

Lucius could not bear the thought that the Dark Lord might find out. Who knew what that madman might do to his beautiful mate in order to gain control of Lucius?

Nott was looking at Lucius calculatingly. "You do have a mate," he said slowly. "And you are trying to protect them. Well, well, well," he said smugly. "How *interesting*. I wonder, who could it be?"

Lucius swallowed hard. "Nott, don't tell him," he begged. "Please, *please* Nott."

"So who is it, then, Lucius?" Nott asked. "Who's the lucky one? A human? Another veela?"

"I don't know," Lucius said, shaking his head. "But I love her. She's my life, my everything...I couldn't bear it if something happened to her. Please Nott..."

Nott lifted a calculated eyebrow. "Her? Are you sure it isn't a *him*? Seems a waste for a beauty like you to be meant for some hag of a woman."

Rage flared up in Lucius and he nearly lunged at Nott. "Don't you dare speak foul of her, you filth," he snarled.

Nott backed up immediately. "Whoa, easy there Lucius. I merely jesting. You know, just a little verbal sparring with the veela."

"The veela is not amused," Lucius said testily. He put his feet on the ground and stood up. "You insulted my mate."

Nott's eyes went wide. "I did not mean it," he protested quickly, looking nervous.

"No?" Lucius said disbelievingly. "I think you did. I think you called her a hag." He advanced on Nott, who backed up several steps.

"I did *not*," Nott protested again, drawing his wand and brandishing it. "Now stay back or I shall be forced to subdue you."

"You will not say one word to the Dark Lord," Lucius said threateningly, ignoring Nott's wand. "You will leave my mate out of this completely, do you understand? You will *not* -"

With a *bang* ropes shot out of Nott's wands, wrapping themselves tightly around Lucius' body. He toppled to the ground, immobile.

"It doesn't matter, either way," Nott said, breathing heavily. "Mate or no mate, the Dark Lord will have you tonight."

Lucius glared heatedly at him from the floor. "This is your last chance, Nott. Let me go, and I will forgive you everything. If you leave me here, I promise to hunt you down when I am free. And I *will* get free, you son of a bitch. And then I'll come for you."

Nott narrowed his eyes. "I don't appreciate being threatened," he said, voice cold. "You are beautiful, but I will not be spoken to like this by an animal."

"Fuck you, Nott," Lucius snarled, twisting against the ropes that held him.

"No, I believe fucking is on *your* agenda tonight," Nott said nastily. He indicated the ropes that bound Lucius. "I think I'll leave you like that for the Dark Lord. You look like you're gift-wrapped. Although, I suppose I could always put you in a box with some air holes, like one might do for a pet puppy."

Nott moved towards the door, making a big show of looking at the clock.

"At the most, I'd say you've got an hour left before the Dark Lord comes," he said airily. "Have fun tonight."

And with that he left, leaving a furious and terrified Lucius behind him.

"Headmaster Dumbledore, I came as soon as I could. Is my son alright?"

Every head in the room turned as Narcissa Malfoy burst through the door. Draco immediately ran to her.

"Mum!" he cried out, giving her a quick hug. "What are you doing here?"

"I sent for her yesterday after you'd disappeared," Dumbledore informed Draco.

"I would have been here sooner but I was in Paris. You know how much I hate staying in Wiltshire when your father is gone," Narcissa said somberly.

She glanced around the room. "Draco, where *is* your father? Why isn't he here?"

"Because the bloody Dark Lord is a *pervert*," Draco snarled. "He's got Dad!"

"What?" Narcissa asked, her blue eyes going very wide and round. "What are you saying?"

Quickly, Dumbledore filled Narcissa in on all the details of Lucius' capture and transformation. Narcissa listened intently, though her growing rage was obvious on her face.

"Am I to understand," she said coolly, when Dumbledore had finished. "that my husband is now a full-fledged veela, and the Dark Lord intends to use him as some sort of concubine?"

"Yes, Madam," Dumbledore said. "Unfortunately that seems to be the case."

"I see." Narcissa's eyes were very narrow. "This is absolutely unacceptable. A rescue must be undertaken immediately."

"Harry's gone after him," Draco interjected.

Narcissa looked surprised. "Harry? As in your Harry? Harry Potter?"

"Of course," Draco said briskly. "Harry's the bloody Boy Who Lived, naturally he went to rescue Dad. Though the prat sent me home first to try to protect me," Draco finished sourly.

Narcissa turned to Dumbledore. "Someone should be sent to assist Mr. Potter," she said commandingly. "Not that I doubt the boy's capabilities, but he is in as much danger as Lucius is. We cannot leave them to the mercies of the Dark Lord."

"I agree," Dumbledore answered seriously. "We need a plan to rescue them both, and we need it quickly."

"Headmaster, if I may offer my services again -"

"Thank you, Severus," Dumbledore said gravely. "But I do not think it wise that you go. If Voldemort were to discover that you had been part of the rescue attempt, you would be irreparably revealed as a spy for me."

"But sir," Snape said, "Lucius has been a friend of mine for years. I am willing to risk -"

"It is a very noble offer of you," Dumbledore interrupted. "But one I will not take you up on. Others will be found who do not have your constraints. I cannot afford to possibly lose both you and Lucius Malfoy in one night."

Ron stepped forward from where he'd been whispering with Hermione. "Hermione and I will go," he said, Hermione nodded firmly behind him. "Harry's our best mate; we've gone through loads of things together -"

"No, I'll go," Draco interrupted immediately. "Harry won't want his friends in danger. Besides, he's *my* mate and I ought to be there to protect him -"

"Spoken like true Gryffindors and a true veela," Dumbledore said, smiling slightly. "But I cannot allow my students to go either."

Dumbledore glanced around the room at the assembled group. "Kingsley and Nymphadora -"

"Tonks," Tonks muttered resentfully.

"Tonks," Dumbledore corrected. "You are both Aurors, rescue attempts fall under your line of work. Are you both willing to enter Riddle Manor and safely remove both Mr. Malfoy and Mr. Potter?"

The two Aurors nodded.

"Excellent," Dumbledore said. "Severus, I believe you have the layout of Riddle Manor in your office?"

Snape nodded his assent.

"Very well. Kingsley, Tonks, if you would first wait for me to make you two portkeys, and then you can head down to Professor Snape's office for the floor plans?"

Tonks and Kingsley nodded. Professor McGonagall began shooing the anxious Ron and Hermione out of the office.

"Let's go, Miss Granger, Mr. Weasley," she said. "It would be best if you waited for Mr. Potter in the common room."

Draco and Narcissa followed the three Gryffindors down the stairs. The group paused just past the gargoyle statue.

"But what about Draco?" Hermione asked, glancing over at him.

"I'll say with my mum," Draco said immediately. "She won't be keen on waiting in the Gryffindor common room. We'll go down to Slytherin."

"Excellent idea, Mr. Malfoy," Professor McGonagall said, and then she, Ron and Hermione left.

Draco waited until they had turned the corner before turning to his mother.

"Mum," Draco whispered urgently. "We *have* to do something. I can't just sit here and hope that everything goes okay. That's my mate in there!"

"Indeed, and my husband," Narcissa said, her own whisper just as urgent. "I won't leave him to that psychopath." She gave her son an intent look. "Do you remember where the Manor is? Could you Apparate back?"

"I remember, but I can't," Draco said bitterly. "Stupid Harry went and forbade me to Apparate back to the Manor to go after him."

"Hmmm," Narcissa said, shaking her head. "He's protective of you, isn't he?"

"You have no idea," Draco said exasperatedly.

"As a mother, I would normally approve," Narcissa said thoughtfully. "But in this case both of us must go. We may need your veela powers to help us rescue your father and Harry. Now this is important, Draco. Do you think you could *portkey* to the Manor?"

"I don't know," Draco said thoughtfully. "All Harry said was not to Apparate back. Nothing about portkeys."

"Good," Narcissa crisply. "Then hopefully this will work. Follow me..."

And she began to lead Draco down to the dungeons.

"That's the one, it's got to be," Harry thought, as he looked at what appeared to be an older version of Theodore Nott resting against a large wooden door.

Heart pounding, Harry raised his wand.

"*Stupefy*," he whispered, and Nott toppled over, unconscious. Moving to the now unblocked door, Harry pointed his wand again.

"*Alohomora*," he whispered, and the door swung open.

Moving quickly and stealthily, Narcissa and Draco dashed through the castle to the dungeons.

"So what's the plan, Mum?" Draco asked, as they paused in front of Snape's door.

"You'll see, darling," Narcissa said, raising one elegantly manicured hand to knock.

Snape answered the door, and Narcissa immediately sent him her most charming smile.

"Severus," she cooed. "How are you?"

Snape's normally sour face took on a somewhat surprised expression.

"Narcissa, Draco," he said. "What are you doing here?"

"I was hoping we could stay here with you," Narcissa said persuasively. "My son is highly distraught over this whole situation, and the Slytherin common room is much too distracting a place for us right now."

"But Draco has his own room you two can wait in," Snape said suspiciously.

Draco made a show of looking utterly miserable. "But there's too many memories of Harry there," he said dismally. "I can't possibly go in there while my mate is in danger."

Snape seemed to soften in the face of Draco's distress. "Very well then, you two may wait here." He opened the door and let them in.

Narcissa and Draco had just settled themselves on the couch in Snape's office when another knock was heard. Snape immediately went to the door, opening it to reveal Kingsley and Tonks.

"You have the portkeys, then?" Snape asked, after Kingsley and Tonks had nodded their hellos to the Malfoys.

"Right here," Tonks said, indicating the two large medallions on long chains in her hand. "This one," she pointed to the silver one, "will activate in about five minutes. This other one," she indicated the copper medallion, "activates in fifty minutes. That should give us time to get to Mr. Malfoy and Harry and then we can all portkey back here."

"Excellent," Snape said. The three of them walked over to the table near the couch where Snape had laid out plans of Riddle Manor.

"You will arrive *here*," Snape said, pointing at a place on the map. Oh-so-casually, Narcissa craned her neck to see the map herself. "Now, I don't know where Lucius is being kept," Snape continued, "so you should just head up to the Manor via this route."

He indicated two folded black robes on the table next to the map.

"Wear these with your hoods up at all times," Snape said testily. "You should blend in with the other Death Eaters fairly well -"

"Wand out," Narcissa whispered to her son, her voice almost inaudible. "Be ready to stun."

" - as most of us do not know who it is underneath the robes, in any case," Snape continued. "All you need to do is get to Lucius -"

Draco discreetly pulled out his wand, keeping it ready by his side.

" - by the time the second portkey activates. The password to get past the guards -"

"On my signal," Narcissa breathed.

" - is *Heir of Slytherin*. Are we clear?" Snape finished.

"Crystal," Narcissa piped up from the couch. "Now, Draco!"

Seconds later, Snape, Kingsley and Tonks all lay unconscious on the floor.

"Nice work, Mum," Draco said admiringly, as they stood from the couch. Quickly, they moved to the table and pulled on the black Death Eater robes.

Narcissa pried the portkeys from Tonks' hand, slipping the copper one into her robe pocket and draping the silver one around her and Draco's neck.

"Ready darling?" she asked.

"Absolutely," Draco said, and then the portkey activated.

Lucius had given up struggling against the ropes and lay passive on the floor. His heart was pounding wildly. Merlin only knew how long he had before the Dark Lord came, and truth be told, he was terrified.

Suddenly he heard the door to his room swing open. Cold terror shot through his veins and he twisted, trying in vain to see who had entered the room.

And then a voice that was definitely not the Dark Lord's cut through the air.

"*Mr. Malfoy? Oh my God. You're bloody gorgeous.*"

The awed voice seemed to come from thin air, and Lucius jerked against his bindings to try to see the source.

"Who's there? Show yourself!" he demanded, struggling against the ropes around him.

A swishing noise was heard, and then suddenly Harry Potter was standing in the middle of the room, looking sheepish.

"Sorry," he said. "Invisibility cloak. But you do look amazing," he said honestly. "Just like Draco."

Lucius stared at him in disbelief.

"Where the *hell* did you come from?" he demanded. "Honestly, do you have some kind of *Someone's in Trouble, I Must Rescue Them* power? How in Hades did you get here?"

Harry actually smiled. "Funny you should say that," he mused. "Well, actually, I originally came here to rescue Draco and then found out -"

"Draco? Draco was *here*?" Lucius practically snarled. "Are you telling me that that double-crossing son of a bitch Dark Lord kidnapped my child after all?"

"Well, yeah," Harry said simply. "Honestly, he's the most evil wizard to exist since like...ever. What did you expect?"

Lucius closed his eyes in frustration. "I don't know. I guess I hoped...well, wonderful. Now I'm a veela and I haven't even saved my son," he said bitterly. "It was all for naught."

"Oh I wouldn't say *that*," Harry said thoughtfully. "First off, Draco's fine. I sent him home."

"Sent him home?"

"Yes, so he'd be safe while I came to get you. And second - have you *seen* yourself lately? You're really hot."

"Potter, are you here to do something besides gawk like an imbecile at your boyfriend's father?" Lucius snapped.

"No need to get snippy. And yes, as it happens, I'm here to rescue you too," Harry said, pulling out his wand. A quick Severing charm and the ropes binding Lucius fell away.

Lucius stretched appreciatively. "Thank you," he said sincerely, rubbing his sore wrists. "What did you do about Nott?"

"Stunned him," Harry explained. "We should be able to escape now."

"Excellent. And I assume you have some kind of brilliant plan of escape for us?"

"Well, that depends. Does hiding under my invisibility cloak and tiptoeing out past the Anti-Apparation Wards count as brilliant?"

Lucius stared. "*That's* your brilliant rescue plan? It's a wonder the damsels don't throw themselves at your feet."

"Hey, Mr. I'm-Now-A-Veela-So-I'm-Wanted-For-A-Sex-Toy," Harry said sullenly. "Do you have a better plan? 'Cause I can always just leave you here, you know. I hear you have a hot date tonight."

Lucius glared at him. "Point taken. Fine, let's just get out of here."

Harry nodded and walked closer. "Okay, we'll have to get real close since we're both pretty tall, but it should be...bloody hell, they put one of those things on you too?"

Lucius gave him an annoyed look. "What are you blathering about?"

Harry tapped his own neck. "The collar."

Lucius' cheeks tinged pink in embarrassment as his hand shot up to his neck. "Right. Almost forgot," he muttered, highly embarrassed to have such a physical reminder of his new status as no-longer-human pointed out to him.

"They put that thing on Draco as well," Harry said, sounding a little pissed off. "What does Voldemort think you guys are, anyway? Some kind of *pet*?"

He hissed something in Parseltongue and the clasp of the collar opened. Lucius caught it as it started to slide off his neck.

"Thanks," he said gratefully, tucking the hated silver collar into his robe pocket. He was embarrassingly relieved to hear Potter speak so disparagingly of the Dark Lord's treatment of veela. After all, if his mate was a pureblood he might have trouble convincing her she wanted to spend her life with a veela.

"Potter," he said hesitantly, just before Harry could throw the invisibility cloak over the both of them. "Does it...bother you?"

"Does what bother me?" Harry asked inquisitively, pausing.

"That Draco is...not human," Lucius said. "That he's a veela."

Lucius' voice was as haughty as ever, but months of dealing with Draco had taught Harry how to read a Malfoy. Underneath his pretended disdain, Harry could hear Lucius' insecurity. It gave Harry the same odd little twist in his chest he got whenever Draco was anxious and worried about something.

"Of course it doesn't bother me," he said comfortingly. "Why on earth would it *bother* me? He's funny, loving, and generous with me, and he also happens to be incredibly fit and have bloody amazing powers. Who cares what species he is?"

"True enough," Lucius mused. "You do seem fond of my son."

"Are you kidding? I adore him. Everyone always makes fun of me for being whipped, but I don't even care because Draco is so worth it," Harry admitted. "He's got me wrapped around his finger but I've never been happier."

Harry paused, wondering just how far he could go in reassuring Lucius Malfoy before the man (or veela, as was apparently now the case) bit his head off.

"You know, if you're worried that your mate won't want you because you're a veela, you don't have to be," Harry said casually. "Your mate will adore you too."

Lucius visibly stiffened. "I don't know what you're talking about," he said dangerously.

Harry reminded himself to tread very cautiously. "So do you know who your mate is yet?" he asked.

"No," Lucius bit out. "Though I'm sure I will figure it out eventually."

Harry nodded. "Well, between you and me things will be fine with your mate. All you've got to do is kiss them with your veela powers on and they'll be putty in your hands."

"Oh really?" Lucius asked, raising an eyebrow.

"Yes, *really*. And if you want more details you'll have to consult one of those helpful books you bought Draco, because I sure as hell am not going to have this conversation with my boyfriend's father."

"Perish the thought, Potter," Lucius scoffed. He seemed a bit more relaxed now, however, and offered no resistance when Harry stepped close and tugged the cloak around both of them.

They disappeared from view, and then began their slow walk to the door. They practiced walking in time together, moving silently beneath the cloak.

Just as they reached the door, Lucius paused.

"Wait. When on earth did I buy 'helpful books' for Draco?"

""

Draco's flight through space stopped abruptly and he tumbled forward, staggering a bit to keep his balance. Next to him, his mother landed with the graceful ease of someone with a lifetime of experience in portkey travel.

"Excellent," Narcissa said, upon seeing that Draco was standing whole and healthy next to her. "You seem to be fine. Apparently Harry's commands are taken literally."

"Yes," Draco agreed, somewhat smugly. "No Apparating, but portkeying back to Riddle Manor is fine."

They had portkeyed straight into the forest that surrounded the Manor. Spying the imposing building through the foliage, Draco pushed aside some branches and pointed through the thick trees towards Riddle Manor.

"We're going to have to be really sneaky if we want to get in there undetected," Draco warned his mother. "We're only disguised; we don't have Harry's invisibility cloak or...Mum, are you listening to me?" he said exasperatedly, noticing that his mother was staring over his shoulder. "What could possibly be so interesting behind...*oh*."

As Draco turned around, he saw Theodore Nott tied securely to a tree just a few feet away. He was staring at the pair with wide, scared eyes.

A not-very-nice smile crossed Draco's perfect features. "Why Theodore," he practically purred. "Fancy meeting you here."

Narcissa raised one eyebrow. "This is Theodore Nott?" she asked coolly. "The one who attempted to...*compromise your virtue*, earlier?"

Nott winced and shrank back against the tree in fear.

"The one and only," Draco said, casually approaching him. "How does it feel, Nott?" Draco asked, his voice almost sickeningly sweet. "How does it feel to be bound and at someone's mercy? I myself am quite familiar with the feeling now...thanks, of course, to you."

Nott was speaking frantically, but the silencing charm Harry had placed on him earlier held firm and not a sound escaped his lips.

"Draco, honey, where are your manners?" Narcissa said. Her voice was even more saccharine than her son's. "Aren't you going to introduce me?"

"Of course," Draco said, his eyes never leaving Nott's. "Mummy, this is Theodore Nott, the boy who put me under the Imperious curse last term and tried to send me off to the Dark Lord, and then tied me up and forced me to use my veela powers on him. Nott, this is my Mum. She's the wife of a Death Eater and knows lots of nasty hexes, and she also happens to be rather protective of her only child."

The two Malfoys stood coldly before him, matching sets of eyes narrowed. Every drop of blood slowly drained from Nott's face, leaving him pale as a ghost.

"Theodore," Narcissa cooed, raising her wand. "How *lovely* to meet you."

Harry and Lucius successfully tiptoed out of the room. Harry cast a quick binding and silencing spell on the still unconscious Nott senior before they locked him into Lucius' room. Lucius took a perverse pleasure in hiding him underneath the bed covers.

"A little surprise for the Dark Lord," Lucius explained to Harry's quirked brow.

Harry nodded and then they began their slow journey out of the Manor.

Lucius more or less remembered the way out from his escape attempt, and Harry knew they had to keep heading east. Together they snuck down corridor after corridor, walking as silently as they could under the invisibility cloak.

After about five minutes of this, Harry was suddenly hit by a wave of exhaustion that nearly knocked him over.

He stumbled a bit, his feet echoing on the stone floor. Lucius grabbed his arm and glared at him beneath the cloak.

"What are you *doing*?" the blonde hissed. "Are you *trying* to let everyone know where we are?"

"Sorry," Harry mumbled, stifling a yawn. Lucius rolled his eyes and then began walking again.

After a few more steps Harry frustratedly began to rub at his eyes behind his glasses. His vision was blurring, and he was having trouble keeping his eyes open.

"Potter!" Lucius snapped in a forceful whisper. "What is the *matter* with you?"

"*Nothing*," Harry spat back defensively. "I'm just a little ti..." Harry interrupted himself with a huge yawn. "...tired," he finished, slapping his face lightly to try and wake himself up.

"Tired?" Lucius asked incredulously. "*Tired?* We are sneaking through the lair of the Darkest Wizard in centuries, praying we won't be captured by a madman who wants me for a concubine and your head mounted on his wall! How can you be *tired?* Does this *bore* you? Is the Great Harry Potter *bored* by *imminent death* now? Severus said you had an ego but *really*, this is taking it too far."

"M'not *bored*," Harry said thickly, as his eyes fluttered shut again. "M'just *sleepy*."

"SLEEPY? For the love of -" Lucius words were cut off as Harry was suddenly leaning heavily against him. "Potter? *Potter!* Wake up this instant!"

"Huhwha?" Harry said, cracking open one eye to look at Lucius. "C'mon...we gotta...get outtahere..." Harry trailed off again as his eyes shut and his head lolled on his neck.

Lucius grit his teeth. "What is *wrong* with you?" he hissed.

"Mating season..." Harry slurred, his weight resting fully against Lucius now. "Took a potion...wore off...haven't slept for *days*..."

Lucius' eyes widened. He had been out of the loop for the last three weeks, and hadn't realized that Draco must have been in the throws of his first veela mating season. He vaguely remembered reading something about veela mates, if they were human, having to take energy potions to keep up with their veela. Potter must have been doing that...but if his potion had just worn off...

"Shit," Lucius swore, as Harry's legs buckled and the Gryffindor started to fall. He caught the boy around the waist, preventing him from tumbling to the ground.

"Potter? Potter?" Lucius asked, shaking Harry slightly, but it was no use; Harry's body had given out. The boy was fast asleep, practically comatose in Lucius' arms.

"Bloody hell," Lucius swore again. "Don't do this to me now, Potter."

Even with his newly acquired veela strength, Lucius didn't think much of his chances of carrying Harry Potter through the Manor while keeping them both under the cloak. First, he needed at least one hand free to hold the cloak closed. Besides that, the damn thing barely fit around both of them standing. No way would it keep them hidden if he was carrying Harry.

Perhaps he could use enervate on Harry? That was a thought, but Lucius didn't have a wand. He eyed Harry's wand speculatively. Harry was still clasping it tightly, even in sleep.

Lucius knew quite a bit about Harry's wand; he remembered the graveyard scene from two years ago, and knew it shared a core with the Dark Lord's. He wasn't really all that keen on using Potter's wand for anything. The thought of using such a powerful and unpredictable wand made him a little nervous.

There was *one* other alternative, if Lucius was up to it...

He made a face. Didn't seem like he had much choice. Taking hold of one of Harry's hands in his own, Lucius turned on his veela powers.

It still felt a little odd to Lucius, these new powers. He'd only really used them once, after all. But to his surprise he enjoyed having them on now. It was a pleasant sensation. One that should be significantly more pleasant to Potter - hopefully enough to wake him up.

Harry stirred slightly, and his fingers flexed a bit in Lucius hand. To Lucius' disappointment, however, Harry didn't wake.

Fine. Lucius would take things to the next level. Reaching out, he grabbed Potter's other hand and held them both tightly in his own.

Again, Harry's fingers moved, and a small breathy noise escaped him. But again, he didn't wake.

Lucius was getting desperate. He had no idea how long it would be before he was discovered missing and a search team sent out. He couldn't afford to waste time being squeamish. He had to wake Potter up, and that meant he had to touch him more.

With an annoyed mutter of, "Honestly, what kind of rescuer develops narcolepsy half-way through the rescue?" Lucius moved his hands from Harry's hands to around the younger man's waist. Allowing Harry to lean forward against him for balance, Lucius slid his hands underneath Harry's jumper to the bare skin of his back.

That got a bit of a rise out of Harry. The brunette quietly 'mmed' in pleasure and nuzzled sleepily into Lucius' neck.

Lucius rolled his eyes but began to trace soothing circles on the warm skin of Harry's lower back. He kept his veela powers on strongly.

"Potter?" he whispered harshly. "Potter, are you awake?"

Harry didn't answer; he only tucked his head more securely into the space between Lucius' neck and shoulder and sighed happily.

"Potter? Potter, wake up!" Lucius demanded, now moving his hands all over Harry's back. "My son is going to kill me for touching you, so hurry and wake, you idiot!"

Harry made another noise, but still refused to wake. Lucius closed his eyes in exasperation. It figures that Potter would make this as difficult as possible.

Lucius really had no choice in his next move. He needed Potter awake, and that meant even more stimulation than he was giving him now.

"In for a knut, in for a galleon," Lucius muttered. Then, taking a hand off of Harry's back, he grabbed a handful of Harry's thick, black locks. With a not-so-gentle grip, he pulled Harry upright by the hair and then leaned in and kissed him right on the mouth.

It worked instantly. Harry's arms encircled him immediately, wrapping around Lucius's body. Harry's mouth opened beneath Lucius', and Lucius' eyes widened as he suddenly found himself kissing his son's mate.

With *tongue*.

"Mrph - Potterph!" he yelped, and tried to pull away. Harry held him tightly, latching on to him like a drowning man to air.

"No, Draco, stay," Harry mumbled, forcing Lucius backwards towards the wall. "Naughty veela, playing games."

Lucius growled as his back hit the wall and Harry pressed against him eagerly.

"I'm...not...*Draco*," he snarled against Harry's lips, before shoving Harry as hard as he could in the chest.

Harry promptly flew backwards several feet, pulling the cloak off Lucius. It slid down off Harry to the floor, leaving both of them in plain view.

Harry put a hand to his lips. "Mr. Malfoy?" he said, his eyes glazed. "I didn't know you could kiss."

He began to walk towards Lucius again, a dazed look on his face. Lucius panicked and shut off his veela powers.

Harry instantly stopped in the middle of the corridor. Comprehension slowly filled his previously glassy eyes, and he stared in horror at Lucius.

"Did you just *kiss* me?" he gasped. "With *veela powers*?"

"I did what I had to do to wake you up," Lucius snapped. "And may I *remind* you that you are the one who insisted on turning into something *sordid*. I merely pecked you; you decided we were going to neck."

"I *thought* you were Draco," Harry snapped back, a faint blush coloring his cheeks.

"So I gathered," Lucius said coolly. "After you moaned my son's name and pinned me against the wall. I take it my son is the bottom in your relationship?"

Harry's faint blush went to full on scarlet at that.

"Ah," Lucius said shortly. "Can't say I'm all that surprised. Though if I'd known he'd end up bottoming for a Potter, I might have insisted he spent more time practicing Unforgivables and less time shopping for dress robes."

"Hey, he learned it from you," Harry protested. "You're the one who swishes around with your long hair and fancy robes acting all dramatic all the time."

"It's called having *class*, you worthless little peasant," Lucius sneered. "And I assure you, none of that behaviour implies I would bottom in any relationship."

There was a pause.

"You would so be the bottom if you and I had a relationship," Harry muttered resentfully.

"*WHAT?*" Lucius screeched.

"Nothing," Harry said, much too innocently.

Lucius narrowed his eyes. "Now you see here, you delusional little brat," he said, pointing at Harry for emphasis. "First off, I'm straight, so obviously I don't bottom for anyone. Secondly, even if I *was* gay I am old enough to be your father, and therefore would obviously top in any hypothetical relationship."

"I don't think so," Harry said, shaking his head. "With all that long, pretty hair you almost look like a girl anyway, and the way you obsessively carry that phallic symbol of a cane makes me think you're comp...en...sate...ing..." Harry's words were broken up with another huge yawn.

Lucius threw up his hands. "You are *not* falling back asleep on me now that my veela powers are off, are you Potter?" he asked desperately.

"No!" Harry said indignantly. "I'm just...just...okay, maybe I am..."

And with that Harry's eyes shut and he staggered towards the wall.

Lucius sprinted forward and caught Harry right before the boy could hit the floor.

"Potter? Potter! *POTTER!!*"

Harry was asleep again.

"Damn you, you insolent brat!"

Lucius turned his veela powers back on, as high as they could go. Then he yanked Harry into a standing position, gripping one of Harry's biceps in each hand.

"Try not to molest me this time, alright?" he barked at the sleeping boy. And with that he pressed his lips to Harry's again.

Predictably, Harry immediately began to kiss him back. Harry's arms went around him tightly and he began to ravish Lucius' mouth. This time, Lucius remained in place, kissing Potter fervently, hoping this time the boy would stay awake...

And at that moment Lucius heard several things.

He heard Harry's voice, practically a growl against his lips, say, "That's right baby, give it to Daddy."

He heard another voice, young and male and *very* angry, say "WHAT THE *FUCK* IS GOING ON HERE?"

And then finally, the most beautiful voice he had ever heard, a voice that echoed in his mind and reverberated in his chest, the voice of the person he wanted to live the rest of his life with, said, "Did I tell you that I'm going to become the next Minister of Magic?"

Chapter Warnings: Excitement, a touch of angst and then enough fluff to make cotton candy jealous.

The Veela Enigma

Chapter 32: A Mystery Solved

Lucius ripped away from Harry instantly, turning towards the sound of that beautiful voice.

"Nar-Narcissa?" he whispered, stepping towards her. Narcissa looked flushed and dazed, and was staring back at Lucius raptly.

"Lucius," she breathed. "You're so handsome...the most handsome man I've ever seen...you make me want to climb mountains....I could swim the ocean for you..."

"Narcissa," Lucius whispered again, and he would have run to her, but a furious blonde mass was suddenly blocking his path.

"Were you just *kissing my mate*?" Draco snarled, eyes blazing furiously.

Lucius tried to dodge around his son to get to the starry-eyed and babbling Narcissa just beyond him, but Draco refused to budge.

"Yes, I was, but I can explain, Draco," Lucius said distractedly, entranced by the vision of his wife just beyond Draco.

"How the *hell* do you think you can EXPLAIN THIS?!" Draco yelled, glaring at his father. "You were KISSING my MATE, Dad! MY MATE!"

"Draco Malfoy, don't you talk to your father that way!" Lucius snapped. "Now move aside and let me get to your mother."

"NO!" Draco howled. "Harry is *MINE*! How could you KISS HIM?!?"

Lucius winced. Draco had thrown the worst tantrums as a young child, and he looked like he was gearing up to throw one right now.

"Draco, I assure you it's not what you think," Lucius said patiently, still trying to maneuver past Draco and get to Narcissa. "I didn't *want* to kiss him. I was just trying to wake your imbecilic boyfriend up."

Unfortunately, Harry chose that moment to speak up.

"Lucius, come back," he whined, his eyes vacant and his jaw slack. "We weren't finished -"

Draco gasped in outrage. "I see what's going on here!" he said, pointing accusingly at his dad. "You've got your *veela powers* now, don't you?"

"Considering that your mother is now claiming to have single-handedly slain hundreds of Acromantulas, I'd say so," Lucius snapped crossly. He dodged right but his son cut him off again.

"You've got veela powers, and you used them to SEDUCE MY MATE?!?" Draco growled. "Oh, someone ought to award you *FATHER OF THE YEAR* for this one!"

"Draco, *really*, if you would just calm -"

"You get veela powers for maybe TWO WEEKS and you use them TO GET OFF WITH HARRY?!?"

"Draco Malfoy, if you don't settle down this instant -"

"I will NOT settle down!! I found you with YOUR TONGUE down MY MATE'S THROAT and he's STILL trying to get to you and -"

"Look, Draco, I'm turning off my veela powers, alright?" Lucius said desperately, trying to calm Draco down. "Powers going off, Potter going back to normal, you can yell at him now, alright?"

Draco paused in his tirade for a moment and looked suspiciously past his father. Harry was now rubbing at his eyes and staring at Draco.

"*Draco?*" he asked incredulously. "Draco, what are you doing here? I specifically ordered you to go home and not come back! How did you disobey my command?"

"Oh, is THAT all you're worried about?" Draco growled. He stomped past Lucius and started heading straight for Harry. "How I *disobeyed your command*? Why'd you send me home in the first place? SO YOU COULD SNOG MY DAD, YOU CHEATING BASTARD??!!"

"Oh God," Harry said, his eyes going wide. He began to back up as fast as he could. "No, it's not what you think -"

"You are in SO MUCH TROUBLE, Harry James Potter!!" Draco snarled, advancing. "First you use you bloody VOICE to SEND ME HOME - and I will *NEVER* forgive you for that - and then I come back to rescue you and YOU'RE PRACTICALLY SHAGGING MY FATHER??!!"

"It was *ONE* KISS...well, actually two, but -"

"OH MY GOD, YOU KISSED HIM *TWICE*???! I'LL KILL YOU FOR THIS, POTTER, DO YOU HEAR ME??!!"

As Draco yelled and Harry cowered against the wall, Lucius dashed towards Narcissa.

"Narcissa, love," he said breathlessly. "It's you...oh, it's you..."

"Lucius," she said back, meeting him halfway and throwing her arms around his neck. "Oh, you're alright, my darling, you're alright..."

"It's you...I'm so glad it's you..." Lucius babbled, encircling his wife's waist with his arms. "My love, my angel, it's you..."

"What do you mean, it's me?" Narcissa asked, her lips only a breath away from her husband's.

"You're my mate," Lucius whispered, and then he kissed her.

"You know what THIS means, Potter?" Draco continued to shout, oblivious to his parents kissing like there was no tomorrow just a few feet away. "It means you're SLEEPING ON THE COUCH from now on!! How could you DO THIS TO ME?!?!"

"Draco, please," Harry begged. "It's not what it...looks...like..." A huge yawn hit Harry, and his knees began to buckle.

"Oh, oh you're *YAWNING* now? Are you *BORED*? Is the Great Harry Potter *BORED* by the threat of *IMMINENT DEATH* from his boyfriend? I swear, if you weren't my mate -"

And that was as far as Draco got before Harry's legs gave out and he fell to the floor, landing hard at Draco's feet.

"Harry, for the love of - get UP!" Draco said crossly.

Harry didn't budge.

"Harry? Harry? *HARRY!*" Draco dropped to his knees and rolled Harry onto his back. Harry was fast asleep.

"You're *asleep?*" Draco said incredulously. "How the *hell* -"

"His energy potion wore off," Lucius called out, reluctantly breaking his kiss with Narcissa to explain. "That's why I had to kiss him in the first place. To wake him back up."

Narcissa regarded Lucius through narrowed eyes. "You know, come to think of it, I'm not quite sure I like the fact you were kissing Draco's boyfriend," she said coolly. "You're a married man, and that boy is less than half your age."

Lucius looked back and forth from his glaring wife to his glaring son.

"I had no choice, alright!" he snapped, throwing his hands up in the air in frustration. "I didn't know you two were on the way and Potter was trying to sneak me out of the Manor beneath his Invisibility Cloak. That was the plan, and the plan needed Potter awake, so I kissed him to wake him up. But now you two are here, and I'm assuming my brilliant wife and equally intelligent son have come with a cunning Slytherin plan and not some half-witted Gryffindor showing of pure, mindless brawn?"

"Well naturally," Narcissa said, exchanging an amused glance with Draco. She reached into her pocket and pulled out the copper medallion. "Here's our portkey back to Hogwarts. It activates in twelve minutes."

"May I see the portkey?" Lucius enquired. Narcissa passed it to him.

Lucius took it. "Interesting choice of - YEOW!" He dropped the portkey, which clattered on the ground. "What was that?"

"Copper," Draco said smugly. "Veela can't bear to touch copper."

"You *could* have warned me, Draco," Lucius growled, rubbing his smarting hand.

Draco shrugged. "I could have. But you could have not kissed my mate, too."

"Now see here, young man," Lucius said menacingly. "You are not too old to be punished."

"You've never punished me for anything in my life," Draco shot back.

"Well it's certainly not too late to start!" Lucius snapped.

"Darlings!" Narcissa cut in. "Really. Now we've made quite a racket, and someone is sure to come running any moment now."

"You're right," Lucius said instantly. "We need a plan."

"We could run through the Manor on a brilliant crusade, slaying the forces of Darkness and bringing peace to the world," Draco suggested.

His parents stared at him.

"I was *kidding*," Draco stressed. "Let's save our own gorgeous arses and get the hell out of here."

Lucius put a hand over his heart. "You really scared me for a moment, son. I thought you were turning into some kind of Gryffindor."

"Daddy, please," Draco said, shuddering. "Don't say things like that. I may be shagging Harry Potter but I certainly don't have any Gryffindor in me."

"Right," Lucius said thoughtfully. "About that, Draco. Are you sure you *have* to be the bottom in your relationship? I understand that Potter's got that certain hero-vibe to him, but I really don't think -"

"*WHAT?!*" Draco screeched. "When did THIS come up?!? Why EXACTLY were you talking about SEX with my MATE???!!!"

"He thought I was *YOU*, and then he SHOVED ME UP AGAINST THE WALL and called me a *NAUGHTY VEELA*! Then he said *THAT'S RIGHT BABY, GIVE IT TO DADDY!!!* What EXACTLY is that boy doing to my ONLY CHILD?!?!?"

"OH, you are so OVER-PROTECTIVE! Just because I think it's hot when Harry's a bit FORCEFUL-"

"LUCIUS AND DRACO MALFOY, YOU WILL STOP SHOUTING THIS *INSTANT!* THIS DISCUSSION CAN WAIT UNTIL WE ARE SAFELY BACK AT HOGWARTS, IS THAT CLEAR?"

There was a moment of silence.

"Well, I can see who the bottom is in *your* relationship," Draco finally said snottily.

"*Draco Lucius Malfoy* - " Lucius began.

"Hey, it's the Malfoys!" A figure Lucius instantly recognized came around the corner, his Death Eater hood lowered. "What are you three doing here?"

"Macnair," Lucius said, eyes going wide. He tried to step in front of Harry's sleeping body to block him from view. "Oh, I'm just...uh...showing my family our Lord's evil headquarters..."

"Oh," Macnair responded, looking slightly suspicious. "That's...unusual..." His eyes traveled down to the floor. "Who's that sleeping at your feet?"

"Um..." And without even thinking about it Lucius turned his veela powers on. "It's no one," he said experimentally.

"Okay," Macnair cheerfully agreed, his eyes vacant and his jaw slack. "If you say so. Did you know I'm the faster runner in the wizarding world?"

"Are you?" Lucius said pleasantly. "Why don't you show me by running as fast as you can away from here?"

"Sure," Macnair responded, and took off running.

Lucius had just breathed a sigh of relief when Narcissa suddenly threw herself at Lucius.

"Lucius," she purred, arms around his neck. "Have I ever told you that I'm going to be the first witch to fly a broomstick to America?"

"Are you really?" Lucius said indulgently, wrapping his arms around Narcissa's waist. "That's the most marvelous thing I've ever heard. Tell me all about it, love."

And with that he leaned down and began to kiss his wife.

"Yuck," Draco said, looking very grossed out. "Quit it, you two. I really don't want to see my parents snog, alright?"

He got no response as his parents continued to kiss each other fiercely.

"*Dad!*" Draco demanded. "Turn off your veela powers and stop getting off with Mum in front of me!"

Reluctantly Lucius turned off his veela powers and watched Narcissa's eyes focus as her mind came back to her.

Narcissa stared at her husband in amazement. "Lucius, that was -"

Draco cut her off.

"Yes, yes, veela powers are bloody incredible," he said irritably. "And watching your parents suck face is disgusting. Save the gushing and mooning over each other for when we're back at Hogwarts and you're no longer in front of your child, alright?"

Lucius and Narcissa exchanged a glance.

"Your son is a bit ill-mannered," Lucius said to Narcissa.

"*My* son?" Narcissa repeated incredulously. "He's a carbon-copy of *you*."

"Can we *please* talk about this later?" Draco said, kneeling down next to Harry. With a bit of maneuvering he managed to get his arms under Harry's back and beneath his legs, and then lifted his sleeping mate into his arms.

"Shall we hide in there until the portkey activates?" Lucius asked, indicating a door off the corridor that was slightly open. "The Dark Lord will probably be discovering Nott any moment and I *really* don't want to be out in the open when that happens."

"Excellent idea," Narcissa agreed, and the three Malfoys and the sleeping Harry swept through the door, locking it behind them.

Nott Senior lay trembling beneath the covers of Lucius Malfoy's bed, terrified out of his mind. The last thing he remembered was standing guard outside of Lucius' door. The next moment, he was bound and gagged and lying in the middle of a bed.

It didn't take a rocket scientist to figure out whose bed he was in. It still *smelled* like Lucius, that intoxicating veela scent that would have left Nott feeling light-headed had he not been fully conscious of how much danger he was in.

Moments later, Nott's worst fears were confirmed as he heard a clicking sound.

"Lucius, pet, where are you?"

Nott sucked in terrified breath. The Dark Lord had arrived. He tried to speak, but the silencing spell prevented any noise from escaping him.

"Are you *hiding* from me, love?" the Dark Lord said, sounding amused. "It will do you no good. I will find you. Really, you needn't fear me; I shall be gentle with you."

He paused. "Well, as gentle as you might expect a Dark Wizard to be," he finished, sounding more amused than ever.

Nott's trembling became full-fledged shaking.

"*Lumos*," the Dark Lord said. A pause. "Oh, *there* you are. Hiding under the bedclothes. Feeling a bit shy, are we?"

Nott swallowed hard. The Dark Lord was going to kill him when he discovered that Nott was not Lucius.

"Well, pet, far be it from me to make you feel...*uncomfortable*," Lord Voldemort said in saccharine tones. "If you're feeling shy about your new veela state, I am more than willing to leave the lights off for now."

Underneath the blankets, Nott's eyes widened in horror.

"*Nox*," the Dark Lord whispered, and the lights went out.

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The door from the corridor had led into a little used billiards room, with a large green table and brown leather sofas all heavily coated in dust.

Narcissa stood near the door, wand out. One ear was pressed to the door to listen intently to any movement that might occur in the corridor. Lucius was standing and leaning against the wall next to his wife, watching his son as Draco set the still fast-asleep Harry down gently on a sofa just a few feet away.

"Draco, I was wondering," Lucius began, looking from Harry to Narcissa. "Why is it that everyone, even my *mate*, begins to say odd things when my veela powers are on, but Potter here doesn't?"

Draco shrugged. "He's Harry Potter. He can do weird things like that. I believe it's because his mental defenses are better than average. After all, he can resist the Imperius Curse, even when it's cast by the Dark Lord."

"True," Lucius mused. "So your veela powers don't work on him then?"

"No, they do," Draco assured him. "Just a little differently then they do on other people. He doesn't start saying crazy things, but he gets really, desperately turned on."

"And then he tries to make a move on you, doesn't he? That little shit. I should hex his balls off."

"Dad, don't start this again," Draco said exasperatedly. "I am seventeen years old now. I'm not a baby any -"

At that moment, the most frightening voice any of the Malfoys had ever heard filled Riddle Manor.

**"LISTEN MY DEATH EATERS!! LUCIUS AND DRACO MALFOY HAVE TURNED TRAITOR AND THEY ARE LOOSE IN THE MANOR!! I WANT THEM FOUND IMMEDIATELY!! DO NOT LET THE MALFOYS ESCAPE! I REPEAT, DO NOT LET THE MALFOYS ESCAPE!!"**

It was Lord Voldemort's voice, amplified far beyond its usual volume. Lucius, Draco and Narcissa cowered together as shouting voices and trampling feet suddenly filled the previous silent Manor.

"Oh, how horrible," Narcissa whispered, clutching her wand tightly. "Draco, you must wake Harry up immediately. We will need him if we're forced to fight."

"No," Draco said hotly. "I want him kept safe. Let me just wrap him in his invisibility cloak and -"

"Your mother is right," Lucius said forcefully. "Potter has the world's most incredible luck against the Dark Lord. Wake him up."

"I said no!" Draco snapped. "He's my mate and I'm keeping him safe. I won't wake him."

"You will," Lucius said flatly.

"I *won't*!"

"You will or I will. The choice is yours."

Draco gasped. "You wouldn't dare kiss him again."

"I will do whatever is necessary to protect my mate," Lucius said, the new word rolling easily off his tongue as if he'd been saying it his entire life. "And to protect my son. We need Potter. Besides, think Draco. What if something were to happen to us and he was left asleep under the Invisibility Cloak. You really think he'd remain undiscovered?"

Draco glared at his father but could not argue with that logic. He bent down over Harry and turned on his veela powers. "Wake up, Harry," he whispered, pressing a kiss to Harry's lips.

Harry's arms immediately wrapped around Draco and pulled the blonde down against his chest. "Draco," he whispered, as he opened his mouth underneath Draco's and began to kiss back fiercely. He suddenly rolled over, making Draco squeal as Harry flipped the blonde onto his back on the couch.

"You're so mine," Harry growled as he kissed Draco, his hands moving to the fastenings of Draco's robe.

And suddenly an inhumanly strong hand was lifting Harry bodily off Draco by the back of his jumper.

"I refuse to stand here and watch you molest my child," Lucius growled into Harry's now wide-eyed face. "You keep your filthy paws to yourself and off of Draco in front of me, is that clear?"

"Daddy, let Harry go," Draco demanded, scrambling off the couch. "He wasn't doing anything to me that I didn't like!"

Lucius pointed at Draco with the hand not still attached to Harry's collar. "And *that* is a whole other issue you and I most certainly need to discuss."

"Lucius, Draco, please," Narcissa said exasperatedly. She reached out and grabbed Harry's wrist, tugging him towards her and out of Lucius' grasp. "Harry, the Dark Lord has just called on his Death Eaters to find us. You can hear them running all over the Manor, searching."

Narcissa paused and the foursome listened to the shouts and stomping feet, all sounding quite a bit closer than they had a minute ago.

"It is Lucius and Draco that the Dark Lord really wants," Narcissa continued. "We need to protect them. Do you have your wand?"

Harry nodded grimly, reaching into his back pocket and drawing his wand.

"Now wait just a minute," Lucius broke in. "If you think Draco and I are just going to stand here and let our mates protect us -"

"- then you're nuts," Draco finished. "We'll protect you two."

"I don't think so," Harry said sharply. "I didn't even want you to be here. You two should stand behind us in case they come through the door."

"No," Draco protested hotly. "I've got my veela powers on to keep you awake, anyway. Anyone walking through that door will be putty in my hands."

"Some people can resist veela powers," Harry pointed out. "And you've never tested your powers on large groups of people."

"I have so," Draco protested. "What do you call the Gryffindor common room?"

"A place where all my horny friends get together to lust inappropriately over my boyfriend?" Harry muttered.

"An atrocious mess of garish colours and shoddy furniture whose decorator ought to be clapped in irons?" Narcissa suggested.

"An unkempt den that breeds drooling, ill-mannered brats with raging hormones who blatantly take advantage of other wizards' innocent sons?" Lucius offered.

A round of heated glares was exchanged, causing Draco to roll his eyes.

"It was a *rhetorical question*," the blonde seethed.

"You know, I believe that Lucius does have a point," Narcissa mused. "Using veela powers on a group of teenagers who already have high libidos is quite different from using your powers to subdue a group of adult, armed Death Eaters. It might be very difficult."

"I don't care," Draco said bluntly. "I can hold them off. Dad will help. We've only got six minutes until the portkey activates anyway. I can last six minutes."

"I can last a whole lot longer than six minutes," Harry informed Lucius in a whisper. "That's why I top."

"I'll *kill* you, Potter," Lucius growled. "When you come to Malfoy Manor I'll tear your bollocks off and feed them to my army of hungry Manticores."

"You have *Manticores* at Malfoy Manor?" Harry asked incredulously.

"I *will*," Lucius promised.

"Harry, Lucius, now is really *not* the time," Narcissa hissed, drawing their attention to the door. Muffled voices were becoming clear as several pairs of feet thudded down the corridor just outside.

"There's a locking charm on this door!" a male voice shouted. "I bet they're in here!"

Two nervous humans and two anxious veela gulped.

"Break it down then!" Another voice answered.

Lucius, Narcissa, Harry and Draco all backed away from the door, forming a tight huddle at the other end of the room. Narcissa pulled the copper medallion out from her pocket and carefully arranged it around all four of their necks.

"Now don't move too far or the chain will snap," she whispered. "We have to stay close together until it activates. Hopefully we can last that long."

There was a hard slam against the door, which creaked warningly on its hinges.

"Probably got Crabbe and Goyle banging down that door," Lucius guessed, moving protectively in front of Narcissa. "Those two bastards are huge."

Another loud bang. Draco took a shaky breath, and suddenly a strong hand gripped his wrist.

"I won't let them hurt you," Harry whispered to Draco fervently. "Even if your veela powers fail I'll protect you."

"*My hero*," Draco simpered sarcastically, using a snotty voice to try and hide how scared he truly was. "My powers won't fail, you git," he snapped, snatching his wrist away. "It'll be fine."

Another slam, and all four of them winced.

"Of course it will be fine," Harry snapped back, moving directly in front of Draco. "Because I won't let anything happen to you."

"Get away, Potter!" Draco, trying to move to Harry's side. "I don't want you getting -"

At that instant, an enormous crash filled the room. The door had been broken down.

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Four pairs of eyes widened as figures in black cloaks began pouring into the room.

"In here! In here!" Came the shouts out in the corridor, which echoed hauntingly off the stone walls of Riddle Manor.

Draco gasped as the strain on his veela powers suddenly increased. For the first time, he was suddenly unsure about his capability to single-handedly hold off Voldemort's legion of Death Eaters. He took a deep breath and tried to concentrate.

The first three Death Eaters into the room froze in their tracks.

"Did I tell you I've just signed on to be *Witch Weekly*'s newest cover model?" the first one said to another.

"Liar! That honour goes to *me*," snapped the second. "I'm the one with the amazing body."

"You're both crazy!" the third retorted. He turned to Lucius and Draco and smiled. "*I'm* going to be on the cover of *Witch Weekly* because I've got the world's biggest cock!"

"Eww," said the three Malfoys and Harry.

Out in the corridor, a voice yelled again, "We found them! In here! In here! Come on!"

More Death Eaters flowed into the room in a seemingly never-ending stream. Draco screwed up his face in concentration, keeping his powers as high as he could.

"Dad, I think I'm going to need your help," he said, panting. "There's too many of them. And if more are coming -"

"Right," Lucius said grimly, turning on his own veela powers.

Narcissa's eyes immediately became glazed and vacant. "I'm going to be the world's first Ambassador to the Moon," she informed Lucius, even as she wrapped her arms around his neck.

Lucius' eyes were squeezed tightly shut and he had started breathing heavily.

"That's lovely, Narcissa," he managed to gasp. "Why don't you just stay behind me and tell me all about it?"

The front line of Death Eaters had stopped a few feet in front of them, all flexing their muscles and claiming outrageous things. Behind them, however, the Death Eaters hadn't stopped coming, and the room was quickly filling with black hooded figures.

Harry chanced a glance over his shoulder at Draco. The blonde's perfect face was screwed up in concentration and a light sweat had broken out over his forehead.

"How much longer do we have?" Harry whispered.

"Four minutes," Draco answered tersely.

"Can you make it until then?" Harry asked worriedly, looking at the strain on Draco's face.

Draco gave a curt nod. "Yes. But I don't know about my dad. He's still new to all this."

Harry looked over his other shoulder. Lucius looked like he was struggling to lift a very heavy weight and was panting slightly with exertion.

Harry could tell that both veela were suffering heavily from such intense use of their powers. He squared his shoulders and lifted his wand. Narcissa might have been a babbling wreck, but Harry could start *Stupefying* Death Eaters to try to ease the work for Lucius and Draco.

Suddenly pain exploded in Harry's scar, and he sucked in his breath sharply, clutching at his forehead.

"Harry?" Draco asked anxiously. "What is it? Harry, is it -"

"Yes, it is I, young Malfoy," a cold, reptilian voice hissed. "I've come to reclaim my errant veela."

Faces white with terror, Lucius and Draco raised their now matching silver eyes to see Lord Voldemort glaring at them from the door frame.

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No one spoke for a moment, as the Dark Lord glided into the room.

"That was a cheap trick, pet," Voldemort said softly to Lucius, as he moved through the crowd of babbling Death Eaters. "Leaving Nott in your place in my bed."

"Like that, did you?" Lucius tried to taunt, but his voice was weak and strained.

"It was an...unpleasant surprise," Voldemort admitted coolly. "Rest assured he has been dealt with for his laxity in guarding you. But I am here to reclaim you both. Surely you did not think I would allow such rare treasures as yourselves to leave?"

Draco was frozen with fear. He'd never actually seen the Dark Lord before and now he was only half a room away, that loathsome half-human being of evil. To think that this foul creature was planning on using both Lucius and Draco, on subjugating them to his will...

"Stay back," Harry suddenly snarled, spreading his arms in front of Lucius and Draco in a protective gesture. "You can't have them."

"Ah, the young hero Potter," the Dark Lord said, sounding amused. "In your never-ending quest of righteousness, have you stooped to protecting animals now?"

Next to Draco, Lucius growled softly but did not move. His face was pale and drawn, and Draco could see what an effort it was for his father to keep his veela powers on with so many Death Eaters about.



"Leave them alone," Harry snarled at Voldemort. Draco noticed the hand not holding his wand was clenched into a tight fist. "You're disgusting. Separating veela from their mates, trying to use them as *sex slaves*...you're the animal here."

"You should choose your words more carefully, Potter," Voldemort said softly. His voice was no longer amused. "A simple spell from my lips and your precious little veela will fall dead at your feet."

"You won't do it," Harry said, lifting his wand defensively. "You're not stupid. You remember what happened the last time our wands did battle."

"Perhaps. But your little pets cannot keep my Death Eaters at bay forever. Soon their powers will fail and my loyal servants will be freed from their spell. At that point I will show no mercy to any of you."

The Dark Lord tilted his head to one side. "Except, perhaps, to the two veela. I will most likely spare their lives. After all, I have much more pleasant things planned for them." He punctuated this with a leer at Draco.

"*SHUT UP!*" Harry said furiously, and started to lunge forward. Draco and Lucius each grabbed a shoulder and yanked Harry backwards before he could break the thin chain that bound them all together.

"Only two minutes left," Draco growled into his ear. "So quit being such a Gryffindor and fucking *stay put*."

"So protective," Voldemort said mockingly to Harry. "Is it really worth it to be the champion for veela? Surely you could find another love besides the young Malfoy? A fully human one. "

Harry clenched his teeth. "I will never want anyone besides Draco," he spat. "*Never*."

Lucius was now shaking all over, leaning back onto Narcissa for support. Narcissa was stroking his sweaty brow, whispering in his ear.

Draco swallowed hard; he could feel his dad's powers weakening, could feel his own burden increasing. There was still one minute. He had to make it.

"I suppose after a veela, the sex would be rather a let down with a human," Voldemort said calculatingly, watching as Harry's legendary temper began to flare again.

"You *bastard*," the Gryffindor swore. Draco could feel Harry's muscles flexing warningly beneath his shirt as Harry clenched his wand tightly. "It's not about the sex. It never has been. I love him."

"Do you? Or do you love the way he makes you feel, his perfect little body hot and tight beneath you as you -"

"Don't talk about him like that, you *wretched, foul* -" Harry would have lunged forward again but Draco grabbed him.

"Don't you *dare*," Draco said, wrapping both arms around Harry's waist and keeping him in place through super human veela strength. "Don't you *dare* be such a Gryffindor that you rush off to defend my honour and end up dead."

Dropping his voice to a whisper, he added, "Thirty seconds. No matter what he says, *don't move*."

Not for the first time, Draco wished he had the power to control what Harry did the way Harry had a power over him. It could come in very handy.

Suddenly, Draco staggered a bit and nearly fell over, clutching at Harry desperately to remain upright. His dad had passed out, leaving only Draco to combat the hordes of Death Eaters flanking Voldemort. The strain on his powers had doubled, and he was now weakening.

"*Draco? Draco, love, hold on!*"

Draco could hear voices, but they all seemed to be coming from far away.

*"Draco!"*

*"One veela down, Potter, one to go. Already some of my Death Eaters are regaining their minds. In a matter of moments, you will all be mine."*

*"Don't come any closer. My wand will work against yours just fine. You will not tear my family apart. Draco is Harry's and Lucius is mine. We're their mates. You won't take them from us."*

It was Draco's mother speaking now, having regained her mind now that Lucius was unconscious.

*"Draco, darling, try to keep your powers on. Just concentrate on your powers, alright?"*

Draco winced and nodded. He was dimly aware that Harry had shifted him slightly to the side and was holding him up with an arm locked tightly around Draco's waist.

*"He will not last. The strain is too much. Any second now young Draco will lose his powers and you will be at my mercy."*

*"Don't give in, Draco. Just a bit longer, love, just a bit longer..."*

When was that goddamned portkey going to go off? Draco's body was beginning to ache and tremble under the strain. Oh God, he wasn't going to be able to last...

*"There he goes, Potter!"* A manic voice cackled, just as Draco felt his power shut themselves off. *"You've lost this time. Look around as my Death Eaters return to me! This is the end!"*

Draco whimpered, bracing himself for the worst -

But the worst never came, because at that instant Draco felt a familiar tug behind his navel and was suddenly soaring through space.

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If anyone had asked Harry, Draco, or Lucius to explain what happened after the portkey activated, none of them could really say. Lucius, of course, was completely unconscious and had no memory of the portkey travel at all.

Draco at least could remember the portkey activating, but was pretty sure he passed out in mid-travel. Harry had fared only slightly better. He remained awake long enough to see that they had indeed all made it safely into Dumbledore's office. The surprised occupants of the room had all rushed to hug him, but without Draco or Lucius' veela powers to keep Harry awake he had promptly fallen asleep midway through the first hug.

Narcissa was the only one of the group who was conscious and awake to explain what had happened to an expectant Dumbledore. Upon seeing Dumbledore again, she somehow had the feeling that he hadn't been at all surprised when it was her and Draco who had taken the portkeys, rather than his Aurors. Still, he listened politely to her story and thanked her for giving him all the details of the rescue.

Well, *almost* all the details. After all, if Narcissa chose to keep silent on a little matter of one Theodore Nott, well...as a protective mother, perhaps that was her prerogative.

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*Red. Lots of red. And quite a bit of gold too. It is a bit...jarring, I suppose. No wonder Draco makes fun of Gryffindor colours.*

Those were Harry's first thoughts as his eyelashes slowly fluttered open. He was lying in his bed in his room in Gryffindor tower, staring up at the canopy overhead.

*Still, I like Gryffindor colours. And Draco looks good in them. Mmmm, Draco...*

"Harry? Harry, are you awake?"

Harry blinked; he hadn't realized he'd made that hungry moaning sound aloud.

"Ron? Is that you?"

"Harry, you're up! Neville, can you go tell Hermione that Harry's awake?"

Harry groped around on his nightstand as Ron and Neville exchanged a few words. Finally finding his glasses, he slipped them on.

"HARRY!"

"YARGH!" Harry shouted as he jumped backwards, startled to find Ron only inches away.

"Oh, sorry," Ron said, blue eyes earnestly apologetic. "Didn't mean to scare you, mate. But we've all been a bit worried. You've been asleep for ages."

"How long?" Harry asked, stretching on the bed.

"About twenty-six hours straight," Ron answered. "How do you feel?"

Harry thought about it. "Normal," he finally answered. And he really did feel *normal* for the first time in two weeks - no energy potion forcing him awake, no exhaustion weighing him down. Just normal Harry, a little disoriented but perfectly awake.

"Oh good," Ron said, obviously relieved. "We figured you just needed some good sleep, but you can never be too sure that -"

"Harry? Oh, *Harry!*"

Hermione had burst through the door and all but thrown herself on the bed on top of Harry to hug him tightly.

"Are you alright, Harry?" she asked worriedly.

Harry smiled at her. "Yes, I'm fine," he said reassuringly.

"Thank goodness," Hermione said, releasing her hold on Harry's neck. "I can't believe you faced down Voldemort again!"

"It's not really that surprising. Harry has had to fight You-Know-Who just about every year he's been at Hogwarts," Ron pointed out.

"True," Hermione conceded. "Still, I thought for sure you'd kill him when you found out what he was planning to do to Draco."

Harry shook his head. "Nah. I somehow get the feeling that I'm supposed to kill Voldemort at the end of my seventh year. Killing him in my sixth year just seems a bit...odd, you know? Out of place or something."

Ron and Hermione nodded.

"Speaking of Draco, is he alright?" Harry asked anxiously. "And what about his parents?"

"They're all fine," Hermione answered. "Draco and Mr. Malfoy had to stay in the hospital wing last night but they are completely recovered. Madame Pomfrey let them leave this morning. Mr. and Mrs. Malfoy actually just left Hogwarts a couple hours ago."

"Oh? Where did they go?"

Ron and Hermione exchanged amused looks. "Paris. Something about a second honeymoon now that Malfoy senior is a veela."

Harry raised an eyebrow. "No kidding," he said dryly. "So where's Draco? Why isn't he here?"

"I think he's down in his room," Hermione said, reaching into her robe pocket. "He was here earlier checking on you. Once Madame Pomfrey assured him that you were fine, just sleeping, he disappeared. But he gave me this to give to you."

Feeling oddly foreboding, Harry accepted the folded piece of parchment from Hermione.

*Potter (the note read),*

*If you've gotten this note it means you are awake and unhurt. It also means that I am officially pissed at you. Come down to my room. We have to talk.*

*Draco*

Harry gulped. "Now what did I do?" he moaned.

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About thirty minutes later, a freshly showered and dressed Harry cautiously made his way down to Draco private dungeon room.

"Draco?" he called out, as he opened the dragon portrait and stepped into the room. "Draco love, are you there?"

There was no answer. The door to the bathroom was shut, however, and Harry could hear the shower running. He sat down on the edge of Draco's bed to wait.

It was only a few minutes more before the shower shut off, and then moments later Draco emerged from the bathroom. He was rubbing distractedly at his damp blonde hair with a towel, wearing only a pair of Harry's khakis that were a bit too big for him and hung very low on his hips.

Harry practically started to drool. "You are *so fucking hot*," Harry said, momentarily forgetting the note and the fact that Draco was mad. He stood up, eying Draco's bare chest predatorily but Draco whirled around to glare at him.

"You are not touching me," he said bluntly. "You father-snogging, Voice-abusing, over-protective human."

Harry's mouth dropped open in shock. "Draco!" he said, eyes wide. "Are you really still mad at me over all that?"

"Damn straight I am!" Draco growled. "You kissed my *father!*"

"And I *told* you I was sorry!" Harry said in frustration. "Look, I am *really* sorry about the bit with your father. He was just trying to wake me up, and I was under the veela spell and thought he was *you*. Not that it makes it right, but we weren't actually trying to get off with each other behind you and your Mum's backs."

"Whatever," Draco said dismissively, folding up his towel and draping it over the back of the armchair.

"*Draco*," Harry pleaded. "It wasn't like that, I promise. I never want to be with anyone but you ever. You know this."

Draco turned his head to glare hotly at him. "Do I? Seems like you've kissed an awful lot of people ever since we got together, Harry."

Harry winced. "I haven't kissed anyone," he said earnestly. "I've been kissed but I've stopped it every time."

"You hit on the Weasel once. Who knows what you would have done with him if I hadn't shown up."

"Draco!" Harry said again, throwing his hands in the air exasperatedly. "I was under the effects of a lust potion at the time - one I was taking for *you!*"

Draco regarded Harry for a moment. "You still shouldn't have snogged my dad."

"I. Couldn't. Help it!" Harry growled. "Veela powers are not something humans can resist - *you've* proved that to me on several occasions. And your father had to wake me up somehow."

"You do realize," Draco said, folding his arms over his bare chest, "that if you hadn't ordered me home in the first place my father wouldn't have had to wake you up at all because *I would have been there.*"

Harry raised an eyebrow. "Is that what you're most angry about? That I used the Voice on you?"

"Yes, damn it," Draco snapped, glaring at Harry. "You sent me home when you were in danger! Do you know how worried and panicked I was? How could you do that to me?"

"Because it's my job to protect you," Harry snapped back heatedly. "You're my boyfriend. Why would I let you remain in a situation where you're not safe?"

Draco ignored his question. "I *trusted* you Harry," he said darkly. "I trusted you with this enormous power over me and you *abused* it."

"What did you expect me to do?" Harry asked sharply. "Did you honestly expect me to let you go back into that Manor so Voldemort could turn you into a *sex slave*? In case you hadn't noticed, I sort of LOVE YOU and I WASN'T GOING TO LET THAT HAPPEN!"

"It WASN'T your decision TO MAKE!" Draco shouted, his fists clenched. "You don't get to TELL ME WHAT TO DO!"

"Damn it, Draco, if your LIFE IS IN DANGER then YES I DO! I don't want you HURT, OKAY?"

"But that is NOT YOUR CHOICE," Draco practically snarled. "You have this power over me to protect OTHER PEOPLE from me. I understand it when you won't let me hurt people on your behalf. I understand that I can be irrationally jealous and dangerous sometimes. I even understand that you might have to punish me once in awhile. But *NONE* of that means you get to CONTROL ME!"

Draco's face was flushed pink, and his eyes were glistening as he yelled at Harry. Harry, however, refused to back down, and he met Draco's glare with one of his own.

"I will do whatever I have to do to KEEP YOU SAFE," he growled. "And if that means controlling you sometimes, then THAT'S WHAT I WILL DO!"

"NO! YOU DON'T HAVE THAT RIGHT!"

"YES I DO! Because I'm your MATE and you're MY VEELA!"

"I may be your veela, but I am *NOT YOUR PET!*"

Harry froze. "What did you just say?" he whispered.

Draco glared hotly at him, unshed tears of pain and frustration making his eyes shine. "I said I'm not your pet, Harry," he said defiantly. "Pets are controlled. They learn commands and how to do their master's bidding. I'm not a pet."

"Draco -"

"No, *listen*. Just because you *can* control me doesn't mean you *should*. Unless someone else's life is really, truly in danger, you shouldn't interfere. You wouldn't be able to make a human boyfriend do whatever you want, and you *shouldn't* do it to me. And if you can't understand that..." Draco swallowed hard. "Then I don't want to be with you anymore."

Harry stared at Draco. "You...you'd break up with me over this?" he said hoarsely. "Can veela do that?"

"Not really," Draco admitted. He took a deep breath. "But I'd try. Because I don't want to be with someone who doesn't consider me an equal."

"Draco, how can you say this?" Harry whispered, his voice choked and thick. "You can't leave me; I'd die without you."

"I'd die without you too," Draco echoed. "But if you can't treat me with the same dignity and respect you'd give a human boyfriend, then I can't stay with you."

"But..." Harry took several steps backwards and sank down onto the bed. "But it's not like that at all," he said almost silently, dropping his head forward into his hands.

"What do you mean?" Draco asked, keeping his distance.

"I *do* consider you my equal," Harry said, staring at the floor. "I never meant to make you think otherwise. But I can't bear the thought of losing you. I have to protect you if I can, don't you understand?"

"Protect me the way you might protect a helpless kitten? Or your prized pet puppy?" Draco said coldly, hugging his own body uncomfortably.

"No," Harry said, looking up at him. "Protect you the way you protect me."

Draco stared at him. "What?"

Harry swallowed uncomfortably. "You protect me constantly," he said softly. "You won't let anyone near me, you watch what I eat, how I dress, if I'm happy...if you could have sent me away from Riddle Manor to keep me safe, wouldn't you have done it too?"

Something in Draco's chest twisted. "I suppose..." he admitted grudgingly. "But I'm a veela and you're my mate. I've got to protect you; it's my nature."

"Well, yes but..." Harry trailed off, staring out into space. He sighed.

"Look," he finally said, "when we first found out you were a veela, I was shocked at what that meant for me. I was worried about how important I would be to you. I wondered how our relationship could possibly work, with you a veela so dependent on a human mate who could both control you and leave you. It was a complete mystery to me.

"But time went on, and I began to fall in love with you. How could I not? You're beautiful, smart, witty...and so good to me. The way you love me, the way you protect me...I still wake up in bed next to you and wonder what I ever did to deserve you. You could have chosen anyone, and for some reason you chose me.

"In the beginning you would have done anything to keep me, and I could have left if I wanted. But now...now I'm the one who can't let you go," he confessed. He looked up at Draco, who was shocked to see Harry's eyes looking suspiciously watery. "You threatened to leave me just a moment ago, but I would never let you. You're mine now, just like I'm yours."

"*Harry*," Draco whispered, but Harry wasn't finished.

"And that's the answer to the mystery, Draco. The relationship works because the mate grows to need the veela just as much as the veela needs the mate. However things started between us, *I'm* the one who needs *you* now. And that's why I *have* to protect you, because I couldn't bear for anything to happen to you any more than you could bear it happening to me.

"I didn't use my Voice on you because I think you're not my equal," Harry said fervently, swallowing hard. "Or because I think you're some kind of pet. I used it because your life means more to me than anything else in this world. Do you understand?"

There was a moment of silence, and then Draco threw himself at Harry.

"Yes, yes I understand, you stupid, *stupid* Gryffindor," he answered, flinging his arms around Harry's neck and pressing his face against Harry's hair.

And then Harry's arms wrapped around him, just underneath his own arms, and they held each other, clutching each other as tightly as they could manage.

Then Draco pulled back and Harry tilted his head and suddenly they were kissing feverishly, their lips and tongues saying all the words of understanding and apology their voices couldn't.

Moving as one the boys drifted towards the bed until they fell on it, rolling each other around on top of the fluffy covers.

"So you've gotten all protective of your veela, is that it?" Draco asked, as Harry flipped him onto his back on the bed. "You should have been clear from the beginning that's why you used your bloody Voice on me. I might not have gotten so mad then."

He paused. "*Might*," he stressed.

"I'm so sorry," Harry replied, tucking his face into Draco's neck. "I really can't help it," he continued, voice slightly muffled. "I know you can take care of yourself but I want to take care of you. I *want* to protect you and keep you safe."

"And let me guess. That's why you call *me*, a full-grown and quite dangerous magical creature, *baby*? These uncontrollable urges to shelter and protect?"

"Guilty as charged," Harry confirmed, relaxing as he snuggled into Draco.

Draco took the opportunity to push the unresisting Harry onto his back. "I suppose if I think of it as you wanting to protect me as much as I want to protect you, I can understand," Draco conceded, as he crawled over Harry to lie fully on top of him. "Still, I think I ought to come up with an equally humiliating pet name for you."

"You wouldn't," Harry said, staring up at Draco in horror.

"I *would*," Draco contradicted, leering at Harry. "What do you think of *Angel*?"

"No," Harry said firmly. "Absolutely not."

"Kitten?"

"Oh *hell* no."

"Muffin? Sweetie? Snuggle-bear? I can come up with something good. I've got all night."

"No way. You are not going to come up with some horrid cheesy pet name for me," Harry said sternly.

"And why ever not, Harry?" Draco asked innocently.

"Because I'll...I'll...um..."

"Spank me?" the blonde suggested hopefully.

"I just might," Harry threatened playfully, rolling them over again and pressing Draco into the mattress. He began to kiss and nip at Draco's bare stomach, making the blonde squirm beneath him.

"Harry, that tickles!" Draco protested. "But don't stop," he added quickly.

Harry grinned against Draco's smooth skin, and bent his head to place a kiss on Draco's hip bone, exposed to Harry's eyes and mouth where the stolen trousers had slipped down.

"Even when you're mad at me you steal my clothes," Harry pointed out affectionately. "And they don't fit you. Look, these pants are almost falling off."

Draco scowled. "They fit me just fine, *thank you very much*. I told you, we're the same size."

Harry raised an eyebrow. "The same size? Are you sure?"

Draco's cheeks flushed the slightest bit pink. "Yes," he snapped defiantly. "Basically."

Harry tried to fight the smile tugging at the corners of his lips. "Whatever you say, baby," he cooed patronizingly. Ignoring Draco's glare, he nuzzled the blonde's stomach, just below the bellybutton, and then pressed a kiss to Draco's chest, right over his heart.

"Look," Harry said, suddenly turning very serious. He moved up Draco's body, placing his forearms on either side of Draco's head. "I was really worried today," he confessed, threading his fingers through Draco's hair. "Don't you ever scare me like that again, alright?"

"Right. I'll be sure to tell that to any potential veela-nappers. *Terribly sorry, can't go with you, it scares the mate*. That'll stop them," Draco said, rolling his eyes but arching his neck to bring his head more fully in delightful contact with Harry's fingers.

Harry noticed Draco's movements and obligingly began to stroke his head more fully. Draco closed his eyes and made a small, blissful sound of pleasure.



"I wasn't talking about the veela-napping," Harry finally said softly. "I meant you scared me when you tried to leave me. Please don't ever do that again."

"Oh," Draco said. He opened his eyes and looked up at Harry, biting his lip. "I won't. And I wouldn't have, you know. I wouldn't have really left. I don't think veela can actually do that."

"Good," Harry said, kissing him on the nose. "Because you're stuck with me forever, and I want to be stuck with you forever."

"Forever, eh?" Draco mused. "I suppose it won't be *too* horrible, what with my genetic disposition to adore you and all. And of course it'll be *lovely* for you, seeing as I'm so gorgeous and I've got these amazing powers. Really, you ought to be thanking me for the chance to worship the ground I walk on for the rest of our lives."

Harry laughed and kissed him on the nose again. "You're cheeky," he said, and then kissed his forehead and cheeks. "But I like it."

"You like everything about me," Draco said smugly, closing his eyes and letting Harry continue to pepper his face with kisses.

Harry smiled. "I do," he confirmed. "Don't know why, really. You're conniving, manipulative, bratty -"

"HEY! You take all that back!" Draco said threateningly. "Take it back or I'll smack you."

Harry shook his head. "Nope," he said, snatching up Draco's wrists and pinning them above the blonde's head. "And I'd like to see you try to smack me now, little veela," he baited.

Draco struggled for about five seconds only to find himself securely pinned by his larger boyfriend. "Fine then," he said impishly. "I'll just have to find another way to get you to take it back."

And then he turned his veela powers on.

Draco watched in immense satisfaction as Harry's eyes dilated and his death grip on Draco's wrists immediately loosened. Draco took advantage of Harry's loose grip to slip out from under the Gryffindor, moving a few feet away on the bed.

"Draco, come back. You're so hot," Harry pleaded, moving towards Draco and leaning forward for a kiss.

Draco jerked his head away. "No," he said teasingly, shaking his head. "No kisses until you take it back."

"I take it back," Harry said immediately. "Whatever it is I take it back."

"That's better," Draco cooed, smiling coyly at his starry-eyed mate. "And now how about a proper apology for all the mean things you said to me?" He licked his lips suggestively, just in case Harry might have missed his meaning.

"I'll show you a proper apology," Harry growled, and then pounced. Draco's happy laughter rang through the room as Harry playfully wrestled him onto his back. Just as Harry began to lean down to kiss him, Draco held up a hand.

"One last thing," Draco said mischievously, batting his eyelashes flirtatiously at his boyfriend. "If you want to kiss me, you have to promise to let me call you *Snuggle-bear*."

"You can call me anything you want," Harry promised gallantly, his eyes bright and adoring.

"Do you really mean that?" Draco asked, his angelic face betraying nothing to his dazed and love-struck mate.

"Of course I mean it," Harry replied obliviously, as he leaned down again. "I love you, baby."

"I love you too. *Snuggle-bear*."

And with a smile that was half mischievous and half completely smitten, Draco closed the distance between their lips and kissed Harry.

""THE END!""

*Dedication:* I would like to dedicate this story to all the wonderful people who liked this silly veela romance enough to track me down after I got kicked from ff.net, to email me and tell me not to quit, to hunt down my livejournal, to offer to and actually email me the chapters I had lost, and to shower me with support and encouragement. You guys are beyond awesome and this story is for you.

And special thanks to **pirate** for all her invaluable help!

Thanks for reading, everyone!