

Bad Magic

By Mystwriter

Suddenly, not one person at Hogwarts can perform any magic. All except Draco Malfoy. PG-13

Chapter 1--Loss

Draco Malfoy crossed his arms over his chest and watched Harry Potter move across the courtyard. For once, his cadre of Weasley and Granger weren't with him. It was a golden opportunity and he decided to take it. He sauntered forward and while Potter was checking on something in his bag, Draco stood right behind him.

"The Great Harry Potter," he sneered. Startled, Harry whipped his head around and glared at Draco. Draco gazed into those dark green eyes and the anger grew within him. "I didn't know you were capable of getting around without your precious Weaselbee and Miss Mudblood."

Harry narrowed his eyes. "I'm telling you for the last time: Stop calling her that."

"Or what? Empty threats, Potter."

"Why are you even bothering me, Malfoy? Surely you have a class in another direction. You go out of your way to get to me. What is it with you? We've been at this school seven years and you can't let it go." He pushed passed him, even jolting him in the shoulder. Draco snarled.

"Because this is my kingdom, Potter," he said, following. "And you and your Mudblood-loving comrades don't belong here."

"You're kingdom? Ha! That's a real laugh, Malfoy. Just when have you won at anything here?"

"My little family of Death Eaters will win soon, Potter, and you will be on the wrong side of it. Again."

"I wouldn't count on that, if I were you."

“Oh no? When the Dark Lord comes, it will all be over.”

Harry stopped and spun, facing Malfoy a few mere inches from his face. Draco was startled. He could almost feel the anger emanating from Harry's body. He could smell him. “What's wrong with you, Malfoy? Isn't there any compassion in you at all? All the people that will suffer. All the innocent deaths. Don't they mean anything at all to you? Don't you care?” He drew even closer. “And me?” he said quieter. “How can you really hate me so much that you honestly want to see me dead? What have I ever done to you? Even with all the terrible things that you've done to me and my friends, I don't wish you dead! I just wish you'd sod off!” He turned away, and stomped up the hill.

Draco watched him go, tight-lipped, red-faced. “It's what you haven't done,” he whispered once Harry had disappeared into the castle. Draco cringed. Even whispering it aloud made him uncomfortable, and he looked over his shoulder, but thankfully, no one was there. The first moment he saw Harry Potter back on the Hogwarts Express in their first year, he knew there was something special about the dark-haired boy. And when he extended his hand in friendship he had been crushed to be so publicly rebuked. No one did that to a Malfoy. It started the burning coals of hate within him and he found his pleasure in making Harry and his friends' lives intolerable. But it was only in the last two years that he realized it. There was another reason he hated Harry Potter with such vehemence.

He was in love with him.

How impossible was that? How dreadful and how impossible. Draco, you've dug that grave a long time ago. He knew Harry would never see him as anything but an archenemy, and so what better way to get on with it than to take on the role of villain wholeheartedly? He told himself if he played it to the hilt, his feelings for Harry would inevitably fade. But as they grew older, the feelings only grew stronger. At seventeen, the both of them had grown tall and lank, the same height. Harry dark, Draco light. Opposites in every sense. And yet... He knew the real reason he harassed Harry day after day, year after year. It was the only way to be close to him.

He hitched his book bag over his shoulder and sighed. A surge of sadness engulfed him, of loss, and then the familiar anger took over. “Sodding Potter!” he hissed. “I can't wait until the Dark Lord comes!” But even as he spit out this curse, he felt an ache in his heart and a wave of anxiety spread over every inch of him. There were always hints about Voldemort wanting Harry dead. What about that Tri-Wizard Tournament in their fourth year? Harry maintained that he saw the Dark Lord rise, and he had. And the Dark Lord had gone out of his way just to capture Harry. What was it between them? Was it because Voldemort hadn't been able to kill Harry when he was a baby? Maybe he couldn't kill him now? Draco did worry. He worried that Voldemort might kill Harry and he didn't think he could live if that happened.

So what was he supposed to do? He actually wanted to be a Death Eater, but not if it meant fighting Harry. Although it might even give Harry pleasure to kill Draco, and he smiled at the perversity of allowing Harry to kill him. But the smile faded. Harry had said that even after all these years, he didn't want to see Draco dead.

Harry was definitely an enigma. Why keep an enemy alive? Draco wouldn't.

He walked slowly to class, not really caring if he made it there or not. He glanced up to the towers and parapets of Hogwarts. Soon the term would be over and he'd likely never see Harry Potter again, and that deep ache, that terrible longing welled up in him. He stopped and leaned against the cool stone. It helped to chill the heat of his body, but not of his heart.

He looked up and saw Weasley and Longbottom at the bottom of the stairs and they were pointing at him. What the hell do they want?

All at once, a bright yellow light seared the sky, the walls, the floor, so bright it hurt, and all Malfoy could remember was falling.

* * *

Malfoy opened his eyes and sat up. He was lying on the stone floor and looked around. Other students in the hall were also on the ground. Something big had hit them all, apparently. Malfoy sat a moment, taking inventory. He seemed all right, felt all right. He picked himself up and watched as others got to their feet.

"What was that?" asked a Ravenclaw fifth-year girl.

"I don't know," said her companion. They looked at Draco but he only shrugged.

"We seem to be all right," said Draco. "I guess...we can go to class."

That was the consensus, and slowly, everyone continued where they had been going. Draco entered Transfigurations and took his seat behind Harry, but Weasley wasn't there. He gazed at the back of

Harry's head. His hair was longer now and covered the nape. Draco was sorry for it. It was his favorite view of Harry. He often daydreamed about kissing him there, nipping at him with his teeth. Yes, that was the spot. One of them.

Professor McGonagall stood before the class a little ruffled. "I trust everyone is all right?" She straightened her tall pointed hat. "The Headmaster is investigating the source of the event and will report back to the staff. There were only a few bruises...." She looked at Harry. "Please see me after class, Potter," she said quietly to him. She darted a glance at the empty place beside him and Harry looked worriedly back at her.

"Let us begin our lesson, then. If you will take out your wands, we will attempt to change fire to water. This is a very difficult lesson, but quite an important step in your Wizarding abilities. As seventh years, I believe you will be adequate to the task." She stepped to her table where a small crucible burned with red flames. She raised her wand over it and said, "Incendium ad aqua."

But nothing happened.

McGonagall looked startled. She frowned and waved her wand again. "Incendium ad aqua!" she said a little louder and more distinctly. But still nothing.

She turned to the class, and looked at each face before turning back to her table. She muttered a little incantation over some objects and waved her wand, but nothing happened. She spun and turned to Harry. "Potter, please perform a levitation spell. On this quill."

Draco was as puzzled as Harry. This was a first year incantation. Anyone could do it. Harry shrugged and complied.

He waved his wand over his quill. "Wingardium Leviosa," he said, but nothing happened.

McGonagall's face went white. "Class. Please try to do a spell. Any spell."

Everyone waved their wands, but no matter how they shouted their spells, no one could perform any magic.

Draco trembled. What was happening? Had they lost their powers? Had they become—he swallowed—Muggles? He clutched his wand and waved it at his quill. “Incendere!” and it immediately burst into flames.

The class froze and stared at him. McGonagall rushed to his desk. “Do it again, Mr. Malfoy!”

He waved his wand and levitated his school books and made them fly in a circle around the room.

Harry’s eyes were wide. Draco looked at him with a renewed sense of power.

McGonagall suddenly snatched him by the arm and dragged him out of the class. “Stay as you are, class. I will return.”

She pulled Draco down the corridor and soon other teachers appeared. All were hurrying to Dumbledore’s office, but Dumbledore was already heading down the stairs.

“Headmaster!” cried Snape, his face furious.

Dumbledore held up his hands. “Yes, yes. I know. We have all lost our powers. I am investigating now, but I cannot get the owls to send a message. They seem to have lost their abilities as well. Hogwarts is effectively cut off from the world and we have no powers to communicate...or protect ourselves.”

“But Professor,” said McGonagall. “Malfoy here does seem to have his magical powers!”

Dumbledore frowned and stepped closer to Draco. “Is that true?”

Draco stammered. “Y-yes, sir.”

The old wizard lowered his head and stared at Draco over the tops of his glasses. “Is there something you would like to tell me, Mr. Malfoy?”

The teachers slowly converged. They think he did it. He looked down and noticed McGonagall still had a grip of him. He shook her off. "I didn't do this!" But then he looked around at their concerned faces and their helplessness and he suddenly felt invigorated. "But if I had, I certainly wouldn't fix it."

McGonagall gasped and drew back. Snape grabbed his arm and stuck his face close to his. "Why you little--!"

Draco's wand was out and Snape jerked back. "Now, now, Professor. I wouldn't if I were you."

"There is no need for that, Mr. Malfoy," said Dumbledore quietly. "We need to talk. Perhaps your owl is the only one that is still functioning."

Draco crossed his arms over his chest. The possibilities whirled in his head. "Perhaps. But I don't know if I'm ready to find out yet."

"What!" cried Snape.

"Come, Mr. Malfoy," said Dumbledore. Draco gripped his wand and followed the Headmaster, keeping his eye on Snape the whole time.

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Chapter 2--Malfoy the Protector

Draco looked around the Headmaster's office. Fawkes the Phoenix glared at him with one beady eye in a peculiar and unfriendly way. The Sorting Hat sat on a high shelf and seemed to sneer down at him. The paintings of Headmasters long past looked out from their frames, trying their best to ignore him. A very busy and annoying room, thought Draco. He hated it.

Dumbledore took his time getting to his seat behind his desk and finally sat. He measured Draco in that uncomfortable way of his, as if he could see exactly what Draco was thinking. Maybe he could. Then he'd get an eyeful, wouldn't he?

He steepled his fingers and simply gazed at the Slytherin. Draco tried to find a comfortable spot on his seat. "Well, what?" cried Draco, unable to contain himself any longer. "Sir?" he remembered to add at the last minute.

"It's curious, is all, Mr. Malfoy, that you and you alone have retained your powers while the entire rest of the school has lost theirs. The fact that you are the son of a notorious Death Eater, the right hand of Lord Voldemort, is mere coincidence? Yes?"

"Yes. Mere coincidence. Though I don't expect you to believe me. Sir."

"I believe you if you say so, Mr. Malfoy. I am always willing to believe the best in my students."

And that's what makes you an old fool!

"True, I may be an old fool," he said with a shake of his head. Draco's eyes widened. "But I'd rather give the benefit of the doubt than make a student feel unworthy. And I do not believe you are unworthy, Mr. Malfoy. I think you are an achiever of great things. And there are many more great things in your future. The question is, how will you shape that future?"

Draco leaned back, not exactly at ease but not on alert anymore. "What do you mean, sir?"

Dumbledore slanted forward over his desk. "I know that there are many...forces...trying to influence you, Mr. Malfoy. But you must know, that the decision ultimately lies with you."

"Forces? I don't know what you are talking about."

“Really, Draco. Your father must have spoken of my abilities.” Then he smiled and chuckled. “Yes, I can just imagine in what way. Well, let me just say, that I understand you have pressures of family from your incarcerated father, your cousins, and from the Dark Lord himself.”

Draco blanched. He gripped the arms of his chair.

“I know, for instance, that your father and your aunt Bellatrix LaStrange would like to see you become a Death Eater. I know that these forces are strong and have influenced you for some time, but I hope that the decision will be made by you and your desires rather than a need to prove something. For this is a decision that will haunt you the rest of your life—for however long that may be.”

Draco frowned. Was that a threat? Or a prediction? Draco felt the sweat darkening his shirt.

Dumbledore toyed with a quill, spinning it in his fingers. “I need not tell you how vulnerable we are at the moment. The castle has magic of its own, protecting us. But that magic, too, appears to have been wiped clean. We are helpless now if Voldemort should discover it. This is very grave indeed, Mr. Malfoy. Should Voldemort discover us, I have no doubt that many if not all in this castle will die. And while I know you have no especial love for Harry Potter—” Dumbledore’s eye twinkled in a way that made Draco’s throat dry up. Could he possibly know? “—I do not think you would actually wish to see harm come to him. I do not think I am giving away any secrets when I tell you that Lord Voldemort has a special interest in seeing Mr. Potter dead. And so, Mr. Malfoy, I have a request of you. This request will be difficult, possibly the most difficult thing you may ever be required to do. It will stretch you as a young wizard and possibly influence the future outcome of your choices and career.”

Draco swallowed. “You’re not making this any easier, sir.”

Dumbledore chuckled. “Yes, I do get carried away sometimes. But it is true that it will be difficult in more ways than one. You see, since you are the only one with magical powers, we at Hogwarts need you to protect us.”

Draco heard the words but they didn’t quite absorb. “I’ll have to what, sir?”

“Protect us. And in particular, Harry Potter.”

“Potter?” Draco didn’t realize he had leapt to his feet.

“Yes. As I said, it will be difficult. You see, Harry is even more important than I. It is vital that he is protected. So much so, that my plan is to put the two of you together in a secret place within Hogwarts until the source of this problem is discovered.”

“Together with Potter?” It was a mad idea, and yet Draco’s heart pounded at the possibility.

“I’d put you two to work, of course, trying to figure out the cause of this event. Mr. Potter has a great deal of experience in these matters.” He leaned back in his great chair and folded his hands. “Can we count on you, Mr. Malfoy?”

Draco sat in stunned silence. There was no question that he enjoyed the fact that everyone was helpless but him. Quite the novelty. But he was equally intrigued by getting to spend so much time alone with Harry, possibly his only and last chance.

He feigned indifference. “No offense, Headmaster, but my being a Slytherin and all—”

“What do you get out of it?”

“Precisely.”

“The satisfaction of a job well done.” He looked at Draco’s expression and shrugged. “Well, I had to try. I don’t suppose you’d be impressed by saving the Wizarding world either?” He aimed an eye at Draco and shook his head. “How about the opportunity to do something truly unique? Who knows? You might very well achieve your heart’s desire in the process.”

There was that damned twinkle again. He hated that about Dumbledore.

“Something unique, eh?”

“Never been done,” said Dumbledore. “You’d be the first. And in so doing, your name and deeds will be added to Hogwarts, A History. That will be quite a legacy for you and for Slytherin, Mr. Malfoy.”

Draco felt a bit puffed in the chest. His name in the annals of history. Side by side with Salazar Slytherin. He liked the sound of that.

“All right. You’ve got a deal.”

“Excellent.” He rose. “I’ll get Mr. Potter and we will find a place to put you two.”

Draco smiled to himself. Interesting. Alone with Potter, and Draco was the only one with magic. Yes, this could prove very interesting indeed.

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Chapter 3--Hidden Suite

Dumbledore led Draco out of his rooms and they returned to the other teachers. He took the teachers aside and explained very quickly and quietly what he had in mind while Draco stood off to the side, thumbing his wand. Snape kept darting mistrustful glances back at him.

Professor Sprout left to get Harry and only then did Draco begin to get nervous. All very well and good to plan something detachedly in Dumbledore’s office, but another thing to actually do the thing. Draco was having second thoughts, except that it was far too late. He couldn’t back out now. He didn’t want to go down in the annals of Hogwart’s history as a coward.

A perplexed Harry arrived and stared at all the worried faces, and lastly landed his gaze on Draco. Dumbledore put his hand on Harry's shoulder and steered him toward the blond Slytherin. "Come along, you two. We make this journey alone."

They walked in silence away from the others and meandered down darkened corridors.

"Headmaster," said Harry in a small voice. "Where are we going? And why are we going with Malfoy?"

"Well, Harry," began the old wizard. "Draco has agreed to be your protector."

Harry stopped dead. His face folded into a grimace. "My protector?"

"Yes, Harry." Dumbledore turned to him. Draco fidgeted. "I no longer have my powers. Neither do any of the teachers. For all we know, the entire Wizarding world has lost their powers. All except Mr. Malfoy. He will now have to protect you from Voldemort."

Harry had a look on his face that seemed to say 'Are you insane?' But Harry was far too polite to utter such a thing to the Headmaster. Although Draco found that trait annoying in others, in Harry it was only endearing.

Dumbledore nodded his head and carefully urged Harry into tentative steps. They continued walking. "Mr. Malfoy saw reason, and has agreed to protect you. In order to assure that protection, you will both be hidden away in Hogwarts. Ah. Here is the place."

There was nothing special about this part of the corridor that Draco could see. The walls were the same as any other corridor, the high ceilings, the carpeted floor. No paintings. Only a large, moth-eaten tapestry sporting two unicorns. Dumbledore swept the tapestry aside and revealed a door. "The old ways are the best ways," he said, mostly to himself.

He opened the door and pushed inside. "Come along, boys."

Harry looked at Draco. "After you."

“Oh no, Potter. I’m protecting you, remember. You go in.”

Harry sneered and followed the Headmaster. Draco was on his heels.

The room was like a large suite, much like Draco’s room at home at the Malfoy manor. One extremely large four-poster bed, a large desk, a table, several comfortable chairs, and a fire place. Another door revealed a lavatory. One entire wall from floor to ceiling was lined with books of every kind of spell and charm. The room could be described as cozy. And then Draco looked over at the bed again. True, it was enormous, more like two large beds slapped together, but it was still only one bed. His breath quickened.

Harry shook his head. “I’m not staying in here with him.”

“I’m afraid you have no choice, Harry.”

“But—” He waved toward the bed.

“Surely it’s big enough for the two of you with plenty of space between. And I hope it will not be long. In the meantime, I suggest you two try to figure out what happened. These books should help.” He turned to go but stopped. “Oh, and since the house elves cannot perform their duties either, it will be up to you, Draco to supply food and drink. I trust you know those spells.”

He went to the door and motioned for Draco to follow. He took out three stones from a pocket in his robe. “Mr. Malfoy, if you will be so good as to enchant these stones, they will be our only communication with you. One stone is for the two of you. One for me and one for Miss Granger. I know she will be of great help to you.” Draco whirled his wand over the stones in the Headmaster’s palm and recited the incantation.

“Thank you,” said Dumbledore, and handed one stone to Draco and pocketed the other two. “I will have to teach you a spell to enchant this door. I want to make it disappear entirely. This is more than a locking spell. It also incorporates an obliviate spell. That way, even I won’t remember that it’s here.”

“Why do you want to do that, sir?”

He looked fondly at Draco. “Because should Voldemort invade the school—no matter what he did to me—I would not be able to reveal your whereabouts.” Draco stepped back, stunned. “Now listen carefully, Draco. I will give you the reverse as well. If you do not reverse it yourself, it may be quite some time before the Ministry can release you. If they can ever find you, that is. So do listen.”

Draco stared wide-eyed at the old wizard and listened carefully to his spells. He repeated them several times and when it met with Dumbledore’s approval, the old wizard grabbed the door knob and opened the door. “As soon as I am out the door, Mr. Malfoy, employ the charm.” He cast a gaze at Harry and then Draco. “Good luck,” and he shut the door behind him. Draco lifted his wand and recited the incantation. The door sparkled and winked out of existence. Draco stood back, slightly appalled.

He turned to Harry who had a disgusted look on his face. “If you had anything whatsoever to do with this, Malfoy, I swear I’ll make you regret it.”

Draco relaxed. Familiar territory. “Oh Potter. One would think you’d tire of so many empty threats after so many years. When have you ever hexed me? You’re too afraid, that’s why.”

He marched up to Draco, hands clenched into fists. “Malfoy—”

Draco brought up his wand. “What are you thinking, Potter? How does it feel to be so absolutely helpless? A new one for you, I bet.”

Harry trembled in fury for a moment and then visibly calmed. “Not so new, actually.” He turned away, walked to a chair, but didn’t sit.

Draco caught his words. “Oh yeah? When have you ever been helpless?”

“Are you kidding? All my life. The first eleven years of it, anyway.”

“What? The Boy Who Lived? The Famous Harry Potter?”

“Oh shove it, Malfoy. You have no idea what my life is like outside of Hogwarts.”

Draco looked thoughtfully about the room and strolled to the bookcase. "You could tell me. We've got a lot of time to kill."

"Like I would open up to you. What would be the point? I'm not a glutton for punishment."

"The point is, we're stuck here together for God knows how long and I'm already bored." He swiveled his head to look at Harry. "And just because you tell me about your poor little life doesn't mean that I'll believe any of it."

"So why bother telling you?"

"Suit yourself. I just thought you'd like to unburden yourself on an uninterested party. Isn't that what the Muggle shrinks tell you to do?"

"And what would you know about psychology?"

"Really, Potter. I'm insulted. I do read, you know. I have ambitions."

"To take over the world?"

Draco smiled. "That, too."

Harry sighed. He trailed his hand along the back of an overstuffed chair, circled it, and then sat. He pushed his long legs out in front of him and stared at the tips of his shoes. "I never asked for any of this, you know," he said quietly. "I never asked to be the 'Famous Harry Potter'. I didn't even know I was a wizard until I turned eleven."

"Strange the things you find out about yourself later in life," Draco said quietly.

"What did you say?"

“Nothing. You said you didn’t even know you were a wizard?”

“Yeah. Nothing about the Wizarding world. I didn’t know such things existed.”

“But surely you did accidental spells when you were younger.”

“I guess so, but my aunt and uncle always explained them away.”

“Who are these Muggles raising you, anyway? They obviously knew who you were.”

Harry scowled. Draco watched him intently, watched each brow draw down, how his lips frowned with displeasure, how his hands curled tightly over the arms of the chair. He wanted desperately to go to him, to clap him in his arms and tell him it was all right, but he stood frozen to the spot, almost afraid to breathe.

“They’re my mother’s family. And they hate me because I’m a wizard. They treat me like dirt and always have. I even lived—” He clamped his mouth shut.

“‘Even lived’ what?”

“Never mind. Doesn’t matter.”

“Come on, Potter. It was just getting interesting.”

He glanced away from Draco. “They...they had me live in the cupboard...under the stairs. Until I couldn’t fit in there anymore.”

Draco’s heart tore with compassion. Stupid Muggles. He’d like to kill them right now for making that miserable look on Harry’s face. But he had to hoot with a laugh instead to hide his feelings. “Oh Potter. I can just picture it.”

"I knew I shouldn't have told you," he muttered.

"Little Harry Potter. All his valued possession living with him along with the spiders under the stairs. What a sight!"

"All right! That's enough."

Draco cleared his throat and approached. "No, really. I'm sorry about that. You were being honest and I shouldn't have said anything."

Harry looked up, surprise on his face. "What did you say?"

"I said I was sorry." He sat on the arm of Harry's chair. He shivered at such close proximity but hid it by looking at his nails. "Sounds like rotten luck. It's a wonder you didn't turn out to be some psychopath."

"Like Voldemort," he muttered.

Draco left the chair to go to the desk. "I really wish you wouldn't say his name."

"Why not? If anyone has a right to it, it's me. He ruined my life and put all these other things in me."

"Things'? You're scaring me, Potter."

"You know. I can speak Parseltongue and...do other things."

Draco was examining objects on the desk when he stopped in mid-move. "What other things?"

"I really don't want to talk about it."

"Then why'd you bring it up?"

“Because you asked.”

“So you’ll do anything I ask? This will be interesting.”

Harry scowled deeper and studied Draco. “Don’t get any ideas.”

“What sort of ideas?”

“I don’t know. Slytherin ideas.”

“I always have Slytherin ideas. It comes with the package.”

“I was supposed to be in Slytherin, you know.”

Draco dropped the crystal globe he was holding and it banged loudly on the desk before it rolled away.

“What? You’re dreaming.”

Harry shook his head. “Seven years ago, the Sorting Hat wanted to put me in Slytherin. Said I’d do great things there.”

Draco hadn’t closed his mouth. Finally he asked, “Then what happened?”

“I...asked not to go there.”

“You asked? You just asked? Blimey, Potter. What an idiot.”

“I didn’t want to go to Slytherin. I had heard that only Dark Wizards went there. And I didn’t want to be a Dark Wizard.”

“Don’t knock it till you’ve tried it.”

“Have you?”

“Only the lifestyle. What do you think Malfoy Manor is made of? Snips and snails and puppy dog tails?”

Harry slumped, letting his arms drape over the sides of the chair. “I wouldn’t become a Dark Wizard, if I were you. It’s not going to last much longer.”

“How would you know?”

“I know.” He exhaled a long breath and jumped to his feet. “Let’s look at some of these books and see what they have to tell us.”

Harry took a book down from the shelf and looked at Draco out of the corner of his eye. Strange how compliant the Slytherin was being. He would have expected Draco to hex him the minute Dumbledore left. He wondered what was stopping him.

“This says it’s the Big Book of Big Spells,” said Harry. “I would say this situation qualifies. Shall we look it over?” Harry heaved the huge book to the desk and used two hands opening the large leather cover. Draco walked over and peered at the opening pages. “Here, Malfoy. Pull up a chair.”

Draco looked at him as if he were mad, but he complied quickly enough. Too quickly. Draco had a look in his eye that Harry hadn’t seen before. Or maybe he had. Mostly, he ignored Malfoy, but he seemed to notice everything he did now. How long and tapered his fingers were tracing the words on his side of the page, and even how his white-blond hair swept down over his eyes. Harry had the urge to push it back with his own fingers, but didn’t quite know why the thought occurred to him.

“What sort of spell do you suppose we are looking for?” asked Malfoy.

“I don’t know. Obviously something that eliminates power. But I’ve never heard of that kind of spell.”

“Well it’s dark magic, now isn’t it? Does this book have dark magic in it?”

Harry examined the cover and shrugged. “Dunno. It just says it’s a book of spells—”

Harry startled at Draco’s touch. His gaze snapped up toward the Slytherin’s steel gray eyes. Draco’s finger was tracing Harry’s scar and his face had drawn closer. Harry sucked in his breath.

“They say,” Malfoy said very quietly. Harry could feel his breath on his cheek. “They say that sometimes your scar hurts.”

“Yes,” he whispered. “When Voldemort is happy and when he’s angry. It hurts a lot.”

“Strange.” Malfoy’s finger hadn’t left Harry’s forehead, but now his eyes focused on Harry’s. “Why does he hate you so much?”

“I...don’t know. I guess I’m unfinished business. I’m a living example of his weaknesses and failures.”

“Weakness? Yes,” he said vaguely. Draco didn’t move away, and in fact, if Harry didn’t know better, he would say he was moving closer. His lips hung open slightly and Harry’s were parted to match them. If Malfoy moved any closer, Harry speculated, Malfoy would actually be kissing him. Harry wondered about it, and he wondered why the thought of it wasn’t as repulsive as it should be.

Harry trembled as Malfoy neared. What if Malfoy did kiss him? Would he kiss him back?

Why was that thought even occurring to him?

“Harry! Malfoy!”

The spell broke between them and they stared at the stone on the table which seemed to be talking to them with Hermione's voice.

"Harry? Malfoy? Are you there?"

Harry reacted first. "Um...Hermione? Yeah, I'm here. Where else would I be?"

"I'm just checking to see how everything's going. Malfoy's treating you all right, isn't he?"

Harry flicked a glance at Malfoy and thought about his recent musings. "Yeah...er...he's treating me fine. Have you found out anything?"

"No, not yet. But it's pretty clear it's dark magic."

"Yeah, we were just discussing that."

"But I'm a little worried about Ron and Neville."

"What about them?"

"Didn't McGonagall tell you?"

Harry suddenly remembered Transfigurations and how McGonagall had planned to talk to him after class. They'd never gotten the chance. Harry felt a wash of anxiety flush his chest. "What happened? Is he—are they all right?"

"They're both in the hospital wing unconscious. They went down when everyone else did but unlike everyone else, they haven't woken up. I'm worried. Madam Pomfrey has been scouring the library for Muggle remedies because she can't use magic or potions."

"I saw Weasel and Longbottom before the spell," said Draco.

There was a pause. “You did?” said Hermione. “Exactly what can you tell us, Malfoy?”

“Nothing much. I happened to notice them on the stairs and they were looking in my direction and pointing.”

“At what?”

“How should I know? I was just minding my own business.”

The stone—or rather, Hermione tsked. “Well, if you recall anything, do let me know. I guess I’ll go now and you two can get back to whatever it is you were doing.”

Malfoy nudged the stone, but it had stopped talking. “Annoying, isn’t it? Her voice, I mean.”

But Harry was thinking. “Too bad we don’t have a Pensieve. Then we can see exactly what was going on.”

“What the hell’s a Pensieve?”

“It’s a way to have a look at particular thoughts. But wait a minute.” He turned to look at Malfoy. “Can you perform Legilemens?”

“What? That’s pretty nasty dark magic, Potter.”

“That’s why I thought you’d know it.”

Malfoy smiled. “Now that’s not very nice.”

“I can do it—except that I can’t. Not at the moment.”

“You can do that? You really are spooky, Potter.”

“But if you know how, Malfoy, you can perform it on the both of us and I can see into your memory and see what happened.”

Draco’s eyes darkened. “You’re not looking into my thoughts.”

“I know it can be pretty intrusive, but you don’t want to stay in here forever waiting for the Dark Lord to swoop down on me, do you?”

“As long as he just swoops down on you.”

Harry scowled. “Some protector.”

Draco whipped out his wand and Harry felt himself lift suddenly from his chair and slam against the wall. He couldn’t move.

“Malfoy! Take this hex off me immediately!”

Malfoy strutted around the table, twirling his wand, and sauntered slowly toward the helpless Harry plastered against the wall. “I don’t think you’ve got much to say about it at the moment.”

Harry struggled, but it was as if his arms and legs were glued firmly to the stone. He couldn’t move his head much from side to side either, and when Malfoy strode right up to him, standing no more than a few inches away, he started to panic. “What’s the idea, Malfoy?” he said, trying to keep his voice steady.

“The idea? Well it’s just occurred to me. I can really do anything I want to you and then Obliviate your memory. Pretty neat, huh?”

Harry’s eyes widened. “What do you mean?”

“Well....” Malfoy pocketed his wand and turned his face this way and that to study Harry’s. Harry was breathing heavily. Some of it was fear, but some of it was also from Malfoy’s nearness. He didn’t like Malfoy so close to him, but at the same time the sensations of it intrigued him. What exactly was it besides fear fighting for equality in his senses? It had the feel of excitement, but where was that coming from? He was never excited about sparring with Malfoy before. But he was never this close to the Slytherin before either, never this physically close. He felt Malfoy’s body heat, felt his undeniable presence, as if he were a smoldering brand. Any moment he might get burned.

“I mean, Potter, you’ve been driving me crazy. For years now.”

“If you hurt me, Malfoy, I swear, when I get my powers back—”

“I won’t hurt you. Unless you want me to.”

“What is that supposed to mean?”

“This.”

It was the last thing Harry expected. And his shock was so great that he didn’t react right away. But Malfoy took another step and pressed himself right up against Harry and dipped his head, dropping his lips on Harry’s mouth. Malfoy’s lips were soft and moist and he rubbed them gently on Harry’s for a few moments while Harry tried to get some sense out of the situation.

Malfoy was kissing him?

But then Malfoy’s hands touched his chest, and with sensuous smoothness, eased their way up until reaching Harry’s collarbones. Those long fingers touched his neck and then surrounded it pulling his head into a deeper kiss. Malfoy’s tongue parted Harry’s lips and probed into his mouth, making a slow circuit there. Finally aware of what was happening, Harry tried to struggle away, but the hex made it impossible. And the kiss—so sensual, so intimate—began to gather new feelings within him. His heart quickened, and he couldn’t seem to stop from opening his mouth wider to receive Malfoy.

He surprised himself when he kissed Malfoy back, chewing on his willing mouth, feeling Malfoy's fingers pressed harshly to the back of his head and tangling in his hair. All at once, he wanted so badly to touch Malfoy's hair. He wanted to see if it was as silky as he imagined it (just when did he imagine it silky?), and he wanted desperately to touch him, not just in the soft way Malfoy touched him now, but he wanted to grab him, run his hands over him, just to see if he were really real, that this moment was real.

Still pressed to the wall, Harry didn't know how his body could feel so limp when Malfoy's lips drew away from his. But there was one part of him not limp at all. And he was especially shocked at that.

Malfoy's smile was positively evil. "So. I won't have to Oblivate you after all, it seems. Oh Potter. Who knew?"

He took out his wand and unhexed him. Released, Harry stumbled and fell back against the wall for support. Speechless, he merely gazed at Malfoy who began to unbutton his shirt. He recovered and managed to gasp, "What are you doing?"

"What does it look like I'm doing?"

"You're not...taking your clothes off, are you?"

He merely smirked and continued to disrobe.

"I don't know what you think you are doing, Malfoy," Harry stammered on, "but I think we need to concentrate on this spell and how to reverse it, y-you know. I...I really think we should."

"Yes, we probably should," said Malfoy, peeling his shirt off. His torso was as pale as his face. He was lean but sculpted, and the beginnings of a few blond chest hairs curled between his pecs. "But what do you want to do?"

Harry shook his head. He was beyond words at the moment. His eyes couldn't help but look at Malfoy's naked torso.

“I didn’t know you were a poof, Harry. You see, I’ve wanted you for a long time. But we’ve been archenemies for longer. It’s hard to walk up to your enemy and ask if he wants—well, you know.”

“I...I never said I wanted you, Malfoy.” But even Harry didn’t believe the insincerity of his breathless words.

“Just now, you were doing a pretty good imitation of someone who did.”

“I don’t know about any of this. I thought I liked girls.”

“Girls have their place, of course. Look at Granger. She’ll figure this out long before we ever could. But for sex, I prefer men. I’ve preferred you, but like I said, I didn’t know.”

“Neither did I!” Harry’s panic returned. This was not something he wanted to know about himself.

Malfoy paused, and gazed at Harry before he slowly approached and enclosed him in his arms. Harry stiffened, not knowing how to react. “Hey, Harry. It’s okay. You’re not the first man to find out. You won’t be the last.” He lifted Harry’s chin with a finger and Harry looked into Malfoy’s gray eyes. His eyelashes were long and swept up in a curve. They seemed suddenly beautiful to him. Malfoy’s lips kissed him again, gently, tenderly. “We’ll start out slow, Potter. We won’t do anything you don’t want to do—at first.” That smile was back, the smile he stole from the devil himself.

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Chapter 4—Solutions

Harry stared at the ceiling. The bedsheets were tangled around his legs but he didn’t feel like moving. He was sated, sore, embarrassed, and pretty confused. He turned his head on the pillow and gazed at the sleeping Malfoy. That blond hair—as silky as Harry imagined—lay across his closed eyes. His lips were parted and he snored occasionally. That white bare chest rose and fell. He looked at Malfoy’s lips again.

How that man could use those lips! Harry trembled again at the thoughts and memories flooding him. How long had they been in this bed? Hours? He had no idea what time it was. A pang of guilt accosted him. While he and Malfoy had their romp, all of Hogwarts was still in the throes of the spell. He wondered if he should contact Hermione to find out if there had been any developments.

But then he looked at Draco. Yes, Draco. He thought of him as Draco now. That's what he whispered to him in his ear, that's what he shouted at the top of his lungs. Draco. But Draco would only call him Harry a few times. It was still "Oh Potter!" even when he came. Harry shrugged against the sheets. Did it matter so much? The only thing that mattered was what wasn't said, and he hoped Draco might say it. Harry whispered it to Draco's neck while he was running his tongue along that white throat; said it soft and gasping, because he felt it suddenly so deeply. He hadn't known the depth of his emotions until Draco unwrapped him, as if everything he'd ever felt had been tightly crushed into a hard ball only waiting for release.

But Draco hadn't said it. Maybe he never would.

As Harry watched, Draco opened his eyes, searched, and found Harry. He drawled a smile. "Potter," he purred, and threw his arm around Harry.

"Look, Draco, we've...we've got to stop fooling around and get back to business."

"My thoughts exactly," he said lazily, and licked Harry's side from his rib cage to his arm pit.

Harry shivered and mustered the strength to pull away. "I don't mean that. I mean this other. The spell."

Draco lay back and huffed. "Oh. That. You sure you want to leave this little haven so soon?"

"Malfoy, it isn't fair to everyone else. They're in danger every moment. And so vulnerable."

"Vulnerable," he muttered and slid his glance to Harry.

Harry jumped out of bed, dragging the sheets with him. It left Malfoy naked. His body lay in lazy relaxation but he was semi-aroused. Harry turned from the irresistible sight and pulled on his trousers, shucking the sheets. "We've got to get going. Now, Malfoy!"

"Spoil sport." Malfoy sat up, grabbed his wand, and magicked his clothes back on.

Harry stared at him. "Wow. That was impressive."

Malfoy smiled lazily. "Didn't you say that a few hours ago?"

Harry felt himself blush, and moved toward the neutrality of the table. "Look, we've got to figure this out. Can you remember anything else that happened right before we all blacked out?"

Malfoy meandered toward the table and moved around it. He moved toward Harry as Harry took a step back and hit the wall. "No," said Draco softly, his hand reaching out for Harry's shoulder. His fingers curled over the bone and he dragged himself up against the Gryffindor. He leaned in, his face close, lips even closer. Harry felt his hot breath on his mouth and longed suddenly to lean further and kiss those teasing lips. Draco smiled slightly and completed what Harry could not manage to do. His lips tested Harry's mouth, danced lightly over them. They touched firmly for a moment before Draco drew back. Harry was conscious only of grey eyes, a smirk, and the rapid thump of his own heart. "I just remember Weasley and Longbottom," said Draco softly, paying little attention to what he was saying while dragging his finger down Harry's cheek.

"They...they were pointing...you said," said Harry vaguely, trying to hold on to his thoughts. "D-did they say anything?"

Draco rolled his eyes and sat, resting his arms on the table. "Okay. Come to think of it, they did. Um...what was it? Something about impotens..." Malfoy snapped to his feet, eyes wide. "Wait a minute! Those bastards! They were trying to hex me! I'll kill them!"

Harry pushed him back down. "Is that what they were doing? Yes, it makes sense. They were probably trying to take away your powers and it somehow backfired."

"I'll kill them!"

“That was dark magic and the two of them aren’t familiar with dark magic. Ron and Neville. It’s amazing they didn’t kill themselves.”

“Good. Because I want to kill them.”

“It was pretty clever, really. If I had thought of it, I might be tempted to do the same to you.” Draco looked up at him appalled. “That was before, of course. I wouldn’t do it now. And anyway, I really wouldn’t have done it at all. Dark magic is never good to mess with. And it would be pretty cruel to take a wizard’s power away.”

Draco stared at Harry. A thought seemed to have occurred to him for the first time. “What...what does it feel like?”

Harry sighed. “A little like the Imperious Curse, only without the good sensations. Very...helpless and empty.” He rubbed his arm. “I don’t like the feeling.” His eyes met Draco’s. “It’s a little like I feel with you.”

“Helpless and empty?”

“Not empty,” and he blushed, knowing how that must have sounded. “But certainly helpless.”

“Because I have magic and you don’t?”

Harry lowered his eyes. “I wasn’t thinking about that.”

Draco said nothing and Harry eventually lifted his face. Draco was looking at him in a concentrated and not exactly pleasant way. “I can’t help it if you’re in love with me,” he said.

Harry turned away to hide the burning of his face. He shrugged. “It’s all really new right now. I guess I can’t expect you to feel the same. You’re a person of lusts, and I’m a person of emotions. That’s how it is.”

“Is that how it is?” he said harshly.

But then the stone talked again.

“Guys! Are you there!”

“Where else would we bloody well be, Granger!” yelled Draco.

“Hermione,” said Harry leaning over the stone, and feeling slightly foolish for doing so. “I think we’ve discovered what happened. We think Ron and Neville were trying to take away Draco’s power and it backfired somehow.”

“Draco?” she said after a pause.

“Malfoy,” he corrected sheepishly. Malfoy smirked at him, a triumphant twinkle in his eye.

“That makes sense,” said Hermione. “Where did they get a spell for Dark Magic? I bet they snuck into the restricted area of the library. I’ll go look for a counterspell and then Malfoy will have to perform it. That will probably bring those two around. I hope they don’t get expelled for this.”

“I hope they bloody well do!” Malfoy yelled at the stone. “Don’t think I’m going to forget this!”

“All right, Malfoy. I get it. I’ll go to the library now and get back to you. You two sit tight.”

Harry looked at Malfoy and the Slytherin looked back, his eyes crinkling. “She wants us to sit tight, Potter. We haven’t tried it sitting.”

Harry had restrained Malfoy. He didn't think it a good idea to engage in...well, what they had done earlier while waiting for Hermione. It seemed too exposed, too deviant. Draco only laughed, of course, saying that's what added a thrill.

Harry sat in a chair on the opposite side of the room. He was afraid that if he sat too close to him, he would succumb too easily to the suave Malfoy. Draco had conjured some food and he was ravenously stuffing his face. Harry didn't want food. He just wanted his powers back. And he wondered what would happen to him and Malfoy once they got out of here. He decided to ask.

"Draco."

Malfoy looked up. The use of his first name softened the hardness of his eyes.

"What's going to happen...once we leave this room? To us?"

"What do you mean, Potter?"

"You know what I mean. Are you...are we..." He sighed. "Is this just a one time thing, or what?"

"What do you want it to be?"

"You bloody well know what I want it to be!"

"Do I? Really, Potter. You're being quite the woman about it. So you've come out at last and like it. So enjoy it."

"But I want to enjoy it with you."

Draco rolled his eyes.

"You said you wanted me."

“Yeah, Potter. Wanted. Now I got. Had. And now you want to propose or something. Get a grip.”

Harry slammed himself back in his chair. “Fine. Once a Malfoy always a Malfoy. I thought you’d changed. Now I don’t care.”

“Fine,” he said blithely.

Harry sat in stony silence until Draco approached. “You really should eat something, Potter. Food, I mean,” he added with a wicked smile. “It’s been a while.”

“No thanks.”

“Oh don’t be such a baby. Just eat something. You don’t know how long we’ll be stuck in here.”

“I don’t want anything!”

“All right. But don’t come crying to me later that you want something conjured. I may not be in the mood.”

“Hello?”

This time Dumbledore’s voice came from the stone.

Harry and Draco gathered around it. “Yes, Professor,” said Harry.

“We believe you have come up with the right solution. A book of dark magic was found under Mr. Weasley’s bed.”

“Sir,” said Harry desperately, “you won’t expel him, will you? It’s his last year, and Malfoy has been so cruel to him over the years.” Draco frowned. “I know it’s not much of an excuse, Professor—”

“This is a serious matter, Mr. Potter. I doubt that I can simply let it go with a little detention. And there is the matter of the grievance Mr. Malfoy will no doubt submit to the Board of Governors.”

“Draco won’t do that, sir. Will you?”

Draco stared at Harry as if he’d lost his mind. Harry mouthed “Please!” Draco shook his head. Harry didn’t realize he was doing it, but he touched Draco’s hand and something electric passed between them. Draco grabbed Harry’s hand and held it, looking into his eyes.

“Boys? Are you there?”

Harry pleaded with his eyes and Draco swore under his breath. He inhaled and said, “Headmaster...I...I don’t think I will prefer any charges.”

“Really? It sounds like you and Mr. Potter must have come to an understanding.”

He looked at Harry and his expression changed, softened. “Yes,” he said quietly. “I suppose we have.” He was still holding Harry’s hand.

“I need to teach you the counterspell, Mr. Malfoy. You can perform it from where you are.” Dumbledore said the words, Draco repeated, and then the old wizard instructed him

to take out his wand. “Wave it toward the hospital wing, Mr. Malfoy, east of you. Use a spell to charm your wand so you know exactly where east is. Have you done so?”

Malfoy did it and faced the bed. “Yes, Professor. I have the direction.”

“Now. Say the spell and wave your wand over your head three times. No more than that. That should do it.”

Draco looked at Harry. There was suddenly something exposed and vulnerable in his eyes Harry hadn't seen before. Perhaps he was unsure of his abilities, and then he said, "I wish you were the one doing this."

Harry gave him an encouraging smile. "You can do it, Malfoy. I know you can."

"Yeah. But then you'll have your powers back."

"Is that what this is about? You're afraid I'll hex you for what you did to me."

"What I did to you?"

"Okay. What we did to each other."

"No. It's just...." His lip trembled. "This was the first time I ever felt stronger than you."

Harry was taken aback. How could that be? Draco was always superior, strutting around Hogwarts like owned it, and people got out of his way. Never had Harry met anyone more sure of himself. Except that it had all been a lie.

"Are you afraid to be less? Because you're not less than me. I thought we were equals."

"Are you kidding? You're a far more powerful wizard than I could ever be, Harry. You...scare me sometimes. You think I never approached you before because I wasn't certain you were gay? I was fairly certain you might be. But I didn't, because you were stronger than I am. And it scares me."

Harry took a step toward him. "Even after today?"

"Especially after today. You had no powers."

"Even if I had, I don't have any with you around."

Draco stared quizzically.

Harry blushed. "Don't you get it? When I told you...told you I loved you, I surrendered to you. Do you think I'm capable of hurting you? Ever?"

Draco looked dumbfounded. Harry supposed the Slytherin wasn't used to compromise, or love, for that matter. He only knew conquest. Did he know he'd have to surrender to Harry, too?

"Gentlemen," said the voice of Dumbledore. Harry looked at Draco meaningfully and they both blushed. "I...ah...have been waiting for the spell, Mr. Malfoy. Can you discuss your...situation...at a later time?"

"Of course, Professor," mumbled Malfoy. He raised his wand and said the incantation loudly and waved his wand three times. Immediately, a bright yellow light emitted from every wall, ceiling and floor. They were bathed in it, but unlike the last time, no one passed out.

"Was that it?" said Harry.

"Try a spell," said Draco.

Harry took out his wand and aimed it at the stone. "Wingardium Leviosa!" The stone slowly rose and hovered before Harry's bright eyes. He breathed a sigh of relief.

"Mr. Weasley and Mr. Longbottom have awakened," said Dumbledore, a smile in his voice. "And all our powers have been restored. Thank you, gentlemen. You can leave the room at any time now. Any time you feel it the right time, that is."

Malfoy disenchanted the stone. "Don't want to be eavesdropped on again," he muttered.

"And so," said Harry. He felt a little odd now. "Shall we...go?"

Draco stood as he was, staring at the floor. "You know, Potter. It has occurred to me that I never said something I should have."

Harry drew closer to him. He felt his breath quicken and he felt the need to reach out and touch Draco, though he restrained himself from doing so. "What?"

Draco finally looked up. His face had dropped the façade of indifference and smugness. He finally looked just like anyone else. Anyone who had something heartfelt to say. "I just wanted to say...Potter... I wanted to say..."

Harry breached the gap between them and planted his mouth firmly on Draco's. His hands flowed around Draco's waist and Draco's hands followed the curve of Harry's back. The kiss was fierce, and they both moaned into each other's mouths, taking from one another and offering freely.

That was enough for Harry.

The End