Mockingbird

by Acherona, trulywicked

Summary

Life post-war was supposed to be good, simple and calm. New house, new life…in more ways than one. Harry had never expected to end up a knocked up teen cliché. Why can’t anything ever go his way? Support though, can come from the most unexpected source.

Notes

Another new fic from us. This was actually written years ago but I’m only now cleaning it up and beginning to post it. This work includes m-preg so if that is not your cup of tea, please it the back button quickly. Otherwise, please enjoy.
Disclaimer: Neither Acherona nor trulywicked have any claim on Harry Potter or any characters or locations thereof.

Warnings: Angst, lots of it, Male Pregnancy, mental torture, infant in peril, boys in love, friendships broken and new friends gained. Disregards canon in so many ways.

Chapter One

Blue eyes blinked open blearily as sunlight prodded their owner awake and his head pounded like someone had taken a hammer to it. Dear Merlin why was it that getting Harry drunk meant he'd had to get drunk as well and wake up with a hangover. He looked over at the sleeping brunette curled against him and smirked. It was worth the hangover; he'd be collecting a pot of galleons for having won the bet not to mention Harry wasn't half-bad a lay. He shifted and shoved Harry off the bed maliciously so he could have his sheets to himself.

Harry awoke when his hip was introduced to the floor painfully. His head throbbed, his arse throbbed and it felt like something had crawled into his mouth and died. He only remembered flashes of the night before but he did remember that he hadn't gone to bed alone. He rose so that he could look at his bed partner. "Oi, keep those long limbs under control. You pushed me out of bed."

Harry's voice was scratchy and it felt a bit awkward even talking to Ron now after what they had done.

"That was the point." Ron gave the brunette an irritable look, "You don't belong here anymore Potter. Go back down to the dungeons with the rest of the snakes." It stuck in Ron's craw badly that, when they'd all been resorted for this repeat of seventh year, Harry had been put into Slytherin. Here was someone he'd considered a friend for nearly eight years and all the time he'd been a snake in disguise. An Ice Prince of one too since he constantly turned down people asking for dates or even just a one-off. They were eighteen, weren't they suppose to be nothing but hormones and sex drive?

Green eyes widened in confusion. Harry couldn't really take in what Ron, what his best friend was telling him. "What are you on about? You're still not on about the House thing are you?" He knew Ron had been upset when he was resorted into Slytherin even though he couldn't understand it. After the war and everything that had happened, House belonging and rivalry seemed so petty and unimportant. People were people and Harry was tired of being categorized. "What are you saying Ron?" A lump that had nothing to do with his hangover started to form in his stomach.
"What I have to spell it out for you?" The redhead didn't bother to ever lift up to address Harry. "You're not one of us anymore. The only reason I got you drunk and fucked you is because Dean and Seamus started a betting pool on who could get the 'Savior' in their bed. I fucked you so I won and there's no reason for you to stick around." He rolled over and presented Harry with his back, "You know where the door is."

Harry's throat closed up and it felt as if he'd been kicked in the gut. This was Ron Weasley, his best friend in the world saying these things. A bet...Seamus and Dean...People he'd lived with for six years and known for almost eight. How could they do this? Harry was still Harry, he hadn't changed, he still considered himself their friend. It hurt. Feeling very naked Harry quickly gathered his clothes, jumping into his trousers without bothering with underwear or socks, he just wanted to get out of there as quickly as possible. Harry waited by the door for a moment, hoping that Ron would turn around and tell him that it was only a bad joke, that they were still best friends and that last night never had happened. Ron didn't move though and Harry got out of the room as quickly as he could without tripping over his own feet. Luckily it was still very early and he hoped to make it back to his room where he could lick his wounds in private without anyone witnessing his walk of shame.

Draco Malfoy was having a good morning; well he was having a good school year so far actually. His father had somehow managed to come out of the debacle of being branded a Death Eater smelling like a rose so Draco's own status was restored in society, he was studying under his godfather with the promise of an apprenticeship, and with the Dark Lord's demise all the 'new' marks had faded so he was no longer branded. The only fly in his personal ointment was, as always, Harry Potter. When all the eighteen year old students returned to complete their seventh year after the missed year there had been a re-sorting and though most were returned to their original houses some had been put into another. Potter had been shuffled into Slytherin which meant Draco couldn't make Potter's life difficult anymore, though verbal potshots weren't disallowed thank mercies.

That was just a minor annoyance though as Potter seemed more than happy to avoid all of Slytherin house. He did his work in the common room next to the huge window that turned Black Lake into Slytherin's personal aquarium, ate his meals at the far end of the table, spent most of his time in the library, and slept with the bed curtains spelled closed and impervious. So Draco really didn't have to deal with the bloody Boy-Who-Lived as a rule.

Right now though he was returning from a night of gathering potion ingredients with his godfather and was looking forward to sleeping for half of the Sunday. He rounded a corner and stopped short, a pale brow rising as he spotted Potter rounding the opposite corner. "Well this is a surprise. Out for a night time stroll Potter?"

Of course. Of course luck couldn't smile on him even once and let him get back to his room and his bed without anyone seeing him. And of course it had to be Malfoy of all people. Harry knew how he looked with his hair in even more disarray than usual, his shirt barely buttoned and with his socks
and shoes in his hands. "I could ask you the same Malfoy." Harry didn't meet the blonds' eyes. He just wanted to get away from him, get to bed, pull the blankets over his head and sleep the day away so he wouldn't have to think about what had happened.

Well that was odd. Potter was not the type to avoid his gaze during verbal sparring, quite the contrary. The bottle green eyes usually glared with the force of a killing curse. "Oh nothing quite so interesting as you apparently got up to. Your hair is even more of a disgrace than usual and your clothes," his disdainful sniff was eloquent, "So who was the lucky girl that got into the wizarding world's intrepid hero's pants?"

He couldn't do this, Harry's stomach churned and he was about to be sick. "Not now Malfoy...Just not now." He pushed his way past the smirking blond and rushed towards the bathroom before he made even a bigger fool of himself and threw up on Malfoy's patented leather shoes.

Both Draco's eyebrows rose up and he watched Harry flee. Now that was interesting and very out of character. He pursed his lips as he recognized the peculiar gait to Potter's near run. It was almost a limp and a limp coupled with the rumpled appearance meant that Potter had been with another man and had been the one on the bottom. From the brunette's reaction he didn't think the morning after had gone well and he found himself curious. What could get Harry Potter to act so beaten when the Dark Lord himself hadn't been able to cow him?

He'd have to watch Potter more closely and see if he could figure anything out.

OoOoOoOoO

"I can't believe you really pulled it off." Dean glanced over at the Slytherin table where Harry sat on his own eating breakfast quietly. "Congratulations mate; you really have balls of brass." He leaned over to shake Ron's hand. "I'm never fond of parting with money but in this instance it's really worth it...So tell us, how was the savior of the wizarding world in the sack?"

Ron grinned, gripping Dean's hand. "He's not half bad but I've had better."

A few seats down the table Neville twitched in disgust. He'd love to knock Ron's smirk right off his freckled face and remind Ron about everything Harry had done for him but he couldn't risk the others defending the bastard. He had to live with them for the next several months and he didn't need to be put into the hospital.
Over at the Slytherin table Draco watched the Weasel crowing and bragging though he couldn't quite hear him. His gaze fell on Potter again and he noticed how the brunet was hunching tighter into himself the louder the Weasel got. Never let it be said that a Malfoy can't add two and two and come up with the proper number. He rolled his eyes and took a sip of his morning cocoa. It figured that the little red haired idiot would be the one Potter let into his pants.

It sucked. Harry stared into his oatmeal, having lost his appetite completely. He'd kind of hoped that Ron had been lying, that only he felt that Harry had no place with his old friends any longer but the way his friends...His former friends acted, patting Ron's back and shaking his hand proved that it wasn't so. They really had bet on who could fuck him first, well wasn't that just bloody brilliant? Harry couldn't wait for the school year to be over, he would leave...Maybe go to France or America, somewhere where no one knew who he was.

Up at the head table Severus Snape, looking particularly bitchy today, eyed Ronald Weasley with thinly veiled disdain. He'd heard about that foul bet from a group of fourth years who'd been discussing putting their savings in the pot during potions class and it quite honestly turned his stomach. He was not in any way a noble or chivalrous sort of man but by Merlin this went against even his own loose code. Betraying a friend for money, it was disgusting.

"Sappy?" Tiny hands pulled on pitch black robes. "Sappy up!"

"Sorry, sorry." Remus Lupin came and swept his son up in his arms. "As soon as I take my eyes from him he finds his way to you. I apologize." Remus took his seat at the table with Teddy on his lap. Coming back to Hogwarts as DADA professor was a good thing. He couldn't stay at the cottage after Dora's passing and living at Grimmauld was out of the question even though Harry had given him permission. He saw and felt Sirius in every room there. Coming back to Hogwarts felt right. "What's going on? You seem in a particularly sourly mood today."

Severus looked over at the werewolf and the currently green haired and pouting toddler in Lupin's arms that was peering at him in fascination. He didn't know why but Teddy Lupin was positively enamored of him when all others turned tail and fled before his infamous deadpan stare. He wasn't entirely certain how to deal with the child, especially not now that he was utterly unable to truly hold a grudge against Teddy's father. Remus Lupin had found him, bleeding to death and poisoned in the Shrieking Shack and had set aside any dislike to stop the bloodflow and get him to St. Mungos before he was too far gone. It was difficult for him to be hostile to Lupin now. The man had never deliberately taken any action against him, he'd simply done nothing to stop James and Sirius, and he'd saved his life. Free of the trappings of his life at two madmens' beck and calls he found it nigh impossible to hold on to his old grudges.

He took a sip of his coffee and flicked a glance at Potter, then to Weasley, and then back to Lupin, pondering how best to answer. If he told Lupin the truth they might well be cleaning up bits of student from the hallway as he knew the werewolf considered Harry as much his cub as the toddler.
in Lupin's lap. "I was recalling some blatant stupidity that will likely have far reaching consequences. It's a distasteful thought."

"Stupidity is always distasteful, and there's always consequences." Remus answered softly, still feeling the need to apologize for how he had acted, or rather not acted back in school but he knew that Severus would not appreciate it. He turned his eyes on his squirming son and tried to get a bib on him before he gave him his breakfast. Teddy was not liking the idea and held out his arms towards Snape pleadingly. "Go Sappy...Pwease!"

Snape eyed the child warily, once again at a complete loss of what to do as the toddler squirmed and kicked and wriggled in his father's arms, preventing Lupin from eating. A brow twitched and he felt certain he'd regret it but he found himself opening his mouth and saying, "If you think it will settle him down so that you may actually eat, I suppose I could be amiable enough to his presence on my lap until you are finished with your meal."

Remus raised an eyebrow but handed his son over quickly before Snape changed his mind. The chance to eat a meal in relative peace was too tempting to give up. "Thank you, I'll eat quickly."

Teddy cooed happily and stretched his chubby, little body so that he could plant a wet kiss on the tip of Snape's long, crooked nose before settling down in Snape's arms being perfectly still and good.

Back at the Slytherin table Draco simply couldn't contain the amused snort at the sight of his dour godfather rubbing baby spit from the end of his unfortunate nose before proceeding to stare at and be stared at by young Teddy Lupin. He had to admit, his little cousin was an astonishingly cute brat. His attention was brought back to the Gryffindor table when the Weaselette whacked her brother over the head with a platter of bacon before storming out in a fury.

Ron rubbed the top of his head and frowned at Ginny's exit. Bloody hell what was that about. He knew she still carried a bit of a torch for Harry but you'd think knowing that Harry would rather take it than give it would put that flame out so what reason did she have to hit him so hard? He shook his head and went back to eating, wondering absently where Hermione was before brushing that question off. She'd probably slept in after another one of her massive study sessions.

"So it's true then. I must admit I didn't really believe it." Pansy leaned close to Draco and crossed her legs elegantly, liking the way the silk stockings felt against her skin. She might have been forced to don the school uniform for an extra year but she would not give up on her underwear or shoes. The killer heels she wore at the moment were clear proof of that. She watched Harry finish his breakfast in record time and hurry out of the Great Hall. "Bloody Weasel, I never liked him."
"Mmm," Draco nodded, "a rather small fish always playing at being bigger than what he is. It appears that he'll be making things unpleasant for Potter." The blond couldn't quite stifle the tiny stirring of pity on Potter's behalf but it was almost insignificant in the grand scheme of his emotions. He looked over at the girl who'd been his partner in crime for longer than either could remember. "Speaking of unpleasant, are the idiots still bothering you about your suggestion to hand Potter over last year?"

"It's nothing." Pansy picked up her teacup and took a sip. "The day I let idiots like them get to me is the day you can wrap me in yellow and call me a Hufflepuff." Potter himself had forgiven her for what she'd said in a moment of weakness and fear but the cronies who'd abandoned the boy wonder hadn't and they let her know it every chance they got. She didn't care though; at least that was what she told herself. She was meant for bigger and better things and school wouldn't last forever. "What can you expect from someone who literally fucks his best friend over for money?"

"Not much that's certainly true. If he or the others pull anything nasty though, my lethal friend, let me know so I can join the fun in teaching them a lesson in what real friends do." He snorted, "Gryffindors like to style themselves as the loyalist house after Hufflepuff but look at them. Making bets about the one who saved their hides," he tsked, "give me the snake pit any day over the lion's den."

"You won't hear any arguments from me." Pansy tapped the edge of her teacup with perfect, crimson colored nails. "Speaking of lions though, that one has filled out rather nicely don't you think?" She nodded towards the head table where the new transfiguration professor ate his breakfast. "Wouldn't have believed it if I didn't see it with my own eyes."

Draco looked up at where Percy Weasley sat talking with Professor Sprout and nodded, "Certainly not what I expected no. I rather thought he'd remain gangly but he did indeed fill out." Draco studied the newest professor, taking in the broader than expected frame and the face that no longer was obscured by a pair of old glasses. "The sixth and seventh years are already making seduction noises. It's rather funny."

"It will certainly make the school year amusing. I look forward to seeing these seduction attempts." She scrunched up her little nose. "He's become fit but seducing him, becoming one of the red army...Certainly nothing for me." Pansy gave an exaggerated shudder. "I like my men a little less...Freckly."

Draco gave her a teasing look, "Less freckly and with a green thumb perhaps?"

"Perhaps, I admit to nothing." Pansy gave a slow, wicked smile and looked across the hall at the tall, dark haired young man sitting a bit away from the rest of his Dormmates. "It's another lion who has certainly grown into his roar, that much I can say."
"Ah but is he as loyal as the rest of his housemates or does he hold himself to a higher standard is the question my dear Pansy. Only the best for you, no second rate pretenders."

"Aren't you sweet?" She poked the Slytherin prince in his ribs. "I don't know about his character yet but you know me Dray, I will have plenty of fun finding out. Now be a good boy and eat up, we don't want to be late for class."

"Perish the thought milady." He smirked and resumed nibbling on his toast, his mind going back to Potter curiously.

To Be Continued…
It was late afternoon and Draco was sitting in his favorite tree watching Harry Potter. It had grown to be a habit of late, watching Potter. He didn't even try to get to know the other snakes even after being in their house for a solid three months, two since the Weasel had shown his true, quite foul, colors. Instead Potter seemed to content himself with the Lovegood girl and occasional visits from Granger though those were stilted and stiff and the bushy haired Gryffindor was always rushed as if on a timetable. It was like she'd made a schedule and slotted 'Time with Harry' in a rigid little box. Not only ridiculous but not any real definition of friendship Draco could recognize. Longbottom he'd seen catching Harry's eye from time to time and sending him an apologetic smile before ducking his head once more and avoiding his former dorm-mates, especially among the current. If Draco surmised correctly then Longbottom was trying not to rock his boat but still wanted to show Potter some support though it wasn't much worth speaking about. Lovegood though, for all her flighty dreaming, remained the single solid, steady presence beside Harry.

Every afternoon she and Potter would come out by the lake, Lovegood would toss the squid sausages while both of them would ramble. It was the only time these days he ever saw Potter smile.

Harry leaned against the trunk of an old gnarly tree, watching Luna feed the giant squid and talk nonsense with the huge lake monster. This time with Luna it was the one time during the day he could relax, word had apparently spread and now Harry was either met with smirks or pitying looks where ever he went in school. He felt wind up and tired all the time, not once in his battles with Voldemort had he felt this bad. If it hadn't been for Luna Harry would have packed up and left, exams be damned.

Luna kept up her inane chatter knowing it brought comfort to her friend. She wasn't given to wishing ill on anyone but if there was anyone she wished would get attacked by real Nargles it was Ron Weasley. She liked every other Weasley family member but Ron truly was a weasel and not even the cute kind. She tossed the last of the sausages in and went to sit next to Harry. "You look peaked..."
Harry; you're not suffering from a spinglesnort infestation are you?" She put her hand on his brow, testing his temperature.

"No infestation, spinglesnort or otherwise." Harry smiled, grabbed the hand on his forehead, squeezing it gently. "I'm fine Luna, just a bit tired, even with silencing spells Theodore Nott snores like a full on thunderstorm." He reached up and stroked a lock of pale blonde hair behind her ear. "I promise I am well, nothing to worry about."

"But I do worry," she took his hand and studied his palm and the lines crossing it, "You were my first friend and you're still my most precious one and I hate seeing you treated so badly."

"I have you don't I? Who needs anyone else when they have luminous Luna's friendship?" Harry smiled but he was aware that it was a strained smile. It had been two months but it wasn't getting any easier. No matter how much Harry tried not to care he missed his friends and how the way it used to be.

"But an orchid needs more than moonlight to grow, it needs sunshine and water and bark to sink its roots into." She squeezed his hand, her finger tracing one odd little line on his palm that hadn't been there the last time she'd studied it.

"I don't know Luna, maybe the night and the darkness is where I belong after all." He closed his hand around hers and turned it so that he could place a kiss on her knuckles. "Come on now, it's time to get back to the castle, homework waits for no one." That was probably the only upside to everything that had happened. Harry's grades were way up and he did well in all of his classes, surprisingly even potions. Since there was an odd number of students he was mostly left alone instead of pairing up with someone and as it was now Harry was just as happy to be on his own. He got up from his place on the ground and reached out to help Luna up when the world twisted and turned around him and he had to sit down again and close his eyes.

"Harry!" Luna supported him, all the dreamy air about her gone as she cupped his face in her hands, taking note of the cold and clammy feel of his skin, "Tell me what you feel? Don't try to soften it either."

"Dizzy, tired...weak." Harry blinked rapidly to try and turn the world straight again. "I'm sure I only need a dreamless sleep draught and a good night's sleep and I'll be right as rain again."

"No Harry, I want you to see Madam Pomfrey. I know you hate the hospital wing but we should make sure you're not sick and get her opinion before you take any potions." She pet his hair gently. "Please? For me?"
He gave her a half hearted glare. "You know I can't refuse when you ask me like that." Harry sighed. "Fine, we'll go see Poppy but I reserve the right to rub your cute little nose in it when she confirms that nothing is wrong." He stood up again, taking it slower this time until he was sure his legs would actually carry him.

She looped her arm through his to help support him so it just looked like friends walking through the halls and started leading him toward the infirmary.

Draco slipped out of his tree and began following them silently, disillusioning himself and slipping along after them. He didn't know why but his heart had leaped up into his throat when Potter had wobbled and he'd nearly jumped out of the tree to check on him, would have if Lovegood hadn't been there. What in the name of Merlin had prompted that reaction?

Harry was relieved to notice that there weren't many people out and about in the halls so late in the afternoon. Those who weren't in class were busy studying or enjoying their time off, Harry really didn't care what they were up to, he was only thankful he didn't have to deal with them and their looks.

It was almost strange walking the familiar corridor to the infirmary, since Harry hadn't even bothered to try out for Quidditch after the re-sorting and Voldemort was dead and gone there hadn't been a reason for him to go to Poppy. Harry didn't think there was a reason now either but he couldn't say no to the only person who treated him like before and stood by him. He pressed the heel of his hand to his stomach as they knocked on the door and stepped inside Poppy's domain. Even though he didn't really have an appetite these days, his stomach still felt bloated and upset.

Draco managed to slip in just behind them before the door closed and hid in a curtained alcove beside Potter's 'official' bed to listen in. He freely admitted to himself about being insatiably curious about what had Potter looking like hell and nearly falling on his face. He also took pride in the fact that he was sneaking around to discover what was going on and listened raptly as Pomfrey came out, heaved a sigh and set about examining Potter after getting a brief explanation. He nodded at the general diagnostic spells she cast and then his brows lifted when she cast another, highly specialized diagnostic spell and Potter's lower abdomen glowed a soft white before turning a pastel blue.

Poppy tapped her wand against her palm and debated on how to tell the young man in front of her what the spell had just revealed. "Mr. Potter did you take the advanced sexual education class in sixth year or did you, like most other muggle raised students, choose to forgo it?"

"I didn't take it." Harry watched Poppy closely, knowing something was up but not knowing what it was. "My mind was on other things back then and the advanced sexual education class seemed like a
"I understand but one of the subjects in that class is rather pertinent to your condition." She summoned a book and opened it to a particular page before handing it to him, "You see Harry in the wizarding world the reason we are not biased against alternate sexuality is because wizards are able to conceive and carry a baby to term should they be sufficiently powerful and you are the most powerful wizard our world has seen since the days of the founders." She let him look at the book and would allow him to come to the conclusion on his own.

Luna hopped up to sit on the bed next to Harry, her hand resting on his shoulder to offer silent comfort as his mind worked.

Harry stared at the page of the book without seeing anything, the letters only floated in front of him as his brain struggled to take in what Poppy was telling him. He couldn't be pregnant...He just couldn't. Men didn't get pregnant; it was against the laws of nature, that's what Harry had always been taught. Not to mention that, no child should come into being from what had happened between him and Ron. A child should come from love. Harry had never been in love with Ron but ever since school started he had felt as if his best friend was slipping away. When he'd had some alcohol in his bloodstream he had clung to Ron with everything he had and apparently this was his punishment.

"I can't be pregnant." Harry turned pleading eyes on Poppy, hoping she would agree with him even though he knew better.

The woman met his eyes, wishing she could tell him otherwise but it wouldn't help him in the slightest, "I'm sorry Harry but you are pregnant. I know that this is far, far from an ideal situation but you have options."

Luna's arm slipped around his shoulders and she squeezed him comfortingly.

Without thinking about it his hand splayed out over his lower abdomen even as he leaned against Luna, trying to soak up some of her strength. "Options?" Harry needed to hear them though he figured he already knew what those options were.

"You can carry to term and either keep it or give it up for adoption. There is also a magical procedure that can transfer it from you to a woman, it would still be yours genetically but legally it would be hers and that option requires the sire to sign over his parental rights. And you could abort the fetus." Poppy didn't use the term baby so as not to create an emotional connection to the baby before he made his decision.
Honestly none of the options seemed very tempting. Harry didn't know if he was ready to have a child, with the fucked up childhood he'd had he would probably be a crap parent. Adoption...Well again his thoughts went back to his own childhood, what if his baby went to people like the Dursleys? People who didn't love it. Also Harry didn't know how that would work...With the blood adoption he'd gone through with Sirius' blood after the war. The child he was carrying was the next Black heir. Harry already knew he would never be able to do the magical transference thingie, knowing his child was carried and born to someone else...No, he couldn't handle that and he didn't think he's be able to terminate it either. Harry just didn't know what to do.

"Do I...Do I have to decide now?" Harry asked, wincing when he realized he would have to speak to Ron. He did not look forward to that conversation.

"Of course not." Poppy moved to get a set of fourteen potions and some pamphlets for the eighteen year old. "You can take as much time to think things over as you need Harry. Until you make your decision though I want you to take one of these potions each morning. Come see me for more when they run out. Also you need to eat more regularly and sleep at least eight hours each day."

Taking the pamphlets Harry nodded quietly. The food he could do something about but he was worried about the sleeping. He hadn't been able to sleep very well before this and he didn't think his rest would become more restful now that he did know what was growing inside him. "I'll do my best Poppy." It was the best he could offer.

The medi-witch gave him a reassuring smile, "Then you're free to go for now. Miss Lovegood help look after him will you?"

"Of course. The last thing we want is for the Nargles to start swarming around him." Luna nudged Harry off the bed and towards the door.

Draco moved out of the curtained alcove and dogged the two's steps as they left the infirmary. Once out of the hospital wing he stopped following them and headed for the Slytherin common room. He wasn't about to tell the snakes that Potter was up the duff but he was going to impress upon them that it was important that they make sure no one harmed him physically. He couldn't help but feel sorry for the brunette thorn in his side. First he was betrayed by his friend and now he was pregnant. He was beginning to think that fate had it out for Harry Potter.

Harry stopped at the entrance to the Slytherin common room and enveloped Luna in a tight hug. "Thank you for being you." He held on to her tightly. "Looked as if you were right, there is an infestation going on inside me after all." He gave her a weak smile and released her, hiding the pamphlets and potions under his robes so that the Slytherins wouldn't see them. "See you tomorrow,
sleep tight." He smiled again and hurried inside and up to his dorm room where he crawled into bed, closing the drapes tightly and spelling his bed silent, no sounds coming in and no sounds leaving. Harry curled into a ball and closed his eyes, trying desperately to figure out where to go from here.

Draco had left the common room after Potter's return to fetch himself some pomegranate arils and was now walking back with a bowlful, that he knew Pansy would demand he share. He reached the entrance to the common room and paused to see Granger's kneazle-cat mix pacing in front of it and meowing its fool head off before clawing at the entrance determinedly. "What the bloody hell are you doing here? Shouldn't you be with your mistress?"

The cat looked up at him, meowed plaintively then pawed at the entrance to the common room again.

"Want inside do you?" He rolled his eyes at himself, talking to a cat. "Fine I'll take you to Potter, he can deal with you." He picked up the cat, entered the common room, still holding his bowl of treats, and went to the dorms. He pulled Potter's bed curtains back and paused at the sight of him curled up in the bed and considered leaving him be but wallowing never did anyone any good, and really it wasn't in his nature to let things lie. He walked over and dropped the cat onto Potter's bed beside the brunette's head. "Potter next time Granger's companion decides he's bored with her kindly direct it away from us, it was setting up a racket to wake the dead outside the common room."

Harry didn't have it in him to glare at Malfoy so instead he ignored him and turned his attention to the large orange cat. It actually surprised him that Malfoy had even let Crookshanks in but he was grateful that he had. "Hi Crookshanks, what are you doing here?" He ran his hand over soft, warm fur and scratched the cat hybrid behind its ear. "I've missed you." Harry fought down the lump in his throat. Having Crookshanks there brought back memories of long evenings planning, talking and studying in front of the huge roaring fireplace in the Gryffindor common room with Crookshanks purring, perched on a lap and being blissed out from petting.

Draco cleared his throat as the cat butt its head against Potter's chin, already purring up a storm, "Well should you choose to cease wallowing in misery in here and instead choose to wallow in the seat beside the window, depressing the mermaids, do bring the furry monster as I've no desire to find any of my belongings falling victim to feline claws."

"Where I wallow is my business isn't it?" Harry shot back but uncurled his limbs and picked up Crookshanks carrying him over to the padded bench by the large window in their dorm room, looking out into the shimmering water. It was weird how Malfoy could still get under his skin like no other just by opening his mouth. Harry didn't know what to think about it, Malfoy was much calmer this year but he was still a git. Shuddering Harry picked up his petting of Crookshanks and stared out at nothing. He didn't really like the Black Lake after the second task during the tournament but the movement of the water was soothing.
"True enough but really Potter you should get off the bloody cross, someone needs the wood." He slipped out of the dorm.

"I hate to admit it but the git is right, just don't let him know I said that." Harry whispered into Crookshanks fur. Okay so life was crap but since when was that a surprise when it came to him? He had struggled through before and would do so this time as well. When even Draco Malfoy called you out on basically pouting then something was definitely very wrong. It was time to take charge of his life again and Harry would start by cornering and talking to Ron tomorrow. As unpleasant as it would be, waiting wouldn't make it easier.

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Ron followed the almost dangerously curved, sultry brunette Ravenclaw who'd come up and whispered in his ear that she wanted to speak to him privately, with a sexy little emphasis on the privately. He didn't recognize her but with her delicious body, gorgeous face, beautifully curled hair, and the amber eyes she was like his fantasy come true. He couldn't wait to get her alone in the empty classroom she was stepping into and get his hands on those luscious curves. He stepped into the room and his jaw dropped when he saw Harry standing beside the bombshell. Then the fantastic body and looks melted away and revealed Luna Lovegood with her usual dreamy smile, though he could swear it held a smug edge. "The bloody hell is this?"

"I need to talk to you Ron and this was the only way I could make that happen since you don't have the guts to face me alone after what you did." Harry thanked Luna for her help and turned to his former best friend again. "Something has happened, something bigger then the both of us."

Ron sneered, making him look quite a bit like a rat instead of a weasel, "Oh really? And what's that Potter? Another Dark Lord coming after you and everyone around you? Get your new house to help you out. I told you I don't want anything more to do with you."

"Well too bad for you." Harry said, too annoyed to try and sugar coat anything. "I'm pregnant so a rather large part of you is inside me at the moment whether we like it or not."

Luna had to admit to a petty enjoyment when she saw the redhead's eyes nearly pop right out of his skull, unfortunately he ruined that by opening his mouth.

"I- you- wh-wha- like hell you're up the duff from me!" Ron's face flushed red. "I don't know who's spawn you're carrying Potter but you won't go pinning it on me!"
Harry's eyes flashed and he stepped closer to Ron, reminding the two people in the room that he was the one who had danced with the darkest lord and the one who had come out of that dance. "Listen to me you spineless little shit. After what you did, what you have done so many times during the years...Do you really think I would tell you that you're the father if you weren't? Like I don't wish that it was anyone but you. As much as you despise me...Do I lie? Have I lied to you before? This is real, I don't like it any more than you do but it's the truth and it's real."

Ron paled now at the reminder of the battle flash in Harry's eyes and took a half-step back from the brunette before setting his feet. "Well I don't want any part of it! Do what you want with the bastard, have it or get rid of it for all I care."

"I will hold you to that Ronald Billius Weasley. You're gonna have to sign it in magic and in blood...This child will be mine and I hope to God he won't inherit even one of your traits. I can see why Wormtail was so happy with you, you are two of a kind and I am glad to be done with you."

Harry looked at Ron with nothing but contempt, shoving the hurt down to be dealt with later.

The redhead snorted and lifted a shoulder, "Whatever. Just send the papers whenever you get them, the sooner the better."

Luna almost gave in to her very, very rare temper and hexed Ron for being so uncaring and foul but the impulse was replaced by curiosity when a cool voice drawled from the doorway.

"For once Weasley you've said something intelligent. Indeed the sooner Potter is completely shed of you the better. I am quite honestly astounded that you've survived this long without finding yourself at his wand point." Draco leaned against the doorjamb and eyed Ron with an icy disdain. He'd heard Weasley shouting from down the hall and he was surprised to find that yes, the Weasel could be even more disgusting to him than he was before. Potter was still an annoyance but to hear someone reject their child, to just shrug off the responsibilities created along with a child, it infuriated him. The Weasel's attitude went against everything Draco had been taught to value from the cradle. In his world family and bloodline were sacred, no exceptions.

Green eyes widened in surprise and then Harry almost groaned. Great! So Malfoy had heard what they were talking about, no chance to keep it a secret after this then. He could only imagine the ridicule he would suffer after this, maybe Malfoy could even make a new batch of charming badges to pass out. Still Malfoy hadn't gotten on Ron's side, that was something. If he was truthful Malfoy hadn't been that bad all year but it felt as if Harry wore his emotions on the outside and he just waited for everyone to tear him down.

Ron spun with a snarl at Malfoy, "What are you doing here ferret?! So help me if you spread this
Draco scoffed and pushed off the doorjamb and took a few steps into the room, "Oh I don't need to do anything to ruin your name Weasel, you do that perfectly well on your own. I have no reason to spread anything around, wasted effort and all that. By the way, weren't you leaving? Your presence here does lend a rather nasty hint to the air."

Luna watched as the redhead shoved past Draco and out of the room and then she studied the blond who was looking intently at Harry. There wasn't anything malicious in the air around the blond nor did he have his old look of near hatred on his countenance. "What brings you here Mr. Malfoy?"

"Well I heard a rather loud bellow and decided to investigate," Draco lifted a casual shoulder, his eyes still locked on Potter.

"Hmm, investigate or stick that pointy nose where it doesn't belong?" Harry's voice wasn't accusing or angry though, if anything it was somewhat amused. "Thank you for getting rid of Ron." Harry's mind was already on things he needed to do and he had no idea how to go about doing them. He needed to find someone to draw up the papers where Ron denounced himself as parent to their child. This baby was going to be the heir to both the Potter and the Black name with all that came with it. He would become very rich one day and if there was anything Ron Weasley liked it was money...Harry needed to protect both himself and his child from Ron finding a way to take advantage of that.

Suddenly he paled when he realized that he was already thinking about both his and his child's future. It seemed he had already decided what to do, he couldn't give his baby up and he certainly couldn't terminate it. Merlin...He already loved the life inside him, for good or bad it would be the two of them from here on out.

Draco smirked, deliberately ignoring the paler tone to Potter's skin, "Yes well any chance I can find to prove the brainlessness of the Weasel is to be seized with alacrity." He sobered and considered briefly before speaking his next words, "If you like Potter, I can recommend a skilled barrister and get you an audience with him."

Harry's brows disappeared underneath his bangs in surprise and it was on the tip of his tongue to ask if Malfoy was about to finish the job his dark lord had started but he didn't. The truth was that Harry needed all the help he could get and it was time to live as he preached and let the past go. Ron Weasley was a pureblood, no matter how dirty he acted and Harry needed to have the law on his side. "Thank you Malfoy, I'd appreciate it." He kept his tone neutral.
"Yes well you are a Slytherin now and I certainly have no desire to see the Weasel get his greedy hands on anything of the Black family." He tugged a sleeve straight and heaved a put upon sigh, "so I suppose I shall offer myself up as your tutor in pureblood politics. I still don't like you but as my mother and by extension I are connected to the Black house I'll not see you ruin centuries of reputation due to ignorance."

"I thank you for your sacrifice cousin dear." Harry snorted but strangely enough he felt better than he had since school started. There was no pity or pretence with Malfoy, it was refreshing. "Thank you for being a martyr in the fight against ignorance and half blood stupidity...I may even manage to get you a diploma or a plaque to honor your great work for the cause. And just so we're clear...I still don't like you either."

"Good, we know where we stand then. We'll work together towards a common goal though we can't stand each other."

Luna smiled at the blond man, "Did you know that you have glitterflies round your head?"

Draco lifted his brow, "I am not even going to pretend I know what that means but I'm not stupid enough to assume it means nothing. You, Lovegood have mastered speaking in code better than most people I know of." He'd never had anything against the dreamy girl, aside from the whispers about her she'd never even blipped on his rader before he'd started watching Potter. As he'd never had anything against her and he was a sneaky little bastard, he knew about speaking in code and using terms no one else knew simply to confuse them. He gathered somewhat, that she'd just called him a liar.

"Luna is better than most people in everything she is and does." Harry agreed fondly. "Well you know where to find me when it's time to start our lessons, it's not like I can hide from you since we're sleeping in the same room." Harry smiled but sobered quickly. "One down and one to go...I need to go tell a wolf he'll be an honorary Grandparent before he hears it from someone else." Another talk Harry did not look forward to in the least.

Draco nodded shortly, "See you later this evening then Potter. I'll have a floo secured to speak with the barrister." He gave Luna a brief bow and swept out much like his godfather.

Luna stepped closer to Harry and gave him a hug, "Do you want me to come with you Harry?"

"Merlin yes, if you have the time." Harry turned pleading eyes on Luna. They both knew that under the politeness and calm Remus had one heck of a temper.

To Be Continued…
Chapter 3

Disclaimer: Neither Acherona nor trulywicked have any claim on Harry Potter or any characters or locations thereof.

Warnings: Angst, lots of it, Male Pregnancy, mental torture, infant in peril, boys in love, friendships broken and new friends gained. Disregards canon in so many ways.

MOCKINGBIRD

Chapter Three.

The door to Snape's private quarters slammed open and Remus stomped inside carrying a wide eyed, pajama clad Teddy. After finding out that Harry was pregnant he had finally managed to drag the whole story out of his other cub and now he was livid. The wolf was right under the surface and his skin actually itched with the urge to sprout fur and go on a rampage.

"Here," He handed Teddy over to a stunned Snape, eyes flashing amber. "I need you to watch over the pup while I take care of something." The words came out as a sinister growl and Remus noticed how Teddy buried his face in Snape's neck but he couldn't reign in his temper now. His cub was hurt and Moony needed to deal out some punishment.

Severus was startled and stunned but he gripped Remus' arm instinctively, one arm supporting Teddy. "I don't think so." He recognized the signs of the wolf, awake within the normally gentle man, and was not about to let an infuriated werewolf tromp through the school without any sort of explanation. "What is going on?"

Remus' eyes darted from Teddy and towards the door, returning to soft honey minutely before the fire of the wolf was back in them. "Someone hurt my cub and hurt him bad...So now I'm going to hurt them." The growl was still there as Moony made his statement and pulled slightly to get out of Snape's grasp.

The potion master's hand tightened. He knew that should the werewolf decide to put effort into pulling away he wouldn't be able to hold him but right now Remus was still on the thin edge between savagery and logic. Snape looked down his nose at the other man and put all the weight of his years as a triple agent, a potions master, a professor, and a man who'd nearly died into his voice to make Remus pay attention, "I think not. Whatever has happened to Potter you cannot go tearing
through anyone, especially on Hogwarts grounds. Think Lupin, if you harm anyone here not only will you be sacked but the good done for werewolves the world over will be destroyed. Like it or not you are the representative for all those who have any measure of lycanthropy, including your son. Will you really damn them all for a moment's vengeance? Is that what Potter would want?"

The fire flashed and burned as Moony held the dark eyes of Snape. His body was still tense, coiled for the fight and he didn't want to listen to what Severus said. When someone hurt pack, even worse hurt your cub you took them out before they could ever be a threat again. It was instinct to protect and provide. Slowly the fire fizzled out and Remus' shoulder slumped, he looked down at his feet. "Fuck you and your fucking logic." The growl was gone and Remus' tone even lacked its usual bite.

"Hm. Sit down," he guided the werewolf to a chair before the crackling fire, called a house elf for some calming tea, then sat down in the opposite chair, aware of the child still clinging to his neck and the shift from gray hair to a tentative dull blue. "Now, would I be correct in assuming that the youngest Weasley boy has done something...again?"

"Again?" Remus' head snapped up and he locked his gaze on Snape. "So you knew about the first thing then?" Remus sighed and wrapped both his hands around the teacup, trying to soak up both the heat and the calm from the hot liquid. "Nothing of what I'm about to say leaves this room, I know you can keep a secret." One corner of his mouth kicked up sardonically even as his eyes filled with regret as his son still clung to Severus, hiding his face from Remus...He hadn't meant to scare Teddy, that was the last thing he wanted. "Harry is pregnant; Ronald wants nothing to do with Harry or the child and had offered to sign away all parental rights. He bedded him because of a bet, turned Harry's first time into something dirty and shameful and now he did this...I thought I knew that boy and now I only want to feel my claws rip through his skin."

Dark brows rose in surprise. "Hm, well that explains the order Poppy made for prenatal potions." He absently pat Teddy's back. "As...wrong as the Weasel's refusal to accept paternity is, I would think that is the best for both Potter and the child. Considering his lack of Weasley honor displayed thus far, Ronald is far from an ideal parent. There is also his appalling greed. Better Potter and his child get shunt of him now yes?" The elf arrived with more tea and a plate of biscuits he hadn't asked for, some of which had sprinkles and icing, but he said nothing but a thank you knowing that the elves were subtly trying to cheer up Teddy. "As for punishment, you Gryffindors are always so hotheaded and physical. A beating is far less satisfying than seeing to it he has a life of misery."

"Well I was thinking more of ending his life than a beating but your way has merit too." Remus was finally beginning to calm down properly, shoving Moony back down under the surface where he belonged. "I know you're right, I know both Harry and the child will be much better off without Ron in their lives but I need him to pay for hurting my cub," Remus paused for a moment. "Want to hear something really strange though? Your little Malfoy offered to get Harry in touch with a Barrister to help him and offered to teach him about pureblood rules and regulations regarding the pregnancy."
Remus picked up a biscuit with bright purple frosting and held it out to his son. "Here Teddy, have a biscuit, everything is okay now."

Teddy peeked out from his spot in Snape's neck, eyeing the biscuit and his father. "Daddy gwowly...No like."

"Daddy's not growly anymore. I'm sorry Teddy." Remus' heart clenched when he thought his child might be scared of him now.

"Good." Teddy took the biscuit and as he ate it his hair turned the same vibrant purple as the frosting. He made no move to get away from Snape's lap but he reached out a tiny sticky hand towards his dad. "Love joo."

"Love you too Teddy, most of all." Remus took the little hand and pressed a kiss to the palm of it.

Severus blew out an amused breath, "Sappy Lupin, very sappy. As for Draco, it's not so strange. Pureblood children are taught from the cradle to value family and bloodlines. My godson might not be the kindest of people but he has a code of honor, one I can guarantee you, has been incensed by Weasley's actions. Not," he paused to charm his hair back into a short tail as a small icing smeared hand grabbed at it, "that Draco would admit to it."

"Love is never sappy." Remus replied and smiled as his son continued to paw and pet at the tall, dark man. "I am glad that young Mr. Malfy is helping Harry, regardless of his reasons. I believe Harry is going to need all the help he can get."

"Sappy smile?" Teddy pulled on the corners of Snape's mouth, shaping it into the expression he wanted.

A sardonic brow lifted at the child's complete lack of awareness of personal boundaries. "You, young Mr. Lupin, have icing hands."

"Huh?" Teddy looked at his hands before bringing them to his own cheeks, placing them there. "No feel icy hands, feel wawm...Is okay." The toddled gave him a brilliant smile and went back to pet his favorite person other than his Daddy. A look of utter concentration settled on his little features and after a while his hair started to darken until it was just as black as Snape's. "Look...Twins."
"Oh sweet Merlin!" Remus couldn't decide if he was horrified or very, very amused.

Severus had no such difficulty. Amusement most certainly won out in this case and the corner of his mouth kicked up a bit, "You certainly inherited your mother's sense of humor. We can only hope you didn't get her coordination."

Remus had finally gotten to the point where he could remember Dora without searing pain at losing her. She had not been his mate but he'd loved her and she'd given him Teddy. "Yes we can only hope, if he had inherited that unique kind of clumsiness Hogwarts will be in shambles before he even is old enough to start school." Remus smiled and noticed how nice it was to be able to talk to Snape without tension or hostility.

"I for one pray he doesn't inherit either your or Nymphadora's potion skills," he quirked a brow at Remus, "If he does I'm retiring before he enrolls."

"Aww, and back down from such a challenge? If anyone can teach him it would be you and who knows...Some latent Black genes might kick in making him ace at potions, just as Siri, Narcissa and Bellatrix were." His breath hitched a little at the name of his best friend but the pain of loss had softened there too, making it more of an ache than a stabbing wound of grief.

"I think not. Teaching Longbottom was challenge enough. An exploded cauldron every class is more stress than I need now. As for Black, he was moderately skilled in potions admittedly but had the attention span of the fleas that adored him so." It was a dry comment without malicious bite but he doubted he would ever refer to Sirius Black gently just as he would never refer to James Potter kindly.

"Ah well, there's still some years left and Teddy will be who he'll be...Right now he's asleep." Remus eyes warmed as he watched his son curled up against Snape, utterly relaxed and fast asleep.

The potion master looked down at the little boy, "You have a unique child Lupin. Most run screaming at one look at me," he paused and grimaced, "dear lord an assured Gryffindor."

Remus chuckled. "I do believe my little lion cub has somewhat of a crush on you. The moment he wakes in the morning he asks after you and every evening he fusses and kicks until he's allowed to say goodnight."

"I have noticed the attachment. I certainly am at a loss to explain it myself." He didn't understand
why Lupin's son was so interested in him but it wasn't what he'd call unwelcome. It was actually rather nice to have someone pleased to see him. "Speaking of your cubs, what are Potter's plans for his child?"

Leaving his son where he was in Snape's arms, Remus focused on what had gotten him so upset in the first place. "Harry has decided to keep the baby and raise him on his own." Pride shone through in Remus' voice. "I have no doubt that he'll be a fantastic parent." Remus was still worried though, as a single father himself, one with a good twenty years of experience on Harry he knew how difficult and how utterly exhausting it was to care for a child on your own.

"Likely so. Him? The child is a boy then?"

"Yes." Remus nodded. "The light glowed blue when Poppy ran her diagnostics. Harry is having a son."

"Then I certainly hope that the barrister Draco pointed him towards works quickly. Even in today's world a son trumps a daughter in heir status and if Weasley learns of it being a boy his greed might rear its ugly head," a devious glint appeared in Snape's eyes, "I suppose I'll just have to keep him too busy for his brain to fit anything but potion ingredients, essays, and difficult detentions."

"I will do my part too; I have a feeling DADA will become a very disliked subject for young Mr. Weasley." If he wasn't allowed to literally tear the boy apart he would certainly do his best to massacre him academically. "I just want Harry's troubles to be over, no one deserves some peace and quiet and love more than him."

"Hm, life is rarely what we want it to be and all anyone can do is use the cards they're dealt. I will deny it if asked but Potter has done well playing his hand. You can deliver the message to him that he can come directly to me for the nutritional potions rather than going to Poppy every two weeks."

"I'll do that." Remus nodded and got up from his seat, leaning over Snape and gathered his sleeping son up in his arms. "I should go put him in bed for the night. Thank you for the talk and for calming Moony down... You are a much better man then you pretend to be Severus, you always have been. I trust my son's judgment."

The potion master snorted, "I could hardly let your wolf get us all in trouble now could I. As for good? I'm a bitter, jaded old bastard; your son just still has his rose colored glasses."
"Perhaps, but in that case I want him to wear those glasses for as long as he possibly can...And I still have faith in you, as bitter and as jaded as you may be. I won't even touch old...You're thirty-nine, hardly ancient." Remus shifted his hold on Teddy and walked towards the door. "Goodnight Severus, have a pleasant evening."

He nodded, a half smile flitting with his mouth, "Sleep well Lupin. Oh and a suggestion, acromatulas are seventh year DADA material aren't they?"

"Indeed they are." Remus' smile turned wicked. "Indeed they are and I think extensive studies are in order don't you? I shall have a talk with Hagrid and see if we can't have a few live and healthy specimens in class. Thank you for the suggestion." Remus practically cackled as he left Snape's quarters and moved towards his own.

Severus chuckled and got up. His own lesson plans took a turn for a block of potions requiring spiders of varying sizes and stages of life. He might not feel warm fluffy emotions towards Potter now but he no longer felt outright, unfair hostility either and he had a well seated hatred for those who took advantage of others. Weasley would find himself very miserable this final year of his studies and if Snape had anything to say about it his chances of entering the Auror corps would be nil.

OoOoOoOoO

Draco shook his head and rolled his eyes, "No Potter, the Weasel signing away his parental rights will not affect the familial rights of the others in that army of redheads. Your sprog will be of their blood and so, unless they choose to magically disown the babe, they retain all magical grandparental or sibling rights. So you can cease beating yourself up over taking away Mrs. Weasley's second grandchild or the dual terror's chance to spoil their nephew and teach him every unscrupulous thing they know."

"Hey what did we say about the eye rolling...Keep it up and they're gonna get stuck looking inside your head." Harry crossed his arms over his chest but he was very relieved. He had worried and agonized over how Ron signing away his rights would affect the rest of the Weasleys. They were still the closest thing to a real family that he had and none of them other than Ron seemed to have a problem with him or his re-sorting into Slytherin. "But they won't be able to take him away from me will they? Get custody somehow?" Harry didn't think it would happen but he needed to know that it couldn't happen. As much as he loved them his first priority was his son from now on.

"No. They couldn't even file for custody if they saw you punch him in front of them all," he held up a hand, "don't raise your hackles Potter. I am well aware you'd never harm your child I am simply providing an extreme example. As the blood parent unless you actually try to kill your child no one, once the Weasel gets and signs the papers, can take him away from you. Custody suits in the
wizarding world exist only between the two parents of a child or two relatives of an orphan. It's rooted in the fact that a wizard or witch's child has a better chance of being magical or more strongly magical themselves if they are in constant close proximity to their mother or father's magic."

"Hm, good to know then." Harry felt both relieved and sad. He wondered how he would have been if he had grown up around his parents magic. Well it really was no point pondering that, things were as they were and Harry couldn't exactly say that there were something wrong or lacking with his magic, that was one area where he actually felt confident. "I'm never gonna be able to learn all this am I? We've hardly gotten started and I am already confused here."

Draco lifted his eyes to the ceiling, "By Merlin I swear I am going to make it a personal goal to see magical theory reinstated as a class at Hogwarts." He looked back at Harry, "Alright the basics. Any and all laws we have in our world are based on one of two things. One is the continuing existence of witches and wizards. That is the highest priority; think along the same lines of most animals, we are all about the continuation of our species or sub-species as the case may be. Every move, step, and thought in the political world is or should be devoted to ensuring that magical humans continue to exist long after the current generation is rotting in their graves."

Harry wanted to ask if Draco thought the way to that goal was through inbreeding and exclusion of a big part of the magical world but Draco was helping him here, without having asked anything in return. It wouldn't be fair to bait him like that and honestly Harry didn't want to piss him off and lose his help. "Okay I get that and it's a noble thought though I can't say I've really seen it carried out in practice by the political world I've seen here. If that is one of the basics, what's the second one? You said all laws were based on two things."

"The second is actually connected and supposedly secondary to the first but the contradiction in the most recent laws is because it's being put first. It's the secrecy clause. The secrecy clause came into being during the witch hunts because while a talented witch or wizard could freeze flames without a wand or escape the other executions others who couldn't master wandless casting ended up apprehended and executed. The magical world lost thousands of witches and wizards because of Muggle stupidity" he paused tapping his chin "well I suppose I should say because of Christian stupidity actually. Before that blasted religion and its corrupted leaders infected the world, witches and wizards were loved, well treated and respected members of society. Magic was known to exist by Muggles, then called mundanes, and they damn near had parties of orgy proportion when a sorcerer moved into the neighborhood."

He pulled out a book from his personal collection that he'd brought every year to Hogwarts to remind himself why Muggles were scum in his early years and then later on remind himself why people, as a whole, sucked. He flipped to the proper page and set it down in front of Harry, "Then the mundanes grew enamored of a religion that promised paradise after you died no matter what, you could murder, steal, cheat, rape, whatever you wished to do so long as you accepted this one figure as the only true savior of souls and you'd still go to spiritual paradise. They began to turn on the witches and wizards because they could do some of the feats Christ was purported to have done and to the mundanes that meant that we were trying to usurp the position of their new god. They began persecuting us, hunting
us down, and we lost too many so we went into hiding. Charms to repel Muggles were created and we all slipped into the shadows just so our people could survive."

"It's horrible, it sucks and it should never have happened. I won't disagree with you Malfoy...But...Listen to what you just said to me. You could murder, steal, rape and do whatever you wished as long as you accepted one figure as the true savior...Turning on other people, persecuting them, hunting them...Does it sound familiar? It goes both ways. People are idiots, they make mistake whether magic runs through their blood or not. The only thing I can and will do is teach my son to accept all life, respect it and treasure it no matter who you are or where you come from." Harry closed the book softly and handed it back to Malfoy. "God can't save you or redeem your soul...That's something you have to do for yourself. At least that's what I believe."

"Potter I am not touting any beliefs, I am explaining why the Secrecy Laws came into effect." Draco looked into the vivid green eyes, still innocent at the core despite what they'd seen, "You don't know my beliefs and I would appreciate it if you wouldn't use my own mistakes to make assumptions about them."

"You're right, I don't know your beliefs but I wasn't accusing you of something either." Harry looked into cool, gray eyes, willing the other to understand. "I wasn't speaking about you personally or trying to drudge up any mistakes made in the past. Merlin knows we've all made our fair share of mistakes. I apologize if I made you feel targeted in any way, it wasn't my intention. I just wanted to let you know that I understand how things can go so wrong so quickly...Both in muggle and magical society...Now if you excuse me I need to heave." Harry grew pale and ran for the trashcan in the corner of the room.

Draco glanced at his pocket watch and his lips twitched, "Good lord it's like your sprog is already living according to a schedule. Same time as yesterday." He pulled a self moistening cloth out, charmed it cool and walked over to place it on the back of Potter's neck casually before also producing a cup of water to rinse when the heaves were over.

"Thank you." Harry rinsed out his mouth and vanished the waste in the trashcan with a grimace of disgust. "Why people call it morning sickness I'll never know, mornings are fine, splendid actually but early afternoons...Bleh." He placed his hand on his still cramping stomach, hoping it would calm down quickly.

Draco handed Harry a tepid cup of tea, "Chamomile, it will settle your stomach. You'll want to avoid anything in the peppermint or raspberry family for the duration of your pregnancy. Though peppermint itself is safe for most people for some it causes problems." He moved back to his seat and pulled out a parchment starting a few notes for the brunette.

Harry's lips quirked in amusement as he sipped the tea carefully. "Dare I ask how you know all this?"
I'm the knocked up one and I have no idea what to eat and what to avoid. I simply puke and hope the babe doesn't decide to come up that way."

Draco glanced up briefly, "Potions. For anyone who has interest in the subject it is imperative to know everything about the composition and effects of the ingredients. Peppermint relaxes muscles so well that it can cause miscarriage in the first and second trimesters of pregnancy so can raspberries and raspberry leaves. There's a particular plant in the peppermint family, pennyroyal, that is regularly used as an abortifacent by those with limited potions knowledge," seeing Harry's vaguely horrified look, "The best teas for you will be chamomile, lemon balm, and freshly ground ginger root. Chamomile is mostly a calming tea but it can help settle the stomach. Both it and lemon balm will help you sleep if you drink a cup before bed. The ginger root is used in the case of extreme nausea."

Both arms went around his stomach protectively as he went through horror scenario after horror scenario in his brain. Harry swore to himself that he would be extremely careful with what he put in his mouth from now on. He already loved Squiggles and the thought of losing him because he'd been careless was unbearable. "I'm going to be a horrible dad, I don't know anything and I will end up hurting Squiggles before he's even born."

Draco burst out laughing, "Squiggles?!" He cackled a bit until resuming his usual air of arrogance, "Calm down Potter. There are a few million pregnant women every year who guzzle down teas and things they know nothing about beside the fact that they taste good and their spawn turn out fine. Sit," he gestured at the chair across from him. Malfoy looked really good when he laughed. Startled by his own thoughts on that matter Harry quickly obeyed and plopped down on the chair opposite of Malfoy without any complaints at being treated like a dog. "What's wrong with Squiggles? I have to call him something and right now he's just a little squiggly inside me...I like it."

"Only you Potter. Now listen, you're following Pomfrey's advice as well as conventional wisdoms like no alcohol and whatnot so your squiggly sprog will be fine. The very fact that you almost had a panic attack about how suited you are as a parent is proof that you will be just fine as a dad." Draco leaned back in his chair, "You're already automatically thinking of your son first and that is what makes a good parent. That is spoken from the perspective of a grown up child who can look back on how he was raised and see what was perfect and what might have been missing."

"As many issues as I have with your parents and believe me...There are many I really do believe they did their best raising you. There's no doubt that they both love you...I envy that." Harry fidgeted, not really believing what he was saying, this was Malfoy for Merlin's sake...You didn't have heart to heart conversations with Malfoy, it just wasn't done. "Sooo...Right no alcohol, absolutely not. I don't think I'll ever get drunk again." Smooth, Harry almost banged his head on the table, yeah, really smooth change of topic.
"Hangovers are never a pleasant state of affairs no," Draco didn't flutter an eyelash at Harry's comment. He knew why the brunette had said it and figured that ignoring the elephant in that room was the best course as well as a good way to distract himself from the odd flutter of pity he'd felt when Potter had mentioned envying Draco's relationship with his parents. "Now back to our real subject. The Secrecy Law was created to protect us from Muggles who'd more than happily chop our heads off because we have magic, they don't, and a religion told them we were the devil's servants. It's secondary to the First Law though. The First Law is the only one recognized by magic herself and the main impetus behind all of the laws involving children. The children are to be protected and any magic they have nurtured to the best of their caretaker's abilities until it settles. It's this rule and law that will keep anyone from taking your son away from you once the Weasel signs away his parental rights."

"Merlin I can't wait for him to sign." Harry ran his fingers through his hair. "I know that's bad but I will feel so much better when his out of my life completely and officially with no going back. As for the laws I think I do understand at least the basics of them now and why they are so important. You're actually not half bad as a teacher when you drop the eye rolling and the sneering." He fiddled with the cuff of his shirt. "Thank you by the way, for not telling anyone. I know I won't be able to hide it for very long but I don't want anyone to know until Ron has signed."

Draco nodded, "Understandable. Montague should have the papers ready by tomorrow as we told him to put the rush on it. And there's nothing in it for me to tell anyone and far more in it for me to keep silent so no need to thank me. In any case you won't have much to worry about so long as the Weasel signs those papers. Speaking of there are only three people in the castle who can act as the notary, Severus, McGonagall, and Flitwick. Which one would you like to have as the notary witness?"

Harry thought about it for a while. "Well Snape already knows so I think I'd like to go with him. I know I have to tell Headmistress McGonagall but as weird as it is I would feel most comfortable with Snape. At least with him I know there would be no pitying look or poor Potter speeches. I made this bed and now I have to lie in it, that's all there is to it."

Draco nodded and smirked, "Have you noticed the ingredients in the last two potions he taught? He is actually quite solidly in your corner."

"I doubt that, I think it's more about enjoying the opportunity to inflict pain and humiliation on a student. That said I really do enjoy it. Watching Ron handle spiders both in potions and DADA has made my week." Harry snickered as he stretched out in the chair. "That demonstration Snape forced him to do in front of the class made me tingly all over."

"Please Potter, that's more information than I need to know." There was a gleam of unholy
amusement in the gray eyes though, "I happen to know for a fact that there are eighteen potions in final year curriculum that require spiders, ten of those require live spiders."

"I didn't mean it like that...Eww, the thought of being aroused anywhere near professor Snape is enough to make me have nightmares. Other than that I do believe that potions are quickly becoming my favorite subject, I can't complain about the entertainment it offers." Harry grinned.

"Yes the entertainment value has always been a particular favorite of mine." Draco handed Harry the parchment he'd been writing on, "Those are the pertinent bits that we've discussed today. Time's up and you I do believe are going to be yawning in the next ten minutes if the sprog keeps the schedule he's apparently set. Go back to the dorm and curl up with that purring beast that has adopted you over Granger."

"Fine, fine. Thank you for today's lesson." Harry was beginning to feel tired and a nap sounded like the most amazing idea ever. Crookshanks was still with him and Harry couldn't bring himself to turn him away. Besides it wasn't as if Hermione had come looking for him either. Harry could count the times he'd spent with his bushy haired friend since school started on one hand. She was always busy. "I'll see you later then and you'll be there tomorrow right? With the Barrister and the signing?"
Believe it or not Harry would actually feel a whole lot better with Malfoy there, the git spoke lawyer fluently but that was not the reason Harry wanted him there...He couldn't actually name a true reason, only that he did want him there.

"Of course. As your pureblood representative it's my job to be there and make sure Weasel doesn't pull a nasty surprise...not that I think he has the brains to." Draco's voice was light, making it a joke but he was truly concerned that Weasley would somehow manage to think before signing and that would be a disaster. Ron Weasley might not be the most admirable man in the world but once he got hold of something he didn't let it go, especially if there was money involved. "Now I intend to go to the library to get a few more gems for the Transfiguration essay. If your nap is disturbed by something rummaging round by my bed, it's just Pansy trying to find her birthday present. Clear your throat and she'll probably leave knowing she's been caught."

"And will she care that she's been caught?" Somehow Harry doubted that. "She will probably only force me to help her look." He said it with a smile and folded up the parchment Malfoy had given him, placing it in his back as he got ready to go. "Good luck with your library research." Harry slipped out of the classroom they had used and hurried towards the dungeons and some rest.

To Be Continued…
Chapter Four

Disclaimer: Neither Acherona nor trulywicked have any claim on Harry Potter or any characters or locations thereof.

Warnings: Angst, lots of it, Male Pregnancy, mental torture, infant in peril, boys in love, friendships broken and new friends gained. Disregards canon in so many ways.

MOCKINGBIRD

Chapter Four.

Draco sat beside Potter in Severus' office, the potion master speaking at length with Montague while they waited for the Weasel to show up, the papers for the redhead to sign sitting innocuously on the desk in front of them. He was explaining to Potter that as soon as they were signed and given the notary seal they would disappear, immediately filed and set in magical stone. As soon as Severus put his seal to the papers there would be nothing Weasley could do to regain his parental rights.

He noticed that Severus had recently added small terrariums containing rare spiders used in complicated potions on his desk. A purely Slytherin move that would ensure that Weasley thought of little else but getting out of there as quickly as humanly possible.

Harry couldn't stop fidgeting as he sat next to Malfoy. He was so nervous, more than nervous actually, he was terrified. He felt sick to his stomach and for once it wasn't Squiggles who was the cause of his nausea.

"Relax Mr. Potter." Montague looked at him from underneath the largest eyebrows Harry had ever seen. "As soon as Mr. Weasley comes and signs the papers this matter will be over and done with."

"Yeah." Harry agreed weakly. He wasn't as confident as the others. Sure Ron could appear to be thick and uninterested in most things but Harry had learned not to underestimate him. There was no chance he could relax in the slightest until the papers were signed, witnessed and filed away. There was no way he would let Ron get his hands on his baby, no matter what happened Harry would see to that even if he had to run. His son would grow up safe and loved.
There was a short knock on the door and Harry steeled himself.

Ron was beyond irritated. He finally had a day free of detentions, dealing with the classes from hell, even his brother seemed to be conspiring against him and having them transfigure several spiders into one teacup, and instead of spending it practicing Quidditch and flirting with Parvati as he'd wanted, he'd been summoned here. He scanned the room curling his lip in disgust at Harry, taking in Malfoy's presence as well as the lawyer, who looked as greasy as Snape with eyebrows that were almost living, and then he spotted two terrariums full of spiders on the desk and paled. Just what he needed more spiders. All he wanted now was to get this over with and get shed of any responsibility to the bastard Harry carried and ties to the brunette as soon as he could. "Alright just hand me what I have to sign so I can get out of here."

Snape lifted a brow and glared down his nose at the redhead, "We've no love for your presence either Weasley, have a seat and we will proceed with alacrity."

Ron plonked his arse down in the seat farthest from Harry which also happened to be rather close to the spiders and one of the eight legged terrors lunged at the glass towards him prompting a rather girly scream and a jump. "Bloody hell fine get on with it!"

The corners of Harry's mouth kicked up at the sound of Ron's shrieking and he looked down at his lap so that he wouldn't annoy Ron more by laughing. He couldn't help but wonder what Snape had done to those spiders to make them want to target Ron. Even now they slammed themselves against the glass, crawling all over each other in an attempt to get at the redheaded boy.

"Very well Mr. Weasley though there's no need for profanities." Montague slid a stack of parchments towards him and handed him a very special quill. One that drew on the magic of the one writing with it. Making sure it was binding and making sure the one signing did so willingly. "Please sign at the marked spots if you will."

Ron, too terrified of the lunging spiders that actually shook their cages as they hit the glass with great force to bother looking at anything but the line to sign, just went through all the papers as quickly as he possibly could, scrawling his name over them in a rush. He signed the final paper and flung the stack at the desk, "There. Can I go now?"

Severus took the papers, "First I must provide the notary signature and seal." He went through the stack, reading each page both because he wasn't an idiot and because he wanted to torment the redhead a bit more. His brow quirked subtly at a byline that stated should Ronald Bilius Weasley ever threaten the child Harry carried he would forfeit any and all money, valuables, and properties currently held to the child. He signed and stamped the final page with the notary seal and the papers disappeared in a magical puff.
"That's it? It's done?" Harry looked between the barrister and Ron with narrowed green eyes, as if afraid to get his hopes up.

At Montague's nod Harry's entire body relaxed, Squiggles was safe and Ron would never be able to hurt him. "Now you can be on your merry little way. Actually I would prefer it if you left now."

Cool green eyes landed on Ron and Harry was glad that he managed to keep his voice steady and aloof when he spoke to his former best friend. "We are completely done now you and I." Harry thought it would be more difficult to end eight years of friendship but it wasn't. All he felt when he looked at Ron now was disgust. "I would be happy if I never had to see you again."

Draco felt an unbidden surge of pride in Potter for the control he was showing and the cold glare leveled at the Weasel. "Yes Weasel...y. Do take off," he made a shooing motion towards the door, "before those spiders manage to break loose. What on earth did you do this morning anyway? Bathe in essence of spider pheromones?"

Ron opened his mouth to retort but a hard slam of a pair of spiders had a terrarium actually moving an inch off the desk and his fear spoke for him in a squeak and the puff of smoke he nearly left behind when he ran from the room.

Draco met his godfather's gaze, twin smirks on their faces as they waited to be sure the redhead was out of earshot. Then they both released a cruel chuckle. The blond lifted a brow at the spiders that calmed down, "Fully mature male flushing redbacks aren't they?" He nodded at the completely black spiders.

Snape nodded, "They are."

"You are evil; I do so hope to be like you when I finish growing up."

Harry couldn't hold in his snort at that. "Don't worry Malfoy, I think you're well on your way to true evilness. The spiders really were a nice touch professor Snape. I almost hoped they would make it out of their glass and try and mate with his hair."

Snape just smirked in satisfaction, "That could be arranged at a later date if you'd like Mr. Potter."

Montague cleared his throat. "Well since we're done hear I should be on my way, please do consider me for any future legal endeavors you might have." All three men in the room were very powerful
"Thank you, I will." Harry nodded and watched the barrister get ready to leave.

Draco waited until the lawyer had left then turned back to Harry, "As much as I hate to break the levity and relief of the moment, I somehow doubt that the Weasel will just fade into the shadows. Not once he realizes what he's just chucked away. He can't regain his rights but he can try to regain your favor," he scoffed in disgust, "a guaranteed failure but he never has liked it when things don't go his way."

Harry made a grimace of displeasure. "You're right, as much as I hate to admit that. Eugh, I hope you're wrong though, just the thought of Ron near me, playing to be nice is enough to make me sick. Thank Merlin he can't get in to our common room and dorm."

Snape bridged his fingers, "You are fully within your rights to simply walk away. I would advise informing at least the staff of your condition, they will assist you in avoiding him cornering you. Also, as you won't be quite full term by the end of the school year, the rest of the Weasley family would more than happily help. Even with just awareness of the bet Miss Weasley and Percy have joined whole heartedly in making their brother miserable."

Draco smirked, "The little virago actually hit him over the head with a platter of bacon the first day. I can only imagine what she's done since."

"When it comes to Ginny one can never know, she can be as devious as the two of you combined when she puts her mind to it. Can't say I mind it now though." Harry smiled but the tension was crawling back in his bones. Somehow he had managed to convince himself that everything would be just fine as soon as Ron had signed. Now it dawned on him that things were only getting started. He had his whole pregnancy in front of him, he had to tell the staff, the students would find out...And he had to tell Molly and Arthur. Harry had no idea what to say but they did deserve to know.

The blond brushed a bit of lint from his sleeve, "I do recall. Such a lovely favorite hex she has," his nose twitched at the memory, "I am rather shocked no Howler has arrived for the Weasel in the morning post yet truth be told."

"I'm not. I doubt Ron has told his parents what he did and as for Ginny and Percy...Well the war was difficult for them. Fred almost died and Molly took a life. All of the kids have been very protective ever since. I know the war was tough on everyone but if you know Molly, the love she has for everyone...For her to feel enough hatred that the killing curse worked...Something broke then and it hasn't been fixed yet." Harry looked down at his lap. He really didn't want to be the one who caused
more problems for the Weasleys.

Snape cleared his throat to get Harry's attention, "Bellatrix threatened Molly's child, I doubt her children aside from Bill can truly grasp the anger and hate that creates in even the most loving of people. Molly is kind, not a saint. You are having your own child, I'm certain you can understand it better now."

"If someone tried to hurt Squiggles I would gladly rip off their heads and shower in their blood." Harry growled but forced himself to calm down. "I do understand what you're saying professor and I may even think you're right. I'm just explaining why none of her children want to cause her any more stress...Myself included."

Draco choked on air, "Stress?! That woman raised the most devious, sneaky, pranksters Hogwarts has seen, and as I am a Slytherin coming from me that means something, if raising Fred and George Weasley didn't drive her mad I hardly think bumping off my psychotic aunt is going to do it."

"You have a point there." Harry didn't know whether to laugh or feel sad that Draco could talk about the death of his aunt so flippantly. Harry absolutely hated Bellatrix, in his mind she was almost worse than Voldemort himself but she was still Draco's family.

A blond brow lifted at the flickering expressions, "You have the most appallingly open face. My aunt, Potter was not much kinder to her family than she was to her enemies. There is no love lost on my part. The only reason I would ever have to feel remorse at her death is the pain it caused my mother. Otherwise," he made a dismissive wave.

"Appallingly open my arse." Harry grumbled but he felt relieved that he hadn't made Malfoy sad...And wasn't that an upsetting thought all on its own? That he worried about Malfoy's feelings?

Snape gave them both a flat stare, "As we have dealt with the main issue for today, if the two of you are quite finished I would like the use of my office back before-" he was interrupted by a happy childish squeal that was becoming more and more familiar.

Teddy came tearing around the corner, very, very naked and very, very wet, his hair full of bath foam. He launched himself at Snape with a happy shout. "Hi Sappy...Missed joo." He nuzzled his wet self against the stern professor.

Harry's eyes were wide as saucers and he feared he was turning purple from his attempt to keep a reign on his amusement.
Draco did not bother to do the same. He took one look at the toddler snuggling against his godfather, smearing foam on the black robes and most assuredly getting them wet, heard the child's mispronunciation of Snape and burst out laughing.

Snape gave his godson a dark glare before sighing and picking up Lupin's son, "I see you've escaped your bath young Lupin."

"Uh huh." Teddy bounced in Snape's arms. "I was sneaky...'scaped." He grinned at the older wizard as if he was a partner in crime.

"There you are." Remus stuck his head inside Snape's office. "I followed the wet trail though I could have guessed where you'd end up anyway." The older Lupin was thankfully not naked but he was almost as wet as his son, foam sticking to his brown hair in certain places.

Draco turned away from the scene, his shoulders shaking as he continued to laugh. Oh he had to Pensieve this for his father. Lucius Malfoy could use some amusement these days considering the difficulties rebuilding business relationships created.

Severus flicked his wand at the blond, casting a silencio and met the honey brown eyes of Teddy's father, "Lupin, you and your son look like some sort of spittle bug has decided to nest in your hair."

"You're just jealous because you don't have Pamonas, pearly peach blossom bath foam in your hair." Remus sniffed and tried to pick his wet slippery son from Snape's arms only to have Teddy cling tighter to the other wizard like some sort of baby monkey. With a defeated sigh he gave up and handed Snape the yellow terry cloth towel he was carrying.

"I think you both look very dashing, a new fashion statement." Harry agreed and pulled on the now muted blonds' elbow. "It's time for us to leave but thank you for your help. He nodded to both Snape and Remus, kissed Teddy on his forehead and pulled Malfoy out of Snape's office before he reversed the silencio.

Draco continued laughing for a few moments before gaining control of himself, "Oh if ever there was a pensive memory it was that." His eyes glimmered with the amusement. "'Sappy' of all mispronunciations for Snape. Oh your godson just made my day Potter."

Harry chuckled happily. "Sappy the dungeon bat...Oh Merlin, did you see his expression when
Teddy jumped on him?"

"Oh I saw, horror and resignation. Ah glorious. I'll be paying for my laughter next private lesson with him but it will be worth it." Draco walked companionably alongside Harry. He glanced over at the brunette, briefly struck by how much better he looked when in a good mood. He could certainly see why great mobs of idiots practically threw themselves at Potter's feet; the man was startlingly attractive when one bothered to really look. The blond nearly tripped on his own feet when he realized what he was thinking. He knew he played seeker for the home team but really, admiring Potter? Where was that coming from?

He would never have thought the day would come when he would walk alongside Malfoy and have a conversation with him without insults and snarkiness. It was nice. When Malfoy forgot to put on his Malfoy mask he was rather insightful and he had a dry sense of humor that fit Harry's own. When they got to the entrance to the Slytherin common room Harry paused and bit his lip. "I should probably grip the broom by the handle and go find McGonagall, she's a kind witch but I doubt she likes to be kept in the dark."

Draco turned and lifted a brow, "No especially not when it involves her favorite lion cub. You might be Slytherin now but you were a Gryffindor first and I refuse to believe you were not her favorite."

"Really Mr. Malfoy, you don't think the Headmistress have ever played favorites now do you? Shocking." Harry fluttered his lashes playfully. To deny that McGonagall had favored him and still did would be like saying that Snape was a closet Hufflepuff. "If I'm not back in an hour you can have my broom. I've seen you eye it on several occasions."

Draco turned up his nose, "I have merely been attempting to see what the fuss has all been about. Really it is beneath me to covet what I could so easily have, I quite prefer my own broom thank you."

"If you say so." Harry replied easily and hefted his rather heavy bag into Malfoy's arms. "My broom is the one that's seen victory though...Of course that has more to do with the one riding it. Be a good boy and drop my bag off on my bed thank you." He waved cheekily at the blond and walked down the corridor, towards the stairs.

Draco nearly staggered under the weight suddenly in his arms, "Bloody hell what is he carting around, bricks?" He turned to go in and do 'requested' before returning to the common room to do some arithmetic equations involved in an experimental potion that he'd been wanting to create. It was years off but he fully intended to gain his mastery and create a potion that would reverse the effects of the Cruciatius curse.
To Be Continued…
Draco watched Potter try and rearrange his robes, then his shirt, then his pants then start over trying to conceal the bulge of stomach that had slowly grown over the last three months. It was a few days shy of St. Patrick's Day and Potter was roughly five months along and being male without the wide hips of a woman, he showed a great deal more than a girl would. "You might as well give it up as a lost cause Potter."

Harry glared but then huffed and sat down on the bed, stroking his bump. "I have transfigured my trousers so that they are barely hanging together and I still can't get the button done...I'm huge." Harry groaned. "Ah well, I know it was coming, no point trying to hide or deny it now I think." He hoisted himself up again. "Oh won't this be a delightful breakfast." Harry's voice was dripping with sarcasm.

"You dwell far too much on what others think or will think or say. Yes you'll have eyes on you and whispers flying but how is that any different than normal?" Draco waved Harry in front of him to exit the dorms and common room, "As for your trousers, this weekend is a Hogsmeade weekend so you can pop by Gladrags and get some more that will accommodate for the sprog."

"Yeah, I think I'll have to do that...These things are bloody uncomfortable." Harry pulled on the black fabric, pinching his waist. They walked up and entered the Great Hall, Harry moving to sit next to Malfoy and Pansy who he'd found that he actually liked. He was aware of the eyes that followed him but he simply lifted his chin, placed a hand on his stomach and began to eat his breakfast.

Up at the head table both Severus and Minerva watched the hall for reactions. Minerva was aware of a soft choking sound that came from Percy Weasley and the sight of Ginny Weasley dropping her
silverware and staring in shock as the whispers erupted, creating a din in the hall. She narrowed her eyes at Ronald as he determinedly ducked his head and ignored the chaos around him to shovel food into his mouth. Hermione Granger was also staring in shock, a goblet halfway to her mouth and her face pale, looking for all the world as if something had slapped her in the face.

Severus noticed Luna Lovegood pinning those at her own table with a rare serious and hard look, slashing a hand through the air before saying something that had the table calming down and subsiding into quiet whispers and occasional evil glares in Ronald's direction. Then he saw Ginny Weasley seem to recover and grab for her wand, only being held back from hexing her own brother by the two boys sitting on either side of her. Dean Thomas and Seamus Finnegan were pale and looked, for the first time since the bet had been suggested, guilty and contrite.

The noise in the hall was so loud even Ginny's shouted threats and insults at her brother were drowned out but everything stopped when Neville Longbottom stood up and walked towards the Slytherin table.

Draco was proud to see that every single Slytherin had their hands on their wands as Longbottom came over to Harry, a determined look on his face but under that was a touch of shame. The blond shifted so that he could move in front of Potter at any moment and waited for Longbottom to make a move.

Neville looked down at his friend nervously and took a breath to calm himself, "Harry?"

"Yes Neville, how may I help you?" Harry wasn't angry or short in tone but he wasn't exactly brimming with warmth either. Neville had never been mean or cruel, Harry knew that he'd had nothing to with the bet that had led to all this but he hadn't been there either. Neville had just been one more bond severed and friend lost.

Pansy looked the Gryffindor over. Say what you want but it took guts walking over to the snakes' lair like that. She commended it.

"I've been a very lousy friend. I'm sorry." Neville looked off to the side, "I never have been a very good Gryffindor and I didn't have the courage to stand up against the others for you. You deserved a lot better than that."

"Rubbish!" Harry looked up and met Neville's eyes. "You are the best Gryffindor of the lot, always have been. I think you're the only one who really got what it's all about. I understand why you did what you did...It's not easy being alone. I get it. Now sit down and eat with us."
Draco rolled his eyes as the Gryffindor dithered and solved the problem by reaching out and yanking Neville down by the tie to sit next to Pansy. "Happy early birthday Pans. Have a Gryffindor."

"Mmm, my favorite kind." Pansy leaned closer towards Neville and gave him a slow, wicked smile. "Will I get to unwrap him?"

Neville's cheeks turned a deep red at that comment much to Draco's amusement. Poor man was doomed.

The hall was still in an uproar and the whispers grew louder.

Lavender pouted at the Gryffindor table. "So I guess I'll finally have to give up on ever becoming Mrs. Potter...Since it looks like he'd rather be the lady in the relationship himself. I envy the kid though, talk about being born with a bloody diamond spoon in its mouth."

Ron looked over at her and frowned, "What do you mean by that Lav?"

"Come on Ron, you of all people should know. Potter has two lordships, a townhouse, two bloody manors and more money than the Minister himself." Lavender sighed wistfully. "That bun baking inside Potter will be the head heir to all those goodies. That child will be richer and more powerful only by being born that either one of us can hope to ever become."

Ron's mouth dropped open and he turned the color of rice paper. He'd forgotten that. Harry had always been just that to him, just Harry. Not Lord Potter-Black, just Harry. The scrawny boy who was stuck in clothes ten sizes too big and had holes in his shoes. He'd forgotten that now that he'd come into his majority Harry was one of, if not the richest man in the wizarding world. And the brat he'd planted in Harry would have all that. His hand tightened on his fork. And he'd signed over his rights to that child three months ago.

Draco noticed the Weasel's expression from across the hall, "I do believe the weasel's brain just woke up, unfortunately."

"I guess I gave him too much credit because I thought he would figure it out sooner. Ah well...I hope he wallows in the knowledge that he'll never see a bloody knut." Harry raised his juice glass in a mock toast towards Ron. The sad thing was that before all this, Harry had wanted nothing more than to share everything he had with his precious people. He was as far from greedy or petty that you
could come but Ron had hurt him all the way into his soul and Harry was sick and tired to forgive and forget.

Neville watched Ron turn red and his jaw tightened, "Be careful Harry, you know how Ron's temper is. I don't want you or your erm," he gestured uncomfortably at Harry's belly, "to get hurt."

Draco sipped at his morning juice, "He calls the sprog Squiggles for now if that helps Longbottom. As for the Weasel, he'll have to get through, first Luna Lovegood, his own sister, McGonagall, my godfather, Lupin, then Pans, and there is of course me..." he paused as the entire Slytherin table chimed in with an 'us as well' making him smirk in satisfaction, "Should he manage to survive that small army there is finally Harry himself to contend with. The prat doesn't stand a chance."

"Don't worry Neville; I can take care of myself. I may be pregnant but I'm not helpless...Thank you for caring though." Harry smiled at Neville and at his new house that had turned out to be both kind and loyal and he treasured every one of them. "I would never let him hurt Squiggles."

"I know you're not helpless Harry. I can't help but worry though." Neville made a silent promise to himself to watch Ron and do as he should have been doing all year so far, protecting Harry. "So is Squiggles a Lord or Lady?"

Harry beamed at him, Squiggles was his favorite subject after all and his fellow Slytherins were probably sick and tired of listening to him. "Squiggles is a Lord, the next Lord Potter-Black." He took Neville's hand and placed it on the side of his stomach. "Here feel, right now the Lord Squiggles is having his morning workout."

Neville's eyes went wide, "That's...wow."

Draco felt a surge of jealousy from out of the blue at the sight of Neville's hand on the mound of Harry's belly and had to look away, pretending to reach for some hot spiced eggs as he tried to get a grip on himself. Where the bloody hell had that come from? Sure he knew Potter was attractive and, though it could get on the nerves, his gushing about the sprog was actually somewhat adorable. So Potter was also humble, frighteningly vulnerable at times then unbreakably strong, he had a sneaky dry humor that poked its head out when he was comfortable, and a disgustingly kind, generous nature that Draco couldn't fathom the origin of, that was no reason to get jealous and...bugger. Had he been alone he'd have smacked his head into the table. He was falling for bloody Potter!

"Careful Dray, your mask is slipping." Pansy watched him intently as she leaned close and whispered to him. "Turn off the glare, I can't have you breaking my present before I've even had a chance to play with it now can I?"
The blond made a very soft hiss and exerted control of himself with a herculean effort then smiled at his friend, "Just keep the whips and chains put away until the third date darling."

"Oh Phooey, how boring but I'll be a good girl...For now." Pansy pouted but placed her hand over Draco's for a second. She was glad he was himself again since she knew how much he hated losing control, even a little. Right here in the middle of breakfast was certainly no place to do it either, the students had enough to gossip about as it was.

"But not too good right," he relaxed at her touch, grateful that she'd been there to help him catch himself. He'd find a spot by himself later though and kick himself in the arse. He was sure Myrtle could use some company.

"Please...If I was too good I'd croak within the hour." She gave him a reassuring smile before turning her attention back to Neville. Now that he sat there with them she wouldn't let him get away without planting herself firmly inside his mind.

"So Malfoy, want to come with me to Hogsmeade this weekend? I could use your fashion eye or else I might come home with last season's maternity clothes." Harry looked at him expectantly.

"Oh we can't have that so I suppose I must," the green-eyed monster settled down now that Potter's attention was on him rather than Longbottom, "And you have my word of honor, I will not let the shop assistant con you into frilly female anything too."

"Oi I don't dress that horribly, I don't think I would come home with women's clothing even if I was on my own." Harry glared. "I do appreciate your help though; maybe we could have lunch or something afterwards as well."

"Not the Three Broomsticks, my name remains mud there." Draco nibbled on his toast. "There's a small cafe next to the bookshop that should do well enough."

"Fine by me." Harry didn't really care where they ate or what they were doing, he just found that he liked Malfoy's company and he'd rather that Malfoy would spend the day with him than anyone else. The thought of Malfoy with someone else did not sit well with Harry. "Three Broomsticks is always so crowded anyway. I'm hoping to keep Squiggles out of the papers for a little while longer at least."

Holding back the sarcasm nearly burned his tongue but Draco didn't drawl good luck as he'd wanted to. Instead he nodded and picked up another piece of toast to gnaw on, "The Bookworm's Pages it is
Neville cleared his throat, "Um Harry I don't mean to be nosy but have you told Mr. and Mrs. Weasley about Squiggles yet?"

Harry flushed and looked down at the table top. "Um...No." He fiddled with the spoon to his boiled egg. "I know I need to and I've meant to do it so many times but I keep chickening out. I don't know what to say...Congratulations, you are going to be Grandparents but keep your son as far away from me as you can before I neuter him with a fork..."

A good half of the table's boys heard him and cringed while the girls applauded and Neville couldn't help but chuckle, "You might like to leave that last bit off but you should tell them before the weekend just in case a reporter is lurking."

"You're right. I shall ask McGonagall if I can floo over to the Burrow or if they can come here. I think I should give them news like this in person." Harry knew he needed to tell them but it was so hard. Telling them about this meant telling them that his friendship with Ron was over too. What if they didn't like him anymore, what if he didn't have any place in their family? Harry was afraid, plain and simple.

Draco tapped Harry on the shoulder and pointed in the direction of Ron, who was currently being faced with his sister, who was hitting him over the head with a baguette and haranguing him. "If that one is any indication you shouldn't worry."

Ginny's voice finally penetrated the din of the hall, "You foul," whack, "evil," whack, "stupid," whack, "bloody heartless traitor," whack whack whack, "you should have been neutered at birth!" at that point she picked up her brother's plate and hit him over the head with the heavy metal before Dean and Seamus managed to drag her off and out of the hall, leaving Ron looking a bit dazed and covered in gravy.

Harry couldn't help it; he burst out giggling hysterically at the sight. "Ginny always had a certain way with words...Like poetry."

Pansy gave Draco a worried look. "Okay, we all know you're a little off Potter but you're starting to get scary. If I wanted crazy I could have stayed with Grandmother Dearest."

"Sorry, sorry. I'm just relieved it's out there. No more hiding." Harry wiped tears of mirth from his
eyes and got ready to go and ask McGonagall about being permitted to leave school grounds before
she walked out of the Great Hall.

Draco absently held Harry's arm to steady him as he moved off the bench. "You might want to bring
a bucket. From what I hear flooing and pregnancy don't like each other much, not dangerous but not
pleasant on the stomach either."

Harry paled, having had morning sickness for the longest time before it finally disappeared he did not
look forward to tossing his cookies again. "Aw Malfoy, you always know exactly what to say to
make my day bright and full of sunshine, thank you so much for that." He plastered on a wide smile
and pinched Malfoy's cheek.

"Augh, get off Potter." Draco rubbed his cheek, "Fine next time I won't bother warning you about
anything and let you experience it for yourself. Prat."

"And give up the right of smug 'I told you so's'?" Harry's eyes were wide and innocent. "Huh, looks
like wonders never cease. Now don't pout, it doesn't suit you. You know that if I do get permission
to go to the Burrow I am going to drag you along to hold the damn bucket."

"Only if you can find me," he bit of a piece of bacon, "Now stop stalling and go talk to
McGonagall."

"I'm going, I'm going. You're so bossy." Harry walked towards the Head Table and just because he
could he pushed out his tummy as far as it would go. If they all wanted to stare then he would give
them something to look at. The conversation was short and Harry got permission to use the floo in
the Headmistress office to go through. Now all he needed to do was to owl the Weasleys and ask if it
was alright that he came to visit.

OoOoOoOoO

Arthur chuckled at his wife who was bustling about doing some straightening up trying to pass the
time until Harry came by for the visit he asked for earlier that week. He and his wife had both been
somewhat worried because there had been a hesitant tone to the letter Harry had sent them and they
wondered what was so important that he had permission to floo out of Hogwarts. First Molly had
dealt with the anxiety by knitting all of the next year's Weasley sweaters, then she'd cleaned the
house top to bottom, then had been the baking, and now it was just nervous nitpicking about throws
and whatnot. He himself had dealt with the worry as he always did, took it out on the contraptions in
his shed and gone through a thousand scenarios in his head each one worse than the next. Now he
was stationed at the fireplace to catch Harry when the younger man fell out as he was wont to do.
"It's already seven pm. He should be here anytime." Molly fidgeted behind Arthur and straightened a pillow that was already perfect. "I'll go and check on the pie in the oven, I want to give Harry a real treat since he hasn't been here for so long." She disappeared into the kitchen just as the fire blazed green and Harry came tumbling out, clutching a bucket tightly in his left hand.

Arthur moved quickly, catching the brunette and helping him to kneel on the floor just in time to watch Harry vomit into the bucket he'd brought through. His eyes widened and he ran a comforting hand up and down Harry's back, gaze locked on a bulging belly, as the young man threw up.

"Heh, hi Mr. Weasley." Harry wiped his mouth and vanished the waste once again; he had gotten really good at that by now. "Sorry about that, not exactly the hello I had in mind." Damnit but the git had been right, Floo travel and pregnancy did NOT go well together. Harry already dreaded the other Floo trip back to Hogwarts.

"Er no, no I can't imagine it was." He helped the brunette up and over to the squishy couch, "It's good to see you Harry. How have you been?" Yes Arthur knew about the elephant in the room but until Harry started talking about it he'd ignore it as his experience with Molly during each and every pregnancy was NEVER to refer to the belly or even mention that you could see it even if it looked like someone had swallowed a Quaffle.

"Oh I've been well. Learning and...Growing." Harry placed his hands in his lap and looked everywhere but at Arthur's kind brown eyes. The Burrow was just as lovely and homey as usual and Harry dreaded breaking the peace here with what he had to say.

"Harry!" Molly rushed into the room. "You're finally here, we were so happy when we got your letter, it's so great to see you. How...are...you?" Her voice trailed off as her eyes locked on Harry's midsection.

"Hello Mrs. Weasley, it's wonderful seeing you too." Harry bit his bottom lip. "I do have something I need to talk to you about."

Molly walked over and sat down in the wingback chair opposite the sofa where Harry and her husband sat.

Arthur put a hand on Harry's shoulder, "What is it Harry? You know you can tell us anything, you're family."
Gods Harry hoped that would be true even after he had finished speaking. Taking a deep breath he placed his hand on his stomach. "As you can see there's a little more of me than when we last saw each other. It definitely wasn't planned but I got pregnant...It's a boy." A small smile lit up Harry's features when he spoke of Squiggles, "Oh Merlin this is so difficult...A lot of things changed after the war...People changed. Ron is the father but...But we're not together, we're not even friends anymore. When I told him about the baby he wasn't pleased. He signed away all parental rights a few months ago, wanting nothing to with me or the baby." Harry couldn't bear to look at them, didn't want to see if their kind expressions melted into disgust. "You are Squiggles Grandparents though and I would love it if you wanted to be a part of our lives."

Molly was too stunned to even open her mouth. Of all the things Harry could have said she'd never had expected this. Oh how she wished Ron was here so she could box his ears. What was her idiot of a youngest son thinking?

Arthur's jaw clenched in anger. Oh not at Harry, not at all, but at his youngest son. How could Ron do something like this? He put it away for now however, though Ronald would indeed be hearing from him and soon. Now Harry needed to know that they weren't angry or any of the dozens of other things he was certain were going through Harry's head. He wrapped his arms around the young man who had become as much a son to him as his own flesh and blood. "Of course we want to be a part of your lives. You're family as I said and that won't change because of something Ronald has done."

Harry's body gave a shudder and he leaned into Arthur's embrace, closing his eyes and wrapping his own arms around the older wizard.

"Oh Harry, you are our child too, have been since you were eleven years old." Molly moved to sit on Harry's other side. "You giving us another Grandchild is a gift, our first boy. We want to be there for you every step of the way. As Arthur says you are family." She dabbed at her eyes. "Are you well, do you have someone to take care of you? Are you eating right? Do you go to regular check ups?"

Harry had to smile at the assault of questions even though his own eyes were teary. "The answers to all those questions are yes." He pulled away from the embrace slightly but was still leaning against Arthur. "I'm sorry I didn't tell you sooner."

Arthur pat him on the back, "It's alright, we understand." He was not a violent man by nature, except when it came to Lucius Malfoy but that was an entirely different kettle of fish, but he would love to visit Harry's blood relatives and hex them until they resembled flobberworms more than human beings. What they had done to crush Harry's faith in family and in people willing to stand by him no matter what was unforgivable in his book. "So who's helping you out at Hogwarts?"
"My whole house has been very supportive." Molly and Arthur both knew about the re-sorting since Harry had written them when it happened. "The one who's helped me the most though, who's teaching me about pureblood customs and what me and my baby can expect is Draco Malfoy. He's really been a great help."

What was the world coming to? First her son acts like an idiot and then a Malfoy of all people steps up and takes care of Harry Potter. The warmth with which Harry spoke of his housemate was enough to get her Mother senses tingling and she exchanged a look with her husband over Harry's head. She hoped that Malfoy wasn't up to something because she had resorted to violence once and was fully capable of doing it again if someone was out to harm one of her babies.

Arthur almost bit his tongue through to keep from saying something he shouldn't. A Malfoy, a Malfoy for Merlin's sake! He met his wife's eyes and read the same shock and suspicion there as he felt but he gave Harry a squeeze and managed to say, "I'm glad he's helping you out then son."

"He is but the one person I wouldn't have managed without at all is Luna." Harry's voice softened even more as he spoke of his dreamy friend. "She's been an endless support through everything and I don't think I could have coped without her. She knows when to coddle me and when to kick my arse. If she didn't have the wrong plumbing I would have swept her up and married her in an instant." That wasn't really true but Harry was joking. The love he felt for Luna was the love for a sister, very strong and very real but completely platonic.

Arthur smiled, "Xenophilius' girl has always been rather impressive."

Molly smiled and leaned in towards the messy haired boy for another hug. She was happy he'd had Luna Lovegood to lean in and to help but a small part of her felt sad that it wasn't one of her children who'd been there for him. It was really a silly thought but she couldn't shake it. Also she wondered where Hermione was in all this, Harry hadn't mentioned her at all. Molly didn't want to upset him now that they had Harry there so she didn't say anything about it. "I'm glad you have people to lean on."

She got up from the couch. "I need to go out in the kitchen and check on the pie, you are staying for tea and pie right?"

"Wouldn't miss it for the world." Harry smiled back at her, so very relieved that they had taken the news so well.
Arthur grinned as his wife bustled to the kitchen happily and let Harry go with a pat on the shoulder, "So how have classes been going then? No one is writing us these days."

"Things have been very busy," Harry tried to excuse both himself and the other Weasley children for not writing. Immediately feeling guilty that he hadn't spent more time with them or been in touch more. "Classes are rough; I think that us returning students are expecting more of ourselves, that we try even harder. I'm not sure how to explain it. It's fun though, we're learning a lot."

Arthur nodded, "Repeating something you always want to do better the second time round. How's Percy doing as a professor?"

"Really well. I was surprised when I saw him at the Head Table at the welcoming feast but he's doing really well. He has a knack for teaching, he explains it so you understand and he hasn't lost his temper with a student once." Harry smiled. "Oh and most girls and a lot of the boys have such a crush on him, Percy's become quite the heart throb professor."

Arthur laughed at that, "Oh don't tell the twins, poor Percy will never hear the end of it if you do." He ruffled the brunette's hair affectionately, "Why don't you and I go keep Molly company in the kitchen? That way she doesn't have to shift between rooms."

Harry nodded and heaved himself off the couch with some effort and followed Arthur to the Burrow's cozy, chaotic kitchen. It was probably the room he liked best in the house. Molly smiled when they came in and sat down and immediately began to chatter and fuss over both of them. Harry just smiled and enjoyed spending time with his surrogate parents before he had to return to the castle.

To Be Continued…
Chapter Six

Disclaimer: Neither Acherona nor trulywicked have any claim on Harry Potter or any characters or locations thereof.

Warnings: Angst, lots of it, Male Pregnancy, mental torture, infant in peril, boys in love, friendships broken and new friends gained. Disregards canon in so many ways.

MOCKINGBIRD

Chapter Six.

Draco actually staggered into the common room, secure enough in the knowledge that most everyone would be in their dorms sound asleep that he allowed himself to drop the aloof mask as he went to a sofa and collapsed face first onto it. Just a few moments was all he needed, just a few scant moments to recuperate from the apprenticeship level potion lesson from hell he'd just been put through by his godfather, and then he'd go to the dorm and sleep in his bed.

Harry snuck into the common room quietly, still shivering from the evil eye McGonagall had given him for coming back so late. He hadn't meant to stay so long but it had been so nice and he and the Weasleys had simply forgotten about the time. The common room was dark, only lit by the fire and a few hanging lanterns, spreading a soft, eerie light over the plush leather furniture. A flash of blond caught Harry's eye and he noticed the tall figure sprawled out in one of the sofas. Harry had never seen Malfoy like that before, sprawled out and relaxed. Walking over softly Harry kneeled at the edge of the sofa and unable to control his urge he reached out and ran his fingers through softer than silk, pale hair.

The blond jolted and flipped over, light gray eyes wide and startled until they saw Harry, "Merlin's boots, it's you Potter. For a moment I was concerned it was one of the squirrels that were transfigured a couple of days ago." He noted the complete lack of pajamas and lifted a brow, too tired to bother getting up just yet. "Just now getting back?"

"Yeah." Harry's voice was somewhat scratchy, he was startled and somewhat disturbed how much just running his fingers through Malfoy's hair had affected him and how protective he'd felt when Malfoy whirled around all wide eyed like that. "Rough night?"

"Long. Any apprenticeship means harder work than most sane people attempt but potions is a bit
more exacting; only a medical apprenticeship is more grueling from what I've heard tell." He looked up into the bottle green eyes, "How'd it go then?"

Harry wanted to run his thumb over the dark shadow showing underneath Malfoy's eye but he restrained himself. He knew that Malfoy studied hard and that he poured his all into the apprenticeship with Snape but he hadn't fully understood how much it took out of the blond before. He wished he could help him somehow. "It went well, they weren't angry at all and they told me I'm still family and that they would love to be true Grandparents for Squiggles."

The corners of Draco's mouth kicked up, "After which Molly Weasley proceeded to feed you if she held true to what I hear is form." He remained where he was, still tired but more because he rather liked having Harry so close.

"She did." Harry smiled. "I'm so full I'm surprised there's any room left in there for Squiggs. I tried to tell her I ate well here but I think she tried to feed me for a whole year tonight."

"Good," Draco stretched his neck, "the more people who stand at your back the better. I'm...glad they welcomed you and your sprog."

"Thank you." Harry's fingers found their way back to Malfoy's hair without him even thinking about it. "I was so scared when I went there but it went well...And yes I did have use for the bucket so you are free to tell me I told you so."

"Mmm," Draco closed his eyes, the feel of Harry's fingers stroking through his hair felt far too good. "I'll say it tomorrow, I'm fagged tonight. My mother had horror stories about flooing while she carried me, only reason I was able to tell you about it. One time she cast her accounts over the front of a foreign consul's best dress robes....and I must be more tired than I thought if I'm sharing that. She'll kill me if she finds out I did."

"Your secret is safe with me." Draco was far too cute when he was tired like this with lowered defenses. Oh this was not good at all...Not only had Malfoy become Draco in his mind but Harry knew himself well enough to recognize the tingling attraction he felt for the other man. He felt like kicking himself for falling for someone he couldn't have...More importantly, Draco deserved someone who wasn't pregnant with another man's child. Harry came with way too much baggage. He pulled his hand away from Draco's hair and got to his feet, needing to put some distance between them. "Well we should probably get to bed so we can have some real sleep...Goodnight Malfoy." Harry turned on his heel and ran.

Blond brows rose curiously but Draco was far too tired for his mind to work out reasons for Potter's
flight. He groaned and rolled off the sofa and moved to take a brief shower before slipping into his bed in the dorm. He cast a single glance over at Harry and was met with the brunette's back and a pair of glowing cat eyes. He chuckled softly at the purring beast that had taken up its usual post right next to Harry's belly. He gave the orangey feline guardian a salute then settled into his bed and closed his eyes, letting sleep take him.

OoOoOoOoO

Pansy raised a perfectly trimmed eyebrow as she watched the Gryffindor girl crouch and look underneath tables and behind every suit of armor. It was so unlikely behavior coming from Granger that Pansy couldn't curb her curiosity. She walked over to the other girl. "Lost something Granger? Except your fashion sense I mean."

The bushy haired bookworm glared up at the Slytherin, "For your information Parkinson I cannot find my cat." She stood up and moved to look behind a large statue. She'd come out of her academic haze the other day to realize that the food she'd put in Crookshanks' bowl hadn't been eaten in several weeks and that every time she put fresh food in she'd had to absently scrape the old crusty food out. When she thought about it she couldn't remember having even had her cat pushing at her for attention in weeks, months even, and now she was worried he'd run away though being intelligent he'd probably remained on the castle grounds.

"Your...cat?" Pansy scratched her cheek with a vibrantly purple painted nail and looked at the other girl with disbelief. "A large, ginger, ugly beast right? Looks like as if it has run face first into a brick wall?" Had Granger honestly not missed the cat until now? That terror had lived with Potter for almost half a year, always disturbing Pansy when she was snooping around Draco's bed for sweets and gifts. It was rather cute though, how protective the animal was of Potter.

Hermione's head shot up and she jerked around to stare at Pansy, "That's him! You've seen Crookshanks?" She nibbled on her bottom lip hoping that Parkinson wasn't just playing with her as a way of taking vengeance on Harry's behalf. She knew she'd been a horrible friend, not really a friend at all this year, but she didn't know how to apologize and she knew she might slip back into burying herself in her studies again. It was the first time since the troll in her first year that she'd been able to focus only on academics and she'd gone overboard with it.

"Sure I've seen him." Pansy had debated on lying, she didn't want this girl to take away the cat that was obviously important to Potter but she couldn't lie either, not when she saw that Granger was truly upset. "That beast has adopted our Potter, hardly leaves his side." She emphasized the word our just to make sure the Gryffindor knew where Potter belonged now, that she knew who had been taking care of him.

Hermione blinked, "O-oh," she shifted just a bit and chewed on her bottom lip a bit more. She
couldn't blame Crookshanks and certainly couldn't blame Harry, she'd abandoned them both and she knew that the cat would have been looking for a familiar friend and Harry, in his condition, just had needed the familiar and welcoming. She knew well how protective the cat was and knew that he wouldn't come back. He wasn't hers anymore, he was Harry's now. She stiffened her shoulders and pulled a toy mouse out of her pocket, she'd brought it along in case she'd found Crookshanks in a tree and had needed to coax him out, and held it out to Pansy, "Could you get that to Crookshanks then? It's his favorite catnip toy."

Pansy's sharp eyes softened and she took the toy. "I will make sure he gets it. Oh and Granger...Neither the cat or Potter are on another planet, they are just downstairs, why not visit sometime? I promise the rumors about us eating those who dare step inside the snakes layer are untrue...We hardly bite unless we're asked to...How's Longbottom by the way?"

"Neville? Erm...I suppose he's fine?" Hermione grimaced, "I've been a bit er....absorbed in my studies...well more than a bit. As for Harry...I'm not really certain he'd even want to see me all things considered but give him my best, if it seems right? Excuse me." She turned tail and fled before more proof of just how self absorbed she'd been this year hit her in the face.

Pansy watched her go before pocketing the toy mouse and turn to walk to the dungeons. She did not envy Granger, it was never easy waking up to reality and having to deal with the consequences of one’s actions, Pansy knew that better than anyone. She had learned from her mistakes and maybe Granger would do the same.

OoOoOoOoO

Draco tugged his sleeves straighter and looked over at Harry, "You're twitching again."

"I may be a little nervous but I'm certainly not twitching, I think you're the one needing glasses." Harry forced himself to be still as they walked down the main street in Hogsmeade. Ever since his revelation Harry had tried to pull away and keep some distance between Draco and himself but it wasn't working very well. Harry didn't know what to do, he wanted to keep Draco as a friend, the other had become so important to him...If only he could find a way to shove these unwelcome feelings back under lock and key.

"You are most definitely twitching. Potter I do realize that tight trousers are most uncomfortable but we're almost to Gladrags so calm yourself." The blond was more than well aware of how Harry had been pulling away before edging close again. Something had the brunette at war with himself but he'd be damned if he could figure out what it was.

"I suppose you know all about tight trousers now don't you." As far as comebacks went that was lame but Harry couldn't even find himself to snap back when Draco said something. Merlin he had it
"Been looking have you?" Draco opened the door to the shop and waved Harry in ahead of him, "Just wanting the trousers or are you after a whole miniature wardrobe to last you through the next three and a half months?" He headed with Harry over to the maternity section and began looking through what was available, glancing at Harry critically with each possible selection.

"I think I'll go with the whole shebang. I'm not going to get smaller anytime soon and I already struggle to get the shirts buttoned." Harry looked through the clothes and frowned when he realized that the most of them were indeed intended for females.

"Hmm," the blond sorted through the clothes quickly, at one point smacking the back of Harry's hand, "Not yellow, unless you want someone quacking at you?"

"But it's cheerful" Harry reluctantly let go of the yellow shirt and moved over to a dark blue one only to drop it with a curse when he noticed that it had ruffles going down the entire front of it. "I'm starting to think that tight trousers might not be so bad after all."

"This is Hogsmeade, not nearly the selection as what you'd find in Diagon or any of the other main markets, it caters to the townspeople and there aren't many wizards living here who have the magical power to find themselves in your condition. There's enough to get you through to graduation, at which point you can go to Diagon and get a couple of outfits that will cover the final month. Here," he handed Harry seven pairs of trousers, ten shirts, and a set of pajamas. "Try them on."

"Yes sir." Harry saluted and took the pile of clothes with him to one of the dressing rooms. He unbuttoned his uniform trousers with a sigh of relief and pulled off his old sweater that he'd inherited from Dudley, at least that one wasn't too tight. "You think I need all these clothes just for a few months?" Harry called out as his slipped into a pair of soft dark gray trousers that felt like a caress against his skin.

"Yes," Draco leaned against the wall opposite the changing rooms, "Seven days in a week means seven trousers and seven shirts, plus extra shirts in case you spill something on one of them. The clothes have expanding charms on them so as the belly grows so will they."

"That's handy at least; I would hate to go through this again. Shopping and I do not get along." He pulled a green sweater over his head and looked in the mirror. He still looked pregnant but the clothes followed the lines of his body very well and they were comfortable. He stepped out of the dressing room to show Draco. "So what do you think? Yay or nay?"
The green of the shirt complimented Harry's complexion very, very well and Draco found himself with a dry mouth all of a sudden and stricken with an urge to wrap his arms around the brunette and shield him from anyone else who might try and take Harry away. He kicked himself mentally and pretended to eye Harry critically before nodding. "Yea, of course. I did pick it out."

"You did, so if this fit it's a pretty good pet that the rest of the clothes will fit too right?" Harry looked at Draco with a hopeful expression. "No need for me try all of them on is there?" Harry's back was aching and he really needed to pee. It seemed as if his bladder was shrinking as his belly grew.

Draco could swear he heard his ancestors calling him a push-over as he sighed and lifted a shoulder, "Well they are all the same size and if they don't fit you can always bring them back I suppose." Oh yes and there was his great-great grandfather calling him a sucker too but he'd like to see any of his ancestors be capable of saying no to a pregnant Harry Potter when those big green eyes were turned on them. 'Merlin's balls you've got it bad Draco Lucius Malfoy, very bad.'

Harry's smile was like the sun as he beamed at Draco. He barely resisted the urge to run over and hug him. "Thank you." The thanks came from the heart. "Do you think I can keep these clothes on me? I'll pay for them of course but they are so comfy and I really don't feel like changing again."

"Just hand the clerk the tags and it won't be a problem." Oh if Severus were to see him capitulating in such a way he'd never hear the end of it and forget ferret jokes, Pansy would call him Fido for eternity.

"Great, I'll just be a minute then." Harry hurried back into the changing room to collect the clothes, pack his old ones and struggle into his shoes, that was another thing that got harder with each passing day. He walked back out and walked over to Draco. "Can you get the tag on the sweater for me? I can't reach it." He held the tag to the trousers in his hand already.

Draco just wordlessly removed the tag, his fingers brushing the back of Harry's neck softly, "Got it. Do you think we ought to get you some slip on shoes while we're here? Eventually you'll need them."

"Thank you." Harry tried his best to repress his shiver from where Draco's fingertips had brushed against his skin. "Yeah, slip on shoes sound like a good idea...I'm not trying them on though, let's just grab a pair...I really need to borrow the washroom now." Harry shifted and looked around for the restroom door.
Draco pointed at a concealed alcove, "Over there, what's your shoe size then?"

"I'm a size seven...Be right back." Harry dashed for the restroom, dropping his purchases on a chair as he went.

The blond went over to the shoe section and found a style of slip on men's shoes that he knew were comfortable and offered excellent support. He grabbed a pair in Harry's size then settled to wait for the brunette next to the clothes as he pondered his own reactions. He'd known he was falling for Harry but it was moving so bloody fast from more than just attraction, though there was still plenty of that in there, and infatuation to something deeper. At the same time he was also already fond of Squiggles, Harry hadn't yet made the offer to him to feel the baby move but he wanted him to. He wanted to feel that little growing human flip about in Harry's belly. He was still jealous that Longbottom got that chance before he had too. It wasn't Neville Longbottom who'd been standing beside Harry since this mess had started, he'd not even tried to show that he was still Harry's friend after the bet had been made so why did he get to feel the sprog move before Draco did?

Harry soon came back feeling a lot better. "Sorry for that, thank you for waiting." He grabbed the pile of clothes and walked to the register. He knew Draco could spend his day in Hogsmeade having much more fun than hoarding a pregnant man around but Harry couldn't bring himself to feel guilty that he got to spend time alone with the blond. He was so messed up. On one hand he wanted to release Draco because he deserved more and on the other he wanted him all to himself.

Draco stood up gracefully, shoving his jealousy and turmoil back behind his occlumantic shields, "Stop apologizing. You've got the sprog bouncing on your bladder; it's a common enough affliction from what I understand and nothing to apologize for." He followed Harry to the counter, glared the curious clerk into silence as she rung everything up, and placed a feather light charm on the bags before shrinking them to fit in Harry's pocket. "Feeling hungry or is there somewhere in Hogsmeade you'd like to pop by before getting lunch?"

A growling sound from Harry's stomach answered that question and Harry couldn't help but chuckle. "Both I and Squiggles think that lunch sound like an excellent idea. Oooh do you think they have meatballs and pickles? I would do almost anything for meatballs and pickles...The really spicy kind, that makes your mouth, feel as if it's on fire."

The blonds' lips twitched as they walked down towards the cafe, "They take just about any order so I think they can accommodate you." He caught Harry's arm and stepped slightly in front of him when a door to a shop was flung out in front of the brunette suddenly and an angry customer stormed out muttering about ridiculous prices. "Perhaps we should walk down the middle of the street."

Harry blinked at the way Draco had stepped in front of him so he wouldn't get hit by the door. Something warm and dangerous bubbled up inside of him and it wouldn't be pushed back down no
matter how hard Harry tried to do just that. Harry could take care of himself but what Draco did would have protected Squiggles if the door had hit and that was worth so much more in Harry's book. "Yeah, maybe we should." He took hold of one of Draco's hands and pulled them closer to the middle of the street.

Warm. That was really all Draco could think at that moment, that Harry's hand was warm, much like the brunette himself. He wanted to lace his fingers with Harry's, wanted it badly enough to scare himself, but he knew he couldn't, so he let his hand lie in the other man's grasp, just barely curling his fingers around to make sure the quiescent hand couldn't be mistaken for rejection. He pointed a block and a half ahead at a little yellow and white striped awning, "There's the café. Do you want to eat inside or out on the sidewalk tables?"

He thought about it for a moment, weighing the options in his mind. It was a really nice day so sitting outside would be nice but it also meant that they would be out where everyone could look and whisper. Then Harry remembered what Draco had said about him caring too much about what other people thought...Maybe Draco was right. People would look and whisper anyway and it wasn't as if Harry had anything to hide, he wasn't ashamed of Squiggles. "Let's sit outside." He didn't want to think too hard about the fact that he didn't let go of Draco's hand the entire walk to the café.

The blond didn't mind and fortunately the waitress was one he knew and she didn't even blink twice at their hands or Harry's order even as she marked down Draco's usual. "You know I've been meaning to ask, third year, the Shrieking Shack, was that you?"

"Would I do something like that? Pelting unknowing, snarky gits with well deserved snowballs? Watching as they ran away in terror and laughing my arse off?" Harry's eyes were huge and innocent behind the lenses of his glasses.

Draco's voice was flat thought the lightness of his eyes gave hint to the humor, "Yes you absolutely would. It was you. After I thought about it I didn't believe the shack was haunted but I did wonder. You have very good aim."

"I admit to nothing but thank you...And you're wrong. The shack is haunted, maybe not by ghosts but it is haunted." Harry thought about Moony's painful transformations in it. About finding out about Wormtail and about Snape almost dying in it. There were no good memories about that bloody place and Harry could definitely see it as a place that gathered bad energy. "You did deserve it though; you were a tool back then."

"Admittedly. Spoiled rotten and taking out every grievance on the only person to deny me something I truly honestly wanted. You know we might very well have been friends all these years if not for an ill timed laugh." His mouth was curled up as he remembered first seeing Harry as they all waited to enter the Great Hall. Even then at eleven there had been something about Harry that drew you
attention despite his obvious desire to stay in the background.

"I know...You weren't the only git back then. I let someone else's opinion color my judgment and I regret that. I was just so happy to finally have a friend that I clung to him with everything I got. I have wondered 'what if' at times though there's little use." Harry looked down at the plaid yellow and white table cloth as he spoke. "I'm glad we're friends now though."

Draco reached out and brushed his fingertips over the back of Harry's hand very briefly, "As am I Harry. You won't possibly get rid of me now though I hope you realize," he quirked a brow, "I am afraid you are stuck with 'the ferret' as your friend."

Harry turned his hand so he could caress Draco's palm gently before pulling away to place his hand on his stomach. "I suppose I shall have to endure." He smiled happily. "You are stuck with 'scarhead' as well so I guess we're even." The sound of his first name coming from Draco's mouth made Harry's insides turn to jello. It wasn't fair that even Draco's voice was perfect and gorgeous. How was Harry supposed to resist him when he was so tempting all over?

"So we are," Draco smiled though the caress over his palm had sent lightening through him, "Scarhead and Squiggles. I do hope you've been thinking of real names for the sprog."

"Of course I've been thinking about it, as much as I love Squiggles I don't want him to grow up hating me. I haven't found one yet though, none that I like." Harry nibbled on his bottom lip. "I have all these great figures in my life that I could name him after but...I want him to be his own person. I don't want him to grow up feeling like he has to live up to his name or for anyone to compare him to someone that came before. Does that make sense?"

"Of course it does. I'm named after my father, well my middle name in any case, and spent far too long trying to fill his shoes rather than walk in my own." He took a sip of his tea. "My mother managed to save me from also being named after my grandfather, how she talked my father out of it I'm not certain, but she told me once that she wanted me to be strong and fierce enough that I could survive nearly anything and so named me after the strongest creature she could think of. Pansy got her name because her mother fainted early in the pregnancy and had her fall cushioned by a thick growth of pansies. Blaise, well Italian, passion, fire, it all goes hand in hand. Name Squiggles whatever feels right to you."

"I just need to find that name that feels right, hopefully before Squiggles begins school." Harry sighed but smiled at the same time. Draco really did get it. "I'm named after my father too...Don't even know where the Harry comes from though."
The waitress came with their food and Harry's mouth watered at the sight and scent of large meatballs, thick gravy, mashed potatoes and plenty of spicy pickles. "Mmmm, I think I could marry this food...At least make it my mistress."

Draco just laughed and tucked in to his own lunch while occasionally flicking glances at Harry as the brunette made sounds that shouldn't be allowed in public. He shifted in his seat and resolved to talk to Pansy later because he was in deep and going deeper and he didn't know what to do about it.

**To Be Continued…**
Chapter Seven

**Disclaimer:** Neither Acherona nor trulywicked have any claim on Harry Potter or any characters or locations thereof.

**Warnings:** Angst, lots of it, Male Pregnancy, mental torture, infant in peril, boys in love, friendships broken and new friends gained. Disregards canon in so many ways.

**MOCKINGBIRD**

**Chapter Seven.**

Lucius walked into the western parlor where he liked to take his breakfast. The table was already set and Lucius sat down at the head of the table after kissing his wife's cheek. He poured his tea into his Wedgewood cup and picked up the rolled up Daily Prophet that the house elves had placed by his seat. He unrolled it and took a sip of his tea only to choke on it when the front page of the newspaper glared up at him, showing a picture of his son walking down a street, holding hands with an obviously pregnant Potter.

He couldn't breathe, what was this? Maybe it was better if he died now...Draco and Potter...It was almost too horrible for words. He coughed and sputtered and tried to block out the thick black letters of the headline, talking about the joining of the two most powerful houses in Britain and how love conquered the shadows of war.

"Lucius? Dear are you well?" Narcissa placed her hand on his forearm, a bit alarmed by how red her husband's face was getting and his spluttering.

Lucius shook his head and pointed at the front page of the Prophet with a long finger as he tried desperately to get some air into his lungs. "Look." He managed to wheeze out.

She turned the paper towards her so she could see it better then blinked at the sight of a visibly pregnant Harry Potter leading her son through Hogsmeade by the hand, both of them with smiles on their faces. "Oh! Oh dear. Darling what do you suppose....I mean why would Draco keep something like this from us? I mean he has always been a bit fixated on Potter but surely this is wonderful news!"
"Wonderful? Have you hit your head Cissy?" Lucius turned to his wife, having finally caught his breath. "I knew about the fixation but I didn't think it was anything like this. How can this be wonderful? It's Potter for Salazar's sake."

She raised an icy brow and then sat back, lifting her teacup to her lips for a single sip, letting a cold silence stretch before standing up. "Better Potter than a Weasley and if my son cares about him then it is wonderful. So long as my son is happy I can be happy for him. Now, if you'll excuse me I am going to see if I can dust off some of Draco's old baby furniture." She turned on her heels and clipped out of the room.

Lucius eyes widened in horror, not only was he bloody likely to get Potter as a son in law, now Cissy was cross with him. He looked at his gold pocket watch and got up from his seat. He needed to talk this over with his son. What was Draco thinking, keeping such secrets? He walked over to the large marble fireplace and placed a floo call for the Slytherin common room, his son should be awake and up by now and if he wasn't...Well too bad for him because Lucius was in no mood to wait.

Draco was indeed awake and in the common room, brooding over his feelings for one Harry Potter when he heard the very familiar voice of his father ringing from the fireplace. He got up and went to crouch in front of the flames that his father's head were floating in, "Father? What has you calling?"

"Why don't you tell me that?" Lucius tone was sharp and precise as he looked his son over. "Anything that you'd like to tell me and your mother?"

A blond brow rose in confusion, "I beg your pardon? What would I have to tell you and mother?"

"Oh I don't know, maybe you'd like to comment on this." A trembling hand held up the crumpled newspaper in front of the flames so that Draco could see. "Or better yet you might have had the courtesy to tell us before we read about it in the Prophet."

Draco blinked at the headline and rolled his eyes, "Bloody press can't even get their facts straight."

"Facts?" A tiny sliver of hope crawled into Lucius mind, maybe it wasn't as bad as he feared after all. "What do you mean facts? Your mother is in the attic, dusting off your old crib and rocking horse so please be quick about it."

Draco sighed and moved to sit Indian style on the floor to get comfortable, "Harry is pregnant with
Ronald Weasley's child, a result of a cruel bet. When Potter told the Weasel about his condition the Weasel first denied responsibility then said, and I quote, 'Well I don't want any part of it! Do what you want with the bastard, have it or get rid of it for all I care.' I have been helping Harry learn about the pureblood customs associated with his pregnancy and assisted him in getting a lawyer and having the Weasel sign away his parental rights.

Relief flooded Lucius, Draco was not the father. His devious mind quickly caught on the benefits of what his son had done...Hmm maybe his dragon was smarter than Lucius had given him credit for. "That's actually a very clever move of you. The public and the press will eat it up. Draco Malfoy, savior to Harry Potter when even his friends turned their backs. Clever move indeed. And see what I meant about the Weasleys? Blood traitors, the lot of them...Of the very worst kind, rejecting your own blood, that's the worst thing you can do."

Draco's voice gained the admonishing ice he'd learned more from his mother than his father, "I did not offer my help to Harry out of a political move and you cannot judge an entire family based upon the actions of one member. Yes Ronald Bilius Weasley is the worst sort of traitor but the other Weasleys have rallied around Potter and kept him as family of the heart, more than accepting the babe to come."

"Yes, yes of course." Lucius brushed his son's defense of the Weasley clan aside and concentrated on what was really important. "But there really is nothing going on between you and Potter other than you helping him out with pureblood customs? You'd like to tell your mother that and soon too, I think she's on the verge of digging up her wedding dress and offer it to Potter as a welcome to the family."

The youngest Malfoy gave his father a sweet smile, "Do remind Mother that Harry is far from being female despite his current condition. I'll talk to you again soon Father." With that he tossed a pinch of terminating powder into the floo, a nifty invention that would block all calls to and from that floo for a good two hours. It was so rare that he got a chance to twit his father, he simply hadn't been able to resist doing it now. Though he was rather certain his godfather would be getting a furious call, or visit from his father now.

Lucius glared at the suddenly yellow and orange flames with venom. That conversation had not turned out as he hoped. Sure it was a relief that Draco had not gotten Potter pregnant but his son had not confirmed that nothing was going on between them. He looked at the photo in the paper again and took in the smile on his son's face. Draco didn't smile like that just for anyone. This was indeed worrying indeed. For now Lucius would find his wife and try to placate her, he was too old to sleep on the couch and then he would floo his old friend and see if Severus couldn't teach his godson something about manners...One did not disconnect their father in the middle of a conversation.

OoOoOoOoO
The Great Hall was a twitter as soon as the paper had been delivered along with breakfast and Ron had the paper shoved into his face more times than he liked, along with little smirks. The whole of the school, from the moment Harry had shown up for breakfast with his pregnancy showing, had begun avoiding him or treating him like the scum of the Earth. Somehow his words to Harry when the brunette had told him of the pregnancy had been spread around the school, as well as the knowledge that he'd signed away his rights to the child, and now there wasn't anyone who even wanted to be in his presence except to call him a blood traitor to his face among other insults. And that wasn't even counting the Howlers his mother had sent him daily in the common room.

He glared down at the picture of Harry and Malfoy. He knew Harry and he knew that wasn't just a simple smile on his face. He'd only seen that smile on Harry once before, when the green eyed man had been infatuated with Cedric Diggory, but now he was smiling like that in Malfoy's presence, because of Malfoy, holding the damned ferret's hand! His chances to get back into Harry's good graces were going to be ruined because of bleeding Malfoy. He surged up, the Prophet crumpled in a fist, and stalked out of the hall. He was going to write Skeeter and see if the woman wanted a scoop about Harry's pregnancy and maybe plant a seed in Harry's mind that he was actually sorry. He wasn't, not by a long shot, but he needed to make Harry believe that he was.

Luna looked across the hall after Ron's departure and met Harry's eyes, flicking a glace after the redhead and giving him a warning sign. She didn't like the look that had been on Ron's face and wanted to be sure Harry knew to be careful.

Harry gave her a small nod to show her that he understood but truthfully his mind wasn't on his former best friend. His gaze slid over to Malfoy before dropping to his breakfast plate. Malfoy had acted somewhat strange all morning, sort of annoyed and aloof. Harry couldn't help but wonder if he was that bothered with the newspaper article, that thought made Harry ache inside. He was bothered by the article too but for another reason...Harry couldn't help but wish that it was true, that he and Malfoy were together and was on the verge of starting a family. To his shame he had actually snuck one copy of the Prophet aside just so he could keep the picture of Malfoy smiling...Merlin he was so pathetic. Harry sighed and nibbled on his sandwich, he wasn't very hungry but he knew he had to eat for Squiggles' sake.

Draco was nibbling absently on his own breakfast, his eyes followed the Weasel out of the hall with a narrow glare before going back to staring into space. He was irritated with himself, highly. That conversation with his father this morning and the article in the paper had driven home just how far he'd fallen for Harry. He'd seen the article, seen the picture, and felt such a strong need for it to be true that it had actually made his heart thump painfully in his chest. He wanted to be building a life, to be starting a family, to be the one that came home to bright green eyes and a baby that squealed and clapped his hands in happiness when he stepped in the door. He wanted to be the man who became a father in heart and mind to Squiggles and he wanted so badly to be Harry's partner in life. Merlin he didn't even think of him as Potter anymore, it was always Harry now.
It bothered him because he was certain that the brunette wasn't thinking of anything but finishing school and creating a stable home for himself and his son. Just them. He knew Harry wasn't seeing anyone else in the picture, aside from friends, which he was fortunately one of but he didn't want to be the babe's godfather or 'Uncle Draco' he wanted to be 'Papa' and the strength of that want was, quite frankly, terrifying. Mainly because he felt sure it was a lost cause. Oh he was pathetic. He bit into a tough bit of bacon, determined to get through breakfast without revealing himself to the entire bloody hall. He could sulk and whine and complain to Severus later.

Severus Snape however, was in a very nearly perky mood for him. It wasn't often he got to hold Lucius at a disadvantage and this morning he'd been able to do just that, drawling that Draco wasn't a child anymore and was far past the age where one could truly teach him manners then terminating the floo call on Lucius' outraged face. He'd been smirking since, and scaring the entire student body with it. He'd not lost his powers of observation however and noticed his godson's hidden melancholy as well as Potter beginning to slip into one of his infamous brooding spells. He glanced over at the picture Remus Lupin was still staring at on the front page of the Prophet and studied the photographic Draco's smile. The thing about wizarding photographs was that that they tended to reveal more about the subject's feelings than the people themselves and his godson had the look of someone utterly twitterpated on his pointy face.

Remus' eyes followed the animated features of his cub and Severus' godson on the grainy photograph on the Prophet. There on the picture they truly looked like they belonged together, they looked so free and happy. He looked up to see their closed off faces at the breakfast table and then back to the paper. The last time he had seen Harry look that free was during the short, short time back in Harry's third year when he'd met Sirius and for one brief moment believed he would have a family of his own. If anything or anyone put that expression of happiness and freedom on his cub's face then Remus wanted to gift-wrap it and present it to Harry on a silver platter. His eyes traveled to the youngest Malfoy again...The question was how the young blond felt about it all. Remus wanted to make Harry happy but not if he would turn out hurt in the long run. He would not encourage a relationship between them unless he knew without a doubt that Malfoy was serious about Harry and about the child he was carrying. His gaze slid from the blond student to his fellow professor, he wondered if he could talk to Severus about it.

Harry finished his breakfast and fled out the Hall, hoping for a little bit of private time before he had to deal with a whole day of classes. He felt frazzled and unsure and he hated the feeling.

Draco glanced up from his absorption and his brows furrowed in concern as he watched Harry rush out of the Hall. He wasn't sure how he knew it but something was wrong or at the very least upsetting. He couldn't follow the brunette now but he'd corner him later and see if he could talk whatever the problem was out of him.

"So what do you think about this?" Remus tapped a long finger at the newspaper on the table in front of him and watched Teddy run around Severus' quarters playing like he belonged there. Well Teddy
spent almost as much time with Severus as he did Remus so he probably knew these quarters as well as his own room.

The potion master corked a bottle, keeping an eye on the toddler climbing the furniture and running around as he bottled the pepper-up potion, then glanced over at Remus, "I think that the press enjoys jumping to conclusions but that's not what you're asking." He set the bottles aside to go and lift Teddy down from the mantle he was climbing and looked the child in the eye, "Absolutely nothing higher than the arm of the sofa young man."

Teddy squirmed, pouted and didn't really want to look his Sappy in the eyes but eventually he gave a sad nod and was released to continue playing.

Remus couldn't help but smile. "You really have a good hand with him and eyes at the back of your neck. I'm starting to understand why the students fear you." He looked over at his son before turning back to Severus. "And no, the usual inaccuracy of reporters was not what I meant. Look at them Severus..." Remus motioned to the picture again.

The dark haired man returned to his bottling, "I know. I don't know about Potter but Draco...doesn't smile. Not honestly. He smirks, he occasionally pastes on the society polite smile, but a true smile? That hasn't been seen on his face since he was eight but here," he nodded at the paper, "he's smiling. I'm not certain that is a good or a bad thing."

Remus nodded. "I don't know either. Harry smiles but he doesn't open up, he's become very careful with who he lets in but look at him here, he practically has his heart in his eyes." He tapped his fingers against the table top and gave his son a stern look as Teddy tried to sneak up on Severus to 'attack' him...Most likely with kisses and hugs. "Harry is carrying another man's child. A child that is not going anywhere and who's only going to take up more time and effort once he's born. Can Malfoy handle that? Is whatever the two of them feels for each other strong enough for such a change, such a commitment?"

"A better question would be if Potter is willing to accept what Draco has to offer and could he convince my godson that he is." He bottled the last potion and tapped the picture, "Here they're both open but this morning Potter was starting to brood and Draco had closed himself off as he only does when he thinks something is out of his reach. I can tell you that once Draco decides on a course he sinks his teeth in and refuses to let go, if he wants Potter and the child nothing will keep him from going after them if he thinks he has the slightest chance."

"I think he has more than a chance," Remus sighed. "The problem is that Harry doesn't think he deserves to be loved, doesn't believe that anyone can truly care for him as anything else as Harry Potter, savior of the Wizarding world." The last part was spat out. "Those disgusting people he had to grow up with ate away at his self esteem until there was nothing left. That's why he gives up the
things he truly does want...He thinks they will be better off without him." Remus looked down at the picture of a smiling Harry again. "I've tried to talk to him about it several times but no matter what I say Harry is terrified to allow himself to be happy just to have it all ripped away again."

Severus gave a soft snorted laugh and turned to catch Teddy as the boy lunged, lifting the toddler up into his arms, "If he gives Draco the smallest signal that he wants him, my godson won't let Harry run away because of that. The only thing that would keep Draco away would be if Potter were to truly not want him. And he'd know for certain that Draco doesn't give a hang about the Savior bit."

"True." Remus looked at his son in Severus arms and something clenched inside him. Harry was not the only one who was afraid to grab a hold of what he wanted, that was probably why Remus could understand him so well. He pushed those thoughts away, this was about Harry and the little Malfoy, not about his hopeless dreams. "I know Harry wants him, we only have to make him admit it despite his fear."

A dark brow lifted, "Should I ask what you've come up with to do that or should I simply go crawl into the bomb shelter until the fallout has passed?"

A brown brow rose. "Now Severus, don't tell me you're scared?" The quiet amusement died down quickly. "No in all seriousness I don't really know what to do just yet but I'll think of something."

Teddy bounced in Severus' arms and looked at his daddy. "Why not ask?...Joo ask me if I'm hungwy ow tiwed. If joo don't ask joo'll newer know, that's what joo said Daddy."

The potion master's lips quirked, "Clever child. I doubt Potter would refuse to tell you if you asked, he is the sort who needs some sort of sounding board for whatever turmoil he's under and this," he tapped the paper with the hand that wasn't holding Teddy, "gives you the perfect excuse to ask."

"Too clever." Remus muttered and looked at his toddler son. Apparently he was going to have to be very careful with what he said in Teddy's presence from now on, the whole saying of small pots have big ears seemed to be very true. "Okay Teddy, are you up for a visit to your godfather later?"

"Yay! I wanna kiss the tummy." Teddy bounced more and wrapped his chubby arms around Severus' neck, squeezing tightly and resting his cheek against Severus'.

The potion master chuckled softly and pat the boy on the back, meeting Remus' eyes, "I do hope you're taking pictures of such moments, they'll be more precious than gold to Potter."
Remus had to snap out of his reverie of watching his son with the tall dark clad wizard and blinked in an attempt to recall what Severus had just said. "Oh, oh yes, I will definitely bring my camera and I only hope he doesn't hit me over the head with it once I start asking personal questions."

"I doubt he'll do that, besides you can run faster than he can right now so you've nothing to worry about." Severus' dark eyes glimmered with devilment.

"Ah yes, that's a comforting thought indeed." Remus' lips twitched with amusement. "I hope I won't have to run though, I have Teddy to protect me right?"

"Yup, pwotect Daddy!" The small boy flexed invisible muscles proudly.

"Ah yes, a positively fearsome defender except," Severus turned his attention to Teddy, "for the one weakness." He wiggled his fingers along Teddy's side prompting a squeal as the child was tickled.

Teddy giggled, squealed and squirmed as Severus tickled along his side and ribs. "Nooooooooo, Sappy pwease...no tickling."

"Well, I suppose. As you asked politely," he stopped tickling the toddler.

"Thank joo." A red-faced Teddy panted as he tried catch his breath.

Remus stood and retrieved his son from Severus. "Thank you for listening to me Severus...Again." He gave a lopsided grin. "I'll take this little one to Hagrid while I have my class and then we'll go visit Harry, see if we can't get him to talk."

The other man felt as if his arms were oddly empty but nodded, "Of course. You and Teddy are always welcome Remus."

Remus nodded and started for the door, Teddy leaning up over his shoulder, waving frantically. "Buh bye Sappy, see joo latew, take cawe, don't move away."
Snape waved back with a chuckle, "I have no intention of moving away Teddy. Until later." He watched the father and son disappear out of the room and blew out a breath at himself. His godson wasn't the only one whose heart was beginning to lead him in the direction of a readymade family but unlike Draco he was faced with almost certain impossibility. Remus was not a pregnant man nor had he ever been and Teddy's mother had most definitely been female. Everything pointed to the werewolf being straight, making Severus' traitorous heart's desire impossible to acquire. He never could choose anything easy could he?

To Be Continued…
Chapter Eight

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MOCKINGBIRD

Chapter Eight.

Harry chuckled as Teddy pulled up his shirt, kissing the swollen belly and talking nonsense to Squiggles. His godson was too adorable and he hoped Squiggles would turn out half as cute. It was nice spending some time with Remus and Teddy and with the whole newspaper issue it was nice to get away from the other students for a little while.

Remus smiled too, it was nice to see Harry somewhat relaxed, it would make talking to him easier. He had started out easy, asking Harry about school, health and all those usual things. It wasn't just to relax Harry, he really wanted to know how his cub was doing. "So Harry, what do you think about the Prophet's article?" Remus watched green eyes go shuttered and his smile turn tense.

"It's fine, it's not like the Prophet hasn't got it wrong before. Everyone close to me knows the truth so it's fine. It will blow over soon." Harry stroked his finger through Teddy's orange hair.

"I suppose I should have asked how you feel about Draco Malfoy then." Remus knew he was pushing but he wanted Harry to admit the truth, at least to himself. He wasn't pushing to be mean.

"What do you mean? He's a friend, he's helped me a lot and he's a friend." Harry's brow furrowed, he didn't know what Remus was getting at and it made him feel uncomfortable.

Teddy's little hands pat and rubbed Harry's belly as if his godfather was a budda, "Daddy's asking if you wike wike Dwaco. Do you wike wike Dwaco?" Big innocent eyes blinked up at Harry, the kind of questioning puppy eyes no one could lie to.
Harry squirmed under that childish gaze and Remus silently thanked Severus for his advice to bring Teddy along.

"Well...I don't, don't dislike him...He's very nice, considerate, loyal, funny and easy to talk to." Draco's face came before him and Harry couldn't stop the small smile playing on his lips. "He's been really wonderful this year and I wish we could have got this close earlier...Yeah I like him Teddy."

"Then don't let him slip away because you're afraid Harry." Remus' voice was soft and gentle. "You are amazing too and if you like the littlest Malfoy then take the chance. If you don't I think you'll miss out on something that could be great."

"I don't know." Harry nibbled on his lip. It felt as if Draco was too far above him for him to even try.

"Don't Dwaco wike you too?" Teddy's arms curled around Harry's leg in a hug.

Harry shook his head and petted those bright orange locks. "I have no idea Teddy, he cares I know that but I don't think there's anything more."

"Are you sure Harry?" Remus looked at his godson closely.

"No...I'm not sure of anything. That's what's so hard." Harry looked down so his bangs shielded his eyes.

"Don't be scawedy Sappy says Dwaco smiled real big fow you, I bet he wikes you and Skiggles bunches!"

"Snape said that did he?" Harry looked down at Teddy with a small grin even though his mind was running a mile a minute, trying to work out if it was true. Even Harry had noticed Draco's smile, which was why he'd hidden the photo away to save it and keep it forever. Harry didn't think he had the courage just yet to lay his heart open at Draco's feet but he would try and include Draco more, testing the waters as how he felt about Squiggles. "I'll try not to be scared Teddy, that's all I can promise." He gave Remus a pointed look as well. He didn't want any more pushing.

Teddy smiled and scrambled up next to Harry to kiss his cheek, "He can give youw tummy a kiss too! Skiggles wiggles lots to say hi when I do!"
Flushing pink Harry leaned down to press a kiss to Teddy's forehead. "Ah, we'll see. Maybe we'll save the tummy kissing for you and Squiggle." 

Remus smiled, knowing that he and Teddy...Well mostly Teddy had at least planted a seed in Harry's mind. It was the best they could do.

OoOoOoOoO

Draco's foot was actually jiggling with his impatience. He stared at it for a moment then stopped his fidgeting consciously as he tried to keep his composure and keep the other Slytherins in the room from noticing just how fractured his mask was at the moment. He was worried about Harry. The brunette hadn't been back to the common room for hours and he hoped it was just Lupin and Harry's godson keeping him out and that the Weasel hadn't somehow cornered him. He knew Harry could take care of himself but that didn't help with the worry.

Harry had taken a detour walking back from Remus and Teddy's quarters, he'd just strolled through barely used corridors thinking about things before he steered his way back towards the dungeons. He had a lot to think about and he couldn't do it in Draco's presence, the blond had a tendency to distract him and make his thoughts run in entirely different directions than he meant them to. He placed a hand at the small of his back as he entered the Slytherin common room, Squiggles was doing somersaults inside him and both bladder, kidneys and liver felt it. Harry looked forward to sitting down and put his feet up for a moment.

Draco's head came up as soon as he spotted the entrance opening and breathed a sigh of relief when he saw Harry walk through the door. He got to his feet smoothly and made his way over to the brunette, taking note of the hand Harry had square at the small of his back, but before he reached the other man a blur of orange shot out from nowhere and was meowing and rubbing along Harry's ankles. Draco certainly didn't blame Crookshanks, if he'd been a cat he'd have done the self same thing. He met the green eyes and lifted a brow, "The sprog jumping around?"

"Like you wouldn't believe." Harry tried to bend down to pet Crookshanks but it was a lost cause. Instead he walked over to a soft leather sofa and sunk down on it so that Crookshanks could jump up next to him and he could pet the cat and scratch him behind his ears. "Come over here." Harry looked up at Draco and took the blond's hand when Draco walked closer. He placed it on his stomach gently. "Don't know what has Squiggles so worked up but he's been at it for hours...I'm starting to fear for my organs." Draco's hand felt warm even through the fabric of his shirt and Harry kept his gaze on Crookshanks, not daring to look directly at Draco.

The blond caught his breath at the movements under his hand. The babe was absolutely lively and
jumping around in there like mad. It was amazing and he felt humbled to feel the life moving around inside of Harry. He smoothed his hand gently over the mound of belly, "He's certainly strong. Hey there little one take it easy on those insides, they are not pugilistic targets."

Harry was about to chuckle but it got cut short when the most amazing thing happened. As soon as Draco spoke Squiggles slowed down his movements and stayed in place underneath the spot where Draco had his hand...At least it felt like it. "Look at that, it's just as if Squiggles is listening to you. As if he knows your voice."

Draco's lips were curved up and he chuckled, "Well I don't doubt that he does. I do talk a lot around you and wither thou goest so goest he. I'm surprised he's not sick of my voice."

"I don't think anyone could get sick of your voice...ever." Harry nearly bit his tongue after he'd said it and hurried to concentrate on petting Crookshanks ginger fur. "I..I think your voice calms him."

The blond hid the satisfied smile Harry's first comment had brought to his lips and nodded sagely, "Yes I have been told I have a magic voice bef-" he broke off with a ringing honest laugh as what was probably a kick thumped against his hand, "Apparently he's also capable of recognizing and disapproving of bad puns as well. Alright little one I'll refrain from the bad jokes then."

Harry's ears pinked at the sound of Draco's laugh, he suddenly wanted to hear it all the time and more than that...He wanted to be the one who made Draco Malfoy laugh free and easily like that. "Oh goodness me, someone who can actually make Draco Malfoy refrain from bad jokes...The world must be coming to an end." The teasing tone sounded a bit hollow even in Harry's own ears.

Draco chuckled again, "Well this is a very special someone in here," he pat Harry's belly gently, "so no need to worry about the sky falling or any other apocalyptic happenings." He flicked his wand with his free hand and had an ottoman sliding over in front of the brunette. "There, you usually go straight for a nap or at least put your feet up."

"Thank you." Harry gave Draco a long look and placed his aching feet up on the ottoman, sighing in relief as the pressure was taken off them. He snuggled down with Crookshanks in his arms and pat the empty spot next to him. "Come, sit with me for a while please."

He didn't need to ask twice. Draco settled into the spot next to Harry, turned towards the brunette. "Are you alright? The Weasel didn't rear his freckled head did he?"
"No, no I haven't seen Ron since breakfast." Harry shook his head and leaned closer to Draco. "I was visiting Teddy and Remus and after that I took a walk through the closed off part of the castle, the wing they haven't had time to fix after the war...I needed a little time to think."

"Because of the article?" Draco noticed that Harry hadn't confirmed or denied whether he was alright or not.

"No, well at least not directly." Harry debated with himself about how much he should say. "The thing that bothered me about the article...Was that...That it didn't bother me."

Blond brows knit in confusion, "Er...come again? You're bothered because the article didn't upset you?"

Nodding Harry curled in more on himself. He should never have said anything at all. "It should bother me right? That they got it all wrong like usual. But...But I kind of liked what it said."

Draco kept his voice gentle and completely stifled the excitement he felt so as not to scare Harry off and put his hands on the brunette's shoulders, "Harry look at me please."

Heart pounding in his throat Harry slowly turned his head towards Draco. He was so scared of what he would see when he opened his eyes. He called on all his courage and opened green eyes to lock on gray.

The blond searched the vivid green eyes, seeing the fear in their depths, and rubbed Harry's shoulders, trying to ease the tension that had seized them, "Do you mean what I think you do? That you'd be interested in me as more than a friend or guide in pureblood politics? Because if I'm getting my hopes up for nothing I'll have to go take my frustrations out on the Weasel."

"Hopes?" Harry eyes widened with hope. "I know I shouldn't, I know it's so unfair to you but I can't stop thinking about you, can't stop wanting you...Want you as so much more than a friend or a guide."

"Unfair to me? Unfair to me how? How is reciprocating what I want unfair to me? Because I do want you Harry, you and the sprog."

"I want you too but it's not fair to saddle you with a child that's not yours. What if you change your
mind later on? What if Squiggles comes out pale, freckly and as ginger as they come...Can you deal with it? To have a replica of Ronald Weasley looking at you every single day?" Harry knew he would love Squiggles no matter how he'd look, his heart was already captured by the tiny being inside him. He didn't believe that Draco was shallow but he wouldn't survive if he started something with Draco, gave his heart away only to be left alone when the other was done playing house.

"Yes and I'll tell you why," Draco put a hand on Harry's belly, "because this baby is not Ronald Weasley and won't become like his sire even if he comes out looking like a carbon copy. Even if Squiggles comes out looking just like Ronald Weasley and has several of his personality traits, he will also be part of you. I've finally gotten to know the real Harry and I could never hate you or anything that is a part of you. I've been thinking about all this for a while now and believe me I've gone over every last aspect in my busy head. I'm not going to change my mind, no matter what."

If there was anything Harry had learned about Draco during their months as roommates, guide and friend it was that he didn't lie. He could tear you apart with words but he didn't lie. Hearing him say these words...It was almost too good to be true but Harry wouldn't doubt them, he wasn't that great a fool. With a choked sob he buried his face in Draco's neck and hid his tears there as he held on as tightly as he could to the other.

Draco pulled Harry close, maneuvering him into his lap and ran a hand up and down the brunette's back, humming a gentle tune that his mother used to sing to him whenever he cried. He knew that things were just starting and a lot of time and smoothing out was needed but as he told Harry, he wasn't going anywhere.

Harry leaned into Draco, letting his tense body relax, listening to that soft voice humming a melody he didn't know. He really didn't mean to cry but Harry had been alone for as long as he could remember and the thought of having someone...Having Draco share his life...To be able to show Draco that he loved him, that was worth everything.

Over by the fireplace Blaise Zabini's lips quirked and he elbowed Pansy, "I'd say it's about time for that don't you think?"

"Hm, I had actually counted on Potter holding out for a little longer...I'm going to be out ten galleons." Pansy tried to frown but the happiness in her eyes destroyed that. She was so happy her best friend had found someone, someone he could be himself with. "They do look good together don't they Blasey boy?"

"Absolutely adorable. Well matched in most areas I'd say. Potter will keep il poco principe humble and Dray will pull Potter's confidence out of the gutter." He polished his nails on his shirt front, "Speaking of l'adorabile, how goes your campaign for your oak tree?"
Pansy's bottom lip slipped out in a pout. "Not all that well. I've been nice, not hexed a single little
lion this year. I've read all the plant and gardening books in the library just so we would have
something to talk about but nothing works. I think I could strip naked and dance the conga in front of
him and he wouldn't even notice." She blinked long lashes up at her friend. "Tell me the truth Blaise,
have I lost my touch?"

His lips twitched, "No, certainly not with that look. But he's not the bold sort cara, he would notice
but he would avert his eyes out of respect. I do not think he's ever had someone interested in him so
how is he to recognize the signs? Perhaps you need to stop being nice and start being Pansy?"

"Strap him down and ride him 'til he pops?" She looked at Blaise’s horrified expression and burst out
laughing. "Just joking, I don't do that sort of thing until at least the fourth official date. Be Pansy
huh? Oh the poor boy won't know what hit him." Pansy grinned as she started to plan out how she
could 'bump' into Neville and show him how she felt. She really did care for the calm, quiet
Gryffindor boy and she wanted a real relationship with him.

He chuckled, "That's our girl. Now if you'll excuse me, I have to meet someone," He cast a tempus
charm revealing it was an hour past curfew, "in ten minutes."

Both her brows rose. "Meet someone? Well far be it for me to keep you then." Who could Blaise
possibly go to meet and why didn't he name them? If Pansy hadn't been busy getting her prize she
would definitely have pursued the matter. Now she had to settle for burning curiosity.

He gave her a winning smile and waved, "Buonanotte Pansy, don't wait up." He slipped out of the
room to meet his lady and see how well they could sneak around those patrolling.

Pansy watched him go and then she stayed to watch Draco and Potter for a little while, they really
were too cute together. If anyone tried to come between them she would gladly rip their head off.
Sadly all the coziness and love in the air depressed her. She really needed to find a way to make
Neville see how great a couple they could be. Sighing she left the lovebirds alone to try and blow
some fire into her own love life.

OoOoOoOoO

The next morning Hermione was sitting next to Ginny at the Gryffindor table having started mending
her friendship with the younger girl when the owls came flying in delivering news, letters, and
packages. Her copy of the Daily Prophet landed in her lap and she unrolled it to read the day's
My faithful readers I bring you quite the scoop. It seems as though my colleague who spotted our beloved Harry Potter shopping with Draco Malfoy didn't quite stick around to get the facts. Yes indeed our hero is pregnant but Draco Malfoy is not the father. The sire of the dear child is none other than Harry Potter's long time friend Ronald Weasley and it appears to be quite the scandal. A night of drinking followed by an awkward morning led to Mr. Potter's condition and Mr. Weasley admits that he reacted badly upon hearing news of his impending fatherhood. Mr. Weasley told me this himself:

'I've always had a temper and I was embarrassed that I got drunk enough that I forgot the contraceptive charm so when Harry told me I made a big mistake and refused to take responsibility. I was so dumb and angry that I signed away my rights to our baby. Mr. Malfoy has been kind enough to help Harry out over the past few months and I'm grateful to him for being there for Harry when I haven't. I don't really know how to fix this but I hope that Harry might forgive me so that we can give our child two parents like he should have. I regret hurting Harry and denying our baby and I know I don't deserve a second chance but I'm hoping that Harry's generous heart might give me one so I can make this all up to him.'

As Mr. Weasley sat before me and poured his heart out and nearly came to tears in his regret, I couldn't help but feel sympathetic dear reader. After all haven't we all made grievous mistakes and hurt people we love? Perhaps our favorite hero will show his generous nature and give Mr. Weasley a chance to prove his heartfelt remorse.

And this intrepid reporter has to wonder, gentle reader, if Mr. Malfoy's actions are as altruistic as they appear. Would there be a better way to gain control of our great hero than to endear yourself to him and his child? It would not be the first time young Mr. Malfoy has sunk to low depths as Madam Rosemearta of the Three Broomsticks in Hogsmeade can attest. Perhaps our hero's re-sorting was not as impartial as we all were led to believe. After all Professor Severus Snape was once an acting Headmaster for the school as well as one of the most dangerous Death Eaters to live. Who's to say he did not work his dark magic to tamper with the Sorting Hat so it would place our hero in the nest of vipers? Has Headmistress McGonagall looked into this? And is Mr. Potter being used by Mr. Malfoy? Fear not gentle readers I am on the case and shall suss out the truth!

"The truth!? The TRUTH!?! That mad cow wouldn't know the truth if it bit her on the antenna or crawled up her bum!" Hermione's voice exploded in the Great Hall that had been silent as others had read their copy and now several eyes turned on the bushy haired girl, Ginny sitting shocked beside her. Hermione rolled up her copy, got up, marched over to Ron and whapped him on the nose, "And you! Worthless, honor-less, brainless, and prejudiced, you wouldn't know remorse if someone shoved it down your throat. How dare you bring that foul bint Skeeter into this because you can't stand being low man on the totem pole! I can't believe I'm about to say this but I hope Harry does end up marrying Malfoy eventually! I may not like him much but at least he's loyal and looks to
actually care which is a damned sight more than what you offer Ron Weasley!"

The entire Hall stared in shock at the brown haired termagant berating Ron. None of them except Harry, Ron, and Ginny had ever seen her in a full temper before and none of them knew how to react.

"And Skeeter won't be getting any more exclusives from you or anyone else let me tell you that! I'm going to take care of that right here and now!"

All eyes were on her as she stomped out of the Great Hall and silence stretched over everyone until Ginny, who'd started grinning at the first smack Hermione had delivered to Ron, stood up and whooped, "By Merlin she's back!" She gave a celebratory finger whistle that she'd learned from her brothers as her other hand punched up in the air.

The Great Hall was so silent you could have heard a wand drop. Most people were still stunned by the article and Hermione Granger’s temper storm. Therefore it was overly loud when Pansy got up from her seat and climbed up on the bench.

“Bravo…Bravo!!! I am no prefect but points to those two Gryffindor girls for finally showing some spine and saying what needed to be said.” She raised her wand in a salute to Ginny as she glared pure venom at Ron Weasley…That boy was more of a worm than the slimy kind that lived in the dirt. Pansy brought her hands together and started to clap. It wasn’t long until almost the entire Hall was applauding while shooting Ron dirty glances.

As she climbed down from her seat again she caught sight of Blaise watching the Gryffindor table with pride and something else that had her ice blue eyes narrowing in suspicion…Hmm, maybe she wasn’t the only one with designs on a lion. She would definitely find out more about it later.

Up at the head table Remus was gripping his fork so tightly that he felt it press into his skin. It was lucky it wasn’t made of silver because right now he wouldn’t have cared if it burnt through his skin. Remus was glad that Teddy was with his Grandmother Rommie for the day because his temper was close to snapping again and he didn’t want to scare his little boy. “He had no right…Nor that awful excuse for a witch.” His voice was a low growl as he turned to Snape with glowing amber eyes. “They had no right saying such things about you, accusing you. You are the bravest man I have ever had the fortune of getting to know and what you did in the war…And long before that. It should be praised. Those fools should drop to their knees and kiss the hem of your robes instead of saying such foul untruthful things.” There was a flash of teeth as Remus whipped his head around to glare at the redheaded male at the Gryffindor table. “You should have let me tear him apart when I first wanted to.”

Of course he was angry on Harry’s behalf too but it was the slander against Severus that had set his
blood boiling and Moony howling in rage. How dared they? How fucking dared they say such things about a man who was nothing but brave, honorable and truthfully all kinds of wonderful?

It was small of him but Snape quite enjoyed the flinch and paling of Ron, almost as much as he enjoyed Remus' defense of him. That growling defense warmed a part of him he’d long thought dead. It was dangerous for the werewolf to be so close to snapping though and it was close to the full moon to boot. He laid a hand on the other professor's shoulder and squeezed, "Don't. People will say and think what they wish, trying to control what's said and thought is an exercise in futility and this is certainly not the first time I've been accused of using nefarious means to achieve equally nefarious ends nor will it be the last. The ones who'd believe this drivel," he gestured at the paper, "don't matter and those who matter won't believe it."

Severus spoke the truth but he was a bit angry himself on behalf of his godson and Potter as well. The two of them could find happiness together along with the child but if Weasley had his way then they’d never get the chance. It was a pity he'd run out of potions it was legal to teach seventh year students that involved spiders but he could come up with another way to make Weasley's life hell. Starting with detention.

Severus’ hand on his shoulder helped to calm Moony down and Remus swallowed hard as he reigned in his temper with effort. His eyes softened as they looked at the other wizard. “Just because you’ve heard it before doesn’t mean it’s right. And Harry and Malfey shouldn’t have to deal with this, stress is not good for Harry right now and I can’t imagine this not being stressful.” He looked over at the Slytherin table where Harry held Malfey’s hand tightly, whispering in the blonds’ ear. Harry was pale and his eyes dark with upset and anger.

Draco rubbed his thumb over Harry's knuckles. He hadn't been at all surprised over the accusations leveled at himself in Skeeter's article. Truthfully he'd been expecting someone to say it eventually so it didn't bother him but he was absolutely infuriated that the Weasel would try and bring the public opinion in to try and gain Harry's forgiveness and get his greedy freckled hands on the Black and Potter fortunes. The very fact that Harry was upset a second day in a row made him want to pull out his wand and just turn the Weasel into the slug he was. He lifted his second hand to the back of Harry's neck and rubbed soothingly. "If it wouldn't get me in trouble I'd hex him blind but as the high road is the prudent one here, I won't." He looked into Harry's eyes, "I can't believe his nerve in trying to force your hand this way, bloody Weasel."

I can't believe he stooped that low.” Harry had known that Ron would try something, he wasn't stupid but he hadn't thought Ron would bring in Rita Skeeter and the public. "I'm starting to wonder if I ever knew him, if even once a long time ago he was actually my friend." To wake up to reality and realize that Ron Weasley had probably never cared at all other than that Harry was a way to make himself seen...It hurt. Harry couldn't pretend it didn't. Especially when he would have done anything, given anything to his close ones. "And to drag you into it...Saying those horrible things about you, that's crossing the line." His green eyes flashed.

"I was expecting it from someone eventually Harry. My family is powerful but not well liked and people love to make malicious speculations about those they don't like who have power. I'm angry because he's trying to put pressure on you." He brushed the dark hair away from the bright eyes, "As much as I don't like him, he was once your friend in truth. Before he let jealousies and immaturity start ruling him. First, second, and third year he was honestly your friend I think and then he let his greed and envy start consuming him."
"He's just an idiot if he thinks I would cave to something as underhanded like this, that I would run to him and offer up Squiggles to his greed." Harry scoffed. "It only shows he doesn't know me at all." Harry was all about forgiveness and second chances but even a blind person could see that Ron was less than sincere in his remorse. The fact that he had told his sob story to Rita Skeeter of all people was pretty good proof of that. "Suddenly I wish we could skip the high road and crawl in the gutter if it would see him hurt."

Draco smirked, "Well if the looks on McGonagall, Lupin, my godfather, and Professor Weasley's faces are any indication as well as Granger's outburst he's going to be miserable for the rest of the school year. We can take the high road and still see him suffer." He squeezed Harry's hand, "Regarding Granger, what are you thinking there?"

"I don't know, it was great to see her like that, not only because she wailed on Ron but because it was like having my Mione back. I don't know though, tomorrow she may be back in her study haze." Harry squeezed back and shifted his grip so that he could lace their fingers together, let them see where his loyalties lay. "She gave up so much, being my friend, rushing around trying to rid the world of that filth. She deserves this time to concentrate only on herself...She really does but that doesn't mean I don't miss her."

Draco looked at their hands then back up into Harry's eyes, "I think you should talk to her. I will admit that she and I are most certainly not each other's favorite people but she is an important part of your life." His mouth kicked up and a slight smile, "Not to mention I don't think she'll slip back into the haze, especially not if she has being 'Aunt Mione' to look forward to hmm?"

Harry gave him a small smile. "You're kind of wonderful, do you know that?" He looked down at their laced fingers and felt a sense of joy and belonging. Ron couldn't take this from him no matter how hard he tried. "I'll seek her out later, when breakfast is over. Do you want to come...Visit the lion's den?"

"So long as no one tries to eat me, I think I could stir myself to accompany you." Draco ignored his inner child dancing around and singing 'He likes me! He really, really likes me!' simply because he preferred to believe he could never act so giddy even in his subconscious.

"Don't worry, I'll keep you safe." Harry smiled again. He found it weird that he could feel so happy, worried, sad and pissed off at the same time. After last night he had looked forward to getting to know Draco better as they took things slow but with all this drama going around them Harry didn't really know how to act or what to concentrate on. Squiggles delivered a kick to his kidney that had him gasping and he reached back to rub the sore spot from the outside.

Draco put his free hand on Harry's belly, "Hey no beating up your Mama today little one, he's got enough on his plate." Much like his inner child, he ignored the looks he was getting from his house members and a few other students who happened to glance over at the right moment.

Squiggles stilled and Harry couldn't help but chuckle as he placed his hand over Draco's on his stomach. "See...Magic voice. He never listens to me and you just have to open your mouth and he obeys."

The blond smiled, "Well I'll just have to start reading him stories before bedtime then won't I? Give you a little relief. Ow-" he looked over his shoulder at Blaise who was smiling innocently. "What?"

The Italian pointed at the Head Table, which had emptied a few moments ago, "I do believe we
Flushing Harry got up from his seat with only a little heaving and struggling. He'd been so focused on Draco that he hadn't even noticed the Head Table vacating or that the other students had started to leave. "Right, right, evening for cuddles." He ran a hand through his hair and reached down to pick up his bag but Harry did not look forward to a day of classes which would be filled with looks and whispers once again.

Draco's hand grabbed the bag before Harry could and he handed it to the brunette, "Just remember, they'll all be talking about how stupid the Weasel is and how they hope you don't give him another shot."

"Never!" Harry tilted his head to look up at Draco. "When you're in the room, how can I even see anyone else?" Harry hoisted the bag over his shoulder and hurried out of the Hall before he said something even mushier. They had only gotten together yesterday and Harry was worried he might be rushing things. He didn't want to scare Draco away by being too intense or clingy.

He needed have worried, those still in the hall were witness to the rare sight of a true grin on Draco's face before he followed the brunette to class.

To Be Continued…
Chapter Nine

Disclaimer: Neither Acherona nor trulywicked have any claim on Harry Potter or any characters or locations thereof.

Warnings: Angst, lots of it, Male Pregnancy, mental torture, infant in peril, boys in love, friendships broken and new friends gained. Disregards canon in so many ways.

MOCKINGBIRD

Chapter Nine.

Hermione and Ginny were sitting by the fire, watching Ron over in the corner and occasionally the two girls would giggle as he magicked yet another bit of charred, slime coated hair off his head. Today in Care of Magical Creatures Hagrid had produced slime spitting firewyrms from Australia and grabbed Ron as his 'volunteer' to help handle them and show how, when covered in the slime, the fire didn't burn your skin though hair was usually a casualty. Then had come potions, where a bit of slime had dropped into Ron's cauldron, blowing it up in his face and making his skin sprout neon pink pimples that Madam Pomfrey swore she couldn't quite manage to get rid of. The day had ended in Transfiguration where Neville's wand had somehow slipped and given Ron a scaly rat tail, which he still had as Madam Pomfrey advised against trying to use any magic to remove it until the effects of the ruined potion were gone.

The bushy haired brunette grinned and finished her latest essay, "Oh mercy Ginny if today was any indication the final months of school are going to be absolute hell for Ron." She couldn't quite keep her smug satisfaction out of her voice.

Ginny snickered, "And he still has to face Mum and Dad after graduation too. By the way Mione, what did you do about Skeeter?"

"Oh you'll see tomorrow morning. For once Harry is not going to be on the front page." She put her study materials away and sighed, "I miss him but I'm scared he doesn't want anything more to do with me since I basically abandoned him when I went into that silly study craze."

Ginny barely resisted rolling her eyes. "Hermione, it's Harry Potter we're talking about, of course he'll want to have something to do with you. He's the most forgiving person I know." She sent a glance towards her brother. "When you haven't been a gigantic arse that'll never be able to earn forgiveness. Just reach out to him Mione; I don't think you need to be scared."
"I know that, up here," she tapped her temple, "but my stomach is still jumpy like I swallowed an entire shelf of chocolate frogs, or what the louse in the corner calls a light snack. I-" her mouth dropped open as Neville stepped through the portrait hole followed by Harry and Draco. "And there they go."

Ron nearly choked and charmed an ear off as Harry and the bloody ferret came into the common room. What the bloody hell were the slag and his pet snake doing here? They should be in their own common room! He glared at them from the corner as Neville closed the portrait door.

Harry ignored the slime charred, neon pink, tail wearing creature in the corner and pulled on Draco's hand to drag him further into the mostly crimson and gold decorated common room. He walked towards the two girls in front of the fire. He wasn't nearly as confident about this whole meeting as he pretended to be but he wouldn't let anyone know that. "Um...Hello Ginny, Mione...Mind if we visit?"

Ginny only grinned and shifted so that there was room for them to sit down.

"I- well of course you can," Hermione wrung her hands a bit nervously and scooted just a bit farther over so Harry had plenty of room, "it...it's good to see you, up close I mean and...Oh just hex me now," she covered her face with one hand in embarrassment over the way she was stumbling over talking to Harry. It was **Harry** for Merlin's sake! Her best friend, who she absolutely didn't deserve.

Draco lifted a brow and nudged Harry to sit down, "Niffler got your tongue Granger?"

A soft brown eye peeked out between two fingers and gave the blond a watered down glare. "Malfoy, apologizing is likely a foreign language to you so kindly let me stumble over it on my own you prat."

"Then let's skip the apologizing and there won't be any need for stumbling or glares." Harry leaned forward as best he could and enveloped Hermione in a hug before flopping down on the sofa next to her, patting the spot beside him and looked at Draco imploringly. "It's good to see you too Mione...Up close." He gave her a teasing grin.

Ginny gave Hermione an 'I told you so' look as she reached for an apple to munch on as she enjoyed the show of old friends reconciling.

As Draco settled beside Harry, Hermione turned so she could hug Harry again, careful not to squeeze too hard, "No, no skipping the apology. I've missed you, I'm sorry I was so stuck in my studies that I left you on your own."

"I've missed you too but I do understand, you deserve this time to concentrate on yourself and your studies. It's okay and besides I'm fine, I'm not on my own so you have nothing to worry about." Harry glanced over at Draco with a smile.

She eyed Draco for a moment, lifting a brow that was echoed by the blond, "So I see." She pondered for a moment then nodded before pointing a finger in Draco's face, "You'd better treat Harry like the most precious powerful, diamond encrusted, gold, magical artifact in the entire world or I swear I'll do more than punch you in the nose or turn you back into a ferret!"

He lifted a hand to his nose, remembering the punch Granger packed; she'd actually broken it in third year, and nodded. "Underst-"

Ron, apparently having enough time to process Harry and Draco's presence in the common room surged to his feet with a shout, "What the bloody hell are you thinking of letting them in here
Neville?! You can't just let a low down, pit viper into our common room! And Harry doesn't belong here anymore! He's gotten plenty cozy with all the snakes and looked to me this morning like he had no problem being Malfoy's little slag."

Both Draco and Hermione were on their feet wands out as soon as that had passed Ron's lips, but Neville got to Ron first, driving a fist into the redhead's face with a loud crunch and sending him flying back a good third of a meter. The tall, muscled brunette looked down on the redhead, "The only slag here is you Ron. You've slept with so many people I'm surprised you don't bark when you open your mouth. You seduced and dumped the man you used to call your best mate and now you're doing your best to make his life difficult. I swear if I hear you insult Harry ever, ever again, I won't pull the next punch."

"Woohoo, great punch Neville! Where have you hidden that upper arm strength? With you as a beater we would have the cup in our hands." Ginny singsonged and moved over to squeeze Neville's impressive muscles before turning to Ron. "And you...I am ashamed to call you family but from here on out I do no longer consider you a brother of mine."

"I rather be Draco's slut any day than a friend of you." Harry's voice was silent and deathly cold.

Hermione walked over, eyes narrowed and cast three silent charms, removing the pimples and slime though leaving the tail before explaining the last charm, "The only reason I just canceled the potion reaction and cleaned up the slime was so the impotence charm wouldn't kill you. I don't know what happened to you but you're not the Ron Weasley I was once proud to call friend. Now you're just a sad, greedy, grasping, envious nothing."

She moved back to Harry's side as Draco came forward, crouching down so that he could grab Ron's tie and pull it chokingly tight. "Watch your back you little rat. I may not be as evil as you like to think but I do know spells and potions darker than you can imagine and I wouldn't have any qualms using them against you, nor would any member of my house have a problem with using their knowledge to make your life a living hell just for a single insult against Harry. We all of us in Slytherin House care about Harry as a friend and I care about him as so much more and if you know anything about my family you'll know this, we do not take well or lightly to anyone insulting those we care for." He released the tie and stood up, going over to Harry and putting his arm around the brunette man's waist as Ron coughed and tried to catch his breath.

"Y-you can't do this to me! You'll all get expelled!"

Hermione drew herself up, "Oh will we? It would be your word against ours. The word of a spiteful little boy against us. Is there anyone here who'd actually stand with you now?"

Ron looked around the room and even Dean and Seamus turned away from him. To them the bet had been a lark, a bit cruel perhaps but just a lark. Ron's actions since, the denial of his child, the paper today, and now this, they weren't anything they wanted to be part of. Not to mention they didn't have any desire to be on the end of Hermione or Ginny's wand.

Harry got up and walked over to the sprawled out, livid redhead. "Remember this Ron because you've obviously spent a lot of time obsessing over it. I am the bloody boy who lived, the one who rid the world of Voldemort. I don't even have to be here...You know I have a cushy job at the Ministry waiting for me at the snap of my fingers." Harry's green eyes were cold and he kept one hand on his stomach. "If you do anything that will harm my friends or my child in any way from here on out...If I even hear the slightest whisper than can be traced back to you I will use everything I am...Every connection and every ounce of unwanted fame to completely destroy you. You know I can do it Ron and believe I will."
He turned his back on Ron and walked the few steps to where Draco was. "I think we should go. I'm sorry Hermione, Ginny, Neville. I really want to spend time with you. You are my friends but this place is not where I belong anymore."

Hermione gave him another hug, "Think the rest of the Slytherins would mind us sitting with you at breakfast tomorrow then? And if you're up to it, maybe the lake in the afternoon?"

"They won't mind." Harry knew that at least Pansy would only be happy to get to sit with Neville at breakfast. "And I would love to meet up at the lake, if Squiggles is behaving." He petted his stomach lovingly with one hand as he hugged Hermione with the other. "See you tomorrow."

"Have Luna come too, I've missed her as well." She kissed his cheek then offered Draco a hand to shake, "You might not be all that bad Malfoy."

He took her hand with a smirk, "Likewise Granger."

Harry hugged Ginny and Neville goodbye too before he walked out the portrait door and waited for Draco who was right behind him. "Let's go home to our own common room yeah? I think we've had enough excitement for one day." Harry was tired, he didn't want to admit it but he was bone weary.

Draco nodded, "Yes I do believe we have besides I did say something about telling Squiggles a story. Now which story should we start with? The real Snow White or Puss in Boots?"

Harry chuckled. "Let's start with the Puss in Boots, Crookshanks will probably like that too." They walked down to the dungeons together in easy silence. Harry didn't mention how much he looked forward to the stories too, no one had ever read him a goodnight story and even if this one was for Squiggles Harry was going to enjoy it.

OoOoOoOoO

Hermione smiled and kept checking the wind up watch she wore waiting for the mail to drop even as she spoke with Harry and traded barbs with Malfoy. She'd missed talking to Harry about whatever popped into their heads. She had the added amusement of seeing Neville glancing at Pansy from the corner of his eye every so often. "So the cat in Puss was actually an animagus?"

Nodding Harry threw himself into a recap of the story Draco had told the evening before, telling Hermione all about it excitedly.

"Sometimes it's hard to believe he'll soon be a Mummy, he's like a child himself." Pansy grinned as she spoke with Draco but her attention was on Neville. She had started to follow Blaise's advice and from here on out she would be herself, only Pansy.
The blond nodded and turned to murmur at her, "It's charming but he's perfectly mature when he needs to be."

"Oh I know, it wasn't a putdown of any kind. I find it precious." She patted Draco on the shoulder and leaned forward towards Neville. "I heard about your heroics last night...I am highly impressed and jealous of the Weasley girl for getting to feel your muscles when you won't even touch little old me." She batted her lashes at him.

Ginny watched Neville flush red with amusement.

The brunette stammered, "I-I well, you want to?" His tone was utterly confounded.

Blaise's lips twitched and he hide the amused smile in his goblet, knowing that Pansy would take that and run with it.

"To feel your muscles or for you to touch me? Well both of course." Pansy leaned even closer and ran her hand up Neville's arm to squeeze his rather large muscles. "Mmm, very impressive indeed. I think I shall have to claim these as my own...Oh Salazar I think I have to claim all of you." She tilted her head and gave him a smile that was half sweet and half wicked.

"I...really? I...you...me?" His tone was patented disbelief, "I mean you're so pretty, you could have anyone in the whole school. I'm just...forgetful, grubworm Neville. You could have someone like, like well like Blaise."

The Italian snorted, "Not bloody likely. She's like my sister and I'm not into incest."

Pansy shuddered at the thought of her and Blaise too, oh that was a thought to give her nightmares. "I don't want anyone else Neville. I see your worth even if you don't. I've been trying to catch your attention all year...Do you know what it does to a girl's self esteem to be ignored all the time?"

He blinked in surprise, "I...you have?"

Hermione dropped her head into her hand, "Oh Nev, you poor naive man."
He ducked his head shyly and looked at Pansy from under his eyelashes, "I'm sorry. I'm not really all that...used to...I can't recognize flirting unless you hit me round the head with it."

Pansy couldn't help but smile even as she heaved a small sigh...boys. "Very well, let's try it this way then. Neville Longbottom, I really like you and I think you're fit as few. Let's go out, what do you say?"

His cheeks were still a bright pink but he nodded, "A picnic by Black Lake?"

She beamed at him. "That's sounds absolutely lovely Neville, I look forward to it."

Hermione shook her head then looked up just as owls started flying in. She snatched up her copy of the Daily Prophet and unrolled it, grinning when she read the headline.

**FAMOUS REPORTER RITA SKEETER ARRESTED!!!**

Aurors came into the Daily Prophet yesterday, just after the delivery of her most recent article, and arrested Ms. Skeeter. The charges? Unregistered animagus and breaking and entering.

That's right readers; Ms. Skeeter has been breaking the law for years by using her animagus form to get into locked houses and other buildings. What is her animagus form you might ask? A beetle. (See pg 6 for picture)

Far be it from this reporter to cast aspersions on his colleagues but one must wonder about the integrity of Ms. Skeeter's articles now. If she would break the law in order to find a story, who's to say she wouldn't lie to create one? (cont. on pg 6)

The bushy haired girl folded the paper up with a satisfied smile.

"Oh Mione you didn't...I honestly, honestly love you." Harry's eyes were wide and disbelieving and he wouldn't have been able to stop the wide grin on his face for anything. "I can't believe you told the Aurors about Skeeter, she will not be happy after this. Even if she escapes with a fine no respectable newspaper will want to touch her after this. Her career is dead...We should celebrate."

Draco pursed his lips then smirked, "I'm impressed Granger. Who knew you had it in you?"
She beamed at Harry, "Of course I did. She got her one warning about writing anything about you without your express consent and I more than told the Aurors, I sent the reporter of this article the picture of her beetle form."

"Bloody brilliant Granger." Even Pansy had to praise the other girl. "That way she won't be able to sweep anything under the carpet. The world of journalism is a jungle and I am sure the reporter you spoke to was more than willing to tear Skeeter down from her throne. I approve, you almost thought like a Slytherin there."

Hermione just lifted a shoulder, "Oh he was nearly jumping for joy and I can be sneaky when the situation calls for it. Who do you think raided Professor Snape's potions cabinet in second year and brewed Polyjuice potion in the second floor girl's lavatory?"

Draco gawked at her, "You're the one who did that? Uncle Severus was in a lather over the missing ingredients for months."

"Now, now don't get too full of yourself Mione...Who was it who used cat hair in her potion and had to spend a week in the infirmary?" Harry chuckled and wagged his finger at her. "Hermione is quite the wild one...I promise she's the brain behind all the trouble we got in. Without her I would have been nothing but a little angel, never breaking even the slightest rule."

"Oh you'd have broken them Mr. Potter, you'd just have been caught without me." Hermione frowned at him, "And I thought we agreed to never speak of the cat hair incident again?"

"Sorry Mione, I just couldn't help myself. Besides you were the one who brought it up." Harry lifted his teacup to his mouth.

Blaise lifted a brow, "I am shocked and surprised," he looked over at Ginny, "have you any idea what the 'cat hair incident' is Miss Weasley?"

"I have no idea Mr. Zabini." Ginny's eyes were huge and innocent. "Unlike these two I am a good girl."

Harry snorted into his tea but at the glare Ginny sent him he wisely kept his mouth shut.

Hermione suffered no such fear of Ginny's glare, "Hah! Fifth year puts paid to that statement, not to
mention your mysterious absence after curfew this year. And just who was bragging about having the twins teach her every last one of their dirty little tricks?"

Ginny sniffed but her eyes shone with mirth. "I'm sure I have no idea what you're talking about."

Pansy's eyes had narrowed and she looked between Ginny and Blaise. "Absence after curfew you say? Funny I know someone who's been absent after curfew a lot as well...Imagine that."

Blaise turned a smile on her, "Pansy do you remember that vacation we all took at Mama's place in Sicily? And the pictures she took?"

Blue eyes widened. "Oh you wouldn't you evil cretin." One look at Blaise said he would though so Pansy crossed her arms across her ample chest with a pout. "Fine, my lips are sealed...I won't say a word but you promised never to use those pictures against me."
"And apparently Potter promised never to speak of the cat hair incident, whatever that is. We all slip from time to time," he pat her cheek.

Draco snickered, "Oh I remember that vacation. Dear Merlin you've got photos of me too Blaise," he grimaced.

"I do yes, so watch yourself." The Italian sipped at his juice.

Neville shook his head and chuckled, "You lot," he looked at Hermione, "the cat hair incident is when Hermione brewed the Polyjuice potion and thought she got some of Milicent Bulstrode's hair but it turned out to be cat hair instead. She spent a week in the infirmary coughing up fur balls."

"Neville!" Hermione squeaked then narrowed her eyes, "How in the name of Morgana do you know that anyway?" She sent Harry a speculative glare.

"Oh no," Harry raised both his hands in surrender. "Don't give me that look, I haven't said anything. That Polyjuice moment wasn't my finest hour either...Though seeing Draco here go through the entire Slytherin house presents picking out what he wanted was a rare and special treat." Harry winked at Draco.
Draco coughed at the glares leveled at him, "What can I say I was a young and petty child. But do give over Longbottom. How do you know about Granger's unfortunate Sugarpaws transformation?"

The Gryffindor boy shrugged, "I hear things. No one really notices me around so they talk like they're alone. I heard Hermione, Harry, and erm you know, planning it out in the first place and then
Harry and the rat talking about Mione's infirmary stay.

Hermione stared at him, "And you didn't rat us out?"

He lifted his brows, cleared his throat, and, in a surprisingly good imitation of Hermione, "I'm really sorry about this Neville, Petrificus Totalus.' First year, I like to think I learn my life lessons quickly."

She blushed and ducked her head, "Oh, right."

"We really are sorry about that Nev." Harry looked remorseful. "I was sure Snape was about to deliver the Philosopher's Stone to Voldy...Were in a bit of a rush." He scratched his head sheepishly, making his hair stand on end.

"What is this? Reveal our dirty secrets day?" Pansy looked around the table. "I'm not sure I approve."

Blaise lifted a shoulder, "Well we could always talk about unicorns," he lifted a brow, "for five straight hours and just how cute their ba-mmph." He bit down and chewed the roll she'd stuffed in his mouth.

Hermione chuckled, "It's three months until we all graduate. I imagine we're all being struck with nostalgia."

Ginny nodded. "It's unavoidable, we're all going to move on, go our separate ways. The remaining months will be filled of nostalgia and memories."

"Hmm, I guess...Still not sure I approve though. And one word out of you," She turned to Blaise who was just removing the roll from his mouth. "And I'll start sharing stories and memories I have of you...You fire and I'll fire back Blasey boy."

He saluted her and bit into the roll again.

Draco hummed, "Good memories though, for the most part. Like the Christmas party in third year where Vincent dressed up like Father Christmas." He smiled sadly, "He got Millie to play Mrs. Claus
with him too and spun her round the floor in a silly stupid dance."

"Yeah, that was nice. Even Snape thought so, remember? He came in and made it snow." Pansy smiled but her eyes shone with unshed tears as she looked down at the table. Remembering those who had been lost still hurt and she wondered if it would ever get any easier.

Harry reached out and took Draco's hand, itching to apologize again for not having been able to save Crabbe but he stayed silent, knowing that his regret wouldn't change anything, wouldn't bring a lost friend back.

The blond squeezed Harry's hand and gave him a slightly brighter smile, "It's alright. There's nothing you could have done Harry. You saved me and Granger and the Weasel saved Greg, you did what you could."

"Yeah...It just never seems to be enough." Harry shook his head in an attempt to push the dark thoughts away. Squiggles helped with that by starting a new kickboxing match with his bladder. Harry wrapped his arms around his belly and swore to himself that Squiggles would be allowed to be a child as he grew up. No tough choices and no destiny resting on his shoulders. "Excuse me please; I need to use the restroom."

Ginny waited until Harry was out of sight before turning to the Slytherins at the table. "I don't mean to be nosy but how are Harry's nightmares? This summer before school started he never slept through the night and no Malfoy turn off the glare. I didn't sleep anywhere near Harry, he woke up the whole house. It wasn't just the screaming either...It was the magic. The first time it happened Mum actually thought it was an earthquake, remember Mione?"

Hermione nodded, "Molly was about to evacuate the house until I told her what it was. When we went after the Horcruxes he had nightmares too and we had to put up a circle around his pallet before he went to sleep to keep the magic contained." She brought her arms in tight around herself. "It was awful, waking up and hearing him scream like that, seeing his magic riot around him like it was trying to tear anything approaching apart and after the final battle, it was so much worse."

Blaise's brow rose nearly to the middle of his forehead, "You could see his magic?"

She nodded, "It's beautiful but frightening at the same time, it glows bluish white like a patronus but it's so wild and...Terrified that you think if you step into the storm it will tear you to pieces."
Draco frowned deeply, "Nothing like that has happened. We never even heard a whimper out of Harry until the rat pulled his stunt."

"Well that's good...And a little bit strange." Dark red brows furrowed. "I'm very glad that he doesn't suffer through the dreams anymore but I wonder what caused them to stop; he had a really big one the night before we left for school."

The blond tapped a finger on the table, "He's had a couple of nights where he starts whimpering but then the cat moves from his hip, right up next to his head and starts purring and he calms down." He didn't mention that on those nights he'd come and sat with Harry, running his fingers through the messy black hair until the brunette settled down. "But nightmares, natural ones, from what I've heard and experienced, don't happen within Hogwarts usually. Something about the castle eases those sleeping within."

Ginny blinked and then she thought about it, she had never had a nightmare while she was at school either nor had she heard about someone who had. "So we have one more thing to thank Hogwarts for. I am really happy Harry doesn't have to suffer through those dreams here." She brought her nail up to her mouth but put it down again with effort, trying to quit biting her nails. "What will happen when school is over though? Harry will still be pregnant, what will his wild magic do to the baby?"

Draco frowned, "That's something to bring up to Madam Pomfrey. I'll talk to Harry about it. Though it's actually possible that the sprog would prevent any wild magic from flying around."

"I really hope so, after everything that's happened I proud myself on not scaring easily but those screams and that magic. It's really, really scary." Ginny looked worried but plastered on a smile as Harry made his way back to them.

Draco turned to the brunette, "Better?"
"Much." Harry grinned. "So sorry for the drama moment, I blame hormones."

Hermione lifted a brow, "And how do you explain fifth and sixth year then?"

Harry glared and gave her the two fingered salute. "I have the same excuse for that...Hormones. A fifteen and sixteen year old boy is made purely from hormones though maybe of a slightly more carnal kind."

"Well there's a point," She flicked a bit of toast over in his direction. "Hey Harry, where do you plan
to live after graduation? You've got three fully furnished houses plus I'm sure Molly and Arthur
would love for you to stay with them."

"That's not entirely true, Potter Manor is burn out...It will take a lot of work to make that livable. I've
never been to Black Manor so I don't know what to expect of that." Harry shrugged. "I just figured
I'd go back to Grimmauld while I work things out. At least I know what will await me there and I'll
have Kreacher to help me...I don't think I can live at the Burrow, sorry Ginny I love your family, I do
but it would feel weird."

Ginny nodded that she understood but cursed Ron mentally for making Harry feel uncomfortable
with his own family.

Draco frowned heavily, "Has Grimmauld been cleaned out then?"

"No." Harry shook his head. That was one thing he dreaded, going through that dark house and
cleaning it out, cleaning Sirius out. He knew that wasn't true but it felt like it.

"Would you like us to help?" Draco's hand reached automatically for Harry's. "At the very least I can
get rid of the last bits of curses that might linger in the walls."

Harry took Draco's hand and squeezed it lovingly. "I'd love any help I can get but I don't want to put
you out. I'm sure you all have your own plans when school ends."

"Actually no I don't. Usually I go with Uncle Severus on his ingredient gathering expeditions but he
won't be going this year so I'm free and all yours."

Hermione nodded, "I chose London University and I already had the campus tour and all so I'll have
plenty of free time to help as well."

Neville smiled, "My apprenticeship is to Professor Sprout so I'll be around to help clear out the
gardens and all."

"My stint with the Harpies doesn't begin until training in September either so I'll be around too to
help." Ginny tossed her hair over her shoulder. "As if I wouldn't be there to help my brother and
nephew."
Blaise lifted a shoulder, "I'm rather handy with household charms and counter curses and I did already plan to stay in England this summer, it will be no problem for me to pop by and assist where I can."

Harry swallowed the slight lump in his throat as he looked at his friends, both old and new...He didn't really know what he'd done to deserve them but he treasured them all. "Thank you, I really do appreciate it."

Hermione leaned over the table and straightened his hair into more of a tousled look than a rat's nest. "Hey, you're our Harry. A brother for me and Ginny, a brother in arms for Neville, and a precious friend for those two Slytherins poking fun at each other. As for the blond menace," she tossed a smirk Draco's way, "well he's clearly bum over teakettle for you so we all have to be there to look out for your virtue don't we?"

Harry burst out laughing and poked at his baby belly. "Oh Mione, I think it's a little late to look out for my virtue but I do appreciate the sentiment." He squeezed Draco's hand again trying to show the blond that he wasn't the only one more than smitten. Harry hadn't known he was able to feel something so intense and 'real' for another person before he got to know Draco Malfoy.

Draco squeezed back, a smile flirting over his lips. He was absolutely arse over tits for Harry Potter and he had no problem letting the other man know. They might be taking it slowly and carefully but his feelings were deep and strong and not going to change. He worried about his father's reaction but he wasn't a little boy looking at daddy with stars in his eyes anymore and he'd fight for Harry if he had to. He gave Granger a droll look, "I am not a menace," he waited until she'd opened her mouth to retort, "I'm a terror there's a difference."

"A very big difference." Pansy agreed seriously. "A menace can be ignored, a terror can't. It's in your face until you either give up or give in." She tossed her friend an amused smirk.

Draco just lifted his chin and puffed his chest out proudly. "And really who could ever ignore this?"

Hermione blinked sweetly, "Hm? I'm sorry what did you say? I'm afraid I missed it with the sound of air escaping your inflated head."

Blaise laughed as Draco pouted, "This promises to be a most entertaining and enjoyable summer."
I agree with you Blaise." Harry laughed. "This time it was point to auntie Mione Squiggles, you'll have to help me keep score." Harry caressed his stomach and bent his head as he talked to his unborn child."

Draco narrowed his eyes, "I will even the score."

Hermione nibbled on a peach, "If you say so Menace, if you say so." She looked at Harry, "Is Luna going to join us by the lake this afternoon?"

"I think so yeah...I hope she will." Harry answered. "I asked her and she said she'd come unless the pillerpeeps had multiplied too much." He smiled at the thought of his friend, he was ecstatic to have Hermione back but Luna was still the one who had kept him sane all year. He couldn't thank her enough for that.

Hermione blinked then shook her head with a smile, "If I live a thousand years never shall I completely understand Luna-code."

Blaise lifted a brow, "Wise beyond her years I think," he nodded at Luna who turned round and smiled at them all, "and the only student in this entire school who should have taken Divination."

"I think that girl could run circles around Trelawney...She sees things all the time and not only by pure luck once and a while." Pansy nodded. She didn't have anything against Luna but that look she had, as if she could see into your very soul was a bit worrisome. Pansy didn't really know how to deal with it.

Harry simply smiled. "She's just Luna and she's lovely."

Hermione nodded, "She is though the way she can look through you bothers most people. No one likes to think their dirty secrets and thoughts are on display for anyone but so long as you don't hurt those she views as precious she'll never do anything against you."

Blaise hummed, "What does that mean for the Rat I wonder?"

Draco looked at Luna then at Ron, "I think, if I were the Rat, as soon as I graduated I'd run far and fast because no matter how delicate and sweet she may look, I wouldn't be surprised if Luna had Valkyrie or veela blood in her veins."
"She's a warrior disguised as a flower." Harry nodded but he didn't mention Ron. He really didn't even want to think about the other man if he was honest since the mere thought of him made Harry sick.

The blond glanced over and changed the subject to classes and ran a hand up Harry's back as he fell into a debate with Granger over Runes.

Harry gave him a grateful smiled and moved minutely closer as he threw himself into the conversation about classes, homework and NEWT exams.

To Be Continued…
Luna picked her way along the shore of the lake until she reached the large blanket spread out and the group sitting on it. She smiled at the sight of Neville blushing and shyly returning Pansy’s flirtations, then at the very discreet glances Blaise and Ginny exchanged, Harry was leaning against Draco, who was running his hand over the mound of Squiggles and exchanging barbs with Hermione. She bounced over and settled in between Harry and Hermione, "The pillarpeeps haven't multiplied at all, strange, usually they run rampant."

"I'm glad they held back from running rampant then, so that you could be here with us." Harry leaned forward so he could give the blonde girl a hug before leaning back against Draco's strong and comfortable chest. This was wonderful, having all his friends and family around him like this.

Hermione nodded as Luna's gaze turned to her, "Yes. I'm very happy you could join us. I've missed you. Um have the Nargles been behaving?"

Luna's lips curved up and she wrapped her arms around Hermione, "Welcome back."

The bushy haired girl blinked in surprise and then returned the hug fiercely. "Thank you."

Oh yeah, Luna definitely saw more than she pretended to. Harry smiled happily as Luna made Hermione fit in better with two simple words that all his combined had.

Pansy was grinning too and when she caught herself she worried about going soft...Oh well, she
didn't really care. Not when she was here with the boy she fancied and friends that had always been there for her along with new friends...Friends she had a feeling could last a lifetime if she let them.

Hermione shifted back with a grin, "Really though, none of your things have been going missing again have they?"

Luna shook her head, "None at all, the Nargles have gone into hiding it seems."

"Good." Hermione settled more comfortably into her skin and returned to snipping at Draco, much to Luna's amusement.

Luna gave Ginny a bright smile, "It's good that Hermione finally has someone who can give her wits a challenge."

"Not sure if you're calling me stupid or not Luna but I agree with you. It's good to see her snap at someone who knows how to snap right back and honestly it's nice to not have the snark directed at me." Ginny shifted and threw an arm around Luna, bringing their heads close.

"You don't have any wrackspurts so of course you're not stupid Ginny," Luna leaned her head against her red haired friend's, "but Hermione is...Hermione. Not many can keep up with her no matter how smart they are." She'd missed the female camaraderie of her two Gryffindor friends. Pansy was nice but the Slytherin was still getting used to the way she spoke, acted, and thought. Ginny and Hermione were veterans at it.

"True, true," Ginny smiled. "and yay for not having wrackspurts." Luna truly was one of a kind and Ginny hadn't even known she'd missed her this much until she was here spending time with the other girl.

The blond girl turned to whisper, "You do have a very pretty melodious moopling following you with his eyes though."

Ginny blushed red and glanced over at Blaise before turning back to Luna. "Mmm, he is pretty isn't he? And nice, thoughtful, kind and sexy enough to melt my panties off."

Luna's grin was wicked, "And how many times has that happened so far?"
"Wouldn't you like to know?" Ginny's matching grin was just as wicked. "A girl has to have some secrets you know."

The blond girl's laughter was bright and happy, prompting the others in the group to cast the pair a questioning glance that was waved off.

Hermione tossed one more barb at Draco then out of nowhere she asked Harry, "So when do you want to have the baby shower?"

"Baby shower? I hadn't planned on having a baby shower at all." Harry looked confused, it wasn't something he had given any thought. He hardly knew what a baby shower entailed. "I don't think I need one."

Luna smiled at him, "You do. How else will you get everything the pitterpog is going to need?"

"Can't I buy it when the need arise?" Harry tilted his head as he looked at Luna.

Even Blaise choked at that question, though Draco just leaned his forehead against Harry's shoulder. Blaise shook his head, "No, just to start with you will need a crib, a changing table, bottles, formula, masses of diapers, wipes, baby clothes, blankets, bibs-

Hermione picked it up, "A baby tub, hooded towels, sheets for the crib, a bumper pad, baby soap and shampoo, you'll probably want a bassinet that can go round the house with you, a baby carrier, among other things. Really having a baby shower will make it all much, much easier on you."

Harry looked horrified. "See, I told you I'll be a terrible parent." He turned his head to glare at Draco. "What kind of parent to be doesn't know this? I would probably keep Squiggles naked, dirty and starving if left on my own. I can't do this...I'm in no way ready...Poor kid, I will ruin him, be worse than Petunia." Harry was on his way to a full fledged panic attack.

Draco closed his arms around the brunette, "No you will not! For Merlin's sake Harry you've got common sense enough to know that baby needs to be washed, clothed, and fed. So you don't know everything needed to be able to do that just yet, that's what books and advice from women like Molly Weasley is for. You've got four more months to learn what you need to Harry."
Hermione reached out and tweaked Harry's nose, "On top of that you will never, ever be a horrible parent and certainly not as bad as Petunia was to you." She put a hand gently on Harry's belly, feeling the sloshing around of the baby. "You love him Harry, you already love him and that is something you never had that every child needs more than anything. I'd like little else than to march into 4 Privet Drive and hex decency into the Dursleys. You are not them and you can learn what you need to in time for Squiggles' birth. The baby shower is to help you get as much of what you'll need before hand to make it all easier on you."

Harry was still wild eyed and he was still silently doubting himself but he'd calmed down enough to not hyperventilate. "Do they have baby books in the library Mione or will I have to order them? I believe I have a lot of studying to do...I need to write Molly a letter too, maybe I can arrange some type of parenting class with her."

Pansy rolled her eyes and turned to Neville. "Boy wonder really can obsess can't he? I don't see why he's worrying, just look at him. He will be a wonderful, doting father and he will have Draco by his side to help him. That baby will have the best of everything."

Draco squeezed Harry gently, "Harry, pet, if the library doesn't have any books on this then I can guarantee you that Madam Pomfrey does. There's no rush on the letter as, one you've got someone much closer to give you advice and teach you what you need to know, and two you've still got four months. I'm fairly certain it doesn't take four months to learn how to change a diaper, prepare a bottle, feed, bathe and dress a baby. Professor Lupin I'm sure will be happy to teach you anything you want to know about the mechanics of caring for an infant." He moved his hands down, nudging Hermione's out of the way to smooth them over the belly, "The rest you have down perfectly. Tell me, would this Petunia have ever worried about you the way you're already worrying about your baby?"

No, no Petunia would never have worried at all, Harry couldn't picture her worrying about him a day in his life other than worrying that he would embarrass them, that he would be a freak just like his parents and blow their cover as the perfect suburban family. He shook his head in the negative and placed his hands on top of Draco's on his belly. "I had forgotten about Remus." He admitted sheepishly. "He should know right? Having raised Teddy on his own since Teddy was an infant?" Harry looked around even as he melted more into Draco's embrace. He was happy that it was only friends and family that had witnessed his little freak out.

Luna smiled, "Of course he'll know. You should dance a bit to shake the wrackspurts off Harry. They make you so much more stressed."

Draco smiled and murmured into Harry's ear, "I believe that's Luna speak for 'don't worry so much and have some fun' yes?"
"Yeah, I'll try. I don't want to stress Squiggles out before he's even born." Harry turned his head so he could look into Draco's gray eyes. "Any suggestion what to do for fun around here?"

"Well we could always pull a 'Weasley Twins' and toss dung bombs at people who irritate us while disillusioned," he smiled wider at Harry's chuckle, "Or we can do as Luna suggests and dance. Then there's wading in Black Lake."

Hermione, having heard them hummed, "We could pop over and see if Hagrid has any new cute, fluffy, and utterly harmless creatures about, rare for him but you never know."

"Not wading in the Black Lake." Harry shuddered; he couldn't really see the lake the same way after the second task at the Triwizard Tournament. "Hagrid is wonderful but his idea of fluffy and cute means scaly, fangy and lethal...We all know it. Still what's a day without risking your life? Let's see Hagrid."

Blaise shook his head, "No offense but I do believe I will pass on that. Hagrid's dog likes me too much."

"I think I'll pass too, I need to go over the tactics for the game against Hufflepuff this weekend." Ginny said as she plucked at the grass outside of the blanket.

Pansy rolled her eyes but she didn't say anything, she really didn't want those pictures to see the light of day ever again.

Neville shook his head, "I'd go but I need to take care of something for this weekend, you'll tell Hagrid I said hello right?"

Hermione smiled, "Of course we will. So it's me, Harry, the Menace, Pansy?"

"Sure I'm in, I don't have anything else to do and I like Hagrid's critters. Well as long as I can keep my distance." Pansy shrugged easily but the truth was she really liked spending time with Draco and Potter and even Granger was growing on her.

Luna smiled dreamily, "I will come of course. Hagrid always has the most fascinating creatures."

Draco got to his feet, helping Harry do the same, "Well let's go see if Hagrid has our version of cute
and fluffy shall we, or some unicorns even," he teased towards Pansy.

She stuck her tongue out at him and got to her feet, straightening her clothes and making sure they were wrinkle free. "They are special, magical creatures Draco." Not to mention cuuuuuute, she added in her mind. One little two hour rant about unicorns and she was labeled for life.

Hermione cleared her throat, "He should know after all, his wand core is unicorn hair."

Luna perked up, "Oh yes, Mr. Ollivander told me that Draco's wand core came from the sweetest mare he'd ever met, so docile and gentle."

"Really?" Pansy's right eyebrow went up as she regarded her old friend. "That's something you've kept from me...Docile and gentle...Yeah; I can see that fitting you."

"Now, now...No teasing." Harry looked at all of them. "Remember that Draco's wand is the one who got rid of Voldemort, the core didn't seem very docile when I 'borrowed' it."

Draco glared at Pansy and Hermione, "Thank you Harry, I appreciate the defense."

Luna hummed brightly, "Well he did also mention that he'd brought her sweet golden apples and that she was carrying at the time."

Hermione burst out laughing, "A pregnant, bribed, unicorn mare wand core! Mercurial but bribable. Merlin it fits so well!"

Draco groaned. He was never going to live this down. "By Circe Granger what kept you out of Slytherin?"

The brown haired girl lifted a brow, "I'm a muggleborn know-it-all. It would have been tantamount to dropping me into a pit filled with starving nundus."

"Hmm, I'm on the fence about who would have won that battle though." Pansy replied. "I have this mental image of you sitting at the pit reading a book; nundu's crawling on their bellies and eating out of your hand."
Harry chuckled. "Somehow I can see that too. Hermione’s always been a force to be reckoned with."

Draco hummed and eyed Hermione, "Quite terrifying yes, even without magic," he rubbed his nose.

The Gryffindor girl blushed but put her hands on her hips, "You deserved it. Little prat."

"Whatever happened to foul loathsome evil little cockroach?" He smirked at her.

Hermione's voice was dry, "He crawled away, got stepped on, then evolved."

Draco blinked, "Do my ears deceive me? Was that almost a...compliment from your lips Granger?"

"Don't get used to it."

"You evolved greatly." Harry nodded as they started their way towards Hagrid's hut. He enjoyed watching and listening to Hermione and Draco bantering, it was funny how much alike each other they truly were and Harry thought they could become great friends once they managed to but everything about the past behind them. He looked at Hermione again; he hadn't realized how desperately he'd missed her as a friend until she was back.

Hagrid was out in the giant pumpkin patch applying flesh-eating slug repellant but looked up when Fang barked cheerily and a wide smile spread over his face. "Ello you lot!" He strode over, "Alright there Harry? The little nipper behaving?"

"He's being good as gold." Harry smiled and petted his belly. "How are you Hagrid? Anything new and exciting?" Harry looked around while Fang practically mauled Pansy with slobber and wet kisses. The surprising thing was that the elegant Slytherin girl only giggled and told the large dog what a good boy he was...Harry found himself wishing that Neville had seen that side of Pansy.

"Well I just got the furbles in for the next lesson if you want ter see em." He pat Harry on the shoulder gently, "The only reason they're seventh year material is cause the Ministry considers em too sensitive fer younger years."
Luna perked right up, "Oh I've heard of furbles! They're supposed to be good luck animals that originate from the Americas, round about Alaska."

"I've never heard about them but we'd love to see them Hagrid." Harry followed the half giant as he led them to the other side of his hut where it was calmer and quieter. Luna didn't seem too worried about claws and venom so Harry figured he would follow her lead. When he saw the furbles he was surprised though, very pleasantly surprised. They were adorable, looking kind of like large, fluffy cats with big, floppy bunny ears and large glistening eyes. Pansy almost squealed when she saw them, Harry believed that the unicorns now had a rival at the top of her cute list.

"Why are they considered too sensitive for the younger years Hagrid?" Harry kneeled so he could get a better look at the furbles.

One of them came up to the front of the huge cage they were all in, its nose twitching and big purple eyes curious and Hagrid crouched next to Harry, "Well they tend towards being skittish and if they feel threatened they'll run themselves into the walls of their cage trying to get away from whatever's scared em until they get out or kill themselves."

He opened the door of the cage and waited, hand out for the furble to sniff at, until the creature stepped out and clambered into his hand and then he brought it close to Harry. "Most of the younger years are too loud for 'em and can scare 'em with too much chatter. They're herbivores, have a diet similar to deer they do, and they've got only three ways to defend themselves. They can climb," he chuckled as the furble clambered from his hand over Harry's shoulders then down to his lap to sniff at his belly, making a soft cooing sound, before climbing back up to Harry's shoulders, "and they're fast as a hare when they run, and that," he nodded at the furry creature that had just turned a light green to match Harry's shirt.

Hermione spoke softly, "So they're like furry chameleons then?"

"Aye, you lot can come on over just go slow and soft and one by one."

Harry turned his head and watched the furble on his shoulder before raising a hand slowly and carefully to pet the little creature. "They are beautiful." He kept his voice soft as well; he did not want to scare them.

His friends came over one by one to coo and pet and they were all very careful not to startle the furbles.
For someone ensconced in Harry's belly, Squiggles certainly seemed excited, moving around in there like a tiny little sea monster.

Draco knelt next to Harry and scritched gently behind the furble's ear, "They are cute little buggers aren't they?"

The furble actually started purring before taking interest in Harry's ear and proceeding to lick and nibble at it.

Luna smiled and peered closely into the cage, another furble coming out of the cuddle pile of them to peer up at her with big blue eyes its nose nearly touching hers as it turned the same color as her hair. She reached a finger between the bars and scratched under its chin, "Their purr is supposed to bring good luck from what I've heard."

Hagrid nodded, "Aye. Most of 'em don't like people as a rule cause they use ta be hunted fer their fur but those who do get to see one and touch 'em and get 'em to purr are said to be blessed. It takes a gentle kind soul to attract one that much."

Hermione peered over Luna's shoulder at the, currently blond, furble that was purring and rubbing against Luna's fingers and murmured softly, "I'll call that accurate from this evidence."

Luna glanced up at her and just smiled.

Pansy smiled too, her furble wasn't purring but it allowed her to pet it and even closed its eyes as it enjoyed the attention.

Harry giggled as his furble's attention on his ear almost got too much, it didn't hurt in the slightest but apparently Harry had sensitive ears and the small licks and nibbles tickled something fierce. "These little guys are going to become a great hit Hagrid, thank you so much for letting us meet them."

Hagrid beamed, "Aye well I always like showing yeh the new creatures. Yeh don't make judgments about 'em just cause they might look scary or have a bad reputation. " He reached over and ruffled the young man's hair, "And yer like that with people too. I'm proud to call yeh my friend. That little nipper's gonna be a lucky little sprout havin you as a Mum."
Harry carefully handed the furble over to Draco before rising up to throw himself at Hagrid, hugging the large man as tightly as he could. "Thank you Hagrid, that means a lot...And if I'm nice in any way it's because I learnt it from you." Hagrid was the very first adult who talked to Harry as if he was actually worth something and Harry would never forget that.

Hagrid turned a bright pink and returned the hug gently, stammering something to just Harry under his breath.

Draco watched Harry with the half-giant and felt a wave of shame go through him. For most of his school career he'd be absolutely horrid to the gentle man who'd just eased Harry's worries with a casual comment and Hagrid had never deserved it, never. Granger was right; he had deserved that punch in the nose in third year.

Pansy's thoughts were somewhat similar, she had never been particularly nice to the large professor, believing him to be nothing but Dumbledore's lapdog and not very smart. Now she finally saw there was so much more to him and she promised herself not to judge anyone from preconceived notions from here on out. When you locked yourself in a small world of elite wizards and witches you missed so very much and Pansy wanted to experience everything there was to see and do. With the war she had seen how short life could be and she wanted to live hers to the fullest.

Harry smiled and let go of Hagrid slowly with one last pat to his beard. "So Hagrid, how's Olympe? Are you going to visit her this summer? When are the two of you tying the knot anyway?"

The blush got brighter, "I-er well...I asked and she wants ter wait til she's done running Beauxbatons." He looked proud of his lady, "The school is 'er first priority and that's how it should be, looking after the young uns."

Draco ran his hand along the furble he held, "Is she staying Headmistress there much longer?"

"Just til little Gabby graduates an' she's got the replacement all trained up I think. She wants all the creature-blooded students to be properly treated when she's gone."

"That's great, she does great work as Headmistress and a prize like that is worth waiting for right?" Harry grinned. "Besides you do important work here, Hogwarts needs you so for all students' sake I'm glad you're waiting."

"Olympe says she wants to move here with me and help teach the kids better tolerance for mixed
bloods. McGonagall's already got a post thought up for when she does an all so don't worry, I'll still be round when your little nipper comes to school." He pat Harry on the head, "Now, you wanna help me feed the furbles then?"

Hermione smiled as they all agreed and watched Harry take a bucket of lettuce to hand feed the furbles. This was exactly what he'd needed to help decompress and when they got back to the castle later hopefully Remus would be able to make some time to help teach Harry the basics of baby care.

To Be Continued…
Chapter Eleven

Disclaimer: Neither Acherona nor trulywicked have any claim on Harry Potter or any characters or locations thereof.

Warnings: Angst, lots of it, Male Pregnancy, mental torture, infant in peril, boys in love, friendships broken and new friends gained. Disregards canon in so many ways.

MOCKINGBIRD

Chapter Eleven.

Severus Snape was having a bad day. No scratch that, it was a hellish day. This day of the week was when he was stuck with the third and fourth year students and true to form at least seven cauldrons had blown up, necessitating infirmary visits. He had also been in pain all day, his muscles tensing in preparation for a massive cramp and his nerve endings screaming at even the slightest brush against him. It was from the lingering effects of Nagini's venom and was also the reason he'd canceled his usual summer trip. It would take another year for his system to return to normal and he didn't want to have an episode while in the middle of a jungle, far away from medical assistance. Right now all he wanted to do was to get into his bed, take the medicinal potion that would hopefully stave off the episode that was building, and sleep until morning. The Head Table could live without him for one dinner.

Remus looked around waiting for Severus to show up but as the students fell in and started to eat it became quite clear that the potions professor wasn't coming. A tight knot of worry formed in his stomach and he only waited for the meal to be over so that he could go check on the other. Teddy was still with his Grandmother and Harry had spoken to him earlier. Remus was honored and proud to teach Harry a bit of the basics of caring for a baby, he had no doubt that Harry would do brilliantly when the time came.

As soon as the plates vanished Remus was on his feet and with a quick nod goodbye to the Headmistress he shot down the stairs to the dungeons and he knocked softly on Severus' door.

Black eyes cracked open and the potion master made a soft pained groan as he managed to roll himself out of bed. He only wore his silk dressing gown and personally he swore that if it was a student pestering him he was going to hex them into oblivion. He was hurting too much right now to be tactful, nice or even marginally pleasant. He yanked the door open, eyes shooting daggers until he noticed who it was standing on the other side, "Remus? Is there a problem?"
Remus' eyes raked over the body in front of him before he could help himself and snap his eyes up to meet Severus' dark ones. "I was worried, wanted to make sure you're okay." He looked closer at the other and noticed the drawn lines of his face and the shadows in his eyes. "Are you alright Severus? Is there anything I can do?"

It was a testament to years of control and spying that he didn't snap and snarl at the other man. Instead he lifted a brow and leaned on the doorjamb, "It's been a trying day is all." He felt the muscles in his back beginning to draw up tight and knew that if he didn't get back into the bed soon he'd be convulsing on the floor. "All I require is some rest." He'd apologize for being short tomorrow but right now he needed to lie down before his pride took a nose dive and he collapsed to the floor at the werewolf's feet.

"Okay, sorry to have bothered you." Remus said but his eyes narrowed. He knew Severus was lying. Almost thirty-five years of searing, burning pain once a month made him recognize the signs. He wanted to push but he couldn't, not if Severus was in pain. Better to leave it for another day. "Rest well then Severus."

The other man nodded, "I will see you tomorrow then." He half turned and reached for the doorknob when it struck. Every muscle in his body seemed to draw up into one giant massive tight knot all at the same time and his nerves lit on fire. He fell to the floor, agony blazing through him though the only sound he made was a sharp hiss through his teeth so as not to scream and drawn anyone else's attention.

"Oh you stubborn, insufferable man." Remus pushed the door open and kneeled at Severus' sides. "Bite down now, I'll help you to bed." He winced at the shudder that went through Severus as the merest touch but Remus knew it would only get worse for Severus' if he stayed on the floor. Thanking his werewolf strength Remus hoisted Severus up and carried him into the inner room of his quarters, laying him down on the bed. He saw the muscles spasm and draw up and without hesitation he started to rub them, trying to make them relax. "I'm sorry, I know it hurts but it will be better later."

The potion master just made a pained groan and focused on riding out the waves of agony. The competent hands digging at his muscles to relieve the cramps would eventually be successful he knew from his experience at St. Mungos but until then the firm touch felt like a hot brand laid on his skin, his nerve endings screaming. It was as bad as the Cruciatus without the known relief of the curse being lifted. It could go on for anywhere from ten minutes to two hours depending on the severity of the attack and he'd be unable to move until it ended. He closed his eyes, aware that tears were leaking from behind his eyelids but not particularly caring.

Remus knew pain but seeing this strong, capable and proud man suffering under it almost made his
heart break. Not because he thought it made Severus weaker in any way but because he thought Severus had already been through enough, he didn't deserve this. He continued rubbing and massaging, hoping the cramps would give soon so that Severus got some relief. "I'm so sorry you have to go through this Severus and I wish I could take the pain away." His voice was soft and soothing, the same tone he used when he tried to lull Teddy to sleep or kiss a booboo better.

Snape made a sound that even through his pain sounded sarcastic and managed to force two words out of his throat, "Bleeding...heart." He viewed these episodes as a sort of penance for his mistakes, for the deaths his mistakes had caused and for the deaths he'd been personally responsible for. Really viewing them as such was all that kept him sane with each episode because if he didn't believe he deserved the pain he'd have lost his mind trying to find a way to justifying continuing to live through it.

"I'm not a bleeding heart to have simple compassion and I still say you don't deserve this. I know you don't believe me but you are a good man Severus Snape and I am proud to know you." Remus Accioed a vial of oil from his own chambers, something that made the day after his transformations a little bit easier. He spread it over his hands and went back to his attempt to uncoil the struggling muscles.

The potion master just made a sound that bordered on humorless laugh and continued to breathe through the pain. His muscles were slowly responding to Remus' ministrations and one by one they relaxed and unknotted until he could reach down and grab the werewolf's hand in a loose grip. "Enough," his voice was cracked and rough from the strain of holding back screams. He let his hand fall back onto the bed. His muscles were no longer cramping but his nerve endings were still raw and felt exposed. He gestured to his bedside table, "The green bottle in the drawer, please."

Remus removed his hands, pushing down the regret at not being able to touch any longer. He wiped his hands on his robes and reached into the drawer for the green bottle. "Do you need help drinking it?"

"No," Severus held out his hand, noting that it shook with a fine tremor.

Ignoring the slight shakes Remus placed the bottle in Severus' hand. "Here you are then."

"Thank you," he uncorked it and downed the potion within in one go, sighing as he felt the effects start soothing his nerves. "How long?"

"Not too long, about twenty minutes I would say. From your expression I see it's been worse at times." Remus looked down at his hands. "I'm really sorry I came by and got you out of bed."
"Don't be. You were concerned and you should never be sorry for concern." Severus closed his eyes again, "It was bound to happen again eventually in any case."

"Still sorry." Remus moved up the bed and stroked the hair out of Severus' forehead and eyes. "Get some sleep now and take tomorrow off. I can cover your classes and before you get your pants in a twist I won't have them brewing anything. It will be a purely theoretical lesson. You need to rest and I want you well and healthy."

He shook his head wearily, feeling the sleeping part of the potion start to take effect, "No need to substitute. I'll be back to normal tomorrow, I always...am." He could admit to himself that the gentle hand felt good now that his body was cooperating and his nerve endings weren't compounding sensations until they were painful.

"Stubborn...You will rest tomorrow even if I have to tie you down and sit on you." Amber eyes narrowed as Remus sighed. "For now though I will leave you to your rest. Sleep well Severus and get better." Remus let his hand fall away and got up from the bed.

"Nnn, stay," half out of his mind and almost asleep, his hand managed to snag the hem of the werewolf's robes.

"Oh Severus, I bet you'll regret this in the morning." Remus couldn't push down his own wishes to stay though so he kicked off his shoes and took off his tie before he slid into the bed behind Severus and slipped his arms around the other man. "Sleep now."

"Hmm," warm, exhausted, comfortable and under the potion's influence, he did as told and slipped into a mercifully dreamless sleep.

Burying his nose in the crook of Severus' neck Remus inhaled the other man's spicy scent and closed his eyes. He fell asleep wishing it wasn't just the pain and the potion that was talking, wishing that Severus wanted him there as much as Remus wanted him.

OoOoOoOoO

The first thing Severus noticed the next morning as he slowly regained consciousness was that he was warmer than he ever was in his dungeon quarters. The next was that there were arms wrapped around him and someone breathing on his neck. His eyes shot open and he jerked into a sitting
position, pulling out of the arms and turning to see who was in his bed with him, nearly gaping as he saw Remus Lupin. He remembered the other man helping him through an episode but, how had the werewolf come to bloody cuddle him through the night?

Used to be woken early by a small ball of energy, Remus' eyes shot open when Severus moved and he looked at the other man carefully as he reached up to rub the sleep out of his eyes. "Good morning, how are you feeling today? Any lingering pain or discomfort?" He brought his hand down over his mouth to cover a yawn.

A black brow rose at the other man's ease in this position, "Sore but then that is quite typical of an episode." He poked at his own mind and managed to unearth a vague memory of asking Remus to stay. Bloody hell he hoped he hadn't revealed his infatuation with Lupin as well. He had no desire to be pitied for an unrequited attraction.

Remus sat up in the bed and stretched to get his muscles working, he wasn't as young as he used to be and a life full of transformations made it difficult to simply roll out of bed first thing. "Good, I'm glad you're feeling better. You're still going to take the day off though." Sharp amber eyes turned on Severus. "I'm fully willing to go through with my threat to tie you down." There was a ball of disappointment lodged in Remus' throat, he had hoped against hoped that maybe Severus had meant something when he asked him to stay but today it seemed as if Severus didn't want to mention it at all. Remus was a fool to even hope and he knew it. He was a middle-aged werewolf with a child...Not exactly the grand prize. Severus could do so much better than him anyway so it was best to pretend like nothing and at least keep the other's friendship.

"I would like to see you try Remus. I am far from being easy to subdue." The potion master slid off the bed and rolled his shoulders, taking a few steps to assess his body. "I have been teaching after episodes like this all year and I am not the type to be idle." He moved towards his bathroom, intent on scrubbing off yesterday's scum and potion residue.

Quick as the wolf that lived inside him Remus was off the bed, grabbed Severus, pushed him back among the sheets and straddled him. "See I'm trying...You look pretty subdued to me." There was a flash of smile. "I know you're capable of teaching today but what's wrong with accepting a little help once and a while. Use the day to go through your notes or work on your own potions but let me handle the kids for one day so you can have some peace." He looked down at Severus intently, trying not to focus on the strong, lean body underneath him.

Dark eyes narrowed, he was never one to simply back down in a challenge and he was not what you'd call fond of being pinned. Snape arched, flipped over beneath Remus, bucked him half-off then used his legs to sweep the werewolf from the bed before moving into a crouch and staring down at Lupin. He had a moment of distraction, taking note of how good the other man looked tousled and rumpled, before bringing his attention back to the subject at hand, "I am a creature of habit and routine and I am not particularly keen on letting a minor episode disrupt that routine. It is Friday; I
can rest and seek my peace this weekend."

Remus' eyes flashed before he let out a sigh, the tousling with the other man had left him with a 'problem' and he didn't want Severus to know. Moony howled his approval at the other's strength and speed and Remus couldn't deny that the man found it hot as hell either. "Fine, fine you stubborn creature. I can't force you to do anything so I'll leave you to do whatever you wish." Remus got up from the floor and made sure his robes covered his groin area.

Severus moved off the bed, again, and straightened his dressing gown. "Remus, thank you for the offer regardless."

"Hmm." Remus was in too deep; he couldn't keep his eyes off Severus, that pale skin and sinewy muscles. He had to get out of there before he made a complete idiot out of himself. "Well I should go get ready for the day, floo Teddy before breakfast. See you later." He escaped through the door before he said anything he couldn't take back.

Snape sighed and rubbed the back of his neck before heading to the shower. He was just stepping out of the bathroom with a towel round his hips when the door opened and his godson stepped in.

"Dear Merlin save us all my eyes!" Draco turned sharply to face the door rather than his nearly naked godfather with a shudder. "Bloody hell Uncle Severus why in Circe's name are you just now getting out of the shower?"

The professor glared at his godson's back before moving to his wardrobe, "I had a difficult night and then had to deal with a concerned colleague this morning. Is there a particular reason you're in my quarters before breakfast?"

"I was sent, well bullied into it, as an emissary to request use of the Slytherin common room in one month's time for a party."

Snape zipped up his trousers, slipped on a dark green shirt, pulled his vested under robe over it, charmed the buttons to do themselves up, and then donned his voluminous outer robe. "You can turn round now you little pest." he moved to sit and put on his shoes. "Precisely why are you wishing to host a party in the common room that needs my permission?"

"It's a baby shower for Harry." Draco turned around cautiously; leaning on the wall and watching his godfather complete his morning routine when he saw that the man was indeed clothed.
The potion master took up a bottle of his protective hair oil and began combing it in. "Again, why does this need my permission?"

"Because two Gryffindors, the Weasley family sans Ronald, the entire staff, Viktor Krum, the Headmistress of Beauxbatons, the Delacour family, the Minster of Magic, Mr. Ollivander, Oliver Wood, Alicia Spinnet, Angelina Johnson, Katie Bell, two bloody mad house elves, and Andromeda Tonks have all been invited. It's either the Slytherin common room or Harry takes us on a tour of the Chamber of Secrets for the baby shower." Draco had to hide his amusement as in mid-recital his godfather had stopped what he'd been doing and turned to just stare at him.

"And Minerva has agreed to all the outside people on the grounds? Wait, don't answer that. She'd likely let a nundu in if Potter requested it, especially now." He finished greasing his hair and eyed his godson, "You mean I'm invited to this infernal thing as well?"

"You are staff are you not?" Draco studied him a bit more closely, "Difficult night you said? You had another episode didn't you? And you're getting ready to teach today?!"

He raised a brow at the blond, "That was my plan yes."

"Uncle Severus you have to stop doing this! Yes I know," he lowered his voice and mimicked the older man, "I am perfectly capable of handling my classes after an episode Draco. It is not detrimental to my health.' No it's not but it is bloody well detrimental to your recovery. You'd recover much faster if you rested after an episode rather than jumping right back into your normal activity. The St. Mungos healers told you that, Madam Pomfrey told you that and you yourself came to that conclusion so why won't you rest?"

"Is there another potion master in this school Draco?"

The blond narrowed his eyes, "No but there's a bloody apprentice who can very well handle the first and second years, which I do believe are on today's agenda."

"First Remus now you, I am perfectly able to teach my own classes."

"What do you mean 'First Remus now you'? Professor Lupin was here? He offered to take over?"
"Yes, teaching only the theory but yes and I'll tell you as I did hi-m," black eyes widened as a wand was quickly drawn and he found himself bound to his own bed in a pair of soft flannel pajamas. He narrowed his eyes, "Draco you will release me, immediately."

"No I don't think I will. You're resting and I'm using enough binding spells that even you will find it utterly impossible to break out of them all before Madam Pomfrey gets here." He cast a silencing charm on his godfather and the layers of binding spells, "And by the time she does the Headmistress will be informed that you are ailing, Professor Lupin will be recruited to help me keep the little monkeys under control, and you will be forced to get some much needed rest." Draco called a house elf to please go fetch Madam Pomfrey, finished binding his godfather, and strolled out the door before breaking into a run to get to the Headmistress before Snape could break free. He'd have to apologize to Harry for ruining the plan to host the shower in the common room but he was sure the brunette would understand.

Only staff had made it to the Great Hall for breakfast so far and both the Headmistress and Remus looked up when Draco Malfoy came tearing in like he was chased by the devil himself. Remus had never seen the young Malfoy heir as anything but calm, cool and collected other than the night of the final battle and to see him here with flushed cheeks as he tried to regain his breath sent a shiver of fear down Remus' spine. "Are you alright Mr. Malfoy...Has anything happened to Harry? To the baby?" Remus was out of his seat in a second.

"Yes Mr. Malfoy, please explain what has you running at breakneck speed through the halls of Hogwarts." Minerva's voice was stern as usual but the worry in her eyes betrayed her, she was just as concerned about what had happened to make Draco act so out of character as Remus was.

The blond smoothed his hands over his robes to straighten them, "No Harry's fine. Professor Snape needs to take the day off Headmistress McGonagall," he lowered his voice so only the stern woman and Remus could hear him, "He had an episode and he really needs to rest. I told him that I could teach the first and second years the practical if Professor Lupin can be there to keep them all controlled and teach the theory."

Surprisingly the first thing Remus felt was anger, why would his mate listen to a student over him, even if said student was also his godson? Then came shock, Remus could actually feel the blood draining from his face. *Mate!* Where in the name of the four founders had that come from? Remus had made it almost forty years without a mate, he'd been married, he had a child for goodness sake. Remus had always known he swung both ways and he'd had both girlfriends and boyfriends but that one soul that was meant just for him, he had never thought he'd find it. Now he had no idea what to do, Moony growled to him that he should take action, claim and keep but for the man it wasn't that simple.

"Of course Mr. Malfoy, it is good that professor Snape rests. Are you okay with covering potions together with Mr. Malfoy Remus?" Minerva turned to the chalk white professor.
"What?...Oh of course, I've already offered. I only have one DADA class today and it doesn't cut in with the potion classes so it should go perfectly well." Remus replied when the Headmistress started to look at him funny.

Draco smiled at him, "Brilliant, now once he gets out of the body binds there's nothing he can do but rest...." he trailed off when both of them looked at him oddly, "What? He's my godfather, it's my solemn duty to make sure he recovers swiftly even if that means putting him in a body bind while his back is turned and going over his head to make sure he rests when he should."

Okay so Severus hadn't agreed when he said no to Remus, that made both the man and the wolf feel better but now he couldn't help but wonder how Severus was doing. His mood could not be very pleasant after such a jump on him. It made the corners of Remus' mouth twitch.

One of Minerva's eyebrows disappeared underneath her pointed hat as she regarded the young Malfoy with both disapproval and amusement. "I see, well since it was for a good cause I will let it slide but if I hear of any other attacks on this school's staff back turned or not I will dock Slytherin so many points your grandchildren will struggle to catch up. Is that clear Mr. Malfoy?"

"Perfectly Headmistress. Oh, one other thing, just in case they haven't gotten round to asking yet, the ladies are planning a baby shower for Harry and the guest list...well it's massive and I doubt that Professor Snape will cheerily agree to the Slytherin common room hosting it. Would you happen to know of anywhere that we can hold it other than the Room of Requirements?"

"The Room of Requirements is not fit to be used anyway, our restoration team hasn't made it to that room yet so you wouldn't be able to keep a party there." Minerva fixed him with a stern stare. "Really though Mr. Malfoy, It's your seventh year and quite bright if I have been told correctly. A simple expansion spell would take care of any troubles and you'd be able to use any room. We are wizards after all. I suggest the old Charms classroom on the third floor though, it's out of use so you can decorate it as you please in advance and it's at the end of a hallway so you should have some privacy."

"Thank you. You'll have to excuse my momentary lapse in intelligence, I have four young women prodding me over this and every other detail...it's a bit confusing."

Minerva's expression softened. "Well get used to it Mr. Malfoy, woman are always confusing and that's just how it should be." She looked up as students started to fill in and sit at their tables. "I trust you sent Madam Pomfrey to look on professor Snape?" At Malfoy's nod she gave a pleased nod. "In that case go have some breakfast, I'll let the professors know that you're filling in teaching today and I'll have a classmate bring you today’s assignments at the end of the day." She sat back down in her
seat as a sign that the conversation was over.

"Thank you," Draco caught sight of Harry walking in between Blaise and Pansy and went over to sit next to him at the Slytherin, "Sorry I was gone this morning, I went to ask Uncle Severus about the common room and well...things happened. Pans you don't mind bringing me today's assignments do you? I offered to teach the first and second years the practical aspect of potions today."

"Of course I don't mind," Pansy shook her head. "Is professor Snape alright?" He might be tough and snarky but Snape was very much liked by the students of his house.

"He's fine, just a bit worn out. If he'd bother to actually rest when he needs it he'd be even better," Draco scowled and tapped a finger on the table. He'd have to teach Professor Lupin how to get the drop on his godfather just in case. "He'll be in a foul mood next apprenticeship lesson though so if I return looking ragged, you'll know why."

Pansy nodded, knowing that Draco told the truth. If Draco had somehow forced Snape to rest then their potions professor would take it out on his arse next lesson. Snape did believe in Tit for Tat after all.

"Don't worry; I'll take care of you." Harry leaned over to rest his lips by Draco's ear. "A rubdown maybe..."

The gray eyes widened and Draco shifted as his body responded enthusiastically to that sexy little murmur. He turned his head and looked into gleaming green eyes and deliberately purred back, "Don't make promises you might not keep pet."

"As bloated as I am at the moment there's nothing wrong with my hands...See." Harry wiggled his fingers enthusiastically. "So no reason what so ever that I shouldn't be able to keep my promise. Besides I love touching you, your skin...So smooth, it's like running my fingers over heated silk."

Draco caught the brunette's hand and pressed a kiss to the center of it, "You're a naughty man Harry Potter and it's enchanting."

Harry gave him a wide grin. "Sometimes it's nice to be naughty and you have no idea how naughty I can really be." Honestly Harry didn't have any idea how to be naughty or seductive but it was nice to flirt, to be able to feel a little bit naughty if nothing else.

Draco leaned in close so his breath ghosted over Harry's ear, "I look forward to finding out."
Harry flushed and was about to reply when Pansy made a gagging noise.

"Please children, not at the breakfast table when Mummy is trying to eat. You can have your playtime later when Mummy is either asleep or dead drunk, whatever comes first." She reached for the jam pot and spread a generous layer of blackberry jam over her toast.

Draco pulled away and smirked at Pansy, "You, milady, are just jealous that your own beau is currently sitting over at the Gryffindor table and therefore you're unable to make him blush."

"Damn right I'm jealous." Pansy pouted and looked over at the Gryffindor table. "If anyone can be naughty it's me...You all know that but that...Bloody gentleman won't let me show it."

Blaise buttered a popover, "Patience piccolo fiore, a little time and I'm sure you'll be able to be as naughty as you like. They do say that it is always the quiet ones do they not? A little patience and perhaps Neville shall be the one making you blush."

Draco lifted a brow, "I would pay to see that."

She stuck her tongue out at him. "I know Neville is worth waiting for and I want it all with him, not just a romp but by Salazar my lady bits ache when I'm with him and toys only get you so far." Pansy sighed deeply and went back to her toast. Ignoring the giant size of Harry's eyes and his flushed cheeks as he listened.

Both Draco and Blaise were far, far too used to her to even react beyond Draco reaching over and patting her head, "There there dearest, they say waiting builds character."

"They say poverty builds character too, feel like trying it?" She gave his cashmere sweater a pointed glare and spread more jam on her toast. If she couldn't get nookie she could at least have sugar.

"Not if I can avoid it, which thankfully, due to my massive personal vault, thank you Grandfather Abraxas, I can." He pulled out his wand, flicked it, and had a jar of Nutella spread sitting in front of Pansy, "Try that Mademoiselle Grouchy-Pants."

"Oooh thank you" She reached for the jar greedily and grabbed another piece of toast. "So much
better than jam."

Harry shook his head in amusement. Pansy was like no other but Harry wouldn't want her any other way.

Draco reached for some French toast, "You're welcome. Oh about the location of the baby shower, we've been given use of the old Charms classroom on the third floor and told to use expansion charms." He glanced over at Harry who was picking at his eggs, "Is something wrong pet?"

"No, nothing's wrong. I'm just not in the mood for eggs and toast." Harry picked at the eggs some more before he called for a House Elf, he whispered in its big, floppy ear and the elf nodded and disappeared with a loud pop. Shortly afterwards another plate appeared in front of Harry and he tucked in happily. Spreading the canned peaches on the blood pudding making sure that the pickles were present before dunking the whole dish in hot sauce. "There, that's more like it."

Blaise looked at the plate with horror and pushed his own plate away, his appetite gone as he watched Harry scoop up the vile concoction into his mouth with obvious enjoyment.

Draco had to clear his throat and take a sip of water as the hot sauce fumes made his nose twitch, "Well that kills that rumor."

"Hmm? What rumor?" Harry licked a drop of hot sauce away from the corner of his mouth as he looked at Draco questioningly.

"Excuse me, I need to go and...Toss my cookies." Pansy hurriedly ran from the table, slightly green in the face.

The blonds' lips twitched as Blaise soon followed her, "The traditional craving is supposed to be pickles and ice cream. You're missing half the equation."

"No I'm not." Harry grinned and shoved a forkful of blood pudding and peaches into his mouth. "Last night when you all had fallen asleep I was in the kitchen having a fish sticks, ice cream and chocolate syrup snack."

Draco's shoulder's shook and he dropped his forehead into his hand as he chuckled, "You're one of a kind pet. Just don't ask me to kiss you before you brush your teeth after one of these cravings."
"Since we haven't even kissed yet I'll take my chances. Besides, they're not that gross are they...The cravings I mean." Harry looked down at his plate; he couldn't see what the big deal was.

He looked at his...boyfriend was it? "Not too terribly in my view but it's not a flavor combination I'd like to experience even vicariously," he reached over and played with the hair at the back of the brunette's neck, "You eat what you like pet and whatever the baby tells you to, it's what you and Squiggles need."

Harry smiled at him gratefully and finished his meal before he picked up his wand and cast the strongest mouth cleaning charm that he knew, it left his gums tingling and his breath minty fresh. Then he leaned forward and placed his lips against Draco's in a very chaste kiss. "There, perfectly kissing safe." Harry got up from the table. "I need to get to Magical History before I'm late, good luck teaching."

The blond watched him go, one hand rising to his lips. He knew the tingling he felt had absolutely nothing to do with the hot sauce the brunette had ingested and everything to do with Harry. His mouth curved up in what knew was a stupid grin that he suspected would make an appearance every now and again throughout the day. His inner child was positively gleeful; dancing round and singing 'He kissed me! He kissed me!' over and over again. He shook his head clear and got up to head to the potions class room to start setting up for the day.

To Be Continued…
Chapter Twelve

Disclaimer: Neither Acherona nor trulywicked have any claim on Harry Potter or any characters or locations thereof.

Warnings: Angst, lots of it, Male Pregnancy, mental torture, infant in peril, boys in love, friendships broken and new friends gained. Disregards canon in so many ways.

MOCKINGBIRD

Chapter Twelve.

Severus was not pleased to be put on 'quarters arrest' but he was a sneaky bastard and had a charm set up in his classroom to see what went on during the day and he found himself impressed. Not so much with Lupin, he knew well that the man was almost tailor made for teaching, but with Draco. His godson managed to catch each and every almost mistake before it blew up a cauldron and he was interestingly gentle with the young students, guiding them carefully and correcting them without malice or harsh words. Just about every one of the brats trotted out of the classroom with a passable or better potion and a smile. Draco was a good teacher, better at the teaching aspect than he himself was. This made him all the more certain that grooming Draco as his replacement was the right decision.

He was now watching the last class of the day and it was the final stages of the potion. He watched as Draco caught a Gryffindor's hand before the prat could toss a flobberworm into a Slytherin's cauldron and as Remus took away points for the almost stunt and Draco intimidated the Gryffindor with well chosen words about exactly what would have happened had the sabotage succeeded, leaving the prat pale and shaken. As the class ended, Draco then drew the misbehaving student off to the side and whatever he said elicited an understanding nod, a truly contrite expression, but also a hug that had the blonds' eyes widening before the brat scampered out. He ended the observation after that, a smile of pride on his own face.

Down in the classroom Draco shook his head and proceeded to start cleaning up alongside Professor Lupin. The foolish boy had a grudge against a certain Slytherin because they both liked the same girl. Draco had told him that girls were more impressed with someone who didn't give in to petty immature sabotage and instead worked hard at bettering themselves, then he'd told the little imp that he had a lot of potential in potions, which he did, and if he left the grudge behind he'd likely end up top potion student in his year. The boy had been surprised but game and had left making plans to ask the girl if she'd help him study.
Remus stayed behind and helped Malfoy...No Draco clean up after the students. He had to admit that he was impressed by the way Draco had handled the student body. Not only was he brilliant at potions but he knew just how to convey that skill to those he taught. Remus had no doubt that Draco would be a wonderful teacher if that was the path he decided to follow. He definitely understood why Severus had chosen him as an apprentice.

"You did very well Draco, I don't think you really needed me here, you are more than capable of handling a class on your own." Remus gathered his teaching notes in a neat pile and placed them in his bag.

The blond finished clearing the room and smirked, "Perhaps but I don't have the ability to take points away to back up the responsibility. I chose not to be a prefect this year." He turned and studied the werewolf curiously, "My godfather mentioned you were there with him this morning."

"Ah yes, I was there last night when he had his episode. I wanted to see that he was alright and try to persuade him to take the day off and rest...Didn't work very well as you noticed." Remus didn't mention that he had spent the whole night with Severus, clinging to the man like he was a giant teddy bear.

"Yes well he's stubborn. You have to bind him from behind and put a silencio on him before layering a few more binding spells on him or he'll do precisely what he wishes despite the consequences." His eyes narrowed, there was something, some quality to the way the werewolf spoke and stood that wasn't that of a colleague. A blond brow rose up high as he recognized the body language and tone, "You like him."

"Well, naturally I like him." Remus misunderstood on purpose. "He's a great potions master and I'd like to think we've become friends. He's an admirable man and Teddy adores him."

Draco folded his arms, "You are trying to prevaricate before a Slytherin Professor Lupin, and doing a rather shoddy job. You like my godfather in a way that has absolutely nothing to do with professional admiration."

Remus stopped fidgeting, looking at Draco and putting a hint of his wolf behind his gaze. "So what if I do? You don't have to worry, I have no plans on acting on any feelings that I may have."

Draco had had the unfortunate experience of having to stare down Fenrir Greyback so the wolf in the gaze didn't bother him, it was the sanity of the man that sent a slight chill up his spine, "Who said I didn't want you to? Did my godfather toss you out on your bum when you were there?"
"That young Draco Malfoy, is absolutely none of your business. You worry about taking care of my cub and I'll worry about my love life or lack thereof." Remus reached out for his bag and walked out of the potions classroom without looking back. He had no reason to explain himself to a student he didn't even know and frankly he was afraid to make these feelings any more real than they already were.

The blond walked out after him and spoke just loudly enough so the werewolf would hear him, "Because if he didn't then he likes you a great deal and your 'lack thereof' might be easier to rectify than you think."

Cheeky brat...Remus had to smile as he made his way up the stairs. No respect for personal boundaries, no wonder Harry had fallen face first in love with him. Draco had probably not allowed any other outcome if he had set his sight on him. Remus shook his head and wondered how he should proceed from here on out.

Draco pursed his lips and turned towards the Slytherin common room. He'd have to compose a letter of helpful hints for Lupin if the man decided to pursue the stubborn, anti-social bastard that his godfather was. He stepped in and smiled, seeing Harry at the window where a merchild was gamboling about in front of him. He walked up behind him and wrapped his arms around the brunette, resting his chin on his shoulder, "I know a secret."

Harry instantly relaxed into the warm arms surrounding him as he turned his head and smiled up at Draco. "A secret you say? Is it a big, juicy one that I'll want to hear? Because if it is then I must find a way to get it out of you." Big innocent, green eyes looked up at the blond.

The blond lifted his brows, "It involves Professor Lupin and his possible, and by possible I mean almost certain, feelings for a well known dungeon bat."

"Well that is as big and juicy as it gets." Harry licked his lips. "So tell me, is there anything, anything I can do to persuade you to share?"

"Hmm I don't know," Draco's gaze was fixed on Harry's mouth, "I mean I'm sure that Professor Lupin would rather I keep this to myself, not to mention my godfather is already quite irritated with me."

"Oh but I can be verrry persuasive." Harry leaned in closer until their lips almost touched. "When there is something I really want, I don't mind working hard for it."
"So I see," it was a soft murmur before Draco covered Harry's lips with his own. He kept the kiss chaste, just lips, as he moved his mouth over the brunette's memorizing the texture of the former Gryffindor's lips.

Draco's lips were soft, not a dry patch on them and they were warm. Harry couldn't help himself; he sighed into the kiss and pressed his own lips tighter against Draco's as he switched his position so he could slant his mouth firmer against the others in a desperate wish to taste and to take.

The blond carded a hand through the soft black hair and smiled into the kiss as he felt Harry's baby belly pressing against him. Then he jerked his head up in surprise when he felt a tap. "Merlin even I felt that one," he placed his hand on the mound and rubbed gently, "Does he disapprove do you think?"

"Mmm, no I don't think he's disapproving, a little jealous maybe that all focus is not on him." Harry pulled away slightly and looked down on his belly. Merlin, what if Squiggles could feel him getting aroused? That would be horrible. Harry quickly began to see Dudley naked to get both body and mind under control again.

"Little imp," Draco's voice was fond as he tugged Harry to sit in the window seat in front of him, the merchild obviously giggling at them, "Lupin likes my godfather I do believe, quite a lot. And I'm fairly certain it is returned as my godfather didn't toss him out on his bum when he checked in on him this morning after seeing him vulnerable last night. He also called him a colleague rather than a pest. Subtle but telling clues."

"Remus likes Snape?" Harry twisted and turned that thought in his mind. It wasn't as strange as he thought it might be, actually it kind of made sense. "They would make a rather dashing and formidable couple. Teddy already thinks Snape's hung the stars and the moon so no problem there. Okay, what should we do to make sure they get together?"

"To start, I will be sending Lupin a letter of tips and hints. My godfather is not a demonstrative man; you have to pick up on the small things he does to tell if he likes you at all or not. Also Uncle Severus won't respond if he thinks Lupin is straight so someone will have to let him know that our DADA professor chases for both teams. He does right? Or do you know?"

"Oh Remus definitely both chases and catches for both teams, I think I have some old pictures of Remus with a school boyfriend in one of the albums Sirius left me." Harry looked over his shoulder so he could catch Draco's eyes. "And why do I have the feeling that the one who's going to let Snape know will end up being me? What should I do? Drop the photo in front of his feet or simply walk up and tell him that Remus likes to eat a good cone as much as he likes to stick his spoon in a cup?"
The blond laughed and kissed Harry's cheek, "That would work too but I was thinking you could visit him for the prenatal potions and in your own charming way, ask why he hasn't made a move on Lupin as of yet. He'll splutter a bit and try to deny any interest, don't let him. Just pin him with those big green eyes of yours and demand an answer."

"I'll do my best but if I explode from the venomous glare he's going to give me then it is on your head." Harry leaned back against Draco, just enjoying the feeling of having him close.

"You won't explode. He spent too long ensuring your survival to bugger that up now. Wasted effort is not part of his modis operendai." He smoothed his hands over Harry's belly, feeling the calmer movements of the baby, "Now what about the real little mermaid for today's story, apropos yes?"

"Sounds brilliant." Harry smiled. He really enjoyed the stories Draco told him and squiggles and he could spend hours just listening to Draco's voice. "I just hope she wasn't a merpeople warrior who had taken someone hostage, that would hit a little too close to home."

Draco chuckled, "No, she was indeed a princess. One who did fall in love with a human prince but the only thing the sea witch did was cast a glamour on her," he fell into telling the story, loving Harry's reactions to the tale. He hoped that he could do this for the rest of his life with Harry and the baby if fate was kind.

OoOoOoOoO

Harry walked the short distance between the Slytherin common room and Snape's office and knocked on the door. It was just after the weekend and time for him to replenish his prenatal potions stash. No time like the present to go forward with the plan. He had watched both Remus and Snape during the weekend and Draco was right, there was definitely something there.

"Enter," Snape looked up to see Harry step into the room and lifted a brow, "Mr. Potter, is there something you need?"

"Um...Yes. I'm almost out of prenatal potions and wondered if I could get some more from you." Harry thought frantically about how to word what he would say next. How did you slide something like that into a conversation? Well Snape already thought he was somewhat of a berk so he might as well just come out and say it. "Also, is there any reason why you're not willing to pursue things with Remus? Romantically I mean."
The eternally graceful dungeon bat nearly tripped over his own chair, "I beg your pardon Potter? I don't know where you got such an asinine notion that I might be interested in Lupin but kindly put it out of your head."

"Oh please, the air practically crackles between you. You are interested in him, it shows if you know how to look and Remus well Remus has, pardon the pun, his moony expression on whenever he looks at you." Harry refused to back down. "He didn't even look at Tonks the way he's looking at you...And there's not as if he hasn't been in relationships with men before. I don't understand what's stopping you from being together and happy."

Snape's bum planted firmly back down in his chair and he stared at Harry, "He's what?"

"He's what, what? Fangs over claws in love with you? Yes he is." Harry nodded and stared back.

"You've finally cracked haven't you?" Severus leaned back in his chair and scowled, "Why in the name of Merlin might he be at all interested in me? I am far from ideal relationship material Potter." He rose and got down a small case, handing it to the younger man, "Two weeks' worth of the prenatal potions and a suggestion you get your head checked."

"I cracked years ago Snape, don't you read the Prophet?" Harry took the potions but stood his ground. "Why wouldn't he be interested in you? Love is not logic. I'm still waking up, pinching myself over the fact that Draco Malfoy...Gorgeous and perfect wants me. Awkward, knocked up me. Remus sees underneath the surface, he sees something in you that he likes, which resonates him. He thinks of himself as a monster, he will never push his feelings on you because just like you, he thinks you deserve better. Think about it at least, look at him and tell me afterwards that I'm wrong. Thank you for the potions."

"Potter, Remus does deserve someone better, someone not tainted by darkness, someone capable of laughing with him, someone not broken."

Out in the hall, just outside the door, Draco's hand clenched on Remus' arm and he shook his head, putting a finger to his lips. He hadn't told Harry that he was bringing Remus to eavesdrop but he knew his godfather well. Severus would never take a chance unless it was made clear by Remus that the werewolf had made his choice and wasn't likely to change it. But if Lupin charged in now the plan would be ruined.

Snape straightened his desk a bit, "And for what it is worth, Draco could not have chosen someone
"I'm going promise...But just listen first. The thing is it doesn't matter if you deserve better or he deserves better. The only thing that matters is how you feel. Remus has chosen you. He has Teddy and you know as well as I do that he would never even allow himself to feel anything if he wasn't ready to get invested all the way...With all that he is." Harry walked towards the door. "And now I'm leaving. Goodbye professor."

"Hmph!"

Draco pulled Remus out of the way as the door swung open and Harry walked out. He made a 'shhh' motion as the brunette spotted them.

Harry walked over with a furrowed brow. He was not exactly pleased to have had an audience to his and Snape's conversation when he didn't know about it. "What's this?" He asked when they had moved a bit away from Snape's office. "You didn't tell me you would be there or that you'd bring Remus."

Remus managed to look sheepish but mostly he just wanted to get to Severus.

"I'm sneaky. He," he flicked a thumb at Remus, "needed to hear why my godfather will dig his heels in and why he has to be even more stubborn dragging him out of his little protected hole." He turned to the older man, "Don't let him know you heard him, you were supposedly one of the infamous Marauders of the school yes?"

"Nothing supposedly about it, I was a Marauder and even though I'm not a Slytherin, I'm not completely hopeless. Not even I would burst in admitting to having eaves dropped." Remus resisted the urge to roll his eyes...Barely.

"You're also a Gryffindor; the phrase 'charging in like a lion' was coined for your ilk. Just remember, he likes you so he'll do everything he can to keep you from making what he thinks is a mistake in choosing him, prove to him that you're not budging."

"Yes little matchmaker, I get it. You have repeated it enough now." Remus knew he was impolite but he was really nervous and it was a bit irking getting advice from people not yet out of their teens. They all thought they had the answer to everything. Remus remembered what it was like being that young. He didn't say that Draco and Harry were wrong but nothing was as easy as they made it out

better for him than you. Now, out of my office."
"It's my godfather; I don't want you two buggering this chance up. Well go," he made a shooing motion and stepped out of Remus' path. Draco wasn't fool enough to think that things would be easy for his godfather and Remus but he knew that if you didn't take the first bloody step you never moved.

"Yes your highness, I'm going." This time Remus didn't even bother to repress his eye roll as he left the two teens and walked to Severus office door. He looked around at the gray stone and badly lit corridors and couldn't help but think that the dungeons were still a very dreary place. It could be warm and cozy sure but Remus would go spare living in a place where you never saw daylight properly.

Remus recognized that he was stalling by thinking about everything else except for what was really on his mind so he raised his hand and knocked and after having been given permission to enter he did just that.

"Hello Severus, just wanted to see how you are after your weekend of rest. Feeling better?" Remus walked over and took a seat in the chair opposite Severus' desk. "Teddy says hello and to give you this." He rummaged through his pockets to fish out a drawing that showed three stick figures, two tall ones and one short with bright blue hair standing between the tall ones. One of the tall figures was clad completely in black and had a very prominent stick nose, there was no mistaking who it was supposed to be, the other tall one was dressed in brown and since he had wolf ears drawn to his head there wasn't much of a surprise who that person was either. They all wore big smiles on their faces and a purple sun was in the background. "He wanted to come but he has a slight ear infection so I thought it best that he stayed home and rested. Hermione's babysitting."

The potion master took the drawing with a softened expression. "Do convey my thanks to him." He got up and scanned his shelves before plucking a small blue bottle from one. He handed the bottle to Remus, "A few drops in his ear should help with the infection."

"Thank you very much." Remus let his hand slide over Severus' as he took the small bottle. "You haven't answered me though, how are you feeling? Any lingering discomfort?" Remus looked at him seriously; he did not want to leave yet, not before he'd had his say. "I was wondering...If you feel up to it maybe you would like to join me for dinner some evening. We could escape the castle for an evening and go anywhere you'd like." Damn it he was not blushing...Almost forty year old werewolves did not blush.

Snape had to stifle a shiver as that slight touch went right to the heart of him and he backed off, retreating behind his desk to prevent a second touch and preserve his control. "Dinner? To what purpose would we need to leave for a dinner discussion? And I am perfectly well. There was no
need for Draco to go to such extremes," his eyes glittered with all the intent of a hunting cobra. "Which reminds me I need to procure some Abadonian slugs for his next lesson." He slithered his way around the obvious reason for Remus' second question though he badly wanted to take him up on that invitation. Remus should be asking out some pretty little motherly thing, not a great, crabby dungeon bat like himself.

"Don't be too hard on Draco, he cares about you, you are important to him." Remus took a step closer. "And as for the purpose of dinner, is it so impossible that I would like to spend an evening with you without a Hall full of children? There's no real need for it but it could still be nice don't you think?" Remus was not going to let Snape slither out of this conversation, it was just so difficult to be firm with Snape without pushing too much and push him away instead of bringing him closer.

"If you would prefer a pleasant evening I would suggest you ask someone who enjoys being around...people." The last words were sneered out as if he was speaking of the plague or cockroaches. He wanted to take another step back and flee but his stubbornness refused to let him as the werewolf drew closer.

Remus chuckled, he couldn't help himself. Dealing with Severus was like dealing with a hedgehog with every needle out. It was probably worrying that he actually found it cute instead of annoying. "I don't want pleasant Severus. I want you, if I didn't I wouldn't have asked."

That warm chuckle did odd things to his stomach but by Merlin those three words 'I want you' coming from the other man's lips created an embarrassing problem that made him extremely thankful he wore a loose, voluminous outer robe. He just hoped that Remus' senses were dulled this far from the full moon and he wouldn't catch the scent of arousal. He turned and straightened a shelf, "And back to the original question, what purpose for dinner? Anything related to the students or my irritating godson and Potter can easily be discussed here at Hogwarts."

"Oh for Merlin's sake, of course it wouldn't be to discuss the student body. It would be me and you talking about whatever might strike out fancy...I'm trying to woo you here you stubborn man. I know you know it so stop playing the fool, it doesn't suit you in the slightest." Remus took another step closer, now he was so close he could almost feel the other's body heat.

Severus' hand stilled on a box he'd been shifting, his eyes half closing at the heat Remus threw off from behind him. It felt good, especially considering that he almost always felt cold in the dungeons no matter what charms he casted or how many blankets he piled on. "You shouldn't."

"Why not Severus? The only reason I can think of that I should pursue this...Pursue you is that you don't like me, don't find me attractive but I know you do." Amber eyes flashed and Remus let his breath wash over Severus' neck. "I want you Severus, somehow, somewhere I fell for you and I don't particularly feel like getting up again."
Now his eyes did close and he shivered. Merlin, he wanted to lean back into the body behind him, to soak up the heat Remus gave off, to give in to what he wanted for the first time in what felt like forever. But he knew he couldn't. His hand clenched on the box before he handily side-stepped away. "You'll have to. I am not inclined to start any romantic entanglements." Not exactly true. He'd like to become entangled with Remus on many different levels but he knew that the time would come that Remus would regret it, especially if he ever found his mate, and Severus wouldn't be able to take that. He'd shatter.

"Too bad Severus, if you're not inclined I'll just have to work on changing your mind." The words came out as the softest of growls, almost like a purr when Remus let Moony rise to the surface a bit. "When Moony and I have our sights set on something, we never let go. I want you...All there is of me wants you Severus."

Holy fuck that growl made his knees weak but he turned and narrowed his eyes in a glare despite the punch in the gut of the amber color in Remus' eyes. "I believe we have established that I am not an easily overpowered man nor do I tend to change my mind. You and your wolf will simply have to get over it." He kept his tone cold so as not to give anything away.

"Oh but Severus," Remus leaned so close that his lips brushed the pale shell of the other's ear. "This is a condition I'll never get over and as such I'll never give up. You're a smart man so I think you'll figure it out. You'll just have to get used to having me around because I'm not going anywhere." He let his tongue out to flick against Severus' earlobe before pulling away and walking to the other side of the desk again. "Think about that dinner, which restaurant would you prefer, and thank you for the potion for Teddy." Remus thought it was better to retreat now while he still had all his bits in place and he hoped he had given Severus something to think about. This was the closest he could come to say that Moony had chosen his mate without really coming out and saying it. He kept his eyes on Severus as he walked to the door and slipped out of it, once he'd closed the office door behind him Remus leaned against the cool stone wall and prayed his boldness wouldn't come back and bite him in the arse.

Once the other man was out of the room, Severus made a soft groan and slumped into his chair. His body felt like a live wire just from that little whisper and lick and his cock was straining against his trousers. He hoped Remus wouldn't continue with that sort of tactic or he'd be giving in to him in short order. For now however, he had a little time to try and shore up his defenses. He glanced down at his lower half, after a hot shower and some quality time with his hand.

To Be Continued…
Chapter Thirteen

Disclaimer: Neither Acherona nor trulywicked have any claim on Harry Potter or any characters or locations thereof.

Warnings: Angst, lots of it, Male Pregnancy, mental torture, infant in peril, boys in love, friendships broken and new friends gained. Disregards canon in so many ways.

Chapter Thirteen.

Hermione bickered with Pansy, "No! We are not making it green and silver. The decorations, as agreed upon, are to be mint green and sunny yellow. We are not changing it in the middle of decorating!"

"But silver and a darker shade of green would look much more stylish. Besides there's no question about it, Squiggles will end up a Slytherin anyway so why not start out early?" Pansy bit down on her smile, it was so much fun to rile the Gryffindor girl up.

Ginny watched as Hermione's hair seemed to bristle and propped an arm on Luna's shoulder, "She's going to hex Parkinson if she keeps it up. Bloody hell it's good to have Mione back."

Luna nodded and kept her pale blue eyes on Hermione, the way her hair tumbled down her back and the way she almost sparked with annoyance as Pansy teased her. "The sparklespurts light up near her, very rare and very precious. She was much missed when the books had their claim on her."

Ginny nodded, "Yeah. I'm glad she pulled herself out of that devil's snare." She snorted when Hermione shook her wand at Pansy.

"No. Harry said the baby's nursery will be mint green and sunny yellow and so too shall the shower decorations, I don't care if Squiggles pops out speaking Parseltongue and looking like Slytherin himself. Now enough of this unless you want to be sporting Gryffindor red and gold hair?"
"Don't you wave that wand at me Granger, you may be a know-it-all but I swear I know hexes that would make even your nest of a hair straighten in fear." Pansy had her hands on her hips and stared the other girl down. "Fine, fine...Keep the decorations bland and boring, see if I care. The table settings will be silver no matter what you say."

"By Merlin you're a pain Parkinson, go work with Ginny as she's less likely to strangle you. I'll join Luna," she turned sharply and went over to where Ginny and Luna stood.

The redhead grinned and went over to help Pansy set the table while Hermione and Luna applied bunting and other wall decorations. "Well nothing was said about no snakes so...little snake plushies curled round the goblets?"

"Oh Ginevra, you are a star among flea bitten, overgrown cats. I could kiss you if your tastes didn't lay firmly in the Italian kitchen...Definitely snake plushies around the goblets, it will be adorable." Pansy bounced on her feet in glee.

Hermione rolled her eyes and shook her head, lips twitching as she draped bunting in the corner. She enjoyed crossing swords with Pansy just as much as she did sniping at Draco. "One of these days I'm going to have to have a practice duel with Parkinson, just to see how I stack up." She glanced over at Luna, smiling at the hair tie that held the mass of pale blond back from the dreamy face. It was a clip shaped like a Niffler holding a carrot. Luna's unique sense of style somehow always made her smile and not because it seemed odd but because it suited the other girl so well.

"You'll stack up just fine, it will be a draw most of the times but you can still do it for fun if you wish." Luna blinked at her with a soft smile. "I hope this draping attracts the carlies, they bring lots of luck you know."

"And Harry needs all of that he can get," Hermione tapped her chin and had a pattern of yellow babies playing with lions, snakes, eagles, and badgers spreading across the green bunting. "What do carlies look like? You've never spoken about them before that I can recall." She'd come to accept Luna's belief in things no one else thought existed and enjoyed hearing her detail what the various creatures looked like. Sometimes in the listening she recognized features of people they knew and realized that it was Luna-code for someone but others she knew the other girl was being serious. At those times Luna almost lit up like the heavenly body she was named after and Hermione rather enjoyed seeing Luna like that.

"Oh me and Papa only discovered the carlies recently so I'm not surprised you haven't heard of them." Luna smiled happily as she admired Hermione's work with the decorations. "They sort of look like small, furry ladybugs but the fur is all colors of the rainbow and they have long antennae that light up at the tips when the carlies are pleased. They are very friendly creatures but they can't survive in places with lots of strife and fighting. I'm sure you have some around you, they like you."
Hermione's lips curved up, "I'll try to keep a closer eye out but I'm not as," her brows furrowed as she tried to find the right word, "environmentally aware as you are Luna. I overlook the little things around me unless they're right in front of my face. It's my biggest flaw really."

"You see what you are ready to see." Luna turned so he could look straight at the other girl. "Don't worry and don't try and look so close, everything is right there when you are ready to open your eyes. It's not a flaw, you simply haven't left the cocoon stage yet."

Hermione gave Luna a one armed hug, "Luna, don't ever stop talking to me okay? I need your perspective in my life."

"I'll be here for as long as you let me or until the Nargles drag me away." Luna leaned forward and wrapped both her arms around Hermione in a more proper hug.

The brunette gave her a squeeze, "I'm so glad we got to be friends in fifth year and I'll turn any nNargle that tries into a slug."

Ginny looked over at them and pursed her lips. She wondered when Hermione would wake up to what was in front of her but that was one thing that no one could push with. If anyone did it would ruin any chance. She turned back to helping Pansy and poked the Slytherin girl in the shoulder, "You know speaking of me eating in the Italian kitchen, I don't suppose you could convince that particular chef to make the knowledge that he's cooking for me exclusively public? I'm getting tired of just midnight snacks."

"Well I suppose I can try." Pansy pursed her lips as she thought. "Blaise is a little bit of a drama lover, I guess that's why we get along so well, it takes one to know one and all that rubbish. Your secret lovers meeting has most likely spoken to that side of him...My advice is to jump him and snog him silly...He'll like that...You laying claim to him so to speak but sure...I can try to talk to him."

Ginny smirked, "Talk to him first and if that doesn't work then I'll plant one on him in the Great Hall. Boldness is something I certainly don't lack. How'd the picnic with Neville go by the way?"

"It went well, it was very nice and Neville is very easy to talk to when he loosens up some." Pansy sighed. "I really, really like him but he's still so terribly polite and...Cautious I guess. I wasn't expecting to toss my knickers on the blanket but it would be nice if he at least spoke to me as a friend instead of a professor or a member of the Ministry." She looked miserable. "What am I doing wrong Red? I can't change who I am, I tried that but it won't work, not in the long run."
Ginny patted her on the shoulder, "The thing about Neville is he's too used to being in the background, to being second best, or being last. He doesn't know how to act when someone honestly likes him more than another. You know how he pulled Gryffindor's sword and then sliced that great ugly snake in half?"

Pansy nodded. "I do know about it and I find it very impressive but if you think I'm only after the hero you're wrong. I want Neville, just him and just the way he is."

She poked Pansy in the side, "That's not what I'm getting at. That is one of a number of times that I can count on one had that I know of him letting his caution and insecurity go. If you want him to toss his caution out the window, he has to be riled up." She tilted her head, half-closed her eyes in thought, and then let a smirk cross her lips, "You know about McLaggan right? Giant git, failed a year, got stuck with all of us?"

"Oh I know about him." The tone of Pansy's voice was not flattering, neither was the face she made just thinking about McLaggan. "Walks around thinking he's Merlin's gift to witches." She shuddered. "What about him?"

Ginny grinned, "He's getting Herbology tutoring from Neville, they'll be in the greenhouses tomorrow after classes. You might want to saunter down there, go in to get, I don't know some sort of potion ingredient, and walk right past them wearing your shortest skirt or tightest trousers. Whatever you get make sure you're just out of earshot so that McLaggan feels safe in making comments. I think you'll like the outcome."

Pansy tapped her chin with a long, sharp nail. "Some old fashioned jealousy...I think I could manage that. It's not as if I have very much to lose, I'm starting to get desperate here and believe me I do not like the feeling." She caught her bottom lip between even, white teeth and then she smiled wickedly. "I do have this skirt I bought in France; Daphne calls it illegal and borderline offensive...I think it will be just about perfect."

The redhead laughed and gave Pansy a friendly slap on the back, "There you go, plus if McLaggan gets really bad we'll have the bonus of Neville clocking him. Now let's get back to decorating before Hermione cracks the whip," she angled her head over to where Hermione and Luna had moved on from draping the walls to transfiguring a trio of chairs into one big comfy chaise for Harry.

"Oh now that's a thought...She does have some latent dominatrix tendencies doesn't she? I can picture her with leather and whips." Pansy grinned and moved to the other side of the table to continue the decorating.

Ginny snorted and got back to work. She hoped that Neville would finally make a move before she had to pull him aside and knock some sense into his thick skull.
Neville dearly wanted to rub his temples to soothe away the headache that was forming as he tried to get Cormac's herbology knowledge up to a respectable level but it wasn't easy with the bloody berk nattering on and on about how he'd knew this or had done that with this plant or the other. All things Neville knew to be patently impossible. Why, oh why had he agreed to tutor Cormac 'Imma-Arse' McLaggan?

Pansy had spent the whole morning getting ready and she was rather pleased with the result. She looked sexy without turning slutty, at least she hoped so. The royal blue skirt really was lethally short and it hugged her in all the right places but she had paired it with a long sleeved white, silk shirt and demure, flower patterned flats. Oh yes she was very pleased indeed with her outfit at least. She noticed the two boys quickly as she entered the greenhouse and moved over close. She nodded hello and bent over a bed of fragrant sage, picking a generous bouquet of the green leaves while bending over a bit lower than necessary, showing off her bum and legs. "Draco needed some sage for a potion you see." Pansy gave them both a sweet smile. "Sorry to disturb your lesson, I'll be out of your hair in a moment; I only need some bluebells as well." She walked further away from the boys, towards where the flowering plants were.

The moment Pansy had walked past Neville had almost had a heart attack. What in the name of Merlin was she wearing?! The bloody place mat that was masquerading as a skirt showed off long, shapely legs that could make the dead rise up and give a whistle. It was indecent and dear gods help him he couldn't peel his eyes away as she bent over. He almost wanted to moan because she had the most adorable bum, heart shaped and just as heart-stopping as her legs. He tore his gaze away with a great effort then scowled at Cormac as the other boy stared even more intently than he had.

"What I wouldn't give to have a ride on that. I bet she could take you places even a broom couldn't reach if you know what I mean." McLaggen groaned as Pansy bent over again over by the bluebells, this time showing off a hint of a lacy bra. "She may be a dirty snake and Death Eater spawn but damn it she would look good on her back all the same...And from what I've heard it isn't all that hard to get her in that position."

Neville felt his temper rise to a quick boil hearing Cormac say that about the girl that he liked. Pansy wasn't dirty or a slut by any means and he didn't like McLaggen making it sound as if she was, not to mention the other boy was staring at a girl that Neville was falling for. He spoke in slow and measured low tones, "Shut up Cormac. Pansy is a lady and doesn't deserve to be spoken about like that."

"Oh please, Parkinson is as far from a lady as you can get." McLaggen sneered and pulled his eyes from Pansy's tempting form to lock them on Neville. "How do you think she managed to get out of
the war practically unscathed? She had a lot of protectors that one, probably still does. I mean look at her, she's gagging for it, all the time and I wouldn't mind being the one to show her what a real man is like...She would walk bowlegged for days after I was done with her."

Neville's temper boiled over and his fisted hand was up and clocking McLaggen before he could even think about it, knocking the wanna be on his arse, "McLaggen don't you ever let me hear of you talking about Pansy like that ever again. She's more than capable of protecting herself and in case your head's too swollen to realize it, I like her. She clever, resourceful, loyal, sweet to her friends, and deserves a bloody lot better than a flobberworm like you leering at her."

"You're bloody mad!" McLaggen wiped at his bleeding nose as he scampered backwards from the other Gryffindor. "Completely barkers you are, going around slugging innocent people. The Headmistress will hear about this, mark my words." He scrambled to his feet and was out of the greenhouse like a shot.

Pansy nibbled her bottom lip as she walked closer to Neville, she'd heard McLaggen's parting words and now she was worried. She hadn't meant to get Neville into trouble, that was the last thing she wanted. "Are you alright Neville?"

"Hm?" He looked over at her, heat still in his eyes, and nodded, "I'm fine. He doesn't have that hard a head." He wasn't worried about McLaggen telling McGonagall, he might get up the bollocks to report that Neville had hit him but if he had a brain at all he'd realize that the Headmistress would ask why Neville, of all people, had clocked him and once she found out why, yes Neville would get in trouble, but so would McLaggen.

This whole jealousy thing didn't seem so grand now that it had happened. Instead of feeling smug or good she felt bad that she had pushed Neville into hitting someone else. "You didn't have to hit him on my account Neville. I'm used to what's being said about me. I know it isn't true and that's all that matters. I don't want you in trouble for me."

Her shook his head and reached up to cup her cheek, rubbing away a smudge of dirt that had somehow ended up there, "You shouldn't be used to it, it's not right. Don't worry about me getting into trouble. At most I'll get a detention but McLaggen won't go to McGonagall after he gets the nose treated because then he'll have to admit why I popped him. Being the shy, stuttering, background sort has advantages and one is that no one assumes you do anything violent without bloody good reason."

She gave him a weak smile and leaned into his touch. "I'm still sorry." She took a step closer and wrapped her arms around him in a hug; it felt so right being close to Neville Longbottom. "Thank you for standing up for me...My Knight.” She leaned her head on his shoulder.
His arms closed hesitantly around her, "Well someone has to. You're strong enough to do it yourself but you shouldn't have to all the time. I'm not much of a knight though, big, clumsy, quiet and shy."

"You are my perfect knight and I happen to like you just the way you are, clumsy, quiet and shy being a part of that." She turned her head on his shoulder so she could look up at him without having to lift her head. "I really do like you Neville; I want to be your girlfriend, just yours." Pansy didn't think she'd ever felt as naked and as exposed as she did now, waiting for Neville's response.

He might be insecure and pants in most his classes but he was far from stupid enough to say no. Didn't mean he wouldn't stutter though, "C-can I kiss you?"

"Yes Neville, you can most definitely kiss me, as often as you like." Pansy's heart slid down from her throat to its usual place in her chest and she almost felt like dancing a jig with relief. She lifted her head from his shoulder and closed the short distance between them to press her lips against his.

He moved his mouth over hers, getting a feel for the kiss, and cupped the back of her head in one hand, the other going to the small of her back. It was just a bit crazy and improbable that she wanted to date him but he wasn't about to argue with his luck.

Pansy moaned softly into the chaste-ish kiss and shifted closer so that she was pressed against his front. The flats made her have to stand on her tippy toes to reach his height. Neville had certainly grown from the small boy he'd been their first year. His lips were warm and just a tiny bit chapped, they felt really good against hers and she couldn't get enough of them.

He made a soft murmur and moved both hands to her waist, lifting her up against him as he nipped gently at her bottom lip before sucking on it softly, getting a good taste of her. It wasn't a particularly heated kiss but Neville could swear he felt the warmth all the way down to his toes.

It seemed so effortless, the way he lifted her and Pansy couldn't help but be impressed by the casual strength he showed. She'd love to have those large hands on her in another way in the future, when they knew each other better. She would have wrapped her legs around him if she'd worn any other skirt than the one she had on. There were still some things she didn't want to show Neville just yet, like the color of her knickers for example. As he nipped at her bottom lip she took the chance to flick the tip of her tongue against his top lip just to have a quick taste.

He licked along her lip and would have taken the kiss deeper had someone's voice not impinged on their moment.
"Hey Pans, you in here? Blaise said you might be..." Draco trailed off at the sight of his best female friend plastered up against Longbottom and lifted a brow, "Well it's about time."

Neville turned a bright red and lowered Pansy's feet to the ground, breaking the kiss, though he looped one arm around her waist.

"Oh Dray, the king of perfect timing." Pansy grumbled but she couldn't hide her beaming smile that Neville was still holding on to her. "Was there something in particular you wanted or did you simply wait for a chance to disturb me and my boyfriend?"

"I need assistance with a gift and as the shower is this weekend, I wanted to get it done as soon as possible. Though I would have likely chosen the latter option had I known you and Longbottom were about to introduce your tongues to your tonsils."

"Charming imagery there Dray, I can so see why Potter fell for you." Pansy said dryly. "So what can I help you with gift wise?"

He cleared his throat and shifted, "It's a charm you used once on something of mine that I would like to have put on one of the things I procured for Squiggles."

"The one I performed on your snugglie? Of course, just bring it to me and I'll cast it." Pansy walked over to Draco to throw her arms around him and hug him tight. "You're all kinds of adorable right now Dray, I almost feel the urge to pinch your cheeks and coo at you."

"You're evil. I just thank Merlin that Longbottom doesn't have a malicious bone in his body and won't spread the knowledge." He pat her on the back, glad she seemed cheerful now that she'd gotten her snog from the Gryffindor boy.

"Oh posh, stop complaining, you know you love me and my evil ways." Pansy gave him a brilliant smile as she backed up again until she could catch one of Neville's large hands in hers. "Do you want me to go with you and perform the charm right away?" She really wanted to spend more time with Neville but she would never turn down a request from one of her oldest friends. Draco was more like her family than her real family was and she'd do anything for him.

"As much as I hate to cut into your time with your beau, yes please. Right now is the only time Harry won't be round in the dorms before the shower and I want to get it all finished and wrapped before he gets back. Surprise is the goal. I'll make it up to you."
"Oh yes you will make it up to me. You can start right now actually by taking these plants off my hands." Pansy handed him the wilting bouquet of sage and bluebells. "The potions ingredients you needed, the reason I was out here in the first place." One day she would admit to Neville what she had been doing in the greenhouses but not just yet, she had only just gotten him and didn't want to be left in disgust so soon. After pushing the bouquet into Draco's hands she turned and wrapped her arms around Neville and gave him a quick peck on the lips. "Sorry I have to go but I look forward to seeing you later...Boyfriend." She gave him a brilliant smile before looping her arm through Draco's and walking out of the greenhouses with him to make Squiggles' plushie extra special.

Neville had a silly grin on his face as he watched her walk away. She was amazing, she was beautiful, and she'd claimed him of all people. Whatever fate had smiled on him he hoped it would continue holding him in its good graces.

Draco looked down at the flowers and herbs and lifted a brow, "I think I should be grateful that Longbottom is notorious for being pants at potions as the only potion that uses both sage and bluebells is an anti-impotence potion. You're not implying anything are you Pans, because I assure you, everything is in proper working order."

Pansy giggled. "Well good to know I suppose, I just grabbed the nearest weeds I could think of and I don't want to hear any judgment from you thank you very much." She bit her lip in thought before grinning wickedly. "The only one in need of that potion is the Weasel I think, if Granger's little hex actually allows his condition to be reversed...I hope not. I hope he'll go through life as flaccid as his personality."

The blond smirked as they reached the dorms and looked around to make sure Harry wasn't there yet, "Knowing Granger I sincerely doubt a potion could reverse that hex." He shifted a few bands on his trunk like a puzzle box, revealing a hidden key hole, took out a silver key and unlocked the trunk, showing a compartmentalized interior. He plucked a floppy, squishy, plushie that looked like a very friendly dragon and the main body was made of the softest light green velvet created from acromantula silk with the belly and wings a silvery satin also using acromantula silk to create the lush material. Scratching the head had the green turn to red with gold crescent moon and stars shimmering over it. He handed the plushie to Pansy, "I'd like it to play Au Clair de la Luna please, Pans."

"Should be able to manage that." Pansy smiled and took the adorable dragon plushie from Draco, pulling her wand from its holster and performing a rather complicated charm to make the plushie play the wanted music. When she was done she handed the dragon back to Draco. "Here, try it out and make sure I got it right...Squiggles is going to love this and Harry even more so, if he wasn't in love with you before he certainly will be after you give him this."

He squeezed the plush and smiled as the gentle, sweet music began to play and the moon and stars
flickered in time. "As long as they're happy with it, I'll be happy." He looked up at her, "I am completely madly in love with Harry and I already love the baby so much and he's not even out yet." His finger smoothed over the soft velvet, "I've not told Maman or Father about how deep my feelings go for Harry and Squiggles but I intend to after the shower." He swallowed, the thought of it made him nervous. "Maman will be happy so long as I am but Father...I want to give him time to accept where my heart lies and to come to grips knowing that, if he tries to make me choose, I will choose Harry and the baby."

Pansy walked over and grasped his shoulder, squeezing it in comfort. "Uncle Lucius has his faults, plenty of them but he loves you. He will complain and snark and throw pureblood tantrums until he's blue in the face but he will never force you to make a choice that will remove you from his life, I know that for certain." She looked around the empty dorm, feeling almost envious of the solace, in the girls’ dorms there was always a constant chatter, no matter what time of day it was. "Have you and Harry considered a blood adoption? Squiggles' DNA would still be half the weasels but his blood would be recognized as a Malfoy and his magical signature would be Harry's and yours. It's not unheard of in pureblood families when for some reason there has been an heir lacking."

The corner of his mouth lifted, "I've not even gotten the bollocks up to say flat out to him that I love him yet or posit the thought of moving in together. I get the feeling that he still thinks I'm going to change my mind sometimes." He started casting wrapping charms on the plushie and other baby paraphernalia he'd gotten for Squiggles. "I don't want to rush him in any way Pans, not after what the whole bloody world has done to him. They fall at his feet in worship and then vilify or abandon him the next day and then the Weasel's betrayal. I want to wrap his heart up in cotton wool and hold it close, protect it like the precious treasure it is," he gave her a crooked smile, "I just have to get up the balls to say the L-word."

"Oh Dray, if Potter doesn't see what an absolute treasure you are he and I are going to have to have words. He loves you too; it's clear from the way he lights up when you walk into the room and how he follows you with his eyes when you leave." She hugged him tightly. "I think you two are going to be a couple the rest of us are going to hate because you'll be so disgustingly in love and happy with each other. I don't have an ounce of seer blood in me but I can still foresee that."

He hugged her back, "Thank you Pans, for being my best friend." He chucked her under the chin, "Now as to an installment of making up the interruption to you," he dangled a bronze key in front of her nose, "Next Hogsmeade weekend, full use of the Malfoy lodge for you and your wood knight."

"Oooh shiny!" Pansy grabbed the key eagerly. She had been to the Malfoy lodge once or twice with the whole Malfoy family and it was a beautiful place with guaranteed privacy. "Thank you, I'll use it well." She fluttered her lashes up at her friend. "Now let's end this mush before we're mistaken for Hufflepuffs and forcefully draped in yellow from top to bottom, it does nothing for my complexion you know."
He smirked, "Pansy, yellow dare not touch you, it would immediately turn green from the sheer force of anti-Hufflepuff you possess." He booped her on the nose.

"Hey, watch the nose. Perfection like this is difficult to come by." She turned her button nose up at him with a smile, she was well aware that her nose wasn't exactly perfect but she had learnt to like it anyway. "Are we done here now? I think I should change skirts before I actually have class. I'd either be propositioned or given detention and I don't really fancy either of those options." Pansy looked down at her excuse for a skirt; it had served its purpose now.

"Yes Pans we're done. Thank you for the help, go change out of the man-killer skirt."

She wiggled her bum at him teasingly. "Thank you, I shall go and do so right now. See you in class Dray and don't be afraid to tell Potter the L-word, he really does feel the same." Pansy hurried out of the boys’ dorm and into her own to change into some more appropriate clothes for school.

He chuckled and gave her a salute before he finished wrapping his gifts to Squiggles. He'd gotten a stack of self cleaning diapers, a few baby clothes that ranged from newborn to 12 months in size, baby towels and washcloths, covers for a changing pad, and he'd brewed a solid six months worth of baby hygiene potions and tucked all that into a green baby tub but the dragon plush would be wrapped individually. He was looking forward to Harry's reaction.

To Be Continued…
Chapter Fourteen

Disclaimer: Neither Acherona nor trulywicked have any claim on Harry Potter or any characters or locations thereof.

Warnings: Angst, lots of it, Male Pregnancy, mental torture, infant in peril, boys in love, friendships broken and new friends gained. Disregards canon in so many ways.

Chapter Fourteen.

Once again Remus found himself outside Severus' door in the dungeons once classes had ended for the day. Remus knew that Severus did his best to ignore this attraction between them, that he pretended that it wasn't there but Remus wasn't going to let him do that. On the other side of that door was his mate, now that Remus had had some time to wrap his head around the fact that he had found his mate after all these years he was almost desperate in his wish to care for that mate and to be together with him as it should be. Both the man and the wolf wanted Severus with everything they were.

He gave a light knock and stepped inside. "So Severus, have you decided on a restaurant yet?"

The potion master flicked an irritated glance up from a paper he was grading and marked through an entire paragraph with red ink, "You are still on about that? Are you in some way related to a mule?" He looked back down at the paper to resume grading and pretend to ignore the werewolf, pretend being the operative word. It was far from easy when all of his traitorous senses were fixed on the man in the doorway.

"No mule in my lineage that I know about but I am a wolf and the man is stubborn too." Remus walked forward and sat down on the edge of Severus' large desk simply because he knew it would irritate the other man. Remus was going to make sure Severus couldn't ignore him. "I'm not going to let this go, let us go, I've told you that and it hasn't changed."

Well there went pretending to ignore the other man right out the window. As usual, when Remus was this close and staring at him so intently with desire and a leading edge of something else in his eyes, Severus found his body reacting to the werewolf. "I think the full moon tomorrow has scrambled your brains. There is no us and there won't be, it is a disastrous idea all around."
"It doesn't have to be disastrous Severus, it could be greatness instead, and you know it could."
Remus looked at him intently. "And as for the full moon tomorrow, I'll be perfectly sound in mind
thanks to your potions so unless you don't have faith in your own brewing you can't use that
excuse." He leaned forward. "What are you afraid of Severus? I won't ever change my mind about
you, not now not ever. All I am, is yours, you just have to reach out and take it."

Dear Merlin he wanted to, he wanted to so badly when Remus looked at him like that but his heart
carried too many scars to simply reach out and grasp what he wanted. He was far too terrified that,
just as it brushed his fingertips, it would be snatched away or he'd drive it away. He was afraid, he
could hear his heart pounding in his ears with the force of the fear.

"Daaaaaaaaaddyyyyyyyyyyyyyyy!"

The cry broke Severus from his contemplation and he watched Teddy barrel around the corner, a
trembling pout on his face.

Remus smothered his sigh of frustration and turned towards his son, hoping that his smile was true
and natural. No matter how much he wanted Severus he would never put his child second. "Yes
Teddy what's the matter? Be careful with that pouting bottom lip before you trip over it."

The little boy flung himself at his father and wrapped his arms tight around his neck, "Flowah wady
says I awe a hawtbweakah, I don't wanna bweak hawts!"

"Oh sweetie," Remus hugged him close and breathed in the special scent of little boy. "Poppy meant
it as a good thing, I promise. You won't break actual hearts love, it means you are so special, cute
and wonderful that everyone wants to me near you, hug you and love you." He pressed a kiss to the
top of his son's head. "She didn't mean anything bad and you don't have to be sad."

"Your Papa is quite correct Teddy."

Teddy pulled back and looked around to Snape, who was smiling just a bit at the toddler, "So I not a
hawtbweaker? Pwomise Sappy?"

"You have my word."
The little boy squirmed down and out of his Papa's arms to go fling his arms around Snape, "Dank joo."

Hermione's head peeked around the door, "Oh thank goodness. I'm sorry Remus. I had to stop by the infirmary to pick up some books Madam Pomfrey has for Harry and she was cooing at Teddy and then called him a little heartbreaker and-"

Teddy piped up, "I not a hawtbweaker! Sappy says so!"

Hermione's lips twitched, "And he ran here before I could catch him." She went over to pat Teddy on the head, ignoring Snape's raised brow, "I know you're not a heartbreaker Teddy Bear. You're just like your Daddy and you'd never break a heart even if your life depended on it."

"It's true," Remus looked at his son in Severus' arms and it felt so right to see him there. He bent down to kiss Teddy and a bonus was that he came closer to Severus too, he placed his hand on Severus' shoulder to steady himself and he didn't remove his hand when he straightened up. "The only thing you do to hearts Teddy, is heal them and make them wonderful."

The little boy beamed and didn't notice the faint mottling of Snape's cheeks as he chirped, "Wike you Daddy. Smile Sappy! Papa wuvves you an' me both an he'll make youah hawt all better!"

Hermione looked away briefly, trying to hide a smile, "Right then. I think Teddy's just where he needs to be right now so I'll take myself off. Oh and before I go, Professor Snape, you never did return that essay I did when you substituted the first time in third year. I'd really like to have it back."

He frowned, "Whatever for Miss Granger?"

"London University wants the best example of my essays from each year." It wasn't a complete lie, the university did indeed want an example from each year, but she had a transfiguration essay that was on par with the one on werewolves. She just wanted to remind the Professor of a little tidbit about them he seemed to have forgotten and help Remus out.

Snape rolled his eyes, receiving another chirped reminder to smile from the child clinging to him like a monkey, and nodded, "Very well, I shall see if I still have it."

"Thank you sir. I'll get out of your hair now."
"Thank you for watching Teddy Hermione, have a pleasant evening." Remus called after the young woman as she left the room. "Oh Severus, would you mind looking after Teddy tomorrow? He feels most comfortable with you, don't you Teddy?" Remus wanted Severus to see that they could be a family; he wanted it so bad he could taste it. The three of them together like this; it was exactly how it should be.

The little boy nodded, "I wuv Unca Hawwy but Sappy's better!"

Severus was beginning to think fate was conspiring against him to block his escape routes. There was no possible way to say no to young Teddy Lupin, especially not when he looked up at you with glowing amber wolf's eyes so like his father's. He heaved a put upon sigh, "Very well you little imp, I'll look after you for your Daddy."

Teddy giggled and pat a hand over Severus' heart, "An I wook aftah you fow Daddy too Sappy."

"Thank you Teddy, Severus needs to be looked after with very extra special care and I know you're just the boy for the job aren't you?" Remus' eyes slid from his son to lock on Severus. "You and I...We need to make sure Severus knows his heart is wonderful too and that we like it just the way it is." He reached forward and tweaked his son's nose.

Teddy squealed a giggled and hid his face in Snape's shoulder to escape his Daddy's fingers. "Okay!" He pressed a kiss to a prominent sallow cheekbone, "We wuv you Sappy!"

As he murmured a reciprocation to Teddy, Snape swore he was going to kill Hermione Granger for letting the imp escape her to come here and make it so much harder to resist the man who now held his heart in his hands.

OoOoOoOoO

Then again, Severus thought, as he re-read Hermione's essay, he might just revise that decision. He looked up at the full moon then down at the exhausted child curled up next to him on the couch, then back down to the line he'd just read, obscure knowledge that was only rarely found after hours of research. It was a tidbit he'd known for years but allowed to slip his mind.

"Werewolves are heavily pack and family orientated and are viciously protective and somewhat possessive of their offspring. It is rare for even a pack member to be allowed to watch over a 'cub' unless they are that cub's older sibling or grandparent. The only exception to this rule seems to be
a mate. A werewolf who has produced offspring with one not their mate will allow a mate found at a later date to watch over their cub and spend time with him or her as if they were the cub's other parent.'

Things were beginning to fit together into a puzzle pattern that made sense. When Remus spoke of both man and wolf wanting him, he meant on the most visceral level there was in the magical world. Severus also knew another thing that had helped him hold back from Remus and that was that werewolves mated for life and once a mate was found they would abandon all others to pursue and stay with that mate. If he was Remus' mate the only thing that would rip them apart was death.

He looked back out the window at the moon. He'd have to interrogate Remus when the other man returned.

Remus looked at the rising sun, the scents of the forest were still potent in his nose even though he had shifted back to his human form, making him testy and almost longing for the wild. His joints ached as he found the sack with his clothes in it; he'd rather not walk back to the castle starkers. There was always some early riser that would get more than an eyeful if he did that. Due to the Wolfsbane potion he didn't tear himself apart during the transformations any longer but it was still painful, to feel bones pop, shift and change into those of his other self. He always ached something fierce the day after the full moon, it felt as if his skin didn't fit and his bones weren't his own. Remus dressed in silence and walked towards Hogwarts, the dewy grass dampening the bottom of his trousers and robes.

Severus was still sitting on the couch, awake and alert, reading a book with Teddy still sleeping beside him, a blanket covering the toddler's footie pajama covered form, when the door to his quarters opened and he looked up to see Remus creeping in quietly as if not to wake anyone. He spoke softly, knowing that Remus would hear him as well as if he'd shouted, "There are some relief potions on the end table."

"Thank you." Remus replied in a hoarse whisper, apparently it had been a night for howling. He walked to the end table and picked up the small vials, one after another and downed them in deep gulps. He turned back towards the couch and looked at Teddy with worry in his eyes. "Rough night for him?"

"A bit. He's too young for any potions that could ease it unfortunately," his hand fell to card through the honey brown hair that was never there when the boy was awake.

Remus sunk down in a chair next to the couch, grimacing slightly when his bones protested the movement. "I'm so sorry I passed on a bit of the curse to him, I would do anything to be able to take it away." His eyes were fixed on Teddy but he looked up to meet Severus' eyes. "Thank you so much for looking after him, I know he will be alright when he's with you."
Severus met the weary eyes of the other man, "Why is that I wonder. I'm neither sibling nor grandparent. Why do you trust me with your cub Remus?"

"Why indeed?" Remus was too tired and worn for wordplays and pretending. "I've tried to let you know in every way I can without pushing too far...I've told you that I will never turn away or change my mind when it comes to you and I swear it's true. I would rather crawl on my hands and knees through fire and broken glass for eternity than do one thing that would cause you pain."

"What am I to you Remus?" The potion master's eyes asked for complete honesty, the whole truth, not just the bits Remus felt wouldn't be pushing too far.

"You Severus Snape, are the man I love, my mate and my soul." Remus' eyes flashed bright amber as he bared his soul and laid his heart in front of the other man.

Severus reached out and took Remus' hand in his, noting that though his fingers were longer, Remus' hand was wider, he looked back into the amber eyes, "There's a muggle restaurant in Edinburgh on top of the Museum of Scotland. I'm rather fond of it." That was about as close as he'd be able to voice acceptance of Remus' suit at the moment. Even knowing what he was to Remus, his heart was too guarded to simply let all the walls down right away but he'd lowered the drawbridge to let Remus start climbing the walls.

Remus' eyes softened and a smile spread over his lips. Severus was not rejecting him full out; he still had a chance to win the amazing man holding his hand. That was enough for now. "Excellent, then that's where I'll take you to dinner at your earliest convenience. I look very much forward to it."

The potion master's lips twitched, "Sometime after the mad party Potter is being subjected to then." He gave Remus' hand a gentle squeeze then shifted to pick Teddy up, "You need to sleep last night off; potions can only do so much." He nudged Remus' leg with a foot, "Up with you Mr. Lupin."

"I don't know if I have it in me Mr. Snape, right now I'm feeling very comfortable where I am." Despite his words Remus struggled to his feet, covering a yawn with his hand. The thought of climbing all those stairs to get to his quarters in the Gryffindor tower seemed daunting but the thought of his bed waiting for him could...Possibly make it bearable. "I'm up and I shall retire to my bed, can Teddy stay with you until breakfast? Harry had promised to pick him up and watch him later; I'd hate to wake him up if he's had a hard night." He reached out a hand to run it through his son's hair and down his pajama clad back. Most of all he wanted Teddy with him but he knew Teddy would wake up far earlier than him and with the potions in his system he'd sleep like a rock. Teddy needed to be with someone conscious who could look after him.
A black brow lifted, "You're using my bed today. I will be in the lab but I'll set a charm to warn me when Teddy wakes."

He should protest, he shouldn't take advantage of Severus and lay claim to his bed for a whole day but the thought of rest just a few steps away and the thought of getting to have Teddy close, at least for a while made it impossible to refuse the offer. "Thank you...Really Severus, thank you so much." Remus followed Severus into the bedroom and he stumbled as he kicked off his shoes and shrugged off the robes, he was so tired. He lay down and almost purred when a small, warm body was placed next to him. He wrapped his arms around Teddy and snuggled close as the spicy scent of Severus, still lingering in the sheets lulled him to sleep almost immediately.

Severus brushed the hair back from Remus' closed eyes. "Fate is a madwoman but I'm not about to argue this time." He leaned down and pressed a kiss to the corner of the sleeping man's mouth before straightening, setting the warning charm, and heading for his lab.

**OoOoOoOoO**

Harry walked with Draco towards the old charms classroom. He was excited to see old friends and get to spend time with them but at the same time it felt as if everything about this baby shower had grown so big. He really didn't like being the center of attention but he tried to tell himself that he wouldn't be, the guest of honor so to speak was Squiggles after all.

As they closed in on the room Harry reached for Draco's hand, stealing strength and courage from the blond. When they walked inside Harry's jaw dropped, the room was so bright and happy, it looked absolutely beautiful. The girls had worked a miracle on the previously dreary room.

"Harry, how absolutely-"

"-corking to see you. You look-"

"-positively glowing. If a little-"

"-round, round the middle but I-"
"-hear tell sprogs will do that when they're incubating."

One tall redhead draped an arm over his shoulders while the other bent down to peer at his belly as if he could see the baby inside.

A wide smile split Harry's face as he watched the two redheads happily. He had really missed Fred and George. "You can't actually see inside Fred." He shook his head at the tall redhead. "But if you place your hand here," He motioned to the side of his stomach. "you might get a hello." Harry leaned against George and reluctantly let go of Draco's hand.

Molly watched from behind her sons, almost bouncing on her heels and clinging to Arthur as she waited for her turn to greet Harry and her grandson. She had forced all the Weasleys to help her carry all the knitting and sowing she had done for the new member of their clan. She might have gone a little overboard, she could admit that much to herself but it felt as if she had to make up for her youngest son's stupidity and show Harry how much both he and his baby were loved.

Fred grinned widely and put his hand on the belly, the scar that sliced at an angle from his chin to his cheekbone stretching with it as he felt a thump against his hand, "By George, George we've a champion beater here."

George gave Harry a squeeze, "Only if he doesn't take after his Mum here."

Harry grinned. "He can be whatever he wants to be, I'd be proud if he'd take after his uncles too. Merlin I'll be proud of him even if he thinks Quidditch is the silliest thing in existence and spends every hour in the library like a certain aunt of his." He winked at Hermione who stood a bit away.

"Harry you'd be proud if your sprog-"

"-even if he turned out to be-"

"just like a certain greasy-"

"-haired dungeon bat. That's-"
"what we all love-"

"about you."

Fred ruffled the brunette's hair and then peered intently at Draco, narrowing blue eyes for a moment before pointing sharply at him, "You, you'd best take care of our Harry or we'll turn you into our new product tester."

Draco lifted his hands in a lazy sign of surrender and drawled, "Merlin forbid. I do my best and I've always got that lot," he angled his head towards the four girls who'd put the party together, "to bring in the cavalry."

Ginny grinned and waved at her brothers and Pansy looked sardonically amused about the whole thing as she kept a lookout for Neville who hadn't arrived yet; she wondered what was keeping him.

Harry chuckled and hugged both George and Fred in turn. "You have nothing to worry about; Draco takes excellent care of both me and Squiggles. I know almost all the classic fairytales now so no product testing necessary. By the way have you come up with anything new and exciting since I last saw you?" Harry knew well how to divert the twins' attention, they loved to talk about their inventions and they really were brilliant at what they came up with.

Fred grinned even wider, "Oh well we're working on this new product that makes you sweat rhinestones but there's a problem with the stones forming under the skin."

George nodded, "Then they block the pores and things get ugly."

Fred was about to go into details more gruesome than should be spoken at a baby shower when a throat cleared behind them, "Boys, don't you think that your mother might want to say hello to Harry?"

Molly jumped on the chance and pushed her way between her sons's to get to Harry. She hugged him and kissed his cheeks with loud smacking noises. "Oh Harry, you look marvelous, the boys are right, you're practically glowing. How is everything? Even with the babe you are as thin as a rail, don't they feed you in this place? Really Harry you must come to the Burrow and let me feed you up with some proper food and care. Oh Harry I worry so but you do look great, if not too thin...Oh how nice it is to see you."
Harry blinked at the barrage of questions and statements falling from Molly's lips but finally he settled on simply hugging her back. He didn't think she had even breathed through everything she'd said but he was so very happy that she was there.

Arthur chuckled and shifted his gaze over to look at Draco, who was looking at Harry and Molly with amusement and an edge of nostalgia. "Draco," he offered a hand to the young man, noting the surprise in the cool gray eyes before the blond took it, "Molly and I are grateful to you for helping Harry out."

Draco shook Arthur's hand and cleared his throat at the thanks before speaking gently, "I didn't do it for anyone's gratitude to be honest Mr. Weasley."

"Oh? Why did you then?" Arthur released the younger man's hand.

"First it was because it was the right thing to do, no matter what politics you're raised under, it was the right thing to do. Then," he looked over at Harry, who was answering Molly's questions as quickly as she got them out and a soft smile flirted with his face, "it was because of my feelings for Harry."

That look was eye opening to Arthur, it was one he saw a more open version of in the morning when he was charming his beard off and heard Molly's voice scold him not to leave the prickles lying in the sink. The young Malfoy was in love with Harry. "I see."

As Harry spoke with Molly, assuring her that he was eating just fine and that everything was well and good he couldn't help but seek out Draco with his eyes in between questions and sentences. It was silly but just the reassurance that he was close made Harry fell better.

Molly noticed too but she pretended she didn't, she could be tactful when she wanted to. Every time the boy turned to look at the young Malfoy he had his heart in his eyes and from the way the blond boy looked back that heart would be protected. She sighed a bit wistfully, deep down she had always imagined Harry to marry one of her children but it looked as if that wouldn't be. Especially not after Ronald's absolute fall into the stupidity cauldron. Harry was her child just as much as the other seven she'd given birth to, that would never ever change, she just had to adjust her dreams a little and pray that that pale, blond Malfoy took as good care of her Harry and her grandson as he possibly could.

After one final round of hugs and kisses that made Harry's glasses askew and his hair even more of a mess, Molly finally relented and walked over to Ginny to make sure her youngest was well and leaving Harry open to be greeted by his other guests. As much as she wanted to she couldn't monopolize him the whole party.
Draco watched Harry from the corner of his eye as the brunette was welcomed and fussed over by everyone and when his boyfriend began shifting in vague discomfort he excused himself from his conversation with Charlie Weasley, involving mostly threats upon his person should he ever break Harry's heart, and gently took his arm, giving the Delacour sisters a polite smile, "I'm sorry to interrupt but I think it's time Harry put his feet up again."

Fleur Weasley blinked then smiled back, she remembered well how it had felt to be seven months pregnant and on her feet for longer than ten minutes, "Non, non eet eez fine," she kissed Harry on both cheeks, "Go sit Cherie, it would be a shame to let zat chaise go to waste."

Harry gave her a smile that was both embarrassed and grateful. He followed Draco to the chaise and sunk down on its fluffy, comfortable cushions with a relieved sigh as the pressure on his lower back and feet lessened. "Thank you so much for saving me, I love speaking to them all but my ankles are killing me." Harry looked up at Draco. "Are you alright? Is everyone nice? Do I need to have words with anyone?"

"Just don't scare him, Neville would never hurt anyone he cares about, he doesn't have it in him." Harry followed the dark haired boy with his eyes for a while before turning them on his boyfriend again. "And there's no need for threats regarding you either, you make me nothing but happy and that's exactly what I've been telling everyone."

"Oh they'll get used to me. If Arthur Weasley can not only be friendly towards me but actually ask after my father's health with a straight face, which he did, the rest will get used to me." Draco shifted to the end of the chaise so that Harry's feet were in his lap and slipped the shoes off to massage them and relieve the swollen ankles. "I'm personally taking great amusement out of the fact that my godfather has not one but two children climbing over him. I think Victoire may have a crush on Teddy and as such is following his lead."

Harry groaned in pleasure at having his feet rubbed and looked over at Snape who had a child hanging in his robes on either side of him. Teddy was sporting matching platinum locks with Victoire and he was saying something to Snape, his whole face scrunched up in a pleading pout. "I wonder what they are trying to make Snape do? Whatever it is I bet they will succeed, just look at the two of them, who could resist that?"
"Certainly not even my steel willed godfather," Draco's voice was deeply amused as he watched Snape capitulate, pick the children up, and swing them round in a circle.

Severus ignored the looks of several people gawking at him in disbelief as childish happy squeals filled the air. He wondered how he'd managed to fall so far as to give in to a pout and a child's pleading whine. When Teddy's arms flung round his neck and a happy voice chirped a thank you, his mind supplied a simple 'Right. That's how.'

Remus paused in his conversation with Bill Weasley to watch his mate spin the children round in a wide circle. Dear Merlin how he loved that man, his heart was so full he thought he might explode from emotion. When Severus put Teddy and Victoire down after lots of hugs and wet kisses in thanks he tore his eyes away and hoped that Bill wouldn't notice that he hadn't heard a word the other man had said.

It was a hope in vain and not only because Bill was an observant man but also because he could smell the mating pheromone on Remus as the older man looked at Snape. "Fate certainly hasn't chosen an easy one for you has she Remus?"

"Huh?" Remus blinked in confusion until Bill's words sank in fully. "Nothing worth having comes easy and some things are very much worth fighting for, a mate being at the top of that list, especially one as special as him." He should have known Bill would notice, the wolf was very strong in the redhead even though he didn't transform fully with the moon.

Bill clapped Remus on the shoulder, "Good luck is all I can say really. He was a terror as a teacher but as an adult I can admire his spine doing what he did for us all, but it'll make for one hell of a fight for you," he chuckled, "Though my daughter and your son certainly do have a knack at getting him to bend. So does Mum come to think of it."

"So I've noticed, though I do believe that with little time and effort Molly Weasley could turn whole hostile armies docile and eating out of her hand. Your mother is a formidable woman." Remus chuckled. He knew he had his work cut out for him with Severus but he also knew he would never give up until he had won his mate. He would make Severus see how great he could be together and that he could trust Remus with his heart. He looked at his son holding hands with Victoire and hovering around Severus and a thought came before him. "Oh Bill, pardon the personal question but how do you do on the nights when the moon is full? Those nights...They are hard on Teddy."

Bill grimaced, "Before your mate tailored a potion for my own level of the condition it was bad but I had Fleur there to help. Unfortunately children can't take those sorts of potions until age five without detrimental effects." His eyes lingered on his daughter, "I was worried when Fleur was pregnant and asked Professor Snape about it, he said that one of the main ingredients in the relief potion caused problems with developing motor skills. Victoire takes after her mother's creature side though so we
haven't had to worry about that." He looked at Teddy then glanced at Snape, "You, Snape, and Teddy could come to Shell cottage during the full moons if you like. Something about veela song helps to soothe the wolf even if it's just humming."

"Thank you for the generous offer Bill, I will talk it through with Severus... He's not the most sociable person as you know and I won't put him in an uncomfortable situation." Remus pat Bill's shoulder gratefully. "I'm not even sure it would work, song or no song Moony has to run during the moons, he goes crazy if he can't feel ground under his paws. I'm not familiar with the nature around your home and it could end badly."

Bill gave him a smile, "I was thinking more for your son. I know your wolf won't stay put but with the Wolfsbane you'll be in control enough that things won't go south. You should have more faith in yourself Remus; you are an alpha after all. Talk to Snape, find out what he thinks then feel free to come by before a full moon to explore on two legs instead of four if you think that will help."

"I'll talk to him." Remus promised. He wanted what was best for Teddy and he'd do anything to ensure Teddy's health and happiness but as close as he was to Bill and his family they weren't really pack, not family. If Severus was willing to go then he would, Severus was his mate and he knew Teddy would be nothing but safe with him but if Severus was against it then they would find another way to ease Teddy's pain on those nights.

Fleur came up to them and kissed Bill on the cheek, "What eez zis? Man talk? Come 'Arry eez about to start opening 'is gifts." She angled her head over to where Harry's chaise was now surrounded by brightly wrapped packages.

"Ah that we cannot miss, thank you for telling us Fleur." Remus smiled at the beautiful woman and walked closer to where Harry was, seeking out Severus and Teddy to stand with. Teddy's eyes were huge at the sight of all the presents and his little fingers were almost itching to tear into paper and ribbons.

Harry was a little intimidated by the sheer amount of gifts, even after all these years he wasn't used to getting presents, even though these were technically for Squiggles.

Draco had moved back up to sit on the edge next to Harry. He ran his hand down the brunette's back, "Just pick one and start ripping in, or you could get an outside contractor," he nudge Harry's attention to Teddy.

Harry turned so he could give Draco a quick kiss before he looked at his godson. "Teddy, do you think you and Victoire could help me open these presents? I don't think I could possibly manage
them all on my own."

Molly smiled as the two toddlers rushed forward with happy squeals and pulled out her wand to run a quick diagnostic on the presents to levitate those with fragile content away from eager little child hands.

Victoire perched on Draco's lap as Teddy held the limited space on Harry's and she poked and peered at his hair before cheerily proclaiming, "Wook Teddy, Hawwy's kissy matches too!"

Draco's lips twitched in amusement as a soft laugh rolled through the room. Harry's kissy was he? He found he rather liked that title as he brought a gift over for Victoire to help unwrap. He'd made Pansy promise to make sure his own gift was last in 'line' so to speak even though he knew Harry would probably receive something much better.

Harry ooh'd and ahh'd over every gift as they were unwrapped, there were blankets, oncies, socks, hats, changing tables and everything in between. Every gift was beautiful and useful and Harry couldn't be more grateful. When they opened Neville's gift Harry almost got teary eyed. The cradle was gorgeous, hand carved oak with carvings all around it of unicorns, dragons, snakes, badgers, eagles, lions and hippogriffs. The thought of his son sleeping in this cradle as he and Draco rocked it softly was humbling and he couldn't wait for it to be true, to have Squiggles out and see him in that cradle.

When Harry reached the final gift and unwrapped the dragon plushie then he couldn't hold the tears back, not when Draco showed him how to squeeze it and heard the soft music play as the plushie changed colors and patterns. It was perfect. Harry wondered if Draco would mind if Harry borrowed this gift until Squiggles was born and had use for it as he ducked his head, trying to hide the tears. Who cried over a stuffed dragon anyway?

Teddy's hands went up and pat at Harry's cheek, "Is Unca Hawwy sad? Pwease don' be sad Unca Hawwy!"

"I'm not sad Teddy, cross my heart." Harry nuzzled the small hands, patting his cheek. "I'm so very happy that I can't hold it all in, it leaks out as tears but I promise I'm not sad. Look at this Teddy; have you seen anything more perfect?" He let the little boy squeeze the dragon.

Teddy studied the dragon before beaming, "Skiggles is gonna have his vewy own dwagon to protect him just like you do Unca Hawwy! I know cause Vikki told me Dwaco means dwagon!"
Draco honestly felt almost as if he'd burst with the desire to just proclaim his love for Harry right there, in front of everyone, when he saw Harry's expression at Teddy's words. Keeping a hand on Victoire's back so she wouldn't fall off he leaned in to whisper, "You can protect yourself I know but he's right, I'm your own personal guard dragon."

Harry tilted his head towards Draco so he could look him in the eyes. "I really don't care about the personal guard bit as long as I can call you my own I will gladly take you anyway I can have you. I'm yours too, just so you know."

"I'm yours however you want me Harry," he gave the brunette a peck on the lips and pulled back so as not to get into a heated kiss in front of everyone, "Down payment."

Teddy squirmed to get down from Harry's lap, followed swiftly by Victoire, and ran over to Remus and Snape. He looked up at them, "They all mushy."

"All yucky." Victoire agreed seriously.

Remus laughed and looked over at his pup. "Well when you're in love you can't help being all mushy sometimes...Like this." He caught both toddlers and placed smooching kisses all over chubby cheeks and necks despite flails, giggles and protests.

"Daddy nooooo!" Teddy squirmed, "Sappy hep us!"

Severus rolled his eyes and extricated Teddy and Victoire from Remus' arms, "Honestly you're as much a child as they are." The amusement in his eyes countered the 'scold' however as two sets of little arms clung to him.

"Kisses are never wrong, childish or not." Remus made more smooching noised just to make the children giggle and hide their faces in Severus' robes. "I don't mind being all mushy when the situation calls for it." He gave Severus a small wink but was careful not to push the other in a room filled with people.

The potion master just shook his head, lips wanting to twitch, "You are quite impossible."

"So I've been told." Remus grinned and tickled Teddy and Victoire before taking a few steps backwards. "Impossible and stubborn, remember that."
"It's difficult to forget." His attention was diverted once more but the imps in his arms as they began pleading for him to spin them round again.

To Be Continued…
Chapter Fifteen

Disclaimer: Neither Acherona nor trulywicked have any claim on Harry Potter or any characters or locations thereof.

Warnings: Angst, lots of it, Male Pregnancy, mental torture, infant in peril, boys in love, friendships broken and new friends gained. Disregards canon in so many ways.

MOCKINGBIRD

Chapter Fifteen.

Draco waved goodnight to Pansy and followed Harry up to the dorm, smiling when he saw the brunette sitting on his bed, the dragon plush playing the lullaby in his hands. He went over and sat beside him. "The ladies and Remus have everything packed in a feather light trunk."

Harry nodded, letting his fingers stroke over the oh so soft silk of the plushie. "They were a great help packing everything. Molly and Hermione have even arranged the gifts with tags as they are packed so we'll be able to find what we need quickly when we need it." He leaned against Draco. "Thank you so much for today."

The blond slid an arm around Harry, "I didn't do much but you're welcome. The girls arranged it all."

"I know and I will thank them as well but thank you for being there, for being you." Harry looked up so that his hair tickled Draco's jawline and ear. "Will you stay with me tonight?...Just sleep, I would just like to hold my very own dragon as I sleep."

Draco brushed his lips over Harry's temple, warmth spreading through him at the request, "I will yes."

"Good, thank you." Harry smiled and placed the dragon plush carefully on his bedside table. "I'll go and clean up, change into pajamas and brush my teeth then."
The blond nodded and lifted his eyebrows, "Call if you need me to scrub your back."

Harry chuckled throatily as he picked up a clean pair of pajamas and moved towards the showers. "Oh don't tempt me Draco." Harry walked faster, hormones were hell on the libido...Harry only had to look at Draco to be hard for hours, he still didn't feel comfortable doing anything other than kissing with Squiggles squirming around in there but Merlin he wanted to.

Draco cleaned himself with a charm and slipped on his own sleepwear before sitting back down on the bed to wait for Harry. He was going to tell him tonight, going to finally spit the L-word out and his stomach was jittery with nerves.

Harry washed quickly and donned his flannel pajamas, frowning into the mirror when the plaid fabric made him look more like a circus tent than anything else, at least in his own eyes. He brushed his teeth and took a few minutes to steady himself before he walked back into the dorm room. He loved Draco so much and asking him to share Harry's bed, even if it was only for sleeping, was a first step in trying to show that love. The mirror murmured something about vanity and hair slicking potions to him sleepily and Harry figured he had spent too long just staring into the reflective glass. He gathered his things and left the bedroom, giving Draco a shy smile when he saw the blond sitting on the bed waiting for him.

The blond smiled back and held out a hand, "Come here?"

Smiling back Harry walked over and took Draco's hand as he climbed into bed next to him, sitting against the headboard. "Mmm, comfy." Having Draco next to him was like having a personal heater in bed, Harry hurried to snuggle close.

Draco carded a hand through the messy mop of black hair in an attempt to calm his nerves. "Harry, there's something I want to tell you, that I've **wanted** to tell you for a while now."

Oh God here it would come, Harry had known things were too good to be true. He swallowed and braced himself for the blow. "Okay...You can tell me anything."

"You know when I first saw you, before I realized who exactly you were, I couldn't look away. Even by eleven I'd become jaded to everyday magics like the boats and ghosts but you, a scrawny, tiny, unknown boy, you looked at everything with such...wonder. It shone from your eyes and in your smile alongside a light case of nerves and I was just captivated. I'd already decided to introduce myself because of that kind of wonder, that light you had about you, I wanted to share in it and then I heard who you were and I was astonished that you could still look at things with wonder, at the time I still labored under the same belief as everyone, that you had a loving, happy home where you were
spoiled horribly and saw magic every day." He pressed a kiss to Harry's temple in both comfort and apology for that belief, "And I knew I had to offer my hand in friendship. Then Weasley laughed at my name, which I was a bit sensitive about, I know now that at the time he wasn't actually trying to be insulting, this was before he became the rat we now know him as, but then I was stung and fired back without thinking and all in one go I had disgusted you, shown my own arse, and embarrassed myself."

His voice wasn't bitter or even rueful, it was soft with remembrance, "And well you know how things went then but I never quite stopped being captivated by you. I always had to know where you were, what you were doing, and who you were with and then this year, after I ran into you after the rat had tricked you, the almost defeated way you acted...I didn't like it. You're supposed to be spitting fire, your eyes sparkling with what you feel and there someone or something had gone and dulled them. I started following you round and watching to figure out what made you tick. I even, and you'll likely hit me for this, I even followed you and Luna into the hospital wing and saw Pomfrey cast the pregnancy detection spell and heard everything after that. The rat's denial of Squiggles," his hand smoothed over the bulging belly Harry sported, "incensed me and everything I was. Family, especially blood family, is sacred and a child should be wanted and cherished no matter how they were conceived. I badly wanted to clock him but I didn't because you needed me more than I needed to pound the rat's face in. So I offered my help and over the course of a few short months captivation turned into friendship and honest caring and that's shifted once again."

He tilted Harry's face to his, looking into the eyes that had captivated him for eight years now, "I love you Harry, everything about you even the things that torque me off."

At first Harry couldn't believe he had heard Draco right, his mind had been so set on Draco giving him bad news that he didn't know how to handle this. He was aware that he was staring right at Draco with unblinking eyes and dropped jaw. He probably looked close to a dead fish. Harry saw Draco's eyes shutter at his lack of response and he hurried to raise his hand and cup Draco's face. "I love you too Draco, I feel exactly the same, loving everything about you...Even the annoying parts."
He gave his boyfriend a small smile. "I don't really know when it happened but I really do love you, can't imagine my life without you...I was so sure you were going to break up with me, hence the fish expression." Harry couldn't take it anymore; he had never been especially good with words, having been more a man of actions so he shifted his hand to the back of Draco's neck and pulled the blond into a kiss that he hoped spoke more of his feelings than his words could.

Draco's eyes fluttered shut and he sank into the kiss, taking the emotion Harry offered and returning it with his own. Right now he could swear his soul was flying. That one moment of silence and shock after his confession had scared him and made him feel like he was falling from the Astronomy Tower and then Harry goes and catches him before he can crash and burn, just like he had in the Room of Requirements. He broke the kiss and leaned his forehead against Harry's, "I'm not going anywhere, I told you that once before but I'll keep telling you and proving it for the rest of my life Harry."

"Rest of our lives, I like the sound of that." Harry grinned like a loon. "We'll love, fight and build a
life together." Harry had no doubt they would fight until sparks flew but they would love just as strongly and as long as there was love he didn't worry. Catching the snitch or performing a perfect Wronsky fint had never even come close to this feeling. "Maybe I should send Ron flowers? For making us find each other."

The blond snorted, "Only if it's devil's snare in full bloom. He just sped the process up; I have a feeling that eventually we'd have found our way to each other."

Harry chuckled. "Neville could probably find us a good and mature devil's snare." He pretended to consider it. "No I think you're right, you spoke about being captivated by me...I have felt the same. Even when I didn't trust you as far as I could throw you I always needed to know what you were up to, who you were spending time with, I wanted to get inside your head and figure you out. Sixth year Hermione accused me of being obsessed and she might have had a point. Whatever my feelings have been for you I have never been indifferent, you have always been the one able to get under my skin no matter what and now you are inside my heart as well. I want you there forever."

"Good because I'll tell you something about us Malfoys, we fall in love once and we love with everything in us, even if no one can tell in public, and you're it for me Harry Potter."

"Likewise Draco Malfoy, you spur me on to fly higher, run faster and do better. I love you."
Squiggles gave a hard kick to his stomach, so hard it showed from the outside. "And Squiggles seem to agree."

Draco brushed his lips over Harry's briefly again, "And I love you," his hand smoothed over Harry's belly, "both of you." He smiled at the jaw cracking yawn Harry gave as he was about to say something else and shifted them so they were both lying down, Harry snuggled against him. "Go to sleep love, it's been a busy day."

Harry didn't want to go to sleep, he wanted to stay up and talk and just revel in the feeling of knowing that Draco felt the same as he did. It was amazing, a miracle and Harry wanted to savor it but he couldn't seem able to keep his eyes open. It was difficult to come as close as he wanted with his large belly but Harry did his best and sighed contently when he managed to rest his head on Draco's chest. Knowing he loved and was loved in return Harry fell into the best sleep he could remember.

OoOoOoOoO

Ron was seething, roiling in bitterness, anger, and hatred. It was two weeks away from graduation, NEWTS had come and gone and now for the seventh and 'eighth' years it was all free study in their
classes. Ron had just received an owl from the Ministry's Auror Department that he'd applied to pending his NEWTS results and he'd been rejected. His NEWT grades had been so bad that he couldn't even get work as a low level clerk and work his way up. Now he only had two options if he was to make any real money in life and that was hope that a Quidditch team picked him up as Keeper or become a professional chess player.

He glared across the Great Hall at the Slytherin table, where Hermione, Ginny, and Neville sat with Harry celebrating Harry's own test results; he'd tied with Malfoy for the top male student in their graduating class. His hand clenched on his goblet, making the metal creak and Dean and Seamus to look at him uneasily, as Malfoy gave Harry a peck on the lips. Harry, who got everything handed to him on a gold-fucking platter, Harry who always came out smelling like a rose, Harry who had vaults and vaults of money at his disposal and never used any of it, Harry who carried a bastard of his own blood that he'd given away his claim on, a bastard that would inherit all that money that Ron would never see a single knut from. He wanted nothing more at the moment than to get up and go kick Harry in that big belly, hard.

Pansy stopped mid laugh when she accidently caught the venomous glares Ron sent their table and Harry in particular. Pansy considered herself a tough girl, thick skinned and somewhat wicked but that look sent shivers down her back. There was no compassion in those eyes what so ever, only bitterness and hatred. She was woman enough to admit that; that look scared her and made her fear for Harry and Squiggles.

Neville felt the fine tremor that went through his girlfriend and put his arm around her before looking over at what had caught her attention. The roiling hate in the once friendly blue eyes had chills going up his spine and he was glad that Harry's back was to Ron. His friend didn't need to see that.

"He's not right Neville." Pansy leaned into her boyfriend's embrace and whispered in his ear. "That's not just being an arsehole and an idiot there, it's so much darker. I had the dubious pleasure of spending time with Bellatrix Lestrange after her breakout from Azkaban; she had the same aura about her. I think something's really wrong with him Nev, something has broken." Pansy was glad Draco sat so that he didn't see Ron, it wouldn't be good to end his Hogwarts career with a murder and he would attack the Weasel if he saw him looking at Harry that way.

The Gryffindor nodded and kissed her temple, "I know. I think I'll talk to Arthur Weasley about this because that look..." he trailed off knowing he didn't have to finish the sentence. He looked over at Dean and Seamus, who were shifting uncomfortably and sent them a pleading look. He wanted Ron out of the Great Hall before Harry had to see that look.

"Hey mate," Dean spoke up and tried to hide his discomfort at Ron's behavior as best he could. "Why don't we rally up some of the Gryffindor guys and have one last match down at the Quidditch pitch, just for fun? Come on Ron, I want you on my team so I'll know we'll win even with my abysmal flying." Stroking Ron's ego usually worked and Dean hoped it would this time too.
"Hm?" Ron broke his glare as Dean's words registered and nodded, "Yeah sure. Just let me go get my Comet. I could use a fly after the news I got."

Neville breathed a sigh of relief and mouthed a thank you to his other two dorm mates as Ron left the hall receiving a half-hearted salute in return.

Ginny had noticed Pansy and Neville's discomfort and though she faced away from her brother she knew it had been caused by him. Someone had to do something about Ron, he was getting dangerous, but for now she just wanted to focus on the good times and happiness. She locked eyes with Blaise, who was still keeping them a secret, and decided to follow Pansy's advice from before. She turned to Luna, who sat beside her and murmured, "I'm about to make a spectacle of myself, wish me luck."

"Good luck Gin, you don't need it though. You shine with carlies so luck is already on your side." Luna smiled at her redhead friend and threw one arm around her in a short hug before going back to watch Hermione from beneath her lashes.

Ginny put her napkin down, got up on the table, aware of the hush that fell over the entire hall and stood, staring down at a surprised Blaise. Her voice rang out loud and clear, "Blaise Zabini I have had quite enough of this! Get up!"

He lifted a brow but did as she 'asked', standing up from the table, eyes widening when she grabbed his tie and yanked him up onto the table with her, where she then proceeded to jump onto him, her long legs, clad in jeans fortunately or he'd have been hexing every male in the hall, wrapping around his waist and her hands burying in his hair before her mouth sealed over his in a searing kiss that electrified and fried all his senses.

"Bravo!!" Pansy was grinning so hard her cheeks hurt as she got up from her seat and started to applaud. "About bloody time too, Blasey-boy you are such a blockhead." She was aware that Blaise probably didn't hear a single word she was saying, as invested as he was in that kiss but that only made her amusement that much greater.

Harry was smiling and clapping too, chuckling when he heard the wolf whistles start as the kiss kept going. He was so happy for Ginny, she was like a sister and he wanted her to be happy.

Hermione was laughing and clapping for Ginny's bold move and soon dissolved in to giggles as the kiss seemed to go on and on and poor Percy at the Head Table looked to be restraining himself from
hexing Blaise silly. She looked across the table at Luna, "Think we should pour some water on them before they catch fire?"

"Nah, let them carump with the flusterblusters." Luna smiled when Blaise's hands went to Ginny's bum and Percy turned maroon in the face. "On the other hand there are children present." The younger year students were watching with wide eyes and slack jaws. There were subtle clicks of wizarding cameras going off and yeah, maybe it was about time to put a stop to it. "I don't know if making them wet will make it better or worse though."

Draco heard his fellow blond and took out his wand to fire a stinging hex at Blaise's arse, making his friend yelp into his girlfriend's mouth and jump, breaking the kiss.

Blaise's cheeks were a darker brown than the rest of him as he lowered Ginny back down to the table. He reached back and rubbed his bum as the redhead yelled out to the entire hall.

"This man here? Mine! So anyone else with ideas to the contrary had best stay away unless you want to be hit with the Bat Bogey Hex from hell!" She looked down at Hermione, "Mind sitting next to Luna so I can sit beside Blaise Mione?"

The bushy haired girl giggled again, "Not at all Gin," she moved round the table to perch on the bench beside Luna, letting Blaise and Ginny hop off the table to cuddle together on the bench with matching smiles.

"Thank you for the show darlings." Pansy blew them air kisses as Harry gave Blaise the big brother speech, he knew Blaise would hear it again and again from Ginny's other brothers but there was nothing wrong with letting the Italian know just exactly what would be in store for him if he hurt Ginny in anyway.

Ginny just grinned, "Always happy to entertain you Pansy."

Neville shook his head at his friends, they were mad.

Hermione reached around Luna and poked Harry in the shoulder mid-lecture, "Let me save you some time Harry. Blaise?"

The Italian eyed her warily, "Er yes?"
"Ginny has six biological older brothers and two of whom are the Weasley twins, Remus, a werewolf, is fond of her like he would be a niece, there is Harry of course, who is just as dangerous as Remus on the full moon if you hurt his loved ones, her mother defeated and killed Bellatrix Lestrange, then there's me, Luna, and girl code dictates that Pansy join in any retribution. Now, considering that list as well as Ginny herself, I assume you are aware of what would happen should you ever, ever hurt her?"

He'd paled a few shades and nodded, "Frighteningly so."

She nodded, "Good."

"Ruin all my fun why don't you." Harry pouted at her but his eyes were glittering with humor. "I was just about to get to all the good threats too, the bone melting and skin flaying ones." Harry's threatening was ruined slightly by his bulging belly and the way he leaned against Draco all lovey dovey and snuggly.

Pansy gave him an amused look though she knew looks could deceive. Pregnant and crazy in love or not Harry Potter was a force to be reckoned with, it was very easy to forget how powerful he was because Harry chose not to flaunt it but it was there. Magic practically seeped out of his pores with everything he did. Draco could not have found a better match in her opinion. She wondered if Draco had told his parents about Harry yet, Pansy narrowed her eyes at her best friend and decided to take it up with him later when Harry wasn't with him in case he hadn't said anything yet. Uncle Lucius and aunt Cissa weren't unreasonable people...Really they weren't but they didn't handle surprises well, especially not Lucius.

Pansy herself was coming home with Neville to meet his grandmother once school was done. She was so nervous and Pansy Parkinson did not like that feeling. She just wanted to be approved by Augusta Longbottom so badly and she was afraid that because of her background lady Longbottom wouldn't even give her a chance. No matter what lady Longbottom thought though, Pansy would never give up Neville without the fight of her life. She turned to look at the man who had captured her heart completely.

Hermione propped her chin on her hand, feeling a bit...lonely with all the lovey dovey couples surrounding her but happy for her friends at the same time. She watched Neville give Pansy a smile and kiss the tip of her pug nose, Ginny kiss Blaise's cheek and promise him she wouldn't let anyone hex him, and Harry beam at Draco as he rubbed a bit of hot sauce from the corner of her first real friend's mouth and she couldn't help but wonder if something was wrong with her that she hadn't found someone to love like most of those that she knew. Even Colin Creevy had a girlfriend for Merlin's sake.
As Hermione was watching her friends, Luna was watching Hermione. She'd perfected the art of hiding her thoughts behind dreamy exterior years ago and so she hoped no one could see her longing. Luna didn't make her feelings known to Hermione because she knew that Hermione wasn't ready to accept them. The Gryffindor girl was as open-minded and kind hearted as they came but Luna didn't think that she'd once even considered a relationship with someone from the same gender before or a real relationship at all, much less one with Luna herself. Right now Luna had Hermione’s friendship and she didn't want to jeopardize that by professing any amorous feelings towards her. She would keep hoping that one day Hermione would be ready to see what was right in front of her and until that time came, Luna would be waiting.

The bushy haired witch glanced over at Luna and smiled. There was just something about Luna that lifted her spirits without the other girl having to say a word. Also she wasn't the only one unattached, Luna was just as single as she was and she doubted the other girl went about in a haze of self-pity.

"How's your dad Luna? I hope he's doing well."

Luna smiled. "Papa is well, he's doing much better now and he's back at the Quibbler, taking charge and seeking truths." Xenophilius had had a rough time just after the war with selling Harry, Ron and Hermione out to the Death Eaters in a desperate attempt to get Luna back. He had always prided himself on his integrity and loyalty and to have those beliefs in himself crumbled had hit him hard. No one blamed him and most people understood the length you'd go to, so you could save your only family and after a few months of crisis Xenophilius was finally beginning to forgive himself and get back to his former life. Luna was glad; she didn't know what she would do without her Papa. "How are your parents? Any lingering effects from having the memory charm reversed?"

"No thank goodness. Mum and Dad are as sharp as ever and everything is there," she tapped her temple, "They're coming here for graduation, special permission from McGonagall. She didn't think it would be right for them to miss me walking across that stage. I'm glad your dad is doing better, I've wanted to write him and let him know I don't blame him in the slightest but I wasn't sure how it would be received."

"I'm glad the wrackspurts didn't nest in your parents and that they get to come for graduation, I look forward to meeting them. I can ask them if muggles have buzzwuzzies in their teeth too." Luna nodded to herself, making her self-made carlies earrings dangle and sway. "As for Papa he would appreciate a letter I think. He cried when Harry spoke to him and told him that he had nothing to blame himself for. Of course he blamed the tears on the dizkops but we all know better don't we?" She gave Hermione a knowing grin. "Dizkops abhorred saltwater so there's no way they would even be close to him if he cried...Silly Papa."

Hermione grinned back, "Most men do refuse to admit to ever having cried, they think it makes them less 'manly' or some such silly notion." She reached over and plucked a stray thread off Luna's shoulder. "I will write him and let him know that I don't blame him and he shouldn't blame himself, not for anything that happened."
Luna shivered at the light touch, it was like being bitten by a flickerbug, those who lived in thunderstorms and fed on lightning. "Thank you Hermione, just don't be too sentimental, I don't need to come home to a house flooded with tears when school ends." She smiled wryly.

Hermione felt a gentle tingle in her fingertips but passed it off as static electricity, "I'll do my utmost best Luna. Though I'm certain you can swim I wouldn't want you to have an indoor swimming pool for a living room."

"As nice as a pool might be, I'm not really a bathe in tears sort of girl." Luna shrugged and grinned. It was nice to be able to talk and joke with Hermione.

She chuckled, "No we'll leave that to Pansy."

"Ah yes, though I must say that I think Pansy's tearbathing, heartbreaking days might be over." Luna nodded towards Pansy who had practically crawled into Neville's lap, looking at her boyfriend with a besotted expression completely out of character for her.

"Oh she's still breaking plenty of hearts because the others know they'll never have any chance with Neville's Slytherin Queen."

Neville heard that from where he was and glanced over at Hermione then back down at Pansy, "My Slytherin Queen, it has a nice ring to it."

"All yours." Pansy agreed and sealed those words with a light kiss. "And you're my Gryffindor Knight. All other girls can weep their hearts out knowing you're out of their reach because now that I have you, I'll never let go. I am a very possessive Queen."

"I'm yours to do with as you will my lady." He lifted her hand and kissed the back of it.

Draco eyed them, "Harry your friend is quite a romantic sap. He's going to turn my lethal best friend into a puddle of goo."

Harry noticed that as sweet and warm Pansy's smile was as she looked at Neville it sharpened several degrees as she looked over her boyfriend's shoulder at some of the girls who still dared to look Neville's way until she looked both smug and feral. "I really don't think you need to worry, she'll be a puddle of goo with a razor sharp edge...Still quite lethal."
Draco chuckled, "Acidic, you're fine so long as you don't step in it." He smirked at the subtle two fingered salute she gave him.

"See, no need to worry." Harry reached up to ruffle Draco's hair, just because he knew it really irritated his blond boyfriend. Draco was cute when he was annoyed.

The Malfoy made an irritable gurgle and set about neatening his hair again, while giving Harry a pout/glare.

Up at the Head Table Snape watched the group with a raised brow. Dear Merlin it was almost as frightening as the love-ins that he'd been witness to when some fool had tried to bring back the sixties. He half expected huge smaltzy hearts to come floating up from the couples any moment now and he could only thank the stars he was not a hormone driven teenager any longer.

Remus watched the kids too but he thought it was rather adorable. It was sweet, the way they were in love, at least they weren't snogging publicly...Well not right now anyway. He'd flushed several of the couples out of dark hallways and obscure corners the last few weeks. As much as he loved those pups there were things he didn't need to know. He turned his eyes towards his own elusive mate. Remus hoped that they were growing closer, dinner had been really nice but Severus was still holding back.

The feel of honey brown eyes that sometimes flashed amber on him reminded Severus that though he wasn't a teenager anymore his hormones were just as wild as they had been then. Jerking himself off in his shower was becoming a nightly routine. He was in love with Remus, he admitted that to himself and he wanted the other man but he was simply not used to letting himself go and even more was not used to submitting to anyone. He wanted to, he wanted to give himself over to Remus and he was fighting himself so he could. It was slow going though.

"Mmmwah!" Teddy gave his second favorite person a smacking kiss to the cheek, "Kisses for Sappy!"

Remus chuckled as he watched his son and his mate. He wished he could lean in and give kisses to Sappy too but he didn't feel like being hexed within an inch of his life. He feared that that was what was going to happen if he planted one on Severus in public. "Good on you Teddy, Severus needs lots of kisses." If he couldn't kiss his mate then he didn't have any qualms using his son to do the kissing.

"You are ruining my reputation Remus and I have to teach the fourth and fifth years today. I am
supposed to be scaring them into good behavior."

"You're still scary and mean...Promise." Remus did his very best to keep a straight face as Teddy's smooching kisses echoed throughout the Great Hall. "Besides, don't you want Teddy-kisses, they are a guaranteed remedy to make everything better, it's scientifically proven." Remus grabbed his son and kissed him loudly. "See, I already feel so much better."

Severus' lips twitched as Teddy giggled and hugged his daddy. "Remus I am blaming every single exploded cauldron on you today. You and Teddy make me soft curse it."

"Exploded cauldrons...Not exactly news for me, sounds like every class I had when I was a student." Remus shrugged, he'd gladly take the blame for most things if he could get Severus' lips to twitch in amusement and his eyes to soften. "I hope you haven't inherited your daddy's skill in potions Teddy bear."

"You weren't entirely hopeless; you could manage to prepare the ingredients well enough." He remembered often watching Remus in school and especially during potions. Lily had often joked that he'd had a crush on the other boy he'd watched him so much but he'd assured her he was just trying to figure out the mystery behind Lupin's lack of talent in potions and his illness...Realization flitted through his eyes as he remembered his obsession with finding out why Remus got so ill regularly. Bloody hell Lily had been right.

His fork clattered softly to the table as the truth smacked him in the face with a fish. He'd liked the other boy before the Marauders glommed together, liked the studious, quiet nature of him and had tried forming a friendship. Then James and the others had laid claim to Remus' time and taken up a grudge against him and Remus had just let it happen. That was why he'd held his grudge against Remus for so long, he'd felt betrayed. Something in him had known back then that Remus was supposed to be defending him, supposed to be supporting him but he hadn't. Despite that he'd still been quietly obsessed with the other boy, had felt concern far beyond that of an almost friend turned enemy when Remus would start looking haggard and ill. Some part of him had known that Remus was his.

Remus looked over sharply when Severus dropped his fork, his mate looked paler than usual and Remus felt his protective urges surface. "What happened Severus? Are you alright? Does something hurt?" Something had obviously upset Severus and Remus wanted to do everything in his power to make it right again.

The potion master shook himself out of his stunned moment and pinched the bridge of his nose, "Nothing, I'm fine, and no."
All mostly honest answers even as he was asking himself how in the bloody hell he'd missed the fact that he'd been drawn to Remus during their school years. Even his love for Lily now that he examined it more closely had been a combination of the deep love of long friendship and her slight resemblance in studious nature to Remus. Bloody hell, fuck him sideways.

Remus wanted to ask him if he was sure because Severus was still flustered, Remus could almost smell it. He managed to refrain himself, Severus did not react well to being pushed on a subject he obviously didn't want to share or talk about. "Okay." He said simply. He hoped Severus knew that he was there for him if he needed anything at all.

Now all Snape wanted to do was get through the day without murdering any of the brats he taught and fall into bed so he could sleep on this revelation.

To Be Continued…
Chapter Sixteen

Disclaimer: Neither Acherona nor trulywicked have any claim on Harry Potter or any characters or locations thereof.

Warnings: Angst, lots of it, Male Pregnancy, mental torture, infant in peril, boys in love, friendships broken and new friends gained. Disregards canon in so many ways.

MOCKINGBIRD

Chapter Sixteen.

Draco knelt in front of the fireplace and tossed a pinch of floo powder in, "Malfoy Manor." The fire roared green and he called out, "Maman? Father?" Pansy had reminded him that he needed to tell his parents of his relationship with Harry, something that had slipped his mind after tell Harry he loved him.

"Son?" Lucius face showed up in the flames. "What a surprise hearing from you, it's been a while." Lucius meant to sound snide but his happiness at hearing from his only child shone through. "Cissy," He called over his shoulder. "Cissy it's Draco calling." Lucius turned back to look at his son, Draco looked well and very grown up. "How are you? Feeling good about graduating? Your mother and I have been meaning to ask what you wish for a graduation gift, do you have any thoughts?"

Narcissa bent and settled beside Lucius, smiling at her son, "Hello darling, you're looking well."

Draco gave her a returning smile, "Maman you're as lovely as always," his eyes turned to his father's face and he hated knowing that the hidden smile in his eyes would disappear as soon as he told them of his feelings for Harry, "I'm well Father, tied for the best male student so I'm looking forward to graduation."

"Well done Draco, I've always known you'll do great things." Lucius put his hand on the small of his wife's back, supporting her as they spoke to their son. "We'll be there for the graduation ceremony of course, you must think of what you would like for a gift before then." Lucius looked over at his wife before looking back at Draco. "Oh and are you coming with us to France over the summer or do you and Severus have some potions plans?"
Here it went, "Uncle Severus is still having occasional episodes so he's remaining here," he saw his mother start to smile brighter and rushed to stop the happy exclamation before it could escape, "but I won't be going to France either, I have a prior commitment." He wanted grimace when his mother's face fell.

Narcissa had been looking forward to a summer as a family in France but she recovered from the disappointment quickly enough, "A prior commitment darling? What would that be?"

"Clearing out 12 Grimmauld Place," he saw his father make the connection instantly and continued before Lucius could say anything, "Harry can't stay there when there are still dark spells and curses in the walls. It's not good for Squiggles."

Narcissa's brows rose and she squeezed her husband's arm in warning, "Squiggles?"

"It's what he calls the baby Maman. I called because I felt it best to tell you about my relationship with Harry. When the paper printed that story we were not a couple," he met his father's eyes calmly despite his nervous stomach. Sometimes he still felt like a little boy holding his arms out for his Papa to pick him up in front of others yet not sure if he would because it wasn't what a Malfoy did in public, "We are now."

"I see, so you Potter and...Squiggles was it? Are going to spend the summer playing house together?" Lucius commended himself on his self restraint. "Just how long have you and Potter been a couple then? What are your plans for the future?"

Draco's eyes iced over, for the first time truly growing as cold as his father's were legendary for but with the sharp, acid edge of both his mother and his godfather. "I am not playing house. I am, however, making certain that the man I love and the child he's carrying, a child I hope will one day call me Papa, are in a safe environment. The baby is due in July and I have been with Harry since his fifth month, I assume you can calculate the time for yourself."

"Do not get smart with me young man." Lucius straightened up until his back was ramrod straight all signs of the relaxed man who had taken the fire call were gone. "You may be of age but I am still the head of this family. I will not apologize for asking you what your plans are or to be disappointed that you have been in a serious relationship for three months and haven't thought your parents important enough to let us know about it."

Narcissa's nails dug into Lucius' arm, her blue eyes sharp in annoyance with him but before she could take him to task her son spoke again.
"You raised me to look beneath surface questions to the meaning under them I will remind you. You were not asking what I would be doing over summer Father; you were insinuating that my feelings for Harry are not genuine, that it's simply a passing fancy." Draco's tone could have turned the Sahara into a tundra, "I did not inform you earlier due to your previous reaction to the Prophet's suggestion of a relationship between Harry and myself." He didn't quail under his Father's glare but met it with his own, "I love him. I love Harry and you, as head of the family, should know that as a Malfoy I will protect the man I love from any disparaging comments no matter who they might be coming from. I fully intend to ask Harry to be my bonded and to raise his child with him and perhaps, if we're blessed, have more. I only ask one thing from you and that is to show him respect and honor whenever you encounter him. Now, you'll have to excuse me but I promised Uncle Severus I would assist him with grading papers." It was a blatant lie but he had to cut the conversation off before he exploded at his father. He tossed a pinch of terminating powder into the fireplace and stood up. He was going to get his broomstick and take a fly to calm his bubbling temper.

Lucius eyes narrowed and he threw his empty teacup into the fireplace in anger. Damn that boy! Lucius had a right to ask questions and Draco couldn't expect him to smile and preen at getting Potter into the family, not right away. Draco didn't even give him a chance to swallow the idea down, no straight on to the blaming. Well if Draco didn't want to actually talk things through then Lucius would oblige him. Narcissa could attend the graduation ceremony on her own. Lucius had better things to do than to go where he wasn't wanted. "I'll be in the study." He didn't look at his wife as he got up from the floor. "I'll send Bushy to clean up the mess."

Narcissa stood, eyes narrowed, hip cocked, arms folded over her chest, and drawled coolly, "Have her make up the couch for you as well."

"Yes, of course big bad Lucius has cocked it up again." Lucius was for once, angry enough to not care about the knots he'd have in his back or the fact that he couldn't sleep without Narcissa in his arms. "Sleep well Cissy." He strode out of the sitting room after having called for a tiny house elf to clean up the broken teacup.

Narcissa sniffed and went to write her son a letter. She knew her husband well and though he was in a bad enough temper now that he was blasé about the couch, that would change when he was actually sleeping on it. She settled at her desk and got out her favorite quill before pondering how best to scold her son for mishandling the conversation while at the same time congratulating him for having found his way to Harry. Both her men had blown it and both would be made very aware of her displeasure over it.

OoOoOoOoO
Snape growled at the final class of the day to get the bloody hell out of his sight before he murdered one of them. He'd been right about the exploding cauldrons today. The fourth and fifth years were at the ages that they just started pulling, trying to have their head and balking at authority and he usually controlled them but they seemed to labor under a misapprehension that, just because he let a toddler crawl all over him and kiss his cheek in front of the entire school population, he'd softened as a professor. They had all swiftly learned better but not before he'd been splattered with three different cauldrons of failed, fortunately harmless, potions. He stalked out of the classroom and headed for the shower in his quarters, pausing, still dripping pink liquid when he saw Lucius' head in his fireplace. "What in the name of Merlin is it now?"

"A heads up would have been nice brother." Lucius was sitting in his plush leather chair in his study, having dragged it across the floor so he could sit in it and still be visible in the fireplace. He held a large snifter of brandy in his hand and since it wasn't his first glass, he felt a little mellower now. Still pissed at his son though. "I assume you knew, nothing gets past you, especially not in your own house."

"Lucius, in case it has escaped your notice, I am currently soaked in failed pepper-up potion, the eighth cauldron to have exploded all over me today, so pardon me if I am not entirely taking your meaning. What, precisely, is it that I knew or know?" Snape was, for once, not being sarcastic. He was quite honest in that he was far too distracted at the moment to properly play the usual word games with Lucius.

"My son's relationship with a certain 'savior' Severus. Apparently it has been going on for quite a while but Draco only thought it fit to tell us today." Lucius swirled the amber liquid in his glass before taking a big gulp of it, feeling the burn as he swallowed it down. "My son sees me as this big evil who can't possibly understand how it feels to be in love."

Severus pinched the bridge of his long nose for the thousandth time that day and just summoned a chair to sit before the fireplace. He would not be getting his shower until this conversation was over he knew. "Does he? Or did you say something to set him off? Don't," he pointed at the head in his fireplace before the sneer finished forming, "snarl at me or I'll come through and hex you bald. Draco is your son but he has Narcissa's temperament, he's easily set off, especially when something is important to him. So what did you say when he told you?"

"I asked him if he intended to spend the summer playing house and yes I know that wasn't the brightest thing to say but I was shocked." Lucius drank some more. "After that he didn't give a chance to say anything, just scolded me and disconnected the call...Still something I am not pleased about, it's rude." He peered through the flames at his long time friend. "You look like hell, why don't you come through and have a drink? You can yell at me in person."

The potion master shook his head, "Normally I would take you up on that offer but in approximately an hour there will be a two going on three year old invading my quarters looking for 'Sappy'. And
you are not incorrect about it being the wrong thing to say. Had anyone ever said that about you and Narcissa during that period of you two just living together before you got engaged you'd have hunted them down, skinned them and poured lemon juice over their bodies. I would imagine Draco cut the call before he said or did something he regretted."

"Sappy? Really? And you let the kid live?" Lucius chuckled but it was a laugh tinged with melancholia. "Yes we've established that it was most definitely the wrong thing to say but Draco's had a three month long relationship with Potter, plenty of time to wrap his head around things. He didn't give me that chance. I love my son Severus, how can he think that I would not support him in everything he does whether it's what I dreamed for him or not? Potter is having his child in about a month, that's one month to sort out the wards and right to inherit everything that comes with the Malfoy name. A month to come to terms with that my first grandchild will not be of my blood and neither Narcissa nor I have been allowed to share anything about this pregnancy. Draco has a quick temper yes but I have a right to be upset as well."

"I'm not saying you don't but Draco expects the worst of you when it comes to the subject of Harry James Potter as you've not had the most...shining of a track record in regards to him. In addition the child is also the grandchild of Arthur and Molly Weasley both by blood and by heart as Potter is all but biologically their son and again, Draco is well versed in your disdain of the Weasley family. He is not thinking of anything but protecting Harry, as you did when Narcissa was pregnant with Draco. Tact has gone out the window in favor of protection and he's already on edge because of Ronald Weasley." Severus called a house elf for some chai tea, "You have a month, do you want to waste it being angry?"

"Yes I do." Lucius answered petulantly. "I want to be angry and upset but I won't be, Cissy will never let me." Lucius sighed. "Potter and I will probably never be bosom buddies, the same goes for the Weasley clan but if my son, the pickiest person on the planet loves Potter...Then there's something there worth knowing. I don't boil and eat those I dislike you know, despite the rumors. I will reach out to Draco but I will not be put down or not given a chance to speak my mind. I am stretching here Severus, trying my very best."

The elf arrived with the tea and Severus took a sip, "I would suggest you contact Draco tomorrow, after breakfast. If Narcissa holds true to form he will be receiving a long letter both congratulating him on his relationship and scolding him for his rudeness. I-"

"Sappy!" Teddy came barreling into the room like a whirlwind but came to a screeching halt when he saw Lucius' head in the fireplace. He blinked and peered at the man, noticing how much he looked like his Uncle Harry's dragon. "Hewo, I is Teddy."

Lucius looked at the turquoise haired little boy with a raised eyebrow. 'Ah so it was Lupin and Nymphadora's spawn then.' "Hello Teddy, I am Lucius, pleased to meet you." He inclined his head in greeting to the boy.
Teddy smiled at him, "Awe joo Unca Hawwy's kissy's Papa?"

Severus' lips twitched in amusement and explained, "Draco has become known to the smaller generation as Harry's kissy."

And the other eyebrow went up as well. Draco was fine with being called someone's kissy? He must really be in love. "Yes, I am Draco's Papa and you are Mr. Potter's godson are you not?"

"Uh-huh, Unca Hawwy's the best ever godpapa," Teddy rocked on his heels, "He aways stops to pway, gives the best hugs, an'" he leaned in as if imparting a secret, "wets me sneak an extwa cookie. He's gonna be the bestest of the best Mama to Skiggles. You gotta be vewy nice Mista Whooshes cause Dwaco is weawy nice but he twies to pwetend he not."

'Whooshes'?!! Oh dear Merlin, his father would turn in his grave if he knew. "It sounds very nice Teddy and an extra cookie is never wrong now is it? Draco is a very nice person, he's always been and I am very proud of him. Just as I am sure your Daddy is very proud of you. You seem to be a wizard and a gentleman of top notch quality young Teddy. If you do see my son today, give him a hug from me."

Severus was covering his face with a hand, his shoulders shaking as he tried to keep from laughing out loud. There was just something hilarious about hearing Lucius being called 'Whooshes' that was beyond amusing.

Teddy beamed, "Tank joo! I will give Dwaco a hug fow joo and I bet he's vewy pwoud of joo too Mista Whooshes!"

Severus heard something from the doorway and saw Remus step in just as Teddy finished that sentence, the sight of the werewolf's eyebrows lifting up tore it and he just couldn't hold in the laughter anymore.

The sight of his son sitting in front of the fireplace, smiling and talking to Lucius bloody Malfoy of all people...Calling him Whooshes and hearing Severus laughing...Loudly and honestly without holding back. It was like walking into an alternate dimension, Remus didn't know if he should laugh along with his mate or snatch up both Teddy and Severus and run for his life.

In the background he heard Lucius tell his son goodbye, glare and harumph at Severus before he
ended the fire call.

"Dare I ask what's been going on here?" Remus looked at his still laughing mate.

The potion master shook his head, unable to stop laughing for some reason and it wasn't until he realized that the laughter had turned into sobs that it dawned on him that everything that had been piling up on him had become too much and something had stripped away his control and walls letting his emotions rush out without a filter.

Remus noticed his son looking at Severus with wide eyes and a trembling bottom lip. He swept his son up in his arms before crossing the floor to wrap his free arm around his sobbing mate as well, holding both of his most precious persons close. He pressed a kiss to Severus' temple and simply held the man he loved as he let all the bottled up emotions out.

Severus buried his face into the crook of Remus' neck and clutched at him, feeling more vulnerable than he had since he was a teenager. He could feel Teddy's hands petting his hair and the toddler pleading for him not to be sad but he just couldn't stop. He'd had too much held back and restrained for most of his life and it had never been allowed an outlet. He cried himself horse, shaking and sobbing past the point where his eyes stopped producing tears, and just soaked up the comfort of the strong body of his mate. Slowly he calmed, exhausted from the rush of released emotions and became aware of Teddy crying softly. He lifted his head and looked at the toddler, whose hair had become the brown he'd been born with and reached over to run his hand over it, "Shhh Teddy, I'm okay. I'm okay now, don't cry little one."

Teddy flung himself from Remus' arm into Snape's, sniffling and wrapping his arms tight around the potion master's neck.

Snape ran his hand up and down Teddy's back, aware of Remus adjusting to hold both of them, "Shh, I'm sorry Teddy Bear. I didn't mean to scare you."

"It's going to be fine Teddy, you and I, we're going to take care of Severus from here on out won't we? We'll make sure he has nothing to be sad about." Remus spoke to his son but he looked at Severus as he said it. "I'll do whatever I can to keep you both happy." He continued to hold them, moving around Severus so he could wrap his arms around him from behind and look at Teddy as he rested his chin on Severus' shoulder. "You two are the most important thing in my life and I will always take care of you."

The other man leaned back against his werewolf, rubbing Teddy's back until the boy had calmed down and pulled away to look at him with serious brown eyes. Teddy traced his fingers over the
potion master's wet cheeks, "No sad no more Sappy?"

Snape kissed Teddy's forehead, "No, not sad anymore."

The little metamorphagus hugged him round the neck again, "Good. Wuv you."

"I love you too little bear."

Now Remus was the one getting tears in his eyes and he blinked furiously to make them go away before Teddy had to witness another breakdown. "Merlin, I love you so much Severus." Remus' voice was thick with emotion and he buried his face in his mate's neck, breathing him in. "I love you both." He performed a tiny mufliato so Teddy wouldn't hear the next part. "I need you Severus; I need you to raise Teddy with me, to be his parent alongside of me and for us to be a real family. You own my heart and my soul and I want to share everything with you."

Severus closed his eyes, "I want that too but I'm afraid, not of you, of myself. I've ruined everything good and precious in my life, driven those I love away though thoughtless words and actions performed in a moment of pride. I'm terrified that I'll ruin you and Teddy too."

"You won't, I know you won't." Remus sniffed Severus' throat again, reveling in the scent, he wanted to get drunk of it and then rub himself all over his mate, mingling their scents until they were one. "Teddy loves you, you have spent time with him every day for almost a year now and you haven't said anything rash or bad to him. If anything you have helped him get stronger, made him know he's loved. We will fight yes...You and I both know that but no matter what you say or do; you will never drive me away, never make me lose faith in you. I love you Severus. I am afraid too, afraid of not being worthy of you. Afraid I won't be what you need but I need to try anyway because the thought of living without you is unbearable."

"Idiot," his tone held no bite, only affection, "Just what is it you think makes you unworthy? It can't be your age because we're the same age, it's not your lycanthropy because even I know mates are given a free pass so to speak, you've a job and a steady income, an agile and intelligent mind, you're kind even to people you don't like, and you know when to hold and protect and when not to, and you are very attractive."

Remus flushed, "If I'm attractive then you're breathtaking." His lips brushed over the pale, soft skin of Severus' neck. "Seriously though, I am an alpha wolf, I'm dominate but I don't want to dominate you, hope that makes sense. As your mate I crave your love and your respect...I would willingly crawl on my belly and bare my throat to you for that but I am afraid I don't deserve respect from you. That's what makes me unworthy." Remus shifted uncomfortably. "I was awful when we were in
school. Doing nothing is just as bad as doing the bullying...Worst of all is that I really liked you even back then. I truly, honestly liked you and I wanted to be your friend but I let my fear of being out in the cold outweigh my wish to know you. How can I be respected when I was such a coward?"

Severus moved to lay Teddy, who'd fallen asleep after crying for his Sappy, down on the couch then turned back to Remus, "We were children Remus, young impressionable teenagers and you were a 'cub' so to speak without a pack until Potter, Black, and Pettigrew sought out to become your friend and they stayed after learning of your deepest secret. They were family and it is nigh impossible to go against family when you're so young." He cupped Remus' face in his hands. "You were a child Remus, the man you are is not the youth you were."

Amber eyes looked at his mate searchingly but he found no disgust or dismissal there. He leaned his forehead against Severus' and wrapped his arms around him once again. "The man I am would do anything for you. I love you but not even love is enough. You are my everything, my world revolves around you and Teddy. I place you above anything and anyone and always will."

Snape closed his eyes and savored the contact before he shivered, he was still wet with potion and it was the dungeons, it was bloody cold.

Remus felt the shiver go through his mate's body and pulled back, finally truly noticing the man's wet clothes. "Go take a hot shower and change into dry clothes. I'm going to take Teddy upstairs and let him nap for a little while longer. The door is wide open...To my quarters, to my heart and to us being a family." He kissed Severus' forehead before going over to lift his sleeping son from the couch and into his arms. "Get warm and dry now, I don't want you getting sick...We love you and we'll see you later." Remus walked out of Severus' room and closed the door behind him softly with his foot since his arms were occupied.

Severus moved quickly to the bathroom and stripped off his soaked robes getting under the warm spray and scrubbing himself clean of the potion residue while analyzing everything he'd been splashed with today in his head. He hummed when he realized that the combination of the potions that had hit his skin today had created a temporary inhibition block, forcing him to release everything he'd kept bottled up inside. He stepped out of the shower, spelled himself dry, and headed for his wardrobe. Rather than put on a set of his robes, he chose to slip on a dark blue button down shirt, a pair of gray jeans, and his bedroom slippers before going to Remus' quarters. He still felt vulnerable and didn't want to be alone.

The door was indeed unlocked so he stepped inside quietly and looked around for Remus.

Remus had put Teddy down in his son's bed and then he had gotten changed too. He'd forgone his usual robes and brown and beige tones for lose, black sweatpants that hung low on his hips and a Gryffindor red t-shirt. When he was in his own rooms he didn't have to worry about looking
respectable or cover his scarred body from view, he could wear short sleeves without feeling self conscious.

He walked out of the bedroom to find his dreams come true standing his living room. The sight of Severus in jeans and that gorgeous blue shirt was enough to drive the breath from his lungs and Remus had to blink, wondering if it was a figment of his imagination, brought on by his longing. No matter how many times he blinked though, Severus was still there and it spurred Remus into action. In a flash he was in front of the dark haired wizard, placing his palm against a pale cheek and stroking Severus' cheekbone with the pad of his thumb. "You're here...I'm so happy."

The potion master leaned into the caress, "I didn't want to be alone. I feel too...raw. It's better here, with you."

Those words warmed Remus like little else could, he knew what a great admittance that was from his cautious and reserved mate. He led them over to the plush sofa, sat down and pulled Severus down next to him, wrapping his arms around the other. "I'm here for you Severus, whenever you need me, I'll always be here."

Severus closed his eyes and let himself lean. There wasn't anyone but Remus here and he knew the werewolf would never spread the knowledge of his moments of weakness around, not even to Harry, so it was safe to give in to the potion effects and allow himself to be weak. The other man was warm and it felt good after the cold of the dungeons to be held against that warmth. He nuzzled his head on a broad shoulder, blowing a wavy, wispy bit of black hair out of his face. His hair when not slicked down with oil and clean was quite honestly irritating. It was flyaway, thick, and fine and drove him utterly mad at times. He lifted a hand to shove it away from his face as the puffing hadn't worked then let that hand fall to Remus' arm, tracing a scar that ran the length of the forearm. "You can't make that promise you know. There's no knowing just what will happen in life so you can't promise to always be there. But," he continued before his stubborn wolf could argue, "you can promise to never leave voluntarily."

Remus shuddered as Severus traced one of his many, many scars. He never liked them being touched but strangely enough it felt good when his mate touched them. Remus had a feeling Severus' touch would feel good all over, there was simply something about him...He was made for Remus and Remus was made for him. "You're right, life is never certain and it can change from one moment to the next. I do promise that as long as I have a say in the matter I will never, ever leave." He reached up with one hand and ran his fingers through Severus' silky hair. "I like your hair like this, so soft...And willful."

"It's a pain in the arse is what it is." He couldn't say he minded Remus' fingers running over his scalp and through his hair though. It felt good. "Remus?"
“Hm, yes?” Remus didn't stop his fingers combing through shiny locks but he looked down at his mate with a soft smile, waiting for Severus to continue.

“In school I didn't snoop trying to get you in trouble, I was worried about you and wanted to know why you got ill so much. I just wanted to tell you that since I know Black and Potter were convinced I was trying to get you expelled.”
Remus closed his eyes and leaned his cheek against Severus’ hair. No matter what Severus said about being children back then Remus was still filled with regrets. “Thank you...I could never really believe it you know, that you were trying to get me expelled but then came that awful night at the shrieking shack and nothing was ever the same. I almost killed you...And James. After that night I understood why couldn't as much as look at me anymore.”
Severus' lips took on a rueful smile, “It scared me but not for the reason you think. It scared me to see you in so much pain and then to see you taken over by the violence. I was afraid for you at first, afraid you’d always be lost in the wolf, and then Potter stepped in and I realized I was in more danger than you were. Then I did run but I suppose, in a twisted way, I owe Black for that stupid move as it helped me to choose my vocation.”

“Really?” Remus' voice was filled with marvel and disbelief. “You decided on becoming a potions master after that horrid event? I'm very grateful you did...Before the Wolfsbane potion...You have no idea what it was like, especially after Moony lost his pack. Your potion...It gave me my life back Severus. Not only mine but it's a beacon in the darkness for all those like me, suffering under this bloody curse.”

The potion master settled deeper into the other man's embrace, "That was the point. I wanted to help you. I'm still working on it though. An actual cure is...unlikely due to the nature of the condition but I should be able to create a potion one day that will enable those afflicted to be more like wolf animagi."  

"If anyone can do it, it's you.” Remus really believed it too, his mate was brilliant, truly a genius within his field and just hearing that Severus had wanted to help and still did. That alone meant more than a cure, at least for Remus. He held his mate close in comfortable silence, his body relaxing, knowing Severus was there, next to him.

"Mmm," the hum was absent and content. Having gotten that little tidbit off his mind allowed allowed Snape to relax to the point that he was drifting closer and closer to sleep. Just before sleep took him, he murmured softly, "Love you."

Remus' breath hitched and his body heated from his stomach and out to his very toes and fingers. To hear those words...It was priceless. Remus knew that Severus had drifted asleep but the was more than satisfied staying where he was, holding his mate. "I love you too Severus."

To Be Continued…
Chapter Seventeen

Disclaimer: Neither Acherona nor trulywicked have any claim on Harry Potter or any characters or locations thereof.

Warnings: Angst, lots of it, Male Pregnancy, mental torture, infant in peril, boys in love, friendships broken and new friends gained. Disregards canon in so many ways.

MOCKINGBIRD

Chapter Seventeen.

The potion master groaned softly as light tickled outside his closed eyes. He didn't even have to open them to become fully aware and awake and remember yesterday's events. His lips twitched. Whooshes indeed. He'd have paid money to see Abraxas 'evil bastard' Malfoy's reaction to that as he rotted in hell. He poked mentally at his emotional state and was relieved to find that it had returned to normal. He was still warm but no longer held against a firm male body, instead he had a comforter tucked in around him and he was absolutely in a bed. Remus must have carried him to it after he'd fallen asleep. He heard a soft rustle and a giggle from his right followed by a soft 'shhh'ing noise and spoke without opening his eyes, "I'm already awake."

A happy loud giggle was his answer before a tiny body leaped on top of him and Teddy Lupin was hugging his Sappy for all he was worth, "We gotcha bwekfust."

"We did indeed." Remus said and tickled his son so he would move slightly. He placed a large tray on the bed, next to Severus. "I hope you're hungry, we...Might have gone a little overboard." The tray was overflowing with every kind of breakfast food imaginable, plus ice cream. Teddy had been very adamant that ice cream was needed. "Have you slept well?" Remus looked his mate over, Severus was rumpled and still sleepy but he looked so gorgeous in Remus' bed. He belonged there.

"Like a stone." Which was saying something really, the first rest without nightmares, tossing and turning, or a sleeping potion he'd had in quite some time. A dark brow lifted at the sheer amount of food there and the presence of the ice cream as Teddy bounced beside him. He tapped the end of the child's nose, "Thank you for the sustenance. May I ask why the ice cream?"

"Cause ice cweam makes evwything betterer!" Teddy giggled at the nose boop.
"Well it's difficult to argue with that I suppose," he revealed a little known secret sweet tooth by going for the ice cream first and making a content hum at the taste of mocha espresso flavor, his favorite.

Remus chuckled at the 'I told you so' look his son shot him as Teddy snuggled up close to Severus, actually trying to spoon feed him the ice cream. He poured himself a cup of steaming tea and sat down on the edge of the bed to keep his most treasured ones company. "You really do look good in my bed Severus." He raised an eyebrow towards his mate as he lifted the cup to his mouth and took a delicate sip.

"Hm perhaps I should endeavor to find myself in it more often then," he smirked at the soft choking noise Remus made as Teddy scrambled over to his Daddy and clapped him on the back. He finished the ice cream and picked up a slice of bacon.

"Thank you Teddy bear, I'm fine now." Remus choked out when he could finally get some air back into his lungs. If his son hadn't been present he would have Severus pressed into the mattress by now. Dear Merlin, Severus' voice alone was enough to make his blood boil with want.

Dark eyes connected smugly with honey brown and Severus almost shivered at the heat in Remus' gaze. He had decided, however, to start as he meant to go on and as he'd already been exposed, weak, and vulnerable emotionally in front of Remus there was no reason to guard himself in private with Remus anymore. "I presume breakfast in the Great Hall has been disbanded."

"It has." Remus nodded. "It's still plenty of time until either of us have lessons so there's no rush, besides no one does any work this close to summer anyway." Remus smiled. This close to end of term there was as if an off switch had been struck with the students. Remus didn't mind much, he sort of felt the same.

Severus made a hum, "I asked because 'Whooshes' should be fire calling his son shortly. In all honesty there is nothing for me to teach in classes this close to end of term. I have already exhausted all the potions I am legally allowed to teach each year by now."

Whooshes, it still made Remus grin. "It's the same with me, I have no spells or counter spells to teach...Mostly we play hangman in my classes now." Remus reached out and stroked a strand of black hair behind Severus' ear. "So what's all this with Whooshes and Draco?"

"Draco waited until yesterday evening to inform his father of his relationship with Harry. Lucius reacted...rashly asking a question that set Draco off, they argued and Draco cut the floo off. Lucius was displeased with not being able to finish his say. He fire called to attempt to," he glanced at
Teddy and amended what he would usually say, "kevetch at me for not giving him a heads up as well as spew his irritation at his son."

"Ah, yes I can just imagine how Lucius would react to something like that." Remus nodded. Lucius Malfoy was not his favorite person in the world but he hoped Draco and he would work things out, family was the most important thing and Harry would never be able to take it if he was the one causing a rift between father and son. "They both have flaring tempers but it will work out. Narcissa and Harry will see to that if they can't sort things out on their own."

"They'll work it out. Lucius has had a night on the couch to temper his tongue and Draco likely received a letter this morning from his mother scolding him for being a prat."

Remus chuckled. "Yeah, they will work it out. Poor Whooshes, the couch is a dreaded punishment indeed." Remus couldn't help but feel a little gleeful at the thought of high and mighty Lucius Malfoy being locked out of his own bedroom.

Teddy looked between them, the conversation going over his head really but he piped up, "I gave Dwaco his hug and told him it was from his Papa Whooshes. Sappy how come Unca Hawwy an' his kissy an' they fwends went all red an' shaky an' waughed?"

Severus' lips twitched. Oh Lucius would never hear the end of this, never. "Well little bear Lucius isn't known for hugging, it was just a little funny to them that he found it easier to give a hug through someone else than give it himself."

"Oh. Okay."

"When you meet him for yourself you'll have to give him a big hug Teddy, teach him how it's done." Remus reached over Severus and ruffled his son's hair. "After all you are an absolute expert on hugs; yours are the very best hugs anyone can get." Lucius Malfoy could do with some Teddy hugs, might loosen him up a bit.

Teddy giggled, "Okay! I give Whooshes the bestest hug evah! Wike dis," he lunged first for his Daddy and gave him and hug, then for Snape and nearly tackled him off the bed.

Severus just laughed gently and pat the toddler's back, giving Remus a smile over the boy's head. He might have to actually thank the brats from yesterday for blowing up the cauldrons.
Draco read through his mother's letter again after Harry left with Pansy to go down to the kitchens for an extra snack and almost winced at the scolding in the letter. It was subtle and well hidden but he recognized it easily. He had been rude to his father, he knew that, but he'd had to end the call before he said something that could never be taken back. What he hadn't thought of was that his father might really want to be as much a part of this as he could and the short notice made that difficult. He wondered if he could risk calling again so soon after yesterday or if his father was still seething mad.

Lucius had debated long and hard if he actually should fire call his son or if it would only make things worse. He had the most terrible crink in his neck from sleeping on the couch and apparently his darling wife had ordered all the pain potions to be hidden from him. Oh she could be an evil witch when she wanted to, it was only one of the reasons Lucius loved her so. He grabbed a fistful of floo powder with trepidation and tossed it into the flames of the fireplace in his study, calling out for the Slytherin common room and Draco Malfoy.

The blond jumped at hearing his father's voice and seeing his head floating in the fireplace. Well that took his decision about whether or not to call out of the equation, now he had to decide if he should talk or not. He reminded himself of the hug Teddy had given him this morning from his 'Papa Whooshes' and decided that if he was sending hugs through a child who called him Whooshes then his father couldn't be too terribly angry still. He moved to the fire place and crouched down, "Father."

"Son." Lucius inclined his head and winced inwardly at how stern he sounded. "I hope all is well." He knew that they had spoken yesterday but Lucius didn't have a clue as what to say, he didn't want to set Draco off again and if he was disconnected once more he swore he would tear down all the fireplaces in the mansion brick by brick and with his own two hands.

"Mostly though," Draco shoved his pride into a corner box, "I owe you an apology for cutting the floo off the way I did yesterday. My temper was running high and I did not wish to say something I couldn't take back."

"It is fine son; I apologize too for what I said. I was taken by surprise but that is no excuse for me to put down your feelings for each other as anything but genuine." The apology almost got stuck in Lucius throat but his son and his son's happiness was more important than his pride.

"Thank you. I know I should have told you and Maman sooner but," he ran his hand through his hair, "I was nervous and worried about your reaction and I had actually planned to tell you sooner but I kept forgetting with exams and my not-quite-official-yet apprenticeship with Uncle Severus as well as my worry in regards to protecting Harry from the rat."
"I do understand Draco, I wish you would have told us sooner but I do understand." Lucius swallowed. "Your mother and I would like it if you and your intended would come to the manor this weekend. We would very much like to get to know your Harry."

The younger blond smiled, "I'll ask him if he feels up to it. Squiggles can be temperamental but if he behaves we will likely be there. Nothing fancy however. Harry did not grow up at all like we were led to believe and he's not yet comfortable with all the trappings of high wizard society."

Lucius cleared his throat. "Ah well...Your mother is planning to do all the cooking on her own, you might want to prepare your Harry for that and sneak a stomach potion or two with you." Narcissa was a wonderful woman, a marvel at most things but she couldn't cook to save her life.

Draco chuckled, "Considering what Harry's been eating I'm actually not too concerned. The baby may be temperamental but a picky eater he is not. I'll bring the potion back up just in case though." He looked at his father, one of the most devious, sneaky people he knew, "Could you do something for me?"

"That depends on what you have in mind." A spark of interest lit in gray eyes so alike his son's. "A true Slytherin never makes a promise without knowing the details and how it can benefit oneself." A silver blond eyebrow went up as Lucius regarded his son.

"Get Ronald Weasley out of the country and monitored without getting him arrested. The last bit is just because Harry would be unhappy if Molly or Arthur were upset, which the rat being arrested would do. Get him a job in Alaska counting furbles, a post in Greenland exploring cave systems; send him to Antarctica to count the bloody penguins for all I care. I just want him away from Harry and the baby and watched to make sure he stays away. He's not stable Father, this morning when I saw him looking at Harry...I swear I thought I was seeing Aunt Bella in his eyes."

"That could be a problem yes." Lucius remembered Bellatrix vividly and it wasn't pleasant memories. "It will be arranged...Somehow." Lucius nodded at his son through the flames. "I do own a Quidditch team on the Easter Islands, they could use some expert help don't you think?" That could always be a start and if Ronald should happen to disappear before the contract was up...Well that would have to be discussed when it happened wouldn't it?

Draco smirked happily, "Yes I'm sure they could." He knew his father well and knew Lucius was already planning other more permanent ways of dealing with the rat but so long as he didn't ask and his father didn't tell he could claim complete innocence in being an accessory. "By the way I understand you've acquired a nickname Father."
"Of course you do, I would be disappointed otherwise." Lucius smirk mirrored his son's. "Take care Draconis, your mother and I look forward to seeing you this weekend, I do hope you'll be able to come."

"I do as well. I've missed Maman and you as well," gray eyes gleamed, "Papa Whooshes. Teddy announced that to the entire Slytherin table."

"Oh joy." Lucius deadpanned. "Well say what you want about Lupin but he spawns well. Now I am going to grovel to your mother, I am much too old to sleep on the couch." Lucius said his goodbyes and ended the fire call.

Draco snickered and wondered what his father would do when he learned that Severus was dating Lupin. He looked up and smiled at Harry as the brunette came in with a bowl of cherries, and no Pansy, "Welcome back pet. Where's the Slytherin Queen?"

"Neville was up and about and with that I lost Pansy's interest in a second." Harry smiled and walked over sitting down on the couch in front of the fireplace, nibbling happy on his cherries. "Cherry?" He held the bowl out to Draco. "You know what they say about cherry stems don't you?"

Draco plucked a cherry out and bit in, "Hm? No what is it they say about cherry stems?"

Harry smiled. "They say that if you can tie the stem into a knot with your tongue then you're a great kisser." Harry didn't believe the rumor but he still popped a stem in his mouth and ran his tongue around it, producing a perfect knot.

"Hmm, truth in rumor for once I see." Draco leaned in and kissed his boyfriend's cherry stained lips.

"Pffft, flattery will get you everywhere." Harry grinned happily against Draco's lips.

Draco licked the juice from Harry's bottom lip before pulling back, "I just got off the floo with my father."

"Oh, how did it go?" Harry raised a hand to cup Draco's cheek, Draco had told him about yesterday's conversation.
"I apologized, he apologized, we talked, he invited us to dinner, and I asked him to kidnap the rat, all in all a good conversation." He kissed the center of Harry's palm.

"Oh good, it sounds as if everything is work-" Harry stopped mid sentence when Draco's words finally sunk in and his green eyes widened. "Wait, what? Kidnap the rat? Do you mean Ron? Kidnap where? Do what to him? And dinner...With your parents? At the manor?" Harry could feel his body tense up into a ball of nerves. Still if Draco and the Malfoys were trying, Harry had to do the same. He owed the man he loved that much.

"Easy love," Draco ran his hand down Harry's arm, "I just asked him to find a way to get the rat out of the country and monitored without causing undue stress as I know you'd not like that. Father owns a Quidditch Team on Easter Island so he'll go the route of stroking the rat's ego." He ran the backs of his fingers down Harry's cheek, "And yes, dinner with my parents at the manor. Mother intends to cook...I'll be bringing stomach potions if we go."

Harry snorted as he leaned into Draco's touch. "Should I be afraid...For the food I mean?" Harry could think of several reasons why he should be afraid meeting lord and lady Malfoy. "As for Ron, it would be nice if he was somewhere far, far away. At least until everything has settled more and he's learned to accept the situation." Truthfully Ron was creeping Harry out, there didn't seem to be a single trace left of the boy who had been Harry's best friend. All that was left was bitterness and hatred and Harry didn't want that anywhere near his son.

"Maman is and can do many things, cooking well is not one of them but once she gets a notion in her head, well it doesn't leave." He took one of Harry's hands in his and began playing with his fingers, "That is what I thought in regards to the rat. I don't want him near you or Squiggles, especially not when he's so," he waved an expressive hand, "and my father has the means to get him far away from us without resorting to illegal proceedings."

Harry was not going to get into Lucius Malfoy and the legality of his dealings, the man had never been caught so whatever he was doing he was doing it well. Instead Harry opted to talk about Draco's mother, it seemed a safer subject. "I do owe your mother a life debt, maybe eating her food will balance it out?"

Draco chuckled, "It's not that bad, no one has ever died eating her cooking. Gotten somewhat queasy? Yes. Died? Never."

"Glad to hear it, maybe I can smuggle my hot sauce bottle with me in my pocket." Harry grinned and popped another cherry in his mouth. "Oh and did you notice that both Snape and Remus were absent from breakfast? Do you think they've finally gotten together?"
"I certainly hope so. I would rather like for my godfather to be in a better mood. The back of my head is getting sore."

"Poor baby, want me to kiss it better?" Harry didn't wait for a reply but reached up and pulled Draco's head forward so he could kiss the top of it. "I hope they've gotten together too, Remus has been acting totally lovesick lately and they deserve to be happy."

Draco hummed and pursed his lips before dropping an impulse kiss on the belly that was practically in his face. He straightened and shifted so that they were snuggled together comfortably on the couch, "They'll make a good family, not to mention that I will forever get amusement if Teddy gets to call my father 'Unca Whooshes'."

"Oh you're wicked." Harry chuckled and relaxed into the snuggle, resting his head against Draco. "But you're right, they'll make a good family, they'll be good for each other and for Teddy. It does makes the family ties rather wonky though...You're Snape's godson, I'm Teddy's godfather and Remus' extra cub...You're Teddy's cousin and my boyfriend. Should we be concerned?"

"Why? We're all family, what difference does it make how?" His hand smoothed gently over Harry's belly.

"I forgot, you're a pureblood, used to inbreeding." Harry grinned wickedly and placed his hand on top of Draco's on his belly. Suddenly he became very serious. "I know we haven't talked about it but I really want you to be Squiggles' father...I my head it feels as if you already are. I want us to be a family, I want it all Draco."

Draco's arms tightened around Harry and his voice was thick with emotion as he spoke, "How is it that you so easily offer me my dreams love?"

"Because they are my dreams too and they're worth nothing without you." Harry spoke softly and shifted so he could hear Draco's heartbeat, his hand still covering the blonds'. "You are my dream. You and our child."

The blond kissed the top of Harry's head, "I would be more than honored to be his father."

"Thank you." Harry nuzzled his nose against Draco's clothed chest. "Thank you for accepting us."

"Thank you for giving me the chance. Ours will probably go down as the longest, bitterest, most violent courtship in history, how you kept from turning me back into a ferret I'll never know."
"Believe me I wanted to at times, just as I'm sure you wanted to hex me to the other side of the planet. Lack of passion has never been a problem of ours, even as rivals. It takes a lot of emotion to stalk and agitate each other as we have. It just took us this long to recognize the feelings for what they really are." Harry smiled as he thought of their turbulent history together.

Draco buried his nose in the brunette's hair. "True and at least we finally did."

"Yes and it was really worth the wait when we finally got it right." Harry agreed.

"Mmmhmm, more than worth it," he looked up as Blaise came back in, clothing and hair mussed, a smug look on his face, "Speaking people who've not been hexed yet, there's a miracle Percy Weasley hasn't turned him into a toad."

"Not so much a miracle than that Percy is probably biding his time, planning on his brothers to back him up when they finally corner Blaise regarding his intentions." Harry eyed Blaise with a smirk. "I know Ginny promised to protect Blaise here and she is formidable and scary but I also know the Weasley brothers and there's no way they will just let their baby sister's beau be. Brace yourself Blaise, you will be interrogated and measured...I think they're all coming for graduation so it will most likely happen then."

Blaise returned the smirk, "I think I'll be fine. Molly scares me more than all the men combined though."

Harry nodded in agreement. "Yeah she can be quite terrifying. Tell her you love her daughter and ask for a Weasley sweater and you'll be fine. That goes for you too," He poked Draco in the ribs. "Except for the daughter thing."

Draco chuckled, "Yes love. They are rather soft I must admit."

"They are, and warm and cozy." Harry agreed. The Weasley sweater Molly had knitted for him that first Christmas at Hogwarts was the first time anyone had taken their time to make something just for him. He would defend those sweaters to his dying breath.

Blaise sat down across from them, "Perhaps what I'm planning might help Molly like me even better."
"Really?" Harry turned around, groaning as his stomach got in the way, so that he could see Blaise properly. "What are you planning?"

Blaise bridged his fingers, "I'm going to ask her to marry me. I know she's got the post with the Harpies and I'm not going to ask her to give that up, I wouldn't not for anything. It's her dream. But I want to be the one she comes back to and the one who's in the stands at the games, bragging about my amazing wife."

"That's wonderful!" Harry struggled to a sitting position so he could move over and hug Blaise. "Ginny will be over the moon and you're right...I really thinks it will raise your grade with Molly, a wedding to plan, she'll love that." Harry smiled. "It'll be nice having you as a brother."

Blaise pat Harry on the back, "Likewise. I could use some help with the proposal, do you have any idea how hard it is for someone not a Quidditch player to get their hands on a Snitch?"

Draco tilted his head, "A Snitch?"

"I plan to tie the ring to a Snitch and charm it to hover in front of her."

"It's a good idea but why don't you use my snitch? The one Dumbledore left me, it's a little bit beaten up from all its adventures but it opens up so you could place the ring inside it if you want." Harry scratched his head as he looked at Blaise.

Blaise grinned, "Harry, you're a genius. I'd appreciate that."

"Don't mention it, just glad I can help." Harry grinned back. "Wait, I'll go get it and you can have it right away." It was sad really, how difficult it was to get up from the sofa. Harry had to rock in place several times before he managed to hoist his body up from the seat. He waddled up to the dorms and dug through his trunk, petting Crookshanks absent-mindedly as the cat slept on top of his bed. Harry found the snitch quickly enough and walked back to the common room. "Here you are, we'll charm it so it opens by her touch rather than her tongue yeah?"

"Yes please, she'd hit me if it was otherwise."

Harry chuckled. "She would and besides, it would be a shame if she swallowed the ring. I'll ask Mione to help me with the charm so that I'm sure it's done right."
"Thank you." Blaise clapped Harry on the shoulder gently, "I appreciate it."

"As I said, I'm only happy to be able to help." Harry eased back on the couch, wincing as Squiggles kicked him. He was really ready to welcome his son to the world soon, everything about his body ached, both inside and out.

Draco reached out to stroke Harry's belly again as Blaise waved goodbye and went up to the dorms. "Little one be nice, your Mama just ate."

"I don't think he's being fussy on purpose right now, he's not targeting my organs as he does sometimes. There's just no room for him, as incredible as that sounds when you look at the size of me." Since Harry was on the slender side normally, his stomach looked even bigger than it was on him. "I feel like I'm about to explode, like a balloon that has too much air pumped into it."

The blond felt a foot connect with his hand, "I suppose it probably is getting cramped in there. Just a month though and we'll be holding him."

"Mm, I look forward to that but a month has never felt so long and so short at the same time." Harry looked at Draco. "As much as I want my body back, I'm scared of what will happen when he's here...Still not sure I'll be a good mummy. What if he hates me? What if I roll onto him one night and crush him? What if I drop him on his head or give him a too hot bath? There's so much that can go wrong."

Draco nuzzled Harry's cheek, "I'm nervous too. What if he hates me? What if I trip and fall while holding him? What if the milk in the bottle is too hot or I forget to change his diaper and he gets a rash? We can only do our best and hope we don't bugger up his potty training."

"Thank Merlin you're nervous too, strangely enough that makes me feel much better." Harry gave Draco a peck on his lips. "You're right, we'll just have to do our best and pray to the fates that it will turn out fine and that we're not shite parents."

Draco smiled and held him close, "I think the fates will be kind for once."

"Mmm, I think the fates owes us some smooth sailing, both of us." Harry agreed and rubbed his swollen and stretched stomach. Things seemed to finally be working out and Harry was almost scared to believe it was true. Draco wanted to raise Squiggles with him. They would be a true family,
Harry felt so much he thought he might burst...From something else than his stomach. One thing he still worried about was Grimmauld Place. Even if they did manage to clean it out Harry didn't think that it was a house to raise a baby in. So many bad things had happened in that house, plus it lay smack in the middle of London. Harry wished they had somewhere else to go, somewhere with open spaces, a large yard and fresh air. Maybe someday he and Draco could have a place of their own.

To Be Continued…
Chapter Eighteen

Disclaimer: *Neither Acherona nor trulywicked have any claim on Harry Potter or any characters or locations thereof.*

Warnings: Angst, lots of it, Male Pregnancy, mental torture, infant in peril, boys in love, friendships broken and new friends gained. Disregards canon in so many ways.

MOCKINGBIRD

Chapter Eighteen.

Narcissa kibitzed over the dining room for the thousandth time, worried that it looked too much like it had when Harry had been in Malfoy Manor the last time. She didn't want him to concentrate on bad memories while they were trying to make a fresh start with him.

Lucius watched his wife fuss around the table setting, the curtains and the carpet with both fondness and a nagging sense of guilt deep in his stomach. He too remembered the last time Harry Potter has been in their home and it wasn't something he was proud over. "Calm down Cissy, the room looks wonderful, you've outdone yourself." It was true; the usually very formal and rather dark dining room was transformed, white linen table cloths, bright lacy curtains in the windows and flowers everywhere. It looked like a completely different room, which was rather the point.

"I just want Mr. Potter to be comfortable in our home." She moved over and leaned against him, "I need tonight to go well. I know we won't get over so much animosity as easily as I redecorate a room but I want to start, to clear the air."

"I promise to be on my best behavior." Lucius placed his arm around his wife's waist, pressing a kiss to the top of her head. "We all need to start somewhere and I think this room you have redecorated is the perfect place."

She smiled up at him, "Sometimes darling you can be very, very sweet."

Lucius made a shocked face. "Dear Merlin, keep that under wraps. It could completely ruin my reputation you know." He leaned down to give her another quick kiss, this time on the tip of her
"Oh no worries darling, I am more than happy to keep all your sweetness a secret just for me." She nuzzled his chin, just happy he was here and not in Azkaban or dead. They all came so close to tragedy last year and she did not doubt that, had Potter not been successful in defeating the Dark Lord, Lucius and possibly Draco would have been killed by Voldemort.

"Glad to hear it." Lucius smiled and held his wife for a little bit longer, still marveling after all these years that he had gotten so lucky, that she had chosen him.

Narcissa reached up to fuss with his collar. They both wore muggle clothing to better set Potter at ease and she had to admit she liked the way the button up shirt looked on her husband and the way the simple sundress she wore fluttered around her legs. Her head came up as she heard the foyer floo roar to life, followed by the sound of retching. "Oh dear, memories."

"Yes...Memories." Lucius did his best to keep his grin at bay as they moved towards the foyer. "At least it sounds as if they made it here okay albeit a little on the sick side. Shall we?" He held out his arm to her.

In the foyer Harry's head was buried in the now familiar bucket as he emptied his stomach. The floo travel seemed even more horrible this time around and he groaned miserably.

Draco stroked his love's hair back from the paled face and rubbed Harry's back soothingly, "Well at least we know you'll have room for dinner."

"Oh joy." Harry managed to answer when the heaving finally subsided. He vanished the bucket quickly and grabbed Draco's hand, pulling himself up. He didn't want to meet Draco's parents on his knees.

The blond gladly offered Harry leverage to get to his feet then helped his boyfriend straighten his clothes. "There, set to rights," he pressed a kiss to the brunette's brow then turned, arm around Harry's waist, just as the soft foot falls of his parents came into the foyer.

Lucius noticed Draco's arm around Potter and how his son looked like he was ready to take on the world for the dark haired boy's sake. He sighed softly, there was no doubt that his only son was in love. "Welcome, the both of you. We're glad you could come."
Draco inclined his head, "Father. You're looking well," he turned to his mother, "Maman, beautiful as always."

Narcissa gave them a smile, "Draco you only say that because you have my nose and chin." Her pale blue eyes landed on Harry, "Mr. Potter I hope you and the babe are well."

"Both Squiggles and I are fine; thank you for asking lady Malfoy and for inviting us." Harry smiled and did his best to wrap his head around a polite and pleasant Lucius Malfoy. The cold marble and huge open space of the foyer was a little intimidating but Harry did his best to relax and really try, for Draco's sake. "Draco's right lady Malfoy, you look absolutely lovely."

She gave him a warmer smile, "Thank you Mr. Potter. I'm glad you and, Squiggles was it? Are doing well."

"Working title." Harry smiled. "Doesn't feel right to name him until he's really here." Harry's hand came to rest on his stomach.

"Wise." Lucius nodded. "Draco here was a Cassiopeia until he was born and even then Cissy here seemed unwilling to accept the extra appendage." He smirked at both his son and wife. "As you can gather we chose for the gender to be a surprise."

Narcissa gave him a droll look, "I was not, that bad."

Draco lifted a brow, "Maman I adore you but, pink unicorns?" He was referring to what had decorated his nursery walls until he'd shown a loud and vocal preference for green and dragons.

Harry burst out chuckling. "Pink unicorns? Does Pansy know?"

Lucius mentally patted himself on the shoulder as Potter relaxed and gave an honest laugh. "Shall we move into the dining room? We can be more comfortable there than here in the foyer."

Draco gave Harry a light glare as he nudged his boyfriend forward, "No Pansy does not know about the pink unicorns and you are not to tell her under any circumstances whatsoever. I'm still trying to live down the revelation about my wand core."
"I think it's adorable," Harry grinned and laughed even more when Draco glared. "I won't say anything though; your secret is safe with me." He walked towards the double doors leading into the dining room and mentally steeled himself. He could still hear Hermione screaming from being crucioed in his mind. Green eyes widened when he stepped into the room and was only met with bright colors, lightness and air. It didn't look like the same room at all and Harry was immensely relieved.

Draco took in the changes and gave his mother a brilliant smile before mouthing a thank you.

Narcissa relaxed and smiled back, "Mr. Potter, Draco tells me that you'll be clearing Grimmauld Place of the dark spells and curses there over the summer. Is that where you'll be settling?"

"It looks like it yes, at least to begin with. Potter manor was torched during the first war and if Grimmauld Place is bad I can only imagine what kind of surprises is left at Black manor. Grimmauld is at least livable." Harry replied. "Oh and please do call me Harry."

She nodded, "You must call me Narcissa then. Black Manor actually would be less...infested I suppose is the best term for it. Grimmauld Place is so heavy with hexes and curses because it was rarely used until Aunt Walburga moved in and she didn't care to remove the spells. Black Manor however was lived in and children were raised there, making it dangerous to have hexes, curses, and dark spell traps. You'd have ended up killing off your heirs if you raised them in that sort of place."

Harry listened intently. It would be great not to have to raise Squiggles in Grimmauld Place. "You really think so? Maybe we should go look at Black manor Draco? See what state it's in." He turned to his boyfriend. He was rather ashamed that he hadn't even been to see the house he had inherited but he had been sort of busy first with the war and then with getting pregnant and finding love. He looked back at Narcissa. "From what I understand it's not too far from here."

She chuckled and looked over at her husband in amusement, "It is. It borders our property actually. It is a ten minute Abraxan carriage ride or a two hour walk from here to Black Manor." She'd spent many a summer day walking from Black Manor to Malfoy Manor to visit Lucius.

"We really need to visit it." Harry decided. No matter what memories he had of Malfoy manor, Wiltshire was beautiful, all rolling hills and fields dotted with trees. It would be a wonderful environment for a child. It was also heavily warded against Muggles so he and Draco would be able to teach Squiggles ride a broom and do all kinds of magical things without worry.

Lucius watched his son and Potter closely. He could admit freely that it would be very nice to have his son so close by and a grandchild, oh it would be wonderful having him close and be able spoil
him. That would depend of course whether Potter was willing to let them be a part of the child's life or not.

Draco smiled, "Would you like to take a look after dinner or after graduation?"

"You think I can wait now that we're so close? After dinner of course." Harry smiled back and reached for Draco's hand, entwining their fingers.

"Speaking of dinner, I think the house elves have finished setting up your lovely meal dear." Lucius motioned towards the set table.

Narcissa chuckled, "Actually they've finished setting up their lovely meal, I wouldn't subject Squiggles to my cooking."

Lucius sent a silent prayer of thanks for small miracles and escorted his wife to the table, holding her chair out for her. "The meal would have been lovely if you'd made it too dear. If nothing else you certainly cook with love."

It was really weird seeing Lucius Malfoy like this and as much as it stung Harry had to admit that maybe he didn't know the elder Malfoy as well he thought he did.

Narcissa lifted a brow as she sat at the table, which had been shrunk for a more intimate feel, "It would have looked lovely but even I must admit it would have tasted worse than Polyjuice potion."

Draco mimicked his father's move absently, pulling Harry's chair out for him, as he smiled at his mother, "I feel your pain mother. How is it that one can be brilliantly skilled with potions yet at the same time utterly useless cooking? They're not that different are they?"

"One would think not but apparently they are."

"Oh they're very different." Harry said while raising an amused eyebrow at Draco for pulling out his chair, oh his boyfriend would hear about that later...He wasn't a girl damn it. "I'm pants at potions, cannot understand it no matter what I do...Cooking though, I love cooking. Love how you can bring a whole dish to life by adding a pinch of rosemary or fresh pepper." Harry smiled. "I miss cooking...Here in the wizarding world the house elves prepare such delicious meals that there's no need to cook." Harry really did miss cooking, when he cooked he felt he could do anything...He
didn't miss cooking for the Dursleys who never had a word of praise but still ate everything on their plates but the act of cooking, of creating something wonderful for eyes, nose and mouth, that he missed.

Draco stared at Harry for a moment, "You can cook?" He shook his head, "Forget I said that as a question. What is it that you like making the best?

Narcissa exchanged a look with her husband. Draco had always been fascinated with cooking, and potions, anything that required mixing two ingredients together and creating something greater than the sum of its parts. It was one of her baby boy's most endearing traits.

"I don't really have a special dish I like to make the most." Harry leaned towards Draco excitedly. "Mostly I like to take simple things, like pasta, fish or a stew and do my best to make it taste special. Transform it from simple to something else just by seasoning or picking something unexpected to serve it with." Harry beamed it was so long since he'd even talked about cooking. Molly was amazing but she always shooed him out of the kitchen at the Burrow, she did it to be nice and so that Harry wouldn't have to work but Harry wouldn't mind helping in the kitchen. "I would like to learn more about wizarding cooking though; I only know how to do it the muggle way, with an electric stove and oven."

Narcissa took a sip of her sparkling grape juice, "I could help you there Harry. I lack the ability to produce edible food but I have the mechanics down perfectly."

"I would appreciate it la-, I mean Narcissa." Harry smiled and remembered that it wasn't just Draco there. "You don't have to go out your way though, it's not like cooking is something important and with Squiggles here coming, who knows when I'll even have the time."

She smiled, "I won't be going out of my way Harry. Any time you want to learn feel free to floo through or, if you move into Black Manor, ride over."

"Thank you." Harry gave her a shy smile before bowing his head and concentrating on the crisp salad on his plate.

Lucius ate in silence as he watched Potter from the corner of his eye. There wasn't much of the bravado Potter had shown every time he'd faced down Lucius and his...comrades. He wasn't weak now, not by any measurements, the fire was still there in green eyes but it looked as if the boy was very soft spoken when he didn't have to fight for his life. Lucius couldn't help but wonder who had managed to tell the boy that the things he enjoyed, like cooking wasn't important. Whoever it was he wouldn't want to be in their shoes if his son ever found them. A Malfoy protected their own and it
truly did look like as if Potter was it for Draco.

Draco leaned his leg over and pressed it against Harry's, wanting to touch. Later he would talk to the brunette and let him know that anything that made him happy was not unimportant but for now he'd settle for subtle, silent support. "Father, how is the team on Easter Island by the way?"

A slow, wicked smirk appeared on Lucius' face. "Well, they've never won a game; they are certainly in need of a solid British player to show them what to do. I'm sure Mr. Weasley will feel right at home there." Oh Lucius doubted that but that was only good. Let the redheaded rat suffer some before Lucius made the problem that he was go away forever.

The youngest Malfoy nodded in satisfaction. "Yes I'm sure he will."

Narcissa looked between her husband and son and lifted a brow. "No plotting at the dinner table if you please."

Lucius gave her a look so innocent Harry could barely hold a snort in. "We're not plotting dear, I've only sent out an invitation for my Easter Island team's trainer to recruit a keeper from Hogwarts, maybe that will be the ticket to get my team winning."

She pinned him to his chair with a long, steady look. She didn't have to say a word to have him looking away before she returned to her own food, "Draco, darling, how's is Pansy doing?"

Draco knew better than to fight his mother's change in subject so he went with it, "She's doing well, sank her fangs into a squishy little lion and she won't be letting him go."

"I don't think Neville minds that at all, he's absolutely, totally in love with Pansy." Harry added and pressed his leg back against Draco's, enjoying and taking strength from the simple touch.

"Neville? As in Longbottom?" Lucius asked. What was it with his children and finding Gryffindors? Well Potter was a Slytherin now but he would always be a Gryffindor deep down.

"Yes, as in 'Told-Voldemort-to-go-to-hell-and-chopped-off-Nagini's-head' Longbottom." He gave his parents an apologetic smile when they both flinched at his speaking of Voldemort's name but he'd been around Harry far too much to go back to skirting around the name.
"Neville is a gentle, brave and kind man and he will carry Pansy on his hands for as long as she'll let him." Harry felt the need to defend his friend though he was very proud of Draco for speaking up like he had.

"I'm sure he will." Lucius said calmly. "Pansy is very used to the best and she would never choose anything less for herself."

Narcissa nodded, "Yes, she has exacting standards and if Mr. Longbottom has met them then I can only be happy for her."

Draco smirked, "Pans isn't the real story though, it's Blaise. He's tangled up and wrapped around the finger of a little sylph. He's even going to propose soon."

Draco's mother's eyes lit up in interest as most women did at the hint of a wedding, "Oh? Who's the young woman who's caught his heart?"

Draco watched his father as his smirk grew; this would be an interesting reaction, "Ginevra Weasley."

Lucius choked on his wine and covered it behind a cough. He decided to keep his mouth shut about this since he wanted to keep the dinner pleasant and not alienate his son and Potter.

Harry hid his grin behind his napkin, it was priceless seeing Lucius Malfoy at a loss for words.

Narcissa blinked in mild surprise before addressing her husband, "Drink some water dear. Has Blaise told his mother about Miss Weasley? Livia would be quite...irritated if he were to spring a surprise fiancée on her."

Draco frowned, "I don't actually know. I'll have to ask him when we return to Hogwarts later."

"Please do," Lucius pressed out between gulps of cool ice water. "Livia is even worse at handling surprises and unexpected news than I am." Lucius could admit that he was hot tempered but he had nothing on Livia Zabini.
Draco had to admit, his father's reaction was even better than he'd hoped for, all the more because Lucius was controlling himself. The very fact that his father was controlling himself warmed him as he knew how hard it came to his father. "You're not that bad at it actually Father."

"Please son, don't rob me of all my illusions." Lucius looked both touched and appalled. "I really am bad; I've built my whole life around it."

Harry couldn't help himself now; he burst out chuckling, unable to stop.

Draco looked at his boyfriend, "Harry?"

"I'm sorry, I'm sorry." Harry continued to chuckle, trying his best to stop. He looked up at Lucius who looked as if Harry had caught some weird contagious disease and that only made his giggling worse.

Narcissa smiled, "Lucius darling do stop giving Harry that look, and you're making it worse." She pat her husband on the arm. "He's not used to seeing Malfoys at play."

"Hm, are you certain dying and coming back didn't affect your mental abilities?" Lucius still looked suspicious as he regarded the giggling Potter.

"Oh I'm sure it did," Harry answered between giggles. "Not that they were much to brag about to start with." He wiped away tears of mirth with his napkin as some chuckles still escaped him. "I really do apologize."

"It's just fine dear, hormones running rampant as well as an unfamiliar situation, I'm just glad you laughed instead of cried like I did all over Lucius' new dress robes during that Ministry Ball." Narcissa took a sip from her glass, "Remember that dear? I was almost full term and the Undersecretary had made that snide little remark? I don't think he was expecting me to burst into tears and you to nearly challenge him to a duel."

"I would have challenged him if you hadn't stopped me." Lucius frowned. "The little toad made you cry, hormones or not he deserved to be hexed within an inch of his life for that."
Draco smiled as his mother just shook her head and exchanged a gentle look with his father. He turned to Harry and ran a hand down his arm, "Your mental abilities are just fine and always have been. You have always reacted perfectly sanely when presented with each dilemma. Reckless, but sane nonetheless."

"Thank you Draco." Harry smiled back at his boyfriend. "Though I have a very clear memory of what you said when I beat you to the Snitch, third year. Not only was I a speccy, idiotic scarhead, I was insane too." His smile widened. "Good to know you've come to your senses you snarky, pointed ferret." The words were filled with love.

Draco coughed, "I will never live that down will I?"

"Nope, I don't think you will." Harry grinned at him; it was just so much fun to tease.

"Fine but I sincerely hope that Squiggles won't ever decide he wants a ferret as a pet. I'd never hear the end of it."

Narcissa reached under the table to give Lucius' hand a brief squeeze as their son teased back and forth with Harry. Her baby had found the person to hold his heart and from what she could see, Harry Potter would hold it safe and fast.

Lucius saw it too, he'd better get used to Potter and that redheaded clan as well because from what Lucius could see Harry Potter was in their lives to stay.

To Be Continued…
Chapter Nineteen

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MOCKINGBIRD

Chapter Nineteen.

Draco held the hand of a yawning Harry, who had been pleasantly surprised by not having thrown up after the return floo trip, as they walked up to the dorms, "So aside from the light severing curse there don't seem to be any major dark spells on Black Manor. What did you think of it?"

"It's a beautiful house, huge but gorgeous and the grounds Draco...Did you see the grounds?" Harry was half in love with the rolling fields and overgrown gardens. "Some good, hard cleaning and gardening and I think we could make it a home." Harry yawned again and squeezed Draco's hand.

Draco leaned in and stole a quick kiss, "Would you prefer we concentrate on cleaning Black Manor then and leave Grimmauld to itself until after the baby is born?"

"Yeah, I'd like that a lot." Harry smiled and licked his lips. "I don't think I'll ever be able to think of Grimmauld as a home, not a real one."

The blond nodded, "Too much there, I understand." He paused at the entrance to the dorm where a very large, very irritable ginger cat sat glaring balefully at them. "Uh-oh, the guard is displeased."

"So I see." Harry leaned down as much as he could. "What's wrong Crookshanks? Upset that we didn't bring you with us?" He scratched the large cat behind a fluffy ear. "I'm sorry; you can come with next time. I think we've found our home Crookshanks and I think you're going to like living there." Harry's voice was soft and coaxing.
The cat's tail thumped heavily on the floor and his eyes were all for Draco, glaring at him. The blond sighed and crouched down, "It was important. Important that my family saw how much Harry means to me and that they got to know him, the real him, better. I want the family Harry and I make to get along well with the ones we already have, so would you kindly cease giving me the look of death puss?"

The cat stretched to his feet, made an impressive leap and landed on Draco's shoulder before jumping into Harry's arms with a plaintive meow.

Harry nuzzled soft fur and pet the cat. "Everything went well Crookshanks and Draco looked after me, promise." The entrance swung open and Harry carried the cat through. "No need to be upset at all." He continued to coo and pet.

Draco smiled and walked in after them, staying behind Harry as the brunette climbed the stairs and entered the dorm, then he leaned against the door with a soft smile, hearing the cat finally purr and just watched Harry set about getting ready for bed.

"There you go; I love to hear you purr." Harry praised the cat and placed him on his bed as he shrugged out of the rather formal robes he had worn to dinner with the Malfoys. The dorm room was empty but Harry couldn't bring himself to wonder where the others were, he was glad for the privacy. He pulled on pajama pants and a soft t-shirt and pulled down the covers. "Are you coming or are you going to stand there and watch all night?" Harry raised an eyebrow as he crawled into bed after a quick teeth cleaning charm, he didn't have the energy to go to the bathroom and wash up, and he’d do it in the morning instead.

Draco walked over and sat on the side of the bed, the same soft smile on his face as he cupped Harry's cheek, "I love you."

"I love you too Draco." Harry replied sleepily. "I really, really do." He turned his head so that his lips brushed against Draco's palm.

The blond leaned down and kissed the tip of Harry's nose, "I'll go clean up and be right with you love."

"Mmmkay, hurry up, I sleep much better with you here." Harry's eyes were on the verge of falling shut but he wouldn't be able to fall truly asleep until Draco was cuddled close with him.
"Won't be long, don't worry." He got up and quickly changed out of his robes, washed up, put on a pair of sleep trousers, and came back just as a wavy space was sneaking in. "You know you're losing your touch Blaise. That's just sloppy disillusionment."

The wavy spot vanished and revealed a very rumpled Blaise standing there, "You couldn't just ignore it?"

"Of course not, if I do you'll never correct yourself."

There was a sleepy chuckle coming from Harry's bed. "I swear Dray; you're becoming more like Snape every day...Should I worry? And Blaise, it really was sloppy, I'm half asleep and I noticed you. Being well shagged is no excuse for losing your focus." Harry yawned as he watched the two boys.

"Oh bugger off, the both of you." Blaise headed for the bathroom but paused when Draco spoke again.

"Blaise just wondering but have you told your Mother about the fact that you're going to propose to Ginevra Weasley yet? You know how she hates surprises."

"Fuck!" Blaise did an about face and rushed down to the common room to floo his mother, leaving an evilly chuckling Draco behind.

The blond slipped into the bed with Harry, "Ah now that was a good reaction. Father will be pleased to hear about it."

"Mmm," Harry hurried to snuggle close and tangle his legs with Draco's as he rested his head on the blonds' shoulder. "Is Blaise's mother really that scary? Will she give Ginny problems you think?" Draco's chest was bare and Harry couldn't help but stroke the smooth, silky skin. He had never felt skin as soft as Draco's before.

"The woman is Italian to start, so long as she ascertains that Ginny loves her 'bambino' then Ginny will be fine. The reason you never spring a surprise on her however is that she has the Italian temper blended with her creature heritage. She's half succubus and believe me when I say; you never, ever, ever want to see even a half-succubus angry. Take a veela and multiply her by ten and you approach an angry succubus." Draco wrapped his arms around his boyfriend running his own hands up and down Harry's arms and belly.
"Ouch, thank goodness Ginny is a spitfire, she can hold her own and she really does love Blaise. I think it will be fine...Now that Blaise is finally telling his mother that is." Harry's words came slower and slower until he fell asleep mid talk, snuggled tightly against Draco.

The blond just chuckled and kissed the top of Harry's head. "Sweet dreams love."

OoOoOoOoO

The next day Blaise came up to stand next to where Draco and Harry sat as they all watched Ginny and the rest of the Gryffindor team get in one last evening fly before they disbanded. "You're an evil, reprehensible, little git Dray and I owe you. Mama knew about Ginny, that I had a girl but I'd forgotten to tell her about what I was planning. I do not wish to think about what would have happened if I hadn't told her."

Harry pulled his eyes away from Ginny doing a loop to look at Blaise. Merlin he missed flying! "I think your mother wouldn't have been the only one you would have had to worry about if you hadn't told her. Ginny wouldn't take well to your engagement being kept a secret from your mother. She would think you were ashamed of her so thank your lucky stars that Draco reminded you or your engagement could have been over before it began." Harry dug through his pockets. "Oh, before I forget. Here." He handed Blaise his Snitch. "Hermione has fixed it, now you only have to stroke the top of it to make it open, like this." Harry ran his finger over the top, between fluttering wings and the tiny ball opened and showed its hollow insides.

"Thanks Harry." Blaise took the snitch and pulled a ring from his pocket, placing it into the snitch and closing it. He waited until the team had landed and the others were slowly making their way to the locker room before charming the snitch to flutter gently right over to Ginny.

"Thanks Harry." Blaise took the snitch and pulled a ring from his pocket, placing it into the snitch and closing it. He waited until the team had landed and the others were slowly making their way to the locker room before charming the snitch to flutter gently right over to Ginny.

The redhead blinked in surprise when she saw it, wondering if the team had forgotten to put away the practice snitch, then reached out, surprised when it fluttered right into her hand. She smiled at the little golden ball, running her fingers over it then jumping when it popped open, revealing a delicate gold ring with a gleaming diamond set in it. She frowned looking up and saw Blaise walking towards her. She opened her mouth to ask him a question then just lost all her speech as he hit his knees, looking up at her with those dark brown eyes that always held such passion for her.

"Ginny, I know we're young and that your brothers will likely want to turn me inside out, the twins might succeed, and that you've a spot on the Harpies' team and I'm so proud of that, proud of you, and proud to call you my girlfriend but I'd like to call you more." He reached up and took the hand that wasn't holding the ring and the snitch, "I want to call you my wife, my partner in everything from now until long past any great deeds known now are forgotten. I want to watch you make goals
for your team and be able to turn to the bloke beside me who's making comments about how he'd love to have a chance with you and tell him he can't because you're mine. I want to see you hex the first idiot who ignores my own wedding ring into oblivion and one day, when we're both ready, I want to give your mother a few more grandchildren. Will you Ginevra Molly Weasley, marry me?"

Her mouth worked, no sound coming out as her blood was rushing in her ears, and she felt her heart going a kilometer an hour as she looked about and saw her friends and a good chunk of her family, and the staff all cheering. This was real, bloody hell Blaise was proposing. Dimly she heard Pansy's voice scream over the crowd, "What are you waiting for, you've got him hooked now reel his arse in!"

Slowly her lips curved up and she yanked him to his feet, gave a war whoop, and launched herself into his arms, "Bloody Hell YES!"

Pansy wolf whistled and cheered loudly, wrapping her own arms around Neville in a heated snog.

Everyone was clapping and cheering, well almost everyone. Ron disappeared the moment his feet touched ground.

Harry watched his sister kiss Blaise and he watched Blaise slide the ring on Ginny's finger. They were a striking couple and Ginny would make such a beautiful bride.

"Isn't it wonderful Draco?" Harry sniffed and to his utter horror he felt his cheeks get wet. Bloody hormones! "Um...Damn allergies." He hurried to say as he wiped at his eyes with his sleeve.

Draco just moved to kiss the tears from Harry's eyes, "Right, hay fever is horrid isn't it pet." His lips twitched in amusement.

"Yes it is and don't you dare laugh you berk." Harry glared at his boyfriend with still teary eyes. He was grateful Draco played along even though they both knew the truth.

"Who me? Never." Draco swiped his thumbs over Harry's cheeks.

Several feet away Snape rolled his eyes at the insane display, "Italian drama."
"I think it's great, romantic. I hope they'll have a long and happy life together." Remus smiled, both at the happy couple and his mate's eye roll. "You can't tell me you don't find that sweet."

"Yes agreed but such a spectacle," he twitched a brow, "youth, and no appreciation for subtlety."

Teddy clapped and cheered along with everyone even though he had no idea why they were doing it. He turned to Snape and tugged on black robes, "Up pwease?"

Severus picked the child up.

"Sappy how come we all so happy?"

Snape pat Teddy on the back. "Mr. Zabini just asked Miss Weasley to marry him and she agreed."

Teddy tilted his head, "So they awe gonna be wike Mowwy and Atur?"

"Well yes and no." Remus ran a hand over his son's bright orange hair. "They will be married like Arthur and Molly but they will still be themselves. They will be a family of their own."

"Wike we awe? an wike Unca Hawwy an Dwaco awe gonna be with Skiggles?"

Severus looked over at his godson and Harry, taking clear note of every nuance, and had to hide a smile, "Exactly so Teddy. Though they won't be getting a little boy or girl of their own for a while."

"You know how Aunty Ginny loves flying?" Remus was all warm from Teddy calling them a family, he would love to marry Severus but they were still taking things very slow, apart from kissing nothing had happened. "She will play Quidditch professionally for a while and you can't have babies when you're flying. That's why Uncle Harry hasn't been playing this year."

Teddy nodded and snuggled his head on Snape's shoulder, "Daddy?"

"Yes Teddy bear, what is it?" Remus stepped closer to his son and mate so he could hear Teddy properly over the cheering and congratulations.
"Wheah do babies come from?"

Severus had to bite the inside of his cheek to keep from laughing. He'd been wondering when, precisely, Teddy would ask that question considering all the baby talk going around.

"Ah well...You see..." Remus felt himself flush. How in the name of the founders was he going to explain this to an almost three year old? "When two people love each other and want to be with each other very much...Sometimes their love plants a seed that allow a baby to grow." He glared at Severus; he could see the amusement shining in black eyes.

Teddy frowned, "But how does it get inside the mommy?"

'Oh sweet mother of Merlin', there was no way Remus was going to explain sex to his not yet three year old son, it just wasn't going to happen. "Magic." He replied instead. "A special kind of magic that only happens when you wish for a baby so badly that mother Magic herself hears your wish and decides to grant it...Like I wished for you." Remus glanced at Severus and his gaze warned him to disagree, Teddy had plenty of time to learn the truth but for now Remus wanted his child to be able to stay innocent and believe that the makings of a child was as miraculous as it was supposed to be.

Severus didn't say a word, though his lips still twitched mightily. He wasn't about to advocate telling Teddy about the bird and bees, for one thing he doubted the little boy would really remember it and for another it was too amusing to see Remus fumbling.

Teddy's hair shifted from orange to a deep blue that approached black, a color that was starting to be associated with deep thought and the child poking at flaws in logic, "But then how come everybody's so mad at Won if you gotta love each other?"

Severus decided to take pity on Remus and pat Teddy on the back, drawing his attention, "Ronald played a very mean trick on your Uncle Harry and doesn't want Harry to have Squiggles. Only one person has to want a baby for Magic to listen, even if they don't know they want a baby. You know how you don't always know that you want a sweet but then when you see one or someone offers you one you get really hungry?"

The little boy nodded, "Uh-huh. So Unca Hawwy wanted Skiggles but didn't know he wanted him?"
"That's right. Your Uncle Harry has always wanted a big family full of love and Magic decided that he was ready for a bigger family."

Teddy pursed his lips, "An Won?"

"You know that Ronald and Harry used to be best friends?"

"Uh-huh."

"Well it doesn't always have to be the same kind of love that Molly and Arthur have to make the baby and sometimes one person can love the other so much that it just happens. Then Ronald's trick hurt your Uncle Harry very, very much and he never said he was sorry and just kept hurting Harry over and over and Harry doesn't want Ronald to hurt Squiggles."

"Oh," Teddy's face screwed up and his hair went from dark blue to dark red, "Well Won's a poopy head then!"

"Now Teddy, you know you're not supposed to call anyone that." Remus scolded but his lips were twitching. "You are right though and Ron behaved very, very badly. Thankfully Draco loves Harry and he wants Squiggles very much so the three of them will be a family together." He looked over where Harry stood, cradled in his boyfriend's arms. "Uncle Harry is happy now and Squiggles will be loved more than anything."

"Good. Won's still a meany though. I hope he swawows a spidah." Teddy snuggled his head back onto Snape's shoulder as his hair turned back to blue.

Severus just hid his smile and glanced over at his godson and Harry, "Now why didn't I think of that?"

"As amusing as it would be to see Ronald be forced to swallow a spider I believe he will get what's coming to him and that the most important thing is that he stays away from Harry and Squiggles." Remus leaned in and nuzzled Teddy's blue hair, noticing that his son was getting sleepy as snuggled against Severus' shoulder. "Squiggles will be lucky to have you to look up to Teddy bear."

The little boy yawned, "Wuv you Daddy," His hand hooked in Snape's robes, "an I wuv you Papa."
Remus' tender smile froze and his heart started to bang against his ribcage. He knew that Severus would never hurt Teddy but he still didn't know how his mate would react to being called Papa. "Love you too Teddy." He whispered with his attention locked on Severus.

Severus' own heart had just about frozen in shock. He'd known Teddy considered him family and understood that he and Remus were growing closer together like parents but he'd never expected to have a paternal name given to him. Once, many years ago, he'd hoped that he would one day have the chance to be a father but the way his life had gone had ripped that away. He held Teddy just a bit tighter, though not so tight it bothered the boy, and kissed the top of the aqua hair, "I love you too little bear."

Remus' breath rushed out in a whoosh of relief and he felt his eyes prickle as he leaned in quickly and pressed his lips against Severus'. He couldn't help himself; his mate was too wonderful for words and them being a family was Remus' wildest dreams come true. "I love you Severus, love you so much." He pulled away before he would make Severus uncomfortable. "Let's get our sleeping bear inside okay?"

The potion master nodded and they walked back to Remus' quarters, where Severus had actually been spending most of his time these days. He helped Remus get Teddy changed and dressed for bed and tucked the sleeping child in, brushing a few scattered locks of now brown hair back gently before they set the alerting charms that would let them know if Teddy woke and moved back out into the living area. He sat down on the couch and closed his eyes, it had been a busy day and his muscles had decided to go on revolt again two days earlier so he was still somewhat sore.

"Tea? Or should we be wicked and go for a glass of wine?" Remus asked as he stood in the doorway to the tiny kitchen area of his quarters. He loved having Severus there and the times his mate went back to his own quarters everything felt empty and wrong. "I could go for a little wine myself."

"I'll have to choose tea I'm afraid as alcohol doesn't react well with the relief potion but do pour yourself a glass." A flick of his wand and Severus had transfigured his robes into a much more comfortable polo shirt and jeans. He looked down at the faded Dark Mark on his arm and tapped his fingers over it, pondering.

"No, tea will be fine." Remus didn't like to drink on his own, even if it only was a glass of wine. He walked back into the small kitchen and got the tea and some small sandwiches ready and levitated the tray to the living room where Severus' was. Remus sat down next to his mate and poured their tea. His eyes went to Severus' fingers, still tapping the faded mark. "What are you thinking?"

"About promises and consequences," his fingers drummed over the snake coming out of the skull, not even wincing at the very familiar sting it caused. He'd learned long before now that the snake
anchored the mark and retaliated against anything that even brushed up against it. Voldemort was dead and gone but he wondered if Harry knew, if he understood, that he was technically Tom Riddle's magical heir as Riddle had died with no children and he'd put everything he was into basically throwing magic at Harry, none of which had worked making that magic Harry's by right of conquest. As the magic still remained, so too did the old anchored marks.

Remus' took Severus' hand between his, bringing it up so he could brush a kiss over long fingers before releasing it. "Don't hurt yourself Severus." Remus knew that the pain barely registered with his mate and that Severus had been through much, much worse but he still couldn't stand to see his mate do anything to cause himself pain or discomfort. "Every action has consequences but not all of them have to be bad."

"Mm," dark eyes still studied the mark with much the same intensity as they did a complicated potion, "I made a promise, after the end of the first war, to Lucius and Narcissa. Not a wizard's oath or any other such thing, simply a promise between friends, to find a way to remove the Dark Mark." His gaze lifted to Remus', "It has more consequences than what you first know of, more than simply branding Death Eaters as loyal. Of course none of us knew that when we took it, only after were we informed of the full consequences."

"What sort of consequences are we talking about?" Amber eyes grew worried. Remus had thought the dark shadow of Voldemort was finally lifting and a hard knot of worry and dread formed inside him when he realized that; that might not be the case.

Severus' lips lifted in a half-bitter smile, "Haven't you ever wondered why it was that all of the pureblood families who have the dark mark either don't have any children at all or they only have the one heir?"

"Oh no..." Remus paled when Severus' words penetrated his brain. "That is horrible! You mean he controlled if and how many children you were allowed to have? That son of a bitch...I hope he suffers and burns where he is." Remus was growling by now, both the man and the wolf absolutely horrified by what he was hearing. Children were sacred. "Do you think there's any way to reverse it?"

"And back to consequences," Severus reached over and rested his hand in the center of Remus' chest to soothe the other man, "There's two but one's only danger is the loss of a quarter of the marked one's magic, the other has the possible consequence of death. The mark is created with and tied to Slytherin magics. The safest way to remove it is for someone with Slytherin magic to perform a removal ritual."

"It doesn't sound as if any way is safe to me." Remus placed his hand over Severus' on his chest. "The second option there is out of the question, I have just found you Severus and there's no way I'm
going to lose you now.” The growl was back in Remus' voice. "You're not thinking of performing the removal ritual are you? Not if we don't know exactly what will happen...I need you, Teddy needs you."

"I was going to. After the toxins were finally out of my system, I was going to use the second option and see if it worked, stop growling at me Remus Lupin and let me finish." His tone became that of the greasy git professor sneering down at an incompetent student. Amber eyes flashed dangerously but Remus managed to reign in his rage at the thought of his mate doing something that stupid that could result in Remus losing Severus enough so that he could hear his mate out. "I'm listening."

"I may be a member of Slytherin house but being a member of the house does not give you Slytherin magic. Only an heir of Salazar Slytherin or a magical heir of one of his heirs has Slytherin magic. Now as I was saying, I was going to use the second option, it was my plan when I began this school year. Then of course you and Teddy came poking about, prying open doors and breaking down walls and now I can't do it." He sighed, "Or I should say that I won't. I'm far too selfish to sacrifice my own happiness for a risky ritual that could kill me."

"Thank fuck for that! I would never let you leave us now." Remus was still upset but relief coursed through him and he pulled Severus close for an almost desperate kiss. "I applaud your selfishness as long as it keeps you here with me." No one could call Remus stupid and his mind was already working over everything Severus had said. "You can't let Harry know...He's been through so much and he's finally happy but he will drop it all if he finds out. It's in his blood, the need to right every wrong and you know as well as I do that he will put this on himself."

Severus moved back, putting a healthy amount of space between them and snapped, "I'm not that heartless Remus! That is the precise reason my choice was the second option before you horned your way in. I somehow sincerely doubt Potter would wish to know he's Tom Riddle's magical heir!" His eyes snapped with temper and irritation and buried just beneath was the faint hint of hurt that Remus would even consider that he'd put that sort of burden on a pregnant man.

"I know you're not heartless Severus, I'm sorry, that came out all wrong." Remus' voice turned pleading. "Please, I'm sorry. I do know you would never tell Harry or use him...I just couldn't bear the thought of losing either one of you. All my life I've learned that secrets, no matter how tightly you hold on to them, have a tendency to get out...I was more worried about what would happen if it did, I never thought you'd tell him." Remus sighed. James and Sirius had always been the ones with a way with words, Remus always stumbled over his tongue and what he did say came out wrong.

Severus' arms folded over his chest and he somehow managed to end up on the opposite end of the couch, drawing into himself as he tended to do when wounded. He knew, intellectually, that Remus truly hadn’t meant it to sound as it had but the rest of him, most especially the fragile inner heart of himself, questioned and doubted. "I survived a war as a triple agent and the only reason I nearly died
was because one of the insane wizards holding my leashes thought it would give him mastery over the Elder Wand. Not once in seven years did anyone even suspect I was anything but an evil, petty, cruel Death Eater, not once did anyone aside from Bellatrix question that I might, perhaps, not be as loyal to Voldemort as he thought I was. Not. Once. Until I chose to reveal the truth to Potter. I can assure you that unless I choose to reveal it, any secret I know remains a secret. Unless a serpent decides to slither up and start conversing with Potter or Lucius or Narcissa mentions the Mark's other effects, a highly unlikely event, Potter is quite safe from learning anything of what I just told you."

He could feel the muscles in his back begin tensing, and recalled that stress made a second episode much more likely especially if he'd had the first within seven days.

"Please, please Severus, I swear I didn't mean it." Remus got off the couch and sunk to his knees in front of his mate, his heart pounding painfully and his wolf whining in sorrow at having upset its mate. "I know you can keep a secret, I admire you and what you've done so much. I was talking about me and my secrets. I tried so hard to hold on to it, to make sure no one would know but it still got out and people...you got hurt because of it. I love you...You are the most important person in my life along with Teddy." Remus swallowed around the lump in his throat. "I said the wrong thing...It won't be the last time I do either. I'm going to make mistakes and say the wrong things but I love you and I'm always, always on your side. Please don't pull away from me or shut me out. Please Severus...Merlin knows I'm far from perfect but everything I am is yours."

The potion master reached a hesitant hand out to rub course strands of graying brown between his fingers, "I don't handle being...upset," hurt, "well Remus. I either draw in and close myself off or I say things I come to regret, things that come back to rip me to shreds." He closed his eyes, "I'm just so used to having my motives and loyalties questioned, and so tired of it."

Remus nuzzled his face against Severus' thighs, his whole body language begging for forgiveness. "I'm so, so very sorry, I've never questioned your loyalty or motive, I promise." His arms came up to wrap around Severus' waist. "I never want to hurt you and I'm so sorry I did. Please...Is there anything I can do to make it better? I'll do anything."

"Just..." Severus wasn't easy with asking for what he needed, wasn't easy with revealing that he ever really needed anything, even once his trust was earned, "just hold me."

"Always Severus, I will never let you go." Remus climbed up on the couch again and pulled the other man onto his lap, ignoring his mate's protests. He wrapped his arms tightly around Severus and tucked the other man's head underneath his chin. His arms ran up and down Severus' back and he pressed kisses to the top of his mate's head. "I love you."

The potion master closed his eyes and eventually leaned into the embrace, "I love you too you flea-bitten idiot. Next time don't let me pull away to begin with."
"I promise I'll do my best." Remus' heart finally found it's normal pace again as he heard those words and he smiled with his lips still against Severus' hair as he kept holding the man he love in his arms, swearing to himself that he would never, ever let go.

To Be Continued…
Chapter Twenty

Disclaimer: Neither Acherona nor trulywicked have any claim on Harry Potter or any characters or locations thereof.

Warnings: Angst, lots of it, Male Pregnancy, mental torture, infant in peril, boys in love, friendships broken and new friends gained. Disregards canon in so many ways.

MOCKINGBIRD

Chapter Twenty.

Draco looked around the Great Hall, for once there were no house tables, just several round tables set up for the graduates and their families and guests. Students in graduation robes mingled and spoke with each other, the ceremony having just completed, the certificates in their hands and the highest honored students wearing decorated badges on their right breast panel. He and Harry wore the same badge as they'd tied for second highest in scores, Hermione however had a bright gold badge for her excellence. Not that her being the one with the highest honors was any surprise. He spotted Ginny being cornered by Blaise's mother and nudged his boyfriend gently, "Watch."

"Hm?" Harry turned from watching Pansy and Augusta Longbottom laughing and joking as if they'd been friends their whole lives to look where Draco pointed him to. "Oh, this should be interesting."

Livia Zabini was quite possibly the most beautiful woman Harry had ever seen, she practically oozed sensuality and had Harry not been irrevocably bent and head over heels for a certain blond he would probably have had the same glassy eyed stare as most men in the Hall had as the gorgeous Italian woman walked by. "Look at Blaise; it looks as if he doesn't know what to do with himself."

"Yes yes the poor lad, just watch the ladies." Draco smirked as Livia pulled out her best intimidating moves, aware that Molly Weasley was already coming across the Hall in case her daughter needed her, only to have Ginny put her hands on her hips and fire back at the Italian woman, much to Blaise's near cardiac arrest. Livia scowled at the redhead then grinned widely and gave a loud, husky laugh before kissing Ginny on both cheeks and giving her a hug.

"Blaise will not have it easy with those two bonding." Harry grinned broadly. "I told you Ginny's a spitfire, no one can step on her." Molly looked relieved but she walked over anyway to introduce herself to Ginny's future mother in law, they had a wedding to plan together after all.
"I think my friend is going to find himself quite happily overwhelmed." Draco looked over to where Hermione was speaking to Xenophilius, shaking her head fiercely and gesturing emphatically, "I think Luna's father is still feeling very guilty."

"I know, Luna and I have tried to talk to him, to tell him that he has nothing to feel guilty about and I know Hermione has written him as well. I'm not sure what we can do to make him forgive himself." Harry stepped closer to Draco. "I never blamed him and now with Squiggles inside me I understand him perfectly...There's nothing I wouldn't do to keep Squiggles safe and out of harm's way."

Draco wrapped his arms around Harry, "I think that bushy haired virago is the one who he most needs the forgiveness of as she was the one who suffered the most. And I somehow doubt he'll be leaving here without her getting some sort of promise to stop punishing himself out of him."

Hermione was near to tearing her hair out and she actually poked Xenophilius in the chest, "Enough! I have never and will never blame you for what happened and let me tell you, if we'd known before walking into your home we'd have done it anyway! That or we'd have gone charging into Malfoy Manor ourselves to save Luna. I'd have gone charging in even if the boys hadn't! And if you think for one second I'm going to let you keep beating yourself up for doing whatever was necessary to save Luna you've another thing coming Xenophilius Lovegood!"

Xenophilius gaped, having been cut off mid ramble. His white candy floss hair stood on edge even worse than usual. He wanted to protest more, to say he wasn't worthy of forgiveness but the way this young witch's eyes gleamed dangerously and the way her voice was nothing but truthful made him pause. To his own surprise he found himself nodding instead. "I shall try to do better Miss. Granger." He said, still amazed by Hermione’s fire and spirit.

Hermione nodded sharply, "See that you do."

Luna walked up to them. "Thank you Hermione! I'm sorry Papa but you've needed that kick in the bum for a very long time now."

Hermione turned to the other girl and smiled, "Where'd you go off to? You seemed to disappear as we all came into the hall."

"I went down to Hagrid's and said goodbye to the Furbles, he's going to send them back to Alaska now and I'll miss them. Then I had to disband a flock of Nargles, trying to make a home in the clock tower." Luna smiled, strangely moved that Hermione had even noticed she was gone. Also since it was her very last day at Hogwarts she had finally got all her things back, she was happy since some of the stuff were things she really cared about. It had taken some time packing the additional things.
"Well I certainly hope they'll stay out of the clock tower from now on." She wondered who Luna had shooed out of the clock tower. She looked at the golden badge on Luna's robes and couldn't help but grin. As the 'eighth' years had graduated with the real seventh years like Luna and Ginny, there were two sets of honors. One set for the seventh years and one for the eighth and Luna had essentially kicked all the people who'd bullied and picked on her in the arse by getting the top honors for the seventh years. Hermione was bafflingly immensely proud for the blond girl.

"Oh I don't think there will be anymore Nargles in the clock tower from here on out." Luna gave the brunette girl an enigmatic smile. She was filled with torn feelings, happy to have graduated with her friends and looking forward to spending a month with them cleaning up Black manor and making it livable and baby safe for Harry and his family. Still this was the end, after this she wouldn't see Hermione every day and the other girl still didn't have a clue about her feelings. Luna for all her bravado was too afraid to lose Hermione's friendship to confess to her.

"That's good," Hermione caught Michael Corner glaring at Luna and caught his eye, giving him a glare of her own that had the git turning pale and seeking the nearest exit. How dare that jealous little prat dare look askance at Luna? She was tempted to follow him and hex his brains out for it. She blinked, a bit surprised at her own reaction. She knew she already didn't like Corner after the way the little worm had questioned her reasons for starting the D.A. but she'd never outright been hostile to him or wanted to honestly hex him and after the final battle she'd become much more easy with him.

Suddenly she was lifted off her feet and she made a surprised shriek before she recognized the laugh in her ear, "Dad! Put me down!"

The male Dr. Granger set his little girl on her feet and pat her back when she spun to give him a hard hug, "There's my little Athena."

She stepped back and poked him in the chest, "I've asked you not to call me that."

A feminine chuckle came from off to the side, "Darling you know he'll never stop. He's been calling you his Athena since you were three and already reading."

"Mum," Hermione gave the woman who looked like an older version of her a hug as well, "You two look wonderful. How are things? Any complications?"

Hermione's father ruffled her hair, "None at all sweetheart, don't worry."
She relaxed and turned so she could introduce her parents to Luna and her father, "Mum, Dad this is Luna Lovegood and her father Xenophilius."

Mrs. Granger smiled, "Luna, you'd be the young woman our Mione praises as being a beautiful breath of fresh air in a moldy old library."

Hermione turned bright red, "Mum!"

Luna cast a sideways glance at Hermione, her own cheeks turning pink as she smiled. "I don't know if I'm all that but I am Luna. It's very nice to meet you." She held out her hand to shake Mr. and Mrs. Granger's hands. "I find what you do with teeth very interesting. How do you deal with buzzwhuzzies the muggle way?"

Mrs. Granger frowned in confusion and asked what a buzzwhuzzie was even as Hermione grinned, curious as to how her mother would handle Luna's...Lunaness. She didn't notice her father stepping closer to Xenophilius.

Mr. Granger studied the blond man, "I realize he's become persona non grata, though Hermione hasn't gone into detail way, but Ronald told us about what happened at your home and then when he and Harry were in the dungeons." He turned to watch Luna speak with his wife, "I can't say that I don't blame you because Hermione is my little girl, she always will be even when she's old and gray and I'm just a spirit nattering away at her over her shoulder." he looked into the other man's eyes, "I can't say I don't blame you but I do understand, as a father. As a father I know that, you'll do anything to protect and keep your child safe. I failed in that, but you didn't and my own baby girl is still here and just as spirited as ever," he held out a hand to Xenophilius, "So as our daughters are friends I hope we can become the same."

Xenophilius held out his own hand and shook the muggle man's. Strangely enough it felt like a catharsis, to hear someone say that he actually was to blame, at least in part. "I hope for a friendship between us as well Mr. Granger and thank you for telling me the truth. Luna is all I have but that is no excuse for what I did, I will strive to become a stronger and better man from here on out though. Someone my daughter can be proud of." He looked at Luna who was smiling and gesticulating widely as she talked with Hermione and Mrs. Granger.

Hermione's lips twitched at her mother's vaguely horrified expression as Luna went off on a tangent that somehow wound its way around to Harry's condition.

"I...I beg your pardon? Mr. Potter is w-what?"
"Oh, don't you use the word pregnant in the muggle world?" Luna looked concerned. "Well he's up the duff, knocked up, bun in the oven...Masquerading as a hot air balloon...With child." She looked at Mrs. Granger and Hermione hopefully, hoping she had made Harry's condition clear. The muggle world was so confusing. "Look." She pointed towards Harry who was standing with Draco, speaking to lord and lady Malfoy.

Hermione giggled at her mother's startled gasp, leaning against Luna until she was able to catch her breath and speak clearly, "Sorry, it's just Mum's expression. It's not that we don't use the word pregnant in the Muggle world as it is that it's impossible for muggle men to get pregnant as they don't have the magic to create the proper space or material for conception."

Her mother's eyes nearly bugged out, "So...a wizard can..."

Hermione nodded, "A powerful one can yes. It's a big part of the reason there's not really any homophobia in the magical world."

Luna looked nearly as shocked as Hermione's mother did. "Only women get pregnant in the muggle world? How, terribly, dreadfully dull. You must be missing out on so much." She petted Mrs. Granger's hand as if it was a personal loss for the woman.

Mrs. Granger recovered from her shock admirably quick and soon had the exact look on her face that Hermione got when she was trying to puzzle something out, "So two wizards can have children of their own blood together, but what about two witches?"

Hermione blinked. That had actually never occurred to her. She knew there were just as many female/female pairings as there were male/female and male/male in the magical world but it was just such an accepted part of her new world that she'd not delved too deeply into questioning things like procreation. "I don't know. Luna?" Hermione turned her curious eyes to the blond, "Can you answer that?"

Luna nodded. "Two witches can have a baby all of their own as well, there are not so many accidental pregnancies between witches because there's a potion involved. Not to grow any extra appendages or something." Luna shuddered. "But to make...How do I explain it...Oh Salazar, to make baby juice plain and simple. Then the rest is up to magic and how powerful the witch in question is. After the actual conception it's just as any other female pregnancy."

Both Hermione and Mrs. Granger spoke simultaneously, "Fascinating." Then looked at each other
and chuckled.

Hermione gave Luna a smile, "In case you ever wondered who I get my quirks from," she waved her hand in her mother's direction.

"Oh you've a few of your father's little piccadillos as well sweetheart." Hermione's mother's eyes twinkled, "I must say Miss Lovegood that Hermione's description is very accurate. You are a lovely breath of fresh air."

The brunette girl beamed, pleased beyond reasoning that her mother liked Luna. "Smart too and I can say this with complete honesty, Luna is the only person on this planet who could tell me she had a vision and I'd believe her. The rest of the so-called Diviners," Hermione eyed Lavender Brown and the Patil twins across the room, "hah rubbish."

Luna flushed bright pink and her smile turned rather shy. Suddenly she wondered if maybe she did have a chance with the lady of her dreams after all. Luna was very thankful she would have a few more weeks with Hermione at Black manor; she didn't want to lose the connection they had now.

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Mrs. Granger studied her daughter and wondered if Hermione had recognized that she was at least half in love with the dreamy blond woman yet or not. Her daughter was brilliant with facts but her own emotions often escaped her. Her baby girl would realize it eventually though so she'd not poke her nose in. She turned the subject to what Luna's plans for after Hogwarts were and prodded the two men standing off to the side to join in the conversation.

Over by a wall Severus was quite happy and content lurking in the shadows with Teddy talking his ear off, watching Remus go over to Harry to hand the pregnant man a pocket watch Black had left in his safe keeping to give to Harry on graduation day. He could see the flitting sorrow cross his mate's features as the werewolf spoke with Harry and gave the young man a tight hug. He wished he could offer some solid comfort in this situation. He may have nigh despised Black but he'd been Remus' best friend and he knew that his werewolf would always hurt over his loss.

Harry clutched the gold pocket watch and hugged Remus as tightly as he could. He still missed Sirius every day; it was so unfair, the way he had lost his godfather. Now that he was having a son of his own he thought more and more about family. Still Harry was lucky, he had managed to make a family for himself, a family just as strong as one made by blood.
Remus ran his fingers through Harry's hair gently before walking back to his son and his mate.

Severus held out a hand for the other man in silent, supportive understanding.

Remus took Severus' hand and squeezed it gratefully, feeling thankful for his mate's support. It was hard for him, knowing of all the plans Sirius had had for Harry and knowing none of them would happen. Remus smiled at Severus, trying his best to shake the dark thoughts away, this was supposed to be a happy day.

"Flea infested idiot," the tone was deeply affectionate as he leaned in to kiss Remus briefly, "the mongrel would have been ringing a peal over your head for not coming up with some sort of gloriously evil send off for this lot you know."

"I know." Remus smiled deepened but his eyes remained lost in thoughts. "He would have been appalled at the quiet and pleasantness of this gathering. I was thinking about doing something actually but it felt pathetic, the Marauders are gone and I'm just a middle aged wolf." Remus leaned his head on Severus shoulder and nodded towards the Weasley twins. "I'm leaving the pranks to the younger generation."

"You do realize they'll make their way over here as soon as they locate you and badger you to help them make a ruckus yes? And you are not middle aged. Middle age for wizards, if you will recall, is sixty." Severus scanned the room, gaze catching on Harry's friends, "And I don't think the Marauders are gone so much as the torch was passed and skills were put to better use for the war."

"I like the thought of that, passing the torch to the younger and better." Remus still held on to Severus' hand. "Our young are leaving the nest." He looked at Harry and Draco especially. "Thank goodness for you Teddy bear." He tickled his son with his free hand.

The little boy giggled and jumped from Severus' arms to Remus', his instincts telling him that his Daddy needed hugs more right now, "Daddy, wuv joo and Papa wuvs joo too." Sloppy wet kisses were pressed to either of the werewolf's cheeks.

"I love you too, both my beautiful, brave men." Remus melted as he was showered with wet toddler kisses. No matter the regrets he might have Remus wouldn't want to trade what he had now for anything. Teddy and Severus were his dreams come true.

Severus just rolled his eyes though a smile tugged at the corner of his lips, and squeezed Remus'
hand. Gryffindors. "Will we be joining the small horde helping to clean out Black Manor by the way, or do you have other plans?"

"I don't have any other plans no." Remus shook his head. "Only that before school starts back up I would like you and Teddy to come with me and see where I grew up. My parents are long gone so it's probably silly but I would still like them to meet you."

Severus shook his head, "It is not silly Remus, I would be more than happy to come with you."

"Thank you." Remus hugged Teddy tightly and leaned his head against Severus' shoulder again, chuckling when Teddy went back and forward to smooch them both.

"Hm." Severus looked to where Harry was in the arms of his godson, with Lucius shifting uncomfortably a space a way and Narcissa patting Harry's back soothingly as the young man apparently tried to get his rioting emotions under control. He pitied Potter but at the same time, deep inside, he envied him as well. He'd give a great deal to have an easy way to remove the mark and have a second child with Remus. He met Lucius' gaze and shook his head at the question within the gray eyes. He'd keep looking but he doubted he'd find another solution.

Lucius knew that Severus was doing and had done everything he could but the disappointment was still bitter. He and Narcissa would have given almost anything to be able to have more children. Cissy had always dreamt of a large family and Lucius hated that he couldn't fulfill that dream. His only comfort was that Draco's mark had never been anchored and that it had faded along with the Dark Lord himself. At least this bloody curse wouldn't affect his son; he would be free to have as large a family as he and Potter wanted. Lucius hoped he would have pretty grandchildren up over his ears.

Narcissa pat Harry on the back once more and pulled out a handkerchief for him, "He is here, in a way you know, we just can't see him. He's probably whispering into Peeves' ear to give him wonderful pranking ideas."

Harry sniffed and gave a choked chuckle as he wiped at his eyes, he could only imagine how red and puffy they looked. "I'm so sorry, I feel so embarrassed. Last time we met I laughed hysterically and now I can't stop crying." He couldn't help but wish, just for a second, that Sirius had been a real ghost. Then at least he wouldn't be completely gone. The fact that he fell through the veil was so much harder for Harry, there was nothing of Sirius left, not a single little piece of him...As if he'd never been there to begin with.

"You don't have anything to be embarrassed about Harry. You loved Sirius and he was taken from you far too soon and your condition will have you riding the emotional roller coaster for a while.
You have every right to cry if you need to."

Draco gave his mother a thankful smile and brushed a kiss over Harry's brow, "Maman is right. You cry if you need to love. I'll hex anyone who looks askance."

Still holding the handkerchief tightly, Harry buried his face in the crook of Draco's neck. "Well get ready to hex because the weird, pitying looks have been going on for a while now." Harry did his best to get his emotions back under control. No matter how gracious Narcissa was he still felt bad that he was a hormonal wreck whenever they met.

"I'm a Malfoy love, I always have a handy hex in my back pocket," steel gray eyes scanned the room and glanced sharply at any odd looks tossed Harry's way. He ran a hand up and down his boyfriend's back.

"That I can believe." Harry chuckled and felt himself calm down slowly. "I think the hysteria is gone for now though. No more tear storm."

"Well so long as no one else comes up with something emotionally touching." Draco kissed Harry's cheek, "So Lord Potter-Black, what are your plans for after this little gathering? Just sleep or are we having story time?"

"You really think I'll turn down story time?" Harry grinned and brushed his lips over Draco's neck. "We'll party hard with a fairy story or two." Green eyes glittered.

Draco chuckled, "Then I have just the tales for the last night in Hogwarts as students. Rapunzel and Sleeping Beauty."

Narcissa moved over to her husband, looping her arm through his, "This is a good day."

"It is." Lucius agreed, petting her hand with his other hand. "We raised him well despite everything. Our son has grown up a good man."

She looked up at him, "Just like his Papa if you ask me." She leaned her weight against him, "You are a good man in my view Lucius."

Lucius shifted his grip so he could wrap his arm around her waist, pulling her close. "Oh Narcissa, I
do believe you need an eye correcting potion then. Any goodness our son has comes solely from you. You've always been my light."

She sighed wistfully, "Ever the poet darling. I still have those letters you wrote me throughout our courtship and the first years of marriage you know."

"You deserve poetry every day my love. The letters may have stopped but I still feel the same way I did when I first saw you. You were only fifteen and you took my breath away." His arm tightened around her. "I knew right then and there that you were the only one for me and that I'd do anything to win you."

She smiled and leaned her head on his shoulder, "All it took was one smile and I was yours, of course I couldn't let you know that. Half the fun is the chase."

He grinned crookedly. "Well you certainly made me chase you my dear and I loved every second of it. Felt like the king of the world when you finally became mine...Narcissa Black, the girl everyone wanted."

"And Lucius Malfoy, the boy no one but me was allowed to have." She watched their son laughing with Harry, "We made the most perfect child don't you think?"

"Yes." Lucius nodded. "We really did my love. Our greatest accomplishment."

She chuckled, "What do you think their reactions would be if I told them I expect at least two more grandchildren after this one?"

"Oh, let's not blow their young, fragile minds darling. At least not until grandson number one is born, then we can start campaigning." Lucius smiled down at his wife. "After all they'll have a very large house to fill."

She smiled back up at him, "I love your devious mind. Dance with me under the stars when we get home tonight?"

"Absolutely love, I'll dance with you until the stars sleep and the sun rises to bless us." Not caring about the people around them Lucius leaned down to kiss his wife gently and lovingly.
Severus lifted a brow, "I wonder if someone," his eyes cut to the twins, "spiked the punch?"

Remus chuckled. "Spiked punch? Sounds a little too basic and easy for a Weasley prank don't you think? Airborne Amortensia or something sounds more up their alley."

"And yet I am unaffected. There is certain insidiousness to spiking the punch as no one would expect something so 'basic' from the Weasley twins though they seem absent so I doubt that's it. They do like to-" A scream interrupted him just before Ron burst in, arms flapping, with tarantulas crawling all over him.

"Now that looks more like their calling card." Remus' grin was wide enough to split his face in half.

All conversations halted at the scream and people watched with wide eyes as Ron flailed and flapped wildly to get rid of the large spiders crawling all over him. Not a single person raised a finger to help him and Pansy was laughing so hard tears ran down her cheeks. "A camera!" She called out. "We need to immortalize this moment."

A flash came from several directions; one of them included Hermione's as Ron flapped harder and screamed loudly.

"GET THEM OFF! GET THEM OFF! FOR THE LOVE OF MERLIN GET THEM OFF!"

Molly felt a pang of sympathy, it was her youngest son after all and she knew how deathly afraid he was of spiders. One look at Harry and she squelched the urge to help him, Ron hadn't talked to any of them for months and she knew he wasn't sorry for anything that he'd done. Gritting her teeth she turned away, she wouldn't help but she couldn't watch either.

"Poor spiders." Luna tilted her head to the side. "I'm glad they aren't real, all that flailing and jumping would have been terribly distressing for them."

Hermione hummed and put away her camera, "I do wonder how long it will take him to notice that they're just charmed rubber or if McGonagall will get fed up with this display first?"

"For some reason I think the Headmistress is rather willing to turn a blind eye for once." Luna
motioned towards McGonagall who was quite busy speaking with professor Flitwick, away from all the commotion.

"Mmm but he is ruining the mood," Hermione lifted a brow as shy, sweet, generally affable Hannah Abbot cast a body-bind on Ron and picked up one of the squirming spiders, stretching a leg to show that it was just rubber before asking him to kindly stop shrieking and un-binding him before moving back to her discussion with Susan Bones.

Ron's face turned redder than his hair and his eyes burned with not quite sane anger and near hatred before he stomped from the room, the spiders skittering to follow him.

Narcissa swallowed and leaned harder into Lucius' arms, "Get him out of England by tomorrow Lucius, that look..." She shivered remembering that same look in Bellatrix's eyes when she'd spoken of pruning her family tree.

Lucius nodded. "He has accepted the spot as keeper for the Easter Island team; I'll pull some strings and have him off on his way as soon as possible. That there is a dangerous man, he has no limits." Lucius had met his fair share of very bad men, hell he was one but that kind of insanity...That he had only witnessed in Bellatrix Black and the Dark Lord himself, it made shivers run down his spine.

Narcissa nodded and decided to do some plotting herself. That man was too dangerous to be allowed to even hint of threat to the new additions to her family. She'd defied the Dark lord himself in order to save her son and husband, arranging for the 'disappearance' of a new threat was nothing to her but she'd not let anyone know of what she was thinking. Her gaze lit on Draco and Harry. Most especially not them. This time was for them, time to have joy and start building their life together.

To Be Continued…
Harry looked around the large, dusty rooms. "I want every portrait gone." Harry closed his ears to the outraged shrieks of ancient Black family members. Harry didn't have anything against them really but this was about starting over, making something theirs and theirs alone. He couldn't do it with old portraits watching and judging him.

Draco moved up behind him to rub Harry's arms, "Why don't we move them to Grimmauld Place then? They'll still be in a Black property but they won't be nattering away at us and-" he broke off as the shrieks grew louder and he put every ounce of pureblood ice and aristocracy he possessed into his voice, "That is quite enough. You can be moved to Grimmauld or you can be burned, continue behaving in such a manner and we will choose the latter option understood?"

The shrieks died down to quiet grumbles at the threat of being burned and Harry breathed a breath of relief. "Thank you." He said to Draco. "Yeah, let's move them to Grimmauld, at least for now. They can keep Walburga company and tell her all about the half blood, blood traitor moving in to her manor. Harry pulled off the sheets covering the furniture and wrinkled his eyes at the heavy, dark pieces. "Some new furniture seems to be in order too. Most of them are nice but look at this monstrosity." Harry pat the couch he'd just uncovered and coughed when a cloud of dust rose from it.

The blond eyed the heavily ornate furniture, "Lighter more modern pieces would be best for you, Squiggles and me I should think." He looked at the walls covered in the dark purple and knew that most every room would have a variant of the same theme, "New paint job too, leaving a few rooms with accents in the Black colors."

Harry nodded. "I agree completely, I don't want to remove every trace of the Black legacy but we
need to make the house our own and I don't think either of us would be happy with all these dark, murky colors looming over us daily." Harry smiled but then there was a loud pop, startling him and causing him to fall backwards on to the stuffy couch, making even more dust rise up from it.

Blinking green eyes open Harry's hands went to his stomach immediately as he scrambled for his wand. When the dust had cleared he saw to small figures...House elves.

"We be Mipsy and Tooty." The house elves bowed, large, ball like eyes looking around curiously. "We be sent by Mistress Malfoy to finally serve our Master when he is home starting with his huggles." Mipsy walked over to Draco. "Mipsy looked after her Master Dragon since he was a babe, changing nappies, bathing and dressing. Mipsy will be so happy to serve her Master Dragon and his family."

"Tooty too!"

Harry gave Draco a questioning look, rubbing his stomach as his heart rate slowly returned to normal when he realized there was no threat.

Draco was already putting his wand away and reached down to help Harry to his feet. "Er well Harry, meet our house elves? Apparently Maman sent a surprise," he looked at the elves, "Mipsy it's been some time. And," he studied the other, "Tooty, you're one of the kitchen elves yes?"

Large bat-like ears fluttered excitedly as the smaller of the two house elves bowed deeply. "Master Dragon remembers Tooty! Tooty be so proud, will cook anything tasty for Master and Master and even tiny Master when he comes."

"Oh...Oh well it's nice to meet you then." Harry scratched the back of his head as he watched the house elves.

Suddenly there was another crack and Kreacher appeared. He glared at the other house elves and moved closer to Harry. Harry wondered how on earth Kreacher would even know where he was, much less any other elves.

"Kreacher will care for Master Harry, he is Kreacher’s responsibility." He glared at the other house elves and even Draco.
Draco lifted a brow, "There will be no fighting over who is taking care of whom. The Manor is too large for a single elf," he looked at Harry, "if you agree I suggest Tooty handles the kitchens, Mipsy assist us with the babe, and Kreacher continues to look after you and remains Head Elf pet." He brushed a kiss over the bridge of Harry's nose, "We should look into hiring a few more as well since the Manor is so large we'll need to have some who specialize in keeping things neat and clean and a laundry elf." He looked at Kreacher, "I'm not disparaging your abilities Kreacher but wouldn't it be nice if you had some time to rest for yourself every now and again?'"

Kreacher grumbled but nodded his head slowly. He might not agree with the resting thing but even he didn't think he could handle the entire manor on his own.

"Then it's settled." Harry said. "I agree with you Draco, we should hire some more elves as well. This house is much too large for us to be able to handle it on our own, especially with the baby coming and your apprenticeship. Oh speaking of, I saw a room on the ground floor that would be perfect for a potions lab, that way no matter where you'll work eventually you can work on your potions at home, too." Harry beamed at his boyfriend.

Draco kissed the brunette lovingly, feeling warm all over just knowing that Harry wanted him with him for a very, very long time. "Sounds perfect. Why don't we go see if our small army of friends has finished clearing out the last of the dark spells then?"

"Yes, let's." Harry agreed and took Draco's hand. "Pansy seemed to have way too much fun with the dark spells she was battling when I saw her last; Neville will have his hands full with her." He chuckled, Harry loved Pansy but she had endless energy and a mouth that could make even the most seasoned sailor blush.

The blond smirked as they walked out of the room, heading for the wing where the dark spells seemed to be centered. Draco rather thought it was a wing that had been used to store the Black family's more closely guarded secrets, "I doubt Longbottom minds at all."

"No I don't think he minds in the least." They heard their friends' voices before they could see them. Harry was so grateful that their friends had taken time out of their summer to help them get the house ready. It meant more to him than he could express.

Just as they stepped into the wing, Hermione shook her head as Pansy finished removing the final spell, a flush of triumph on the Slytherin's face, "You're insane."

"If I am then I embrace it completely." Pansy said grinning, still holding her wand raised, almost wanting there to be some more spells she could dig her teeth into. After doing this she had started to
wonder what schooling was necessary to become a curse breaker.

Luna shook her head fondly; they had done a good job though. Not a single dark spell was left. The house was free now.

Hermione snorted, "That was never in question." She moved over to the huge picture window now that the spell was gone and pulled the curtains back flooding the room in light. "There that's better." She turned and her eyes found Luna and for some reason she caught her breath at the way the sunlight made her seem to shine. Luna really was a very beautiful woman, from the inside out. The dreamy blue eyes met hers and Hermione felt a vaguely familiar tug that had her blushing.

Backlit by the window, Hermione’s brown hair shone, turning a few of the brown strands into dark gold. Luna smiled at her and walked over where Hermione stood, opening the window, pushing it wide open. "Let's get some fresh air in here shall we?"

Pansy rolled her eyes at the two girls who never seemed to get their act straight. She moved over to a large wingback chair about to flop down on it when something small, furry and dark blue? Shot out from underneath it and ran out the window. Pansy shrieked. "By Salazar, what the fuck was that?"

Luna leaned out of the window, spotting a cowering little ball of fur out on a ledge. "Oh my, it's a brillwhistler. They are very, very rare. I wonder how it has ended up here, they usually lives in forests." She kicked her shoes off and gathered her hair into a ponytail. "I need to save it, they are gentle creatures, she's just scared." Luna swung her leg over the window sill and moved out on the ledge.

The bottom of Hermione's stomach dropped out as the blond girl was out of the window before she could say anything and creeping along the ledge. She lunged at the sill and gripped it, whispering so that she didn't frighten the creature Luna was trying to save into jumping, "Luna get back in here, we'll lure it back with food or some such thing, it's dangerous out there you could fall."

"It's okay; I climbed the walls and ledges at Hogwarts all the time. Besides I'm almost, almost there," Luna whispered back to the brunette girl as she moved further along the ledge. She reached out her hand towards the trembling creature and she was so close to getting her fingers around it when her foot slipped on a loose brick and she found herself scrambling for something to hold on to but not finding anything.

"Luna!" Hermione's heart jumped into her throat as the blond fell and her wand was in her hand and she was casting a silent levitation spell without any conscious thought on her behalf, catching Luna just before she hit the ground. Her hand shook as she gently brought the blond back up and floated
her back into the window. She snatched the blond back in, her arms clenching tightly around Luna, her heart still racing. She'd never been that terrified, not even when they'd been hunting the Horcruxes or when Harry had been face to face with Voldemort. The mere thought that she might have just lost Luna, forever, had a vise clenching around her heart and the wave of love she felt for the blond girl hit her in the face. The overwhelming force of that feeling brought what she'd been experiencing around Luna for some time now into sharp focus and she realized that she felt a great deal more for Luna than she would just a friend.

"Don't you ever do something like that again!" She trembled, "You could have died!"

Luna wrapped her own arms tightly around Hermione, trying to calm both herself and the other girl down. "It's okay, I'm fine. You caught me, kept me safe and whole." She reached up to cup Hermione's face, startled when she felt wetness there. "No, don't cry. Please don't cry Mione." Luna wiped away the tears with her thumb and looked into those beautiful, brown eyes she loved so much.

"I could have lost you, before I even realized how much you mean to me." Hermione bent to press her face into Luna's shoulder.

"But you didn't lose me." Luna's hand cupped Hermione's neck, underneath her fall of thick curly hair. "I'm right here and I'm all yours...Always have been." Her other arm snaked around Hermione's waist, holding the other woman as close as she could.

Draco caught the attention of the others in the room and gestured towards the door, shooing everyone out to give the two young women privacy. He caught Harry's hand, brushing a kiss over the knuckles before they also left, shutting the door quietly.

Hermione shuddered and took comfort from Luna's gentle touch and warmth. "I've never been so scared before, you slipped and I thought I was going to lose my mind."

"I'm sorry I scared you, I didn't mean to." Luna rubbed her hand up and down Hermione's back, her other hand still cupped Hermione's neck. This was like one of her dreams and she was almost afraid to believe that it was true, that the girl she loved was really in her arms, telling her that she had feelings for Luna as well. "I never want you to be upset or sad."

The brunette nuzzled her face against Luna's shoulder, "Just from now on don't go creeping along any ledges unless you've got a safety net or a rope in case you slip please." She'd never ask Luna not do go out along the ledges at all because that would change part of who Luna was. She lifted her head and looked into the other girl's eyes, "How long have I been missing what's been right in front of me?"
Luna just shrugged, how long she had pined for Hermione wasn't really important to her, what was important was that now she could actually show how she felt. "As I told you when we worked on the baby shower, you weren't ready to see just yet. Now you are." She smiled softly.

Hermione smiled back, "You are the most amazing person Luna." She pressed a tentative kiss to the very corner of Luna's mouth, "Thank you."

"You're the wonderful and amazing one, I saw it the moment I met you." Luna hesitated for a moment before pressing her lips very, very lightly against Hermione's, just a brushing of lips. "Thank you for being you."

The brunette returned the kiss softly, a little thrill slipping up her spine at the gentle rush she felt at the contact. Pulling back she reached down to lace her fingers with Luna's, "Would you like to go out with me this weekend?"

Luna beamed. "I would like that very, very much." She nodded and squeezed Hermione's hand. She had waited and hoped for this moment for such a long time now that she felt giddy and as if she could take on the world barehanded.

Hermione squeezed back, her mind already poking at where the best place to go would be. "Do you think the others are eavesd-" she made a squeak as something landed in her hair and made a whistling noise.

"She came back!" Luna grinned broadly and plucked the blue furball from Hermione's hair carefully. "It seems she likes you. It's been told the brillwhistlers know quality when they see it but I've never seen it before. Now we know it's the truth." The tiny critter whistled again and waved furry little legs in the air, trying to get back to the brunette girl.

Privately Hermione thought it probably just thought her hair would make a nice warm nest but it was rather cute, all blue and furry, looking mostly like a tiny guinea pig except it had very large rose ears. She reached out and let it sniff at her finger before stroking it on the head. "We'll have to take her with us, as cute as she is it would be a very bad idea for her to stay here when Crookshanks moves in."

"Mm, yes it would probably be safest for her. 'Sides, it looks as if she's bonding with you." Luna smiled again, feeling all warm over the fact that Hermione had used the word us. It was silly, getting so worked up over such a little word. "And you guys can come in now." She raised her voice a little.
"I know you're all behind the door anyway."

The door opened, a sheepish Ginny tumbling in along with a widely grinning Pansy. "So you two are finally together right?"

"I think so." Luna nodded with a brilliant smile as she looked at Hermione.

"About bloody time, you've been given each other smoldering looks forever." Pansy didn't seem at all embarrassed as she straightened up and dusted her clothes off. "It seems we're all paired off then...Perhaps we should have an orgy."

Draco snorted, "I think not. You know all we Slytherins are far too possessive to share." He stepped over Ginny as the redhead didn't seem inclined to move from her spot on the floor, "Granger, congratulations on finally looking past your nose."

"Better to look past mine than get my eye poked out by that needle that masquerades as a nose on your face."

"And here I thought you getting some sweet loving would mellow that sharp tongue of yours but it seems I was mistaken." Pansy grinned and kissed Hermione on the cheek before moving over to wrap Neville's arms around herself.

"Don't worry, I like your nose." Harry placed a kiss on the very tip of Draco's admittedly somewhat pointy nose.

The other man sniffed, "It's aristocratic not a 'needle' nose I'll have you know Granger."

Hermione rolled her eyes, "And hence we see the results of inbreeding."

Ginny giggled and got to her feet with her fiancé’s assistance, "Alright no sniping. We're here to help Harry get the Manor stripped down and redecorated now that the spells are gone remember?"

"Don't worry about it, love is much more important." Harry felt himself going misty eyed again and hurriedly excused himself to fetch them all some tea. He was really, really getting over this whole hormone thing.
Pansy smirked knowingly and finally allowed herself to flop down in the chair, after having Neville check it for more furry surprises. "What kind of colors do you want for the walls Dray?"

"We're going for light, airy colors for the most part, a few jewel tones here and there, and occasional accents in the Black colors." Draco eyed one of the sofas, poked it to make sure no wildlife had snuck in, and sat. "We want a welcoming home, one that feels as happy as we are. A home, not a show palace."

She nodded. "A show palace is not your style, neither of you. Light, airy colors sounds wonderful. This is really an amazing house and the park is to die for...I could hardly tear Neville away from the gardens earlier." She gave her boyfriend a fond smile.

Tooty showed up with a large tray filled with tea and cucumber sandwiches and Harry showed up not long after, having got his faulty tearduckts under control again.

Hermione stared at the elf but bit her tongue to keep from saying anything she shouldn't, "Erm I didn't know the Blacks had other house elves."

Draco lifted a brow at her as Harry settled on the sofa next to him, "Tooty and Mipsy were sent here by my mother to help Harry and I get started." He knew how much it bothered the bushy haired girl to see the elves in 'slavery' but there wasn't much to be done about it.

"Tooty is being so very happy to be here and help Master dragon and Master mama start their lives. Tooty couldn't believe his luck when he was chosen." The elf grinned and bowed deeply. "Please call for Tooty if you be needing anything else." He disappeared with a pop.

"Please have some tea." Harry gave Hermione a look, he knew very well how she felt too but there was no way they could run this house without house elf help. Harry would be happy to free them and pay them but the truth was that the majority of house elves didn't want to be free.

Hermione understood that most house elves were very, very happy being 'enslaved' but it still rubbed her wrongly, knowing that there were some people out there who abused them. She knew Harry would never and that if Draco started to then he'd soon get hexed courtesy of Harry though so she could live with it. "You'll be getting a few more won't you?" Her voice was soft and unjudgmental, "The manor's too big for just a couple house elves right?"
Harry nodded. "Yeah, Kreacher is not going to like it but we need several more just to keep the place going. Draco and I are going to look into where we can hire some." Harry reached forward and took a small sandwich biting into it happily.

"Will you be looking for elves that have been freed?"

Draco coughed, "Er that's a bad idea actually."

Her eyes narrowed, "And why is that?"

"House elves are rarely freed without good reason, very good reason." Blaise answered as Draco tried to cough up whatever he'd gasped down, "You need to understand, for a house elf being freed is the worse shame they can bear because they did something so awful that they couldn't even be demoted anymore. There is a hierarchy for them. For example Kreacher I would imagine will be the Head Elf here, he'll direct all the others in their duties, act as Harry's valet, for lack of a better term, and have the highest status. After that would be a nursery elf, one that helps care for the children in the manor, then kitchen elves, then gardening elves, then cleaning elves which have sub-levels of hierarchy within that title, then pest control, etcetera. There are so many levels and jobs that it's nearly impossible for an elf not to find the right niche that makes them happy. The lowest of the low in house elf rank is the elves that clean up after pets, not feed them, not walk or groom them, just pick up and dispose of the waste. When an elf gets knocked down that far on the ladder that means they're either too clumsy to do anything else or they've done something wrong."

Draco finished coughing and cut in before Hermione could say anything to that, "And we are not talking wrong as in folded the cravat incorrectly or tripped and spilled breakfast. House elves don't get demoted unless they're shite at their jobs or they're a danger to the wizards they serve."

"One thing you must understand too is that it's a voluntary 'slavery' the house elves are in." Pansy spoke up. "House elf magic is very powerful but highly volatile. Before they entered a contract to be bound they were dying out. Fighting amongst themselves and being used as weapons in every war imaginable. They house elves wanted to be bound, to find a way to live and serve in peace. Yes some are abused but that goes for human servants as well. They are not bound to wizards so we can use them and repress them; the contract is mutually beneficial to both species." She gave Hermione a look. "They aren't as primitive as you seem to think, they have a council of their own and as a matter of fact they have a voice at the Ministry too."

Harry had never heard any of this before and he listened with wide eyes. Even Luna was nodding in agreement with the three Slytherins speaking.
Neville inclined his head, "That's why there's a house elf in the fountain statue. I don't know why Dobby was erm," he cast a questioning looks at Draco, who grimaced.

"Dobby was in training to become my valet but he literally threw a tantrum while helping me get ready because I couldn't decide between a green or blue cravat. He was...young, very young by house elf standards, the equivalent of ten years old to a human child so he didn't have control of himself or his magic and it made the lamp in my room shatter and catch fire. Father was...very angry."

Hermione's eyes were wide, "Oh dear."

Harry looked down at his hands resting in his lap. Dobby had been out there, loopy and troublesome but he had saved Harry on several occasions and he gave his life to save them and get them out of Malfoy manor before Voldemort got there. He would never be able to speak ill of the weird little creature, no matter the mistakes he might have done.

Draco cleared his throat, "My father is not what you'd call the...forgiving sort and decided to 'teach' Dobby discipline himself."

Hermione winced, "And ended up using Dobby as a whipping post then."

"Essentially, yes."

"What about Winky then?"

Neville picked it up, "See like Blaise was saying, an elf gets knocked down the ladder until there's just no choice but to free them. In Winky's case she wasn't even demoted before being freed because Crouch was a turnip headed git. He wanted to save face so he used Winky as an escape hatch. Most freed elves though are freed because they're...not right. Violent and a true danger to the wizards they serve. Gran had to free an elf when I was nine because he tried to beat the groundskeeper with a chain. All elves once freed automatically get taken to the elf council within a day to ascertain if they're fit to be 'rehired' or not."

"If they are fit to take service with another family that's handled quickly and silently and the family they were fired from is investigated to see if they should have a right to keep elves at all. Crouch lost all of his after the Winky incident." Luna poured her tea out in the saucer and drank from that. "If the elf is not fit to be hired back in service there is another hearing to judge if they should be allowed to
keep their magic or not. Most of them are stripped of everything but the very basic magic since they have proven to be a danger both to themselves and society at large. It's actually a system that works rather well."

Ginny pursed her lips, "Er then was Mione's idea of SPEW redundant then?"

Hermione grimaced, feeling just a bit like a fool.

Draco shook his head, "Not so much actually. The elvish council can only step in after an elf is wrongfully freed because they don't know abuse has taken place until then. SPEW, really Granger you need to work on your acronyms, could step in before then, as a wizard based organization and investigate or do as Harry did and sneakily free an elf."

"I regret nothing." Harry smiled but it was a smile tinged with sadness.

"SPEW is still a brilliant idea; it simply needs a little tweaking. It is never redundant to care for the wellbeing of others." Luna put her saucer down and ran her hand down Hermione's arm.

The brunette girl gave her a smile, "Well I'll probably be nattering away at you quite a bit over it then Luna. I'll need you to help keep me from stepping in the wrong direction due to lack of information."

"Natter all you want Hermione, your ears will probably get tired as well once I get going about my passions." Luna smiled back and kept her hand on Hermione's arm, loving the simple contact.

"I'll see if there are any books you can use in the Parkinson library, it's a part of wizarding history so something must be written about it." Pansy added and nabbed another sandwich; breaking spells had made her hungry.

Draco heaved a long suffering sigh, "And I suppose, should Lovegood actually not know something about them however unlikely that is, you could owl me as well."

Hermione just shook her head and lean into Luna's touch, murmuring to the blond girl, "I'll be related to that soon I think, if Harry ends up marrying him."
"I believe the question is not if but when. Harry will marry him, of that I have no doubt and you will get Malfoy as a brother... Who would have thought?" Luna kept her lips against Hermione's ear so no one else would hear. Hermione's hair tickling her face.

Hermione chuckled, "Well at least I don't want to clock him anymore. Progress." She decided to lean her head on Luna's shoulder and study the future brother in law in question.

Draco was holding Harry's hand, playing with the fingers, "So what colors would you like for the master suite pet?"

"Hm," Harry looked up at his boyfriend, thankful to have something else to think about than the past. "Light blue and green colors I think, with silver accents... Like water. Calm and restful. How do you want it? We're going to sleep there together after all."

"This is one subject we're in accord on. I like that color scheme, more green than blue in the bedroom but more blue than green in the ensuite bathroom I should think."

"I'd like that, it sounds brilliant. Dark wood for the furniture would be fitting I think, to bring out the light colors. The hardwood floors are beautiful so I think we should keep them, add carpets of course... Woven ones rather than antique ones. I don't want to be afraid to walk on them."

Draco chuckled, "Or afraid the babe will spill or throw up something onto them either right love?"

"Yeah, that has something to do with it too. A baby is messy, that's just how it is and I want Squiggles to be allowed to move and play without restrictions or worry about carpets of fabrics." Harry smiled and leaned against Draco.

"Agreed. We should also rearrange the library so that the bottom meter and a half is just wood paneling so a little monkey can't climb up onto the shelves or get to books he oughtn't."

"Mmmhmm, we must remember to do that yes. At least in this house we don't have to worry about electrical sockets since everything runs on magic." Harry snuggled closer. "I love you."

Draco wrapped his arms around his boyfriend, "I love you too." He pressed a kiss to the top of Harry's head. "A partir de maintenant jusqu'à la fin de l'éternité."
Luna felt like she was spying on something very private here. "Come on, let's go downstairs and start getting rid of the furniture that isn’t to be kept." She motioned to her friends, wanting to give Draco and Harry some privacy. "I'm sure you can even use Reducto on some of them Pansy."

Hermione chuckled at the excited gleam the pug-nosed girl got in her eye as they all left the room, giving the two men privacy. She imagined Harry was also likely tired and needed a nap. A whistle trilled in her ear and she felt little paws tugging on her hair. She'd picked up a new companion and a girlfriend all from one incident. It made her wonder what else would happen today.

To Be Continued…
Chapter Twenty-Two

Disclaimer: Neither Acherona nor trulywicked have any claim on Harry Potter or any characters or locations thereof.

Warnings: Angst, lots of it, Male Pregnancy, mental torture, infant in peril, boys in love, friendships broken and new friends gained. Disregards canon in so many ways.

MOCKINGBIRD

Chapter Twenty-Two.

Harry watched the girls leave the room and shifted so he was lying on the couch with his head in Draco's lap. He hadn't done anything strenuous but his back still ached. "Hey Draco...I heard Pansy mention blood adoption once and I've been reading up on it." Harry bit his lip. "Would...Would you be willing to go through one? To really be Squiggs' parent along with me, with everything that comes with that?"

Draco leaned over, brushing his fingers through dark hair, "Silly man, you shouldn't even feel you have to ask." He looked into Harry's eyes, "I told you I wanted to be Squiggs' Papa and I meant it. Of course I would be willing to go through a blood adoption."

Harry smiled a brilliant smile up at the blond. "I know you said it, that was what gave me the courage to ask. I don't want anyone to be able to question your right to be Squiggs' Papa. I want it to be official and I want everyone to know that the three of us is a family in every way."

"Then I have a question of my own to ask." Draco traced his fingertips over Harry's brow, "When you're ready, will you bond with me? Be my husband?"

Green eyes grew very large and Harry reached up so he could trace Draco's features with his fingertips. "Yes! Of course yes. I would bond with you right now if it was possible. I love you and want to share everything with you, want us to grow together and grow old together."

Draco leaned down and brushed his lips over Harry's gently, "We'll fight, we'll laugh and love and raise children and we'll do it together then, always."
Harry gripped the back of Draco's neck and kept him down so he could catch the other's lips in a much more heated kiss. "Always and forever ferret."

The blond gave a soft laugh, "Prat," and sank into the kiss. It was upside down and not exactly comfortable for him but it was just as intoxicating as every other kiss he shared with Harry.

"Your prat." Harry chuckled and released Draco so the blond could straighten up. Harry's hands went under him to rub at his lower back and sides, he was really aching.

"You alright love?" Draco slipped his own hands underneath Harry to help him massage his back.

"Yeah, I think so...It just hurts really badly." Harry groaned and sat up, leaning forward so Draco could reach better.

The blond pressed gently on the tense muscles, "Maybe you turned wrong and twisted a muscle?"

"Maybe, I've tried to be really careful though." Another stab of pain went through him and Harry gasped from the force of it. "Your hands feel good."

Draco frowned, "That gasp didn't sound like it. Maybe I should call Uncle Severus."

"No, no need to bother him for a little back ache." Harry shook his head and grit his teeth around the pain. "I'll be fine after I rest for a while."

"Are you sure? What if it's the baby?"

"It's too early for the baby, almost three weeks until Squiggles is due. I'm sure it's just stress and tension." Harry smothered another groan; instead of getting better it was getting worse. It wasn't his stomach that hurt though; it was his lower back and his sides.

"Harry, I'm calling Uncle Severus." Draco moved to get up, unease crawling down his spine. "Just because it's early doesn't mean nothing's happening and I'd rather be sure than sorry."
"Oh God!" Harry panted as something went through him, leaving him very...Wet. "Dray, I think my water just broke. That or I need some real help because I just pissed myself really bad."

Draco burst into action, scooping Harry up into his arms and rushing out of the room to a downstairs guest bedroom, yelling at the top of his lungs, "Pansy call Uncle Severus and tell him to get his arse here NOW!"

Pansy stilled at the tone of Draco's voice, she had never heard him sound like that before and why was he carrying Harry? When Draco sounded like that you listened so she rushed to the closest fireplace and tossed a fistful of floo powder into the fire, calling for Severus.

In the guest bedroom Harry was red-faced. "You didn't have to carry me, I could have walked."

"Allow me my panic?" Draco set Harry on the bed, looking up when Hermione rushed in.

"Harry what...oh." The brunette poked her head out the door, "Luna see if you can scrounge up a man's nightgown, Neville go to the kitchens and get some ice chips from Tooty, Blaise if Professor Snape gives Pansy a hard time reach through the bloody floo and yank him here, Ginny start calling round and letting everyone know Harry's in labor." That done she turned back inside, "Alright Harry off with the trousers, and don't give me that look. If you think I haven't seen you bare arsed before think again. You weren't exactly discreet during the hunt."

"Always suspected that you couldn't keep your eyes to yourself." Harry joked but groaned when more pain stabbed through him. Oh this really wasn't fun at all. He got up from the bed and unbuttoned his wet jeans, pushing them off his thighs and legs.

Luna came back with what must be the ugliest nightshirt in history. Full of frills, Ron's dress robes back at the Yule ball had nothing on this piece of clothing. "Do I really have to wear this Mione? I will scare Squiggles so bad he will want to crawl back inside."

She shrugged, "It's either that or be naked, your choice."

Draco rolled his eyes and flicked his wand transfiguring the monstrosity into a large plain nightgown. He took it from Luna and handed it to Harry, "Better?"
"Yes but don't you roll your eyes at me Draco Lucius Malfoy." Harry glared half heartedly and changed into the nightgown quickly, still feeling ridiculous but being in too much pain to do much about it. They weren't ready, the manor wasn't finished by a long shot, nothing was baby proofed. All of Harry's insecurities about becoming a mom were rushing back to him.

"I was rolling my eyes at her," he angled his head at Hermione.

Before the bushy haired woman could fire back at him, Snape strode in, medi-wizard kit in hand, and wearing regular jeans and a polo shirt. "Well Mr. Potter I'd say your child is as impatient as you are. Miss Granger you and Miss Lovegood go, help Remus start fixing a few rooms and baby proofing them."

Hermione out of the room almost immediately, snagging Luna's hand and tugging her out as well.

"Hello professor." Harry greeted. "You actually hid a body under all those robe layers...Who knew? Except for Remus I mean." Harry was surprised by himself, he wasn't on any sort of drugs but he couldn't seem to keep his mouth shut. It was either talking like a loon or burst out crying again. Harry chose to be a chatterbox.

Draco cast worried gray eyes on his godfather, who merely lifted a brow at Harry's babble.

Snape recognized panic and its effects well and just walked over to set his kit on the bedside table, "Mr. Potter, how long have you had the back ache today?"

"It ached some when I woke up but I'm usually stiff in the mornings." Harry broke off to giggle, a tint of hysteria in his voice. "I figured it would ease up like it normally does but instead it's been getting worse all day. The stabbing pains started shortly before lunch and then they have been coming closer and closer." Harry looked up at his ex professor. "If I die, will you make sure Draco gets to raise Squiggles?"

Snape rolled his eyes, "You are not going to die Potter, cease being so dramatic. Wizards give birth all the time and it sounds as though you're progressing normally." He pulled out his wand and cast a simple diagnostic spell nodding in satisfaction, "As I thought, normal...for once. Draco stop hovering in the corner, wringing your hands and sit behind your boyfriend. Honestly the two of you."

Draco gave his godfather an evil glare but did as told and slid onto the bed behind Harry, arms going round him and resting his hands on the tense mound of Harry's belly.
Harry turned his head so he could look at Draco, mostly ignoring everything Snape had just said. "If I do die you get Squiggles Draco...And my broom, you've always eyed my broom." A new contraction came upon him and he grabbed one of Draco's hands, squeezing it with all his might as he waited for the pain to subside. "Fuck! By Gryffindor's shriveled balls it hurts so much." His whole body spasmed and drew tight. Then a thought came before him and he tensed for a different reason. "I can't do this Draco...Snape is going to look at my bits isn't he? I can't have Snape looking down there." He squeezed his legs shut tightly underneath the ridiculous nightgown.

Severus snorted, "I assure you I've no desire to see what you look like underneath your clothing Mr. Potter but you have the choice of me or no one at all." He paused, "It is highly unlikely anything will go wrong but in the event that something does which is more important to you, your and your child's life or your modesty?"

Green eyes met black ones. "If it comes down to a choice between the two you know I would gladly shove my groin in your face if it meant Squiggles would be safe and well and healthy." He looked down at his stomach and grumbled. "What an idiotic question, thinking I'd choose modesty over my child."

Draco kissed the back of Harry's neck, "Uncle Severus is a professional love and more, he's family now. Better he help than some unknown twit in St. Mungos yes?"

Harry nodded. "Yeah I really am grateful for his help...I am but the words...They keep jumping out of my mouth without any filter at all." Harry looked miserable as pain went through him again. "I don't want to be at Mungos, getting gawked at, thank you for ogling my bits Snape, I appreciate it deeply."

Severus snorted in amusement as Draco's shoulders shook and the blond pressed his forehead to Harry's shoulder. The professor pat Harry's shoulder, "Pain and panic does that. Do not concern yourself as no one holds anything said whilst giving birth against the mother."

A soft knock came on the door and Ginny stepped in with a big bowl of ice chips, "Hey, ice chips for when you get thirsty Harry and the bowl's got an ever cooling charm on it so they won't melt before you need or want them." She moved over, scooted around Snape, set the bowl down and brushed a kiss over Harry's brow, "Mum and everyone else is here and we're all getting the Manor done up while you're getting this little one out," she pat his belly gently, "So no worries about things not being ready okay?"

"Thank you Gin." Harry looked at the redhead with large eyes, still squeezing Draco's hand tightly. They were lucky to have such a wonderful family and amazing friends who stepped up to help them.
"Has someone called Narcissa and Lucius? I don't want them to feel left out...Ow, ow, ow!" It felt as if someone had stuck a knife straight through his spine at the same time as all his internal organ was shifting and changing places.

Draco grimaced at the strong grip Harry had but didn't complain as his godfather timed the contraction.

Ginny just conjured a damp cloth and used it to bath Harry's face until the contraction had passed, "I tried flooing Malfoy Manor but an elf answered and said they were out at Eyelops Emporium. So I sent Mipsy to go find fetch them."

"Okay, good, good. Mipsy should be able to find them right?" Harry turned to Draco again; right now he could finally draw breath again. He looked down at Draco's abused hand and brought it to his lips. "So sorry, didn't mean to hurt you. You're so good to me Draco and I can't even yell at you that you've done enough already by getting me in this situation."

Ginny slipped back out, smiling as Draco answered the brunette, "Shh, it's fine love," he nuzzled Harry's temple, "We can both start cursing the Rat to the ends of the earth if you like? Yes Mipsy will be able to find my parents, though the poor thing will be jumping out of her skin. Owls terrify her."

"She's so tiny, she's probably afraid they'll eat her, or fly away with her." Harry gave a tired chuckle. "Don't want to curse the Rat though, don't even want to think about him...Trying my very best to forget that he ever had a part in this...My first and only time having sex." Harry tensed. "Oh, what if I'm shite in bed? Draco, you can't marry me until you've fucked me, what if I'm a disappointment?"

Draco tried not to laugh at the pained look on his godfather's face and instead focused on Harry, "I don't see how you could possibly be love. You live with such passion that sometimes I think it must be exhausting for you just to wake up and enthusiasm is half the battle, supposedly." He gave Harry a gentle squeeze, "Besides it won't be sex with us, we'll be making love and we'll be learning that one together."

"Smooth, you have a silver tongue...I love your tongue, and the things you can do with it." Harry reached his arm up and behind him so he could bury it in Draco's hair. Unfortunately that was when another contraction hit and his grip on Draco's locks tightened as he pulled on the hair and fought the pain.

Severus privately felt that karma was taking its due from his godson at the moment as Harry's hand nearly yanked a hunk of white blond hair out. He had to hand it to Draco however; he handled it
well, just grimaced and stroked Harry's belly, murmuring encouragement and endearments in the brunette's ear.

"Do something useful!" Harry hissed at Snape, his hand still gripping Draco's hair tightly. "Don't just stand there hawwing and humming, reach in there and pull Squiggles out." It hurt so badly, Harry thought he knew what pain was but everything he had experienced up to this point was just Childs play.

Draco had chuckle despite the painful grip on his hair, "Found an appropriate person to curse now?"

Snape lifted a brow, "Unfortunately you've roughly another hour of contractions to go Mr. Potter, until I can do anything to assist. Any pain easing potions or spells could be detrimental right now."

The hand in Draco's hair tightened dangerously. "Another hour? One more fucking hour of slowly being turned inside out? No! No, no, no...I don't think so. I want him out and I want him out now." Green eyes narrowed and Harry hissed like a cat. "Don't you stand there and look all superior...It's your fault. And yours." He turned his eyes on Draco. "You with your penises with their babymaking ways." He looked between his own legs. "Yeah, I'm talking to you too."

Outside the door, Narcissa paused with her hand on the knob and looked at her husband, "I think we'll just go help the others redecorate and child proof the house darling and leave them to themselves yes?"

"As always you have the best ideas love." Lucius readily agreed, his lips twitching from hearing Potter curse out his own penis along with Severus and his son's. "It sounds crowded enough as it is in there and I'd rather go spend time with the Weasleys than step one toe in there."

She kissed his cheek, "Suffering flashbacks?" She hooked her arm through his and they walked into the 'war room' that had been made of the library hearing Pansy arguing with Molly Weasley over colors.

"Flashbacks and physical memories, I swear the bones you crushed still haven't grown back right." Lucius kissed his wife's cheek and hurried over to where Blaise was moving books away from the lower shelves. Even though he was marrying a Weasley, Blaise was still one who Lucius felt comfortable with.

Narcissa chuckled and went to put a hand on Pansy's shoulder, meeting Molly's eyes, "Molly, you
"look well," her gaze snagged on the former Order of the Phoenix members, including the Minister, who were helping shift things round then turned back to Molly.

"You too Narcissa." Molly bowed her head in greeting to the blonde witch. No matter what had happened in the past they were going to have a grandchild together now. "Now about this gold." She turned back to the paint samples.

Pansy smiled at her Aunt even though she felt like pulling her own hair out in frustration. "Molly, gold is nice but it's not what Harry and Draco wants. They want light, airy colors with a few Black accents which are purple, blue and silver."

Narcissa saw Molly's lips firm and tapped her chin, "Gold can be airy, if you use it correctly." She bussed Pansy's cheek, "Go help the others strip everything down sweetheart and let the veterans battle this out." She turned to the paint and drapery samples Molly had spread out, "Now, what is it you're thinking gold for?"

"For paint I thought it could be nice for the cornice in this room, with very light cream walls to offset it." Molly pointed to the paint samples. "Then for these gorgeous windows, these white silk drapes with the gold thread. I think it would look bright and airy but also warm and welcoming. A place where you'd want to sit and read or simply sit and talk together."

Narcissa narrowed her eyes and thought it over before nodding, "All imbued with stain repellant charms though. I once had a white sitting room and Draco got into it when he was, oh three I think, with his watercolors." Her lips twitched at the memory, "It went from white to rainbow in the space of five minutes."

Molly chuckled. "Oh I know how that is, anything white is a blank canvas to a child. And I definitely meant of everything here to be covered in stain repellant charms. I've raised seven children, even when they are on their very best behavior they are dirty...Stains, dirt and dust are drawn to little children, it's like they're a magnet for it."

Lady Malfoy smiled, "Good, that's settled. Now as to the dining room," she settled in to work with Molly on making the Manor just right for Harry, Draco, and the child being born right now.

Hermione came in with Tooty, helping the elf carry a set of trays bearing tea, and brought one over to the ladies just as they began pondering the master suite.
Narcissa frowned, "I'd definitely agree with the silver for the accent but I've no idea what the other colors they both might want would be."

"Blue and green," Hermione smiled and handed Molly a teacup, "They were talking about it before the contractions hit. Blue, green and silver like water and Harry will want the nursery in yellow and mint green and you should make sure it's in a room right next to or across from the master suite. Harry won't want to be far from Squiggles."

"The master suite is in the corner of the eastern wing, there's a wonderful room next to it with beautiful morning sun. It would make a great nursery." Molly told Narcissa enthusiastically.

Luna walked past them, her arms filled with books. "Oh for the master suite, Draco and Harry want more green than blue in the bedroom and more blue than green in the bathroom." She smiled and levitated to books to higher shelves, sorting them after subject and author.

Narcissa sorted through a few swatches, choosing three greens and three blues. Two green and one blue for the bedroom and the opposite for the bathroom. She nudged them towards Molly, "What do you think?"

Molly nodded approvingly. "It looks very nice; you have a good eye for colors Narcissa. It will suit our boys perfectly I think." She gave the other witch a real, honest smile, feeling strangely close to Narcissa Malfoy at the moment.

Hermione just moved over to help Luna, "Not even here yet and Squiggles is already a peacemaker," she nodded over to where Arthur and Lucius were cautiously and with only the slightest edge of hostility working together to fix the light wood paneling along the bottom of the room to keep a tiny marauder from climbing shelves, and then to where Narcissa and Molly were sitting heads together like two old biddies clucking over eggs.

"Isn't it wonderful?" Luna smiled happily and leaned close to Hermione, chuckling when she heard a warning whistle. A tuft of blue peeked out from behind Hermione's hair. "I think I've gotten a rival for your affections." She looked back towards the grandparents to be. "They are all going to be family from now on; I'm glad they are fighting the wrackspurts and at least try to get along."

Very loud cursing followed by a hoarse scream echoed throughout the house.

"Poor Harry." Luna tilted her head. "I had no idea he had such a foul mouth."
"Poor Draco and Severus I say." Pansy added and burst out giggling when Teddy asked Remus what a god damned motherfucker was.

Hermione laughed out loud and pecked Luna on the cheek, "He can get worse. You should have heard some of the things he called Mouldywarts while we were hunting the Horcruxes."

Narcissa actually choked on air, "Mouldywarts?!" Her lips twitched like mad, "Oh that's almost as good as what they," she gestured at the Weasley Twins, "came up with as a product name."

Fred looked over at her and bowed, "Why thank you milady."

George grinned, "We do try. Weasley Wizarding Wheezes-"

"-mocking Dork Lords since 1978."

Ginny giggled, "They like to think they mock everything dark and gloomy just by existing....they're probably right."

Molly huffed and tutted her sons but her smile was filled with pride over her two impossible boys. She had finally given up trying to steer them away from their pranks and inventions. It was what they loved doing and after the was she was just thankful to still have them, to be able to hold them and love them.

"Nothing more powerful than laughing in the face of darkness." Luna nodded. "It always makes it seem just a little less dangerous."

Fred smiled softly, "That's close to what himself in there cursing once said. By the way Hermione, did you know you've got blue fuzz in your hair?"

"Brill whistler, she's adopted me."

George peered closely, " Bloody hell those fuzz balls are almost as rare as a Snigit. Their fur is a
really rare potion ingredient, used to be hunted for it until they were protected. Now it's shed fur only but it does the most amazing things in potions."

Hermione recognized the gleam in the twins' eyes and held up a hand, "Maybe, if you'll get back to work. Harry won't be in labor forever you know."

They snapped to attention and saluted her, "Ma'am yes ma'am!"

"Amazing, you actually found a way to get them to work." Molly laughed fondly. "A true feat."

"Don't know if bribery is to be commended but at least it worked." Luna reached inside Hermione's hair masses and pet the blue fuzz ball.

It whistled and trilled then went silent as another scream and round of cursing echoed through the house.

**To Be Continued…**
Draco wiped sweat from Harry's face, his other hand stinging from the nails that his fiancé had dug into it, as the brunette slumped back against him. "Bloody Hell Uncle Severus isn't there anything you can do?"

Snape cast another diagnostic charm as he answered, "For the twenty third time, no. However the end is near as Harry is fully dilated and next contraction he can start pushing."

Harry's eyes were only green slits and he was breathing as if he had run a marathon. "No way will I be able to push now...Told you before and I say it again. Reach in and yank him out. If I die I die but at least the pain will be over."

"Pathetic, and to think I was actually starting to respect you Potter." Snape had learned that the best way to get Harry to stop with the dramatics was to stoke his temper.

"Like I care about that." Harry scoffed even though he straightened up more and his eyes flashed. "I lived with your contempt for eight years just fine, if I survive I'll live just fine with it in the future as well...I will tell Remus what a huge meanie you are though."

"Feel free to. What could he possibly do? I am what I am."

"That you are yes...But maybe I can get Teddy to withhold his kisses for a week or so...Hah, take that." Harry knew perfectly well that he was being beyond childish at the moment but snapping at
Snape was the one thing that made him get through the pain.

"Oh no whatever shall I do?" The deadpan tone was the same that had echoed in his classroom many times over.

"Suffer, that's what you'll do...I know you crave those smooches." Harry tensed and dug his nails into Draco's soft skin again. "Now get down there and get ready to catch my son because I'm going to push."

Snape rolled his eyes and refrained from informing the laboring man that he wouldn't be getting his son out in one round of pushing as he flipped up the night gown, helped Harry brace his feet on the bed, and put one hand on the tightening mound of the belly, "Alright, push!"

Draco winced at the sharp bite of nails into his skin and the agonized scream that nearly burst an eardrum. It was a good thing he had no problem adopting Squiggles because he was not going to ever let harry go through this again. It was agonizing and he hated seeing his Harry in pain.

"Fuckity fuck, fuck!!! How in the deepest pit of hell has Molly been able to do this six times?" Harry gasped and slumped back against Draco once the cramp was over for this time and Snape had told him to stop pushing for now. Everything down there felt as if it was on fire, stretching and burning and everything inside him was still hurting. He had felt Squiggles shift and drop and having press down on the opening was extremely uncomfortable.

"Seven." Snape's tone was matter of fact, "Just because the twins were born the same day doesn't diminish the fact that she squeezed two out."

"Believe I'm thanking all fates out there that Squiggles is alone. And I know about the twins...I'm just doing my best to erase the fucking arsewipe who did this to me out of my brain." Harry growled and held on to Draco. "Can I push now? Please?"

"Not yet," Snape felt Harry's belly and waited until the muscles were contracted completely, "alright now."

Bracing himself from the tip of his toes to the ends of his very hair, Harry put everything he had behind the pushing, screaming towards the ceiling at the top of his lungs as it felt as if he was ripped apart from the inside.
"That's it, keep pushing. He's crowning," Snape reached down and cradled the head of the infant in one hand as it was pushed out and the contraction ended. "One more contraction and you should be done Harry."

Harry didn't even have the energy to say something; it took everything just to breathe. Tears mingled with the sweat pouring off him and every muscle was trembling. He was seriously starting to believe that death wasn't such an impossible event from this. Who could survive pain like this?

Draco pressed a kiss to Harry's temple, "You're doing wonderfully love. Ten times better than I ever could."

Harry gave him a weak smile as he waited for it all to be over; he just wanted to be done. And why wasn't Squiggles crying? Bill always bragged about Victoire crying as soon as her mouth was out but Squiggles was completely quiet. Was something wrong? He wanted to lift his head and look between his legs but his body wasn't obeying him at all.

Severus felt the muscles of Harry's stomach clenching again, "Alright Harry, last push to get his shoulder's out."

He was sobbing openly now, too tired and too much in pain to even try to keep dignified. Harry gathered every last ounce of strength he had left and channeled it into a push to end all pushes.

Snape gently rotated the baby's body as Harry pushed, manipulating it to get first one should then the other out. After that the rest of the baby just slithered out. He cleared the nasal passages and mouth of mucus, tapped the infant on the back and smirked as the child set up an indignant wail. He put the baby down on Harry's chest, "Almost done and now I can help." He cast a pain relief spell followed by one for separating the placenta from the temporary womb as Harry met his son for the first time.

"Oh..." Harry reached out a shaking hand to stroke his fingers over damp, dark red hair. Squiggles eyes were still tightly shut from the light of this new, cold and strange world. He was wrinkly and red and he was the most beautiful thing Harry had ever seen. "Hi, welcome out sweetie, you were in a hurry, weren't you?" Harry was still crying but now it was tears of bliss.

Draco peered at the baby over Harry's shoulder and reached down to trace a finger over a tiny fist, "He's amazing. Just as beautiful as his Maman."

Severus looked up from getting the afterbirth out and lifted an eyebrow in amusement at the star
struck looks on the two's faces. He put the afterbirth into a special bag for later ritual disposal and moved to tie the umbilical cord off. "Harry, do you want Draco to cut the cord?"

"Absolutely. He's Squiggles' Papa in every single way that counts." Harry found it hard to tear his eyes away from his son but he leaned back to press a kiss to Draco's jawline. "I love you, thank you for being here with me." Squiggles moved his little fist to his mouth to suck on it and Harry fell in love all over again.

Draco gave Harry a gentle squeeze, "I wouldn't want to be anywhere else love."

Snape cleared his throat and handed Draco a pair of medical scissors, "Here."

The blond ignored the very slight tremble in his hand as he cut the cord in between the two clamps and was completely unaware of the single tear that made its way down his cheek. He had a family of his own, all right here, wrapped up in his arms, and he couldn't have asked for anything more perfect.

Severus didn't bother to hide his smile as he gently lifted the baby off Harry's chest, "I just need to clean him up and then you'll have him back. Take the time to think of a proper name for the poor child will you Potter?"

Harry's arms already felt achingly empty and he followed Severus' with his eyes, longing to get his baby back where he belonged. "A proper name, you don't think Squiggles Potter is proper?" Black brows rose questioningly. "No seriously though," He looked up at Draco and snuggled close to the blond. "What do you think of Jason? Jason Anthony Malfoy-Potter?"

Draco smiled, "I think it's a perfect name, for a perfect little boy."

Snape cleaned the baby up, noted down his measurements, put him in a tiny onesie, and was swaddling him with a soft thin blanket when the little eyelids cracked open, staring back at him with bright green eyes that made him catch his breath. "Merlin."

"What is it? Is something wrong?" Harry had heard Snape's exclamation and his insides knotted in worry. He stretched in an attempt to peer around the tall wizard to see his son.

Snape shook his head, "No, nothing's wrong," he moved back to place the baby into Harry's arms,
"He has his mother's eyes." Red hair and green eyes. It almost hurt to see and be reminded of Lily but at the same time it was good to see her legacy continue on through her son and now, grandson.

Harry smiled when he saw those slivers of bright green peer up at him. "Well hi there Jason, I'm your Mama and this here is your Papa. We're so happy you're here." He nuzzled the red fuzz on top of his son's head. It was still very early but other than the hair color there didn't seem to be much of Ron in Jason's appearance. Harry couldn't help but feel relieved over that but even if Jason would grow up to look exactly like Ron Weasley, Harry would always love him. "You want to hold him? Go and show him off to our family?" Harry looked at Draco.

Draco nodded and carefully cradled Jason in his arms before kissing Harry's brow, "I'll be right back love."

Snape cast a few cleaning and freshening charms as Draco left, cleaning Harry up, and then transfigured the night gown into pajamas. "You should refrain from moving about too much for a week. Let Draco do the heavy lifting. Were you told of the afterbirth ritual?"

"Thank you." Harry pulled at the pajamas, relief painted all over his face to be out of the horrid nightgown. "I was told there would be a ritual but I don't know what the ritual is or what I'm supposed to do."

"It's just a simple burning ritual to pass the magic in the afterbirth on to Jason and dispose of the afterbirth to prevent it from being used against you or Jason. You only have to be there, hold Jason, say the words with Draco, and use your own magic to start the fire."

"Okay, that sounds easy enough." Harry yawned, his body was still aching and now that Jason was out he felt how bone tired he really was. "Snape...Severus, I know I behaved like a spoilt child before but I really want to thank you for being here and for delivering Jason. I wouldn't have trusted anyone else to do it."

Severus put his hand on the top of Harry's head, "I know. I believe I told you Mr. Potter that no one holds words spoken while in labor against the mother. Just take good care of your miracle and remember that no matter how he came about, you're far luckier than you know to have your child."

There was something in Snape's voice a deep longing and regret. "Believe me; I know how lucky I am." Harry wanted to reach up and comfort the older man but he didn't know what for and despite everything they weren't close enough for Harry to ask. He fell quiet and waited for Draco and Jason to come back, hoping he would manage to keep awake until they did. It had been a very long and eventful day. Harry could hardly believe it, he was a Mum, Jason was here and he was beautiful.
"Hm, rest Potter. You look like death warmed over." Snape hitched his robes into straighter lines and strode out of the room.

Draco lifted his brows at the pretty lavender walls of the hallway as he headed for where he heard the most activity, the library. He nudged the door open and his jaw dropped at the transformation it had undergone. "By Merlin, you lot work quick."

It was funny how everything grew completely silent in the blink of an eye. Everyone in the library dropped what they were doing to look at Draco and the tiny bundle he held in his arms. Molly had to fish out her handkerchief from the sleeve of her robe just at the sight of Draco carrying her Grandson.

"Oh, he's here? Did everything go alright? Is Harry okay?" She couldn't wait for the blond to step closer so she could have a good look at the baby.

Lucius noticed the love and pride in his son's eyes. No matter how the conception of this child had gone it was clear to Lucius that Draco was holding his son. The elder Malfoy's heart melted a little at the thought of having a Grandson to spoil and he would do anything to make sure that no one would ever be able to threaten or hurt the new family.

Draco nodded, "Everything went fine Molly. Harry's tired but okay," he wanted to bring Jason over to his parents first but that wouldn't be fair to Molly and Arthur and at the same time he couldn't snub his own parents. He caught sight of a mop of blue hair peeking out from behind Remus' legs and smiled, "Teddy come here I want you to meet the new member of the family first."

The little boy's face lit up and his hair turned a bright blazing pink as he scampered over to where Draco had sunk into a crouch. He looked at the tiny face, "He's all squished."

Draco chuckled, "Well he's been cooped up in a tiny place for the last nine months, and he’ll plump up soon enough."

Teddy reached out hesitantly, glancing up at Draco in question.

"It's okay, just be gentle."
The toddler touched the baby's forehead softly giggling when the baby made a grunt, "Did Unca Hawwy give him a weal name?"

"He did. Jason Anthony Malfoy-Potter."

Teddy scrunched up his nose, "Long name."

The blond chuckled again, "We'll just call him Jason day to day."

Molly caught sight of the tufts of red hair on top of the baby's head and her heart thudded against her ribcage. Jason really was her Grandson; she was so relieved and happy that Harry allowed them to be in their lives despite what Ron had done. It was still difficult to come to terms with the fact that her baby boy had turned out so wrong. She took Arthur's hand and walked closer. "He is beautiful Draco, absolutely precious."

Lucius placed his hand on the small of Narcissa's back and walked closer as well, watching the tiny red-faced baby. "Jason is a good, strong name." Lucius nodded. He was a bit sad there was no connection to the night sky but he understood Harry and Draco's need for a fresh start.

Arthur wrapped an arm around his wife's waist and beamed at the infant, "Healer, that's what Jason means, healer. I wonder if Harry knows that."

Narcissa studied the infant closely, "Oh he's got such a sweet face and I'm rather certain that's a squished version of Harry's nose."

Green eyes opened to look around before closing again with a displeasured grunt and Jason turned his head to burrow against the warmth of his Papa's body.

"Well that's definitely Potter's eyes, no mistaking those." Lucius said, his tone soft and almost cooing without him realizing it.

Everyone gathered close to admire the new baby, Pansy holding Neville's hand tightly and Luna whispering in Hermione's ear that even though Jason was cute he reminded her of a Welsh naked mole. All red, wrinkled and hairless.
Hermione chuckled and agreed softly. Ginny leaned her head on Blaise's shoulder and chuckled about the baby's obvious dislike of the crowd. She noted the Twins peering closely over Draco's shoulder.

"Handsome lad innit he Georgie?"

"Oh yes, very. I look forward to teaching him our best tricks."

Bill snorted a laugh, "Well that's a child destined for Slytherin then. Harry and Draco as parents and the Twins teaching him all they know? Minerva had better find a replacement for her job before Jason hits Hogwarts."

Fleur nudged her husband in the side, "Stop zat! 'Arry did not want any house spoken of favorably over ze ozzer remember? 'e wants 'is baby not to 'ave ze prejudices of previous generations."

Charlie snickered as his brother rubbed his side and demurred to his wife then he caught the Twins collars and pulled them back, "Let Harry's blond stand up will you?"

Draco chuckled and stood, "As much as I would love to hand him off to a grandparent first, I think Remus should hold him first this time round." He moved to the werewolf, "Harry loves Molly and Arthur like he would his parents but you knew Lily and James, were family, so it's only right you get to hold their grandchild first."

Remus accepted the tiny baby and shifted he held him properly. Jason was so small; it was hard to believe that Teddy had ever been that tiny. He let his amber eyes roam over the small human. Remus' thoughts went to James and Lily, the struggle James' had had to even get Lily to give him the time of day and later the deep and unshakeable love they'd had for each other. The dreams they'd had for the future and for Harry. None of those dreams had come true but Harry had managed to find his own dreams and now he had his own family...They would be so proud of him.

Remus felt his eyes prickle as he leaned down to place a soft, soft kiss on top of the red fuzz. Sirius would have been so proud too, strutting like a peacock and offering everyone cigars and firewhiskey, Remus believed Sirius would have been happy to know that Harry was starting his life, raising his family in Black manor, making it a bright and happy place. "You are going to have a wonderful life little one and you're going to be so loved and treasured." He whispered into a tiny, pink ear.

Narcissa couldn't help but smile. She remembered, vaguely, how the Marauders had been in school
and how much they'd stuck together like magnets. Her son was right it was only fitting that the last true Marauder hold his brother in arms' grandchild first. She caught Lucius' arm when Remus was about to hand the babe to someone else and shook her head at him before looking at Molly, "You and Arthur go first, you've been waiting longer."

Molly smiled gratefully and cooed as Remus handed the baby to her. Jason had fallen asleep and Molly couldn't help but think that that was probably a good thing since he was moved from arms to arms. "He's so beautiful don't you think Arthur? Reminds me a little of Bill when he was a baby, just something around the eyes." She ran a finger lightly over squished, elfin features.

Arthur chuckled as the baby made a grimace though he didn't wake up, "Billy's got your look love," he kissed Molly's cheek, "I'd say Jason got the best of the Weasley looks here though he looks mostly like Harry. I remember James bringing a picture into work and crowing about Harry all day."

"He does look a lot like Harry and Lily, especially with this coloring. He'll grow up to be all Jason though." Molly and Arthur admired and nuzzled the baby a little longer before Molly walked over to Narcissa and handed her Jason. "Here Narcissa, meet your Grandchild." She gave the other witch a smile and moved back into Arthur's arms. Never in a million years would she have thought she'd be sharing a Grandchild with the Malfoy's of all people.

Narcissa felt her throat grow thick at the sweet weight of the baby in her arms and bent to nuzzle baby hair and draw in Jason's scent. Oh how she wished she could have more children but this sweet little boy would be the first of hopefully many grandchildren. "Welcome to the family sweet little darling. Oh I'm going to spoil you rotten then watch your Maman and Papa try to reign you in."

Lucius thoughts were much like Narcissa's, regret that they hadn't been able to have more children but thankful that the child they'd had was as wonderful as Draco. "We really are going to spoil you Jason and I have so much to show you and teach you." His voice lowered into a soft murmur. "All the Malfoy secrets will be yours."

Hermione tapped Draco gently on the shoulder, shaking her head when he turned from watching his parents with his son and raised an imperious brow, she caught his wrist and lifted his scratched hand to wand level and cast an epipsky, healing it. "I will never again likely say anything overtly complimentary about you but, you're going to make Harry a wonderful partner and you'll be an amazing father to Jason. But don't let it go to your head!"

The muggleborn witch had succeeded in surprising him so that he didn't have a proper retort as she moved back to Luna's side.
Luna smiled and leaned her head against Hermione’s shoulder despite the warning whistle and trill as she got too close. "You have a good heart Hermione, it was nice of you to heal him before the blood burrowers had a chance to infect the wounds and even nicer to say what you did to him. Draco will be an amazing father and he'll do anything to keep Harry happy."

Hermione laced her fingers with Luna's, "Harry would have felt bad if he saw the scratches and I was honest." She lifted a brow as Draco approached with Jason.

"I need to get back to Harry in a moment but I wanted Jason's godmother to hold him first. Luna, Harry and I both agree that no one could be a better godmother for him than you," he transferred the baby into the blond woman's arms before smirking at Hermione, "And of course I will Granger, they deserve no less than the best after all and I am the best in all I do."

Luna chuckled at Hermione's expression but her attention was firmly locked on the little boy in her arms. "I'll be honored being Jason's godmother Draco." Her light blue eyes sparkled. She ran her fingers over the red hair and smiled when there were no signs of wrackspurts hovering around or inside him. "Now I think you should get him back to Harry before Harry comes to find him, you know how stubborn he is." Luna handed Jason back to Draco with one last kiss to a chubby, little cheek.

"I do," Draco took the baby back into his arms and turned to face the room, "Thank you all for being here and for working on the manor for us. It's more appreciated than you know. Now let me get this precious boy back to his Maman." He walked out of the room and headed for the bedroom Harry was still in.

Harry was lying in bed, propped up against the pillows Snape had helped him fluff. He kept his eyes open by pure stubbornness, he didn't want to fall asleep before Draco and Jason was back even though his entire body screamed for rest. He kept looking towards the door, hoping his family would be back soon. "You don't have to stay now Severus, I'm fine and I'm sure you want to get back to Remus and Teddy."

Severus moved a bassinet next to the bed, "Hm, rest brat. Medi-wizard's orders."

Draco gave his godfather a smile, "Thank you Uncle Severus, for coming, helping, everything."

The professor lifted a dark brow and pat Draco on the back, "You're family," and then he disappeared out the door leaving Harry and Draco alone with their son.
"Thank Merlin you're back, I was worried you'd gotten lost there for a second." Harry shifted in bed, grimacing when his body didn't agree with the movements but he wanted to make room for Draco and Jason. "Come lie with me, please." He petted the mattress next to him. "I want to hold him so badly but you need to be able to catch him if I fall asleep."

Draco moved onto the bed with his future bonded and handed him Jason before moving to help Harry into a more comfortable position and hold them both, "He's a hit with the family."

Harry chuckled softly as he ran his lips over his son's soft skin, breathing in the scent of him. "Of course! Just look at him, he's the most beautiful baby ever born, amazing, wonderful and so special. Our beautiful little healer."

"He is all of that, beautiful, special, amazing, just like his Maman," Draco kissed Harry's temple, "It's almost terrifying how much I love the both of you."

"I know how you feel, I love you so, so much Draco and now with Jason here us being a family...I'm scared to be as happy as I am now. Afraid something will happen to take it away, that it's a dream and I will wake up in the cupboard all alone again." Harry's voice was soft and slow and his eyelids were drooping.

"Never, you'll never have to go back there love." Draco's arms tightened around Harry, "I'll never let you be trapped like that again. I'm just as real as you are Harry, and I'm not going anywhere."

"Love you, so happy you're mine." Harry snuggled close to Draco, feeling warm, safe and loved. Jason was in his arms and Draco was watching over them. Right now Harry couldn't have managed to stay awake even if Fred and George had set off one of their fireworks right next to his bed.

"The feelings are entirely mutual. Get some sleep love; you've more than earned it."

"Mmm..." Harry snuggled closer, Jason still safe in his arms as he drifted off to sleep.

Draco just smiled and held Harry and Jason close. He had the world all right here in his arms and he was content with his life.

To Be Continued…
Chapter Twenty-Four

Disclaimer: Neither Acherona nor trulywicked have any claim on Harry Potter or any characters or locations thereof.

Warnings: Angst, lots of it, Male Pregnancy, mental torture, infant in peril, boys in love, friendships broken and new friends gained. Disregards canon in so many ways.

Chapter Twenty-Four.

Ron groaned as his muscles brutally protested the morning’s practice. The Easter Island team was hard edged and rough and dear lord it was hard work but it was work. He was paid well, not nearly as well as if he’d been put on a team with a winning streak but well, he had food, a place to live, and he’d not heard of nor seen anything of the little slut and his git of a boy toy in the last month, making him as happy as he could be. He ducked to avoid an owl that was swooping in to the kitchen with a copy of the Daily Prophet. He paid the bird and unrolled the paper just as he took a sip of coffee, which was promptly spewed out as the first thing that met his gaze was a picture of Harry with Draco Malfoy cooing over a baby bundled in a blue blanket. His hand shook as he saw the article proclaiming the baby to look just like its maternal grandmother under the headline that boldly announced the engagement of Harry Potter and Draco Malfoy. His expression twisted into a dark, seething look of pure hatred and he slammed down his coffee and marched back out to the practice field to run through maneuvers and plot exactly what he was going to do about this.

He’d never see a dime of Harry’s money and the way he saw it, it was all that little bastard’s fault. If the bastard had never been conceived then he might have one day been able to sneak his way back into Harry's good graces but ever since Harry announced he was knocked up his life had spun down the toilet and it was all the bastard child's fault, his and Malfoy’s. Well he'd show them, he'd get revenge for it all and squeeze some money out of both Harry and Malfoy while he was at it.

OoOoOoOoO

Severus watched Teddy carefully pick the red peppers out of his rice and carrots in cheese sauce. The boy hated, absolutely hated, red peppers to the extreme despite Remus’ love for them and had made an art of getting every last one out no matter how his Daddy tried to disguise them. It was somewhat impressive.
Remus hid his smile carefully as his son practically dissected his food to get the red peppers out. "Oh Teddy, just eat it please, there can’t be any peppers left after your search." Remus loved this, he loved the three of them sitting down and eating together as a family. Even with his son being picky about his food.

The little boy’s hair turned a mutinous red, "I gotta make suwah."

Severus’ lips twitched, "How can you possibly taste the peppers under the lake of cheese?"

Teddy had a frown of concentration on his face as he picked another pepper out, "It makes the cheese taste funny, even one so I gotta get all of ’em out. I wish Daddy would stop putting the peppahs in my wice an cawwots sos I don’t hafta pick ’em out."

"Why don't you just ignore the rice and carrots with the peppers until your Daddy makes you your kind?"

"Cause 'we don't waste food' no matter how yucky one part of it is. I can pick out the one part and keep the west."

Severus' own fork froze halfway to his mouth as he stared at the little boy who smiled in satisfaction and finally began eating his rice.

Remus filled with pride at Teddy's words; he was a good little boy. He reached out to ruffle still red hair. "You are such a good boy for not wasting food Teddy bear. I promise I won't put peppers in your rice anymore okay."

"Tank you Daddy," the hair turned pink under his daddy's hand as he chewed happily. He swallowed his food and frowned at Snape, "Papa is sumthin wong?"

Remus looked away from Teddy and locked his gaze on his mate who still sat frozen. "Are you okay Severus? Are you hurting?" Remus reached across the table in concern, wondering if Severus was feeling another episode.

Snape shook himself out of his epiphany and set his fork down to rub his hand over his face, "I'm fine. I was just hit with the realization that a toddler is smarter than I am."
Widening his smile Remus captured one of Severus' hands in his, running his thumb over his mate's knuckles. Just the fact that Severus was admitting anyone to be smarter than him was a shocker that had Remus' smiling. "Aww, well Teddy is smarter than most people, aren't you Teddy?"

"That's cause I get my smahts from you Daddy!"

Severus chuckled and shook his head, "Little bear you may have just helped me solve something I've been toiling with for a while now."

"Weawy?" Teddy blinked up at his Papa with big dark eyes.

"Really."

"What has your brilliant mind worked out now Severus?" Remus tilted his head in curiosity, looking very much like his son at that moment, watching Severus with wide honey colored eyes.

"Possibly a safe way to keep a promise to an old friend."

Had Severus figured out something about the Dark Mark and the curse that came with it? Remus was extremely curious but it wasn't a subject of conversation to have in front of a toddler who drank everything up like a sponge. "That's absolutely wonderful." Remus settled for saying, hoping that Severus would talk to him about it later.

Severus squeezed his mate's hand, "I'll talk to you about it later, for now let's finish dinner."

"Sounds like a good idea; if we don't finish dinner then we can't have dessert." Remus' smiled and tweaked Teddy's nose. "I've heard this strange rumor that it's chocolate pudding with raspberries and whipped cream."

From the joyous gasp Teddy made you'd have thought he'd been given the best news in the world. "Chocowate?"
Severus chuckled at the shout of delight that followed Remus' nod and watched Teddy plow through his food like a starving man. He finished his own dinner at a much more sedate pace, half his mind already poking at spellwork.

Remus had to chuckle at the way Teddy bounced in his seat, clearly waiting for Severus to finish his meal but being polite enough not to say anything to rush his Papa. Once they had all finished their food Remus cleared away their plates and returned with the dessert bowls. "Here you are Teddy bear, lots of chocolate."

"Whoohoo!"

Snape shook his head in amusement, accepting his own bowl, "Thank you. He will be bouncing off the walls until bedtime. Why is it that chocolate affects him, and you for that matter, in such a manner?"

Being almost as excited at the thought of the chocolately dessert as his son only shrugged. "Not completely sure, it has something to do with the wolf, the canine aspect of our being. Chocolate is poisonous to canines but for some reason it's more like a drug to werewolves. You want us to do anything, just wave a chocolate bar in front of us." Remus smiled and dug into the sweet pudding.

The potion master smiled slyly and nearly purred, "I will keep that in mind the next time I wish to bend you to my will." He licked a dribble of chocolate from the bowl of his spoon.

Remus' eyes widened and grew dark and wanton as he followed the movements of Severus' tongue. "Bend...yeah."

The other man hummed in enjoyment. He wasn't as mad over it as Remus and Teddy but he did enjoy chocolate, especially when it had complex flavors added to it. "Why Remus, something on your mind?"

Honey flashed amber at the low teasing tone and Remus' managed to shake off the daydream he'd lost himself in with difficulty. "No, just enjoying the dessert." He sucked his own spoon into his mouth, cleaning it from chocolate and cream.

"So I see," his voice was low with amusement as he scooped up another spoonful of his pudding, "I wonder if perhaps I could tempt you into another kind of dessert tomorrow evening." He kept his voice low and added just a bit of a purr to it so Remus would be left in no doubt as to what he meant.
They'd been dancing around each other, admitting their feelings but going no further, for months now and his patience was at its end with cold showers. When Andromeda came tomorrow to pick Teddy up for a weekend visit, come hell or high water Severus was going to seduce his werewolf.

Remus tensed and he looked at his mate searchingly, his eyes darkening even more at what he saw there. "Oh I think that could be arranged, I'm always up to wrapping my tongue around a new treat and suck the flavor out."

Severus shifted just a bit as his body responded to that mental image. "I look forward to it and to getting a taste of my own special treat."

"I believe it will be delicious and I can't wait for us to try that dessert tomorrow." Remus was thankful that Teddy was so engrossed in his pudding that he didn't really listen to them. Oh Remus loved his son but right now he couldn't wait for the weekend and Rommie coming to pick Teddy up so he would finally be able to claim his mate in every way. Remus wanted him so much.

Snape cleared his throat and finished his pudding just as Teddy decided he'd sat still long enough and came running around the table, "Papa, bubbles pwease?"

The potion master nodded and got up, thanking the stars that he'd worn robes today, and walked with Teddy to the play room to conjure some bubbles for the boy to chase.

Remus stayed at the table, doing his best to will his body to calm down. After imagining swimming in ice water and seeing Filch naked he finally felt comfortable enough to get up and follow his family to the play room. He couldn't wait for tomorrow.

OoOoOoOoO

Severus stooped to let Teddy give him one last kiss on the cheek, "Have fun with your grandmother little bear."

"Yes, have lots of fun but remember to listen to your grandmother okay." Remus kissed and held his son tightly before stepping through the floo in Minerva's office with him. He handed Teddy and his rucksack to Andromeda and flooed back to Hogwarts with empty arms but feeling almost childishly giddy at the thought of some alone time with Severus.
Snape looked at his mate and cleared his throat before addressing the headmistress, "Minerva, thank you for letting us use the floo here again. I don't mean to be rude but Remus promised to help me with something I've been having a hard time with and I'd rather not waste time."

Remus' mind went straight to the gutter at the word *hard* coming from his mate's lips and he nodded at the Headmistress. "Yes I promised, very important." He breathed a sigh of relief when Minerva just waved them away and he hurried out of her office, almost dragging his mate behind him.

Not that Severus was complaining. He knew very bloody well that Minerva had had a knowing gleam in her eyes when she'd waved them out but he honestly did not care. What he cared about was the fact that he and Remus were finally going to take each other to bed, no more cold showers starting every morning or needing to keep himself from making a borderline lewd suggestion. He followed Remus to the dungeons, much to his amusement, "Seeking out the better wards of my quarters Remus?"

"Abso-bloody-lutely." Remus agreed with a growl. "I am not going to be interrupted by an overly curious, overly brash Gryffindor without a sense for personal boundaries." Usually Remus didn't mind his students visiting him or coming around to ask questions but he had waited for this so long. He was going to touch and taste and claim his mate and he wasn't going to let anything or anyone get in the way of that.

They reached the portrait entrance to Severus' quarters and the potion master gave the portrait succinct instructions, "Do not interrupt us unless the school is being invaded, and is on fire, a student is bleeding to death outside the door, or Minerva is outside because something happened to Teddy."

The portrait just smirked and nodded before swinging aside and letting them in. Snape cast a few extra wards on the door before turning to Remus and lifting a brow in invitation.

Not having to be asked twice Remus was on his mate in a second, burying his hands in soft, black hair and slanting his mouth almost desperately over Severus'. With a groan Remus tasted everything he could, marveling at the sparks of electricity traveling between them as they touched.

The black eyes fell shut and he opened his mouth to welcome Remus' tongue with his own. Warmth crackled through him to whisper over every nerve, exciting them. He pressed closer, long hands running over the werewolf's shoulders, a pleased sound echoing in his chest at the bunch of muscle.

"You taste so wonderful, are so beautiful and so bloody responsive...I can't get enough of you." Remus released Severus' mouth to run his lips and tongue over the other's jaw and neck, that slender, pale neck that he couldn't wait to mark. "Let's get you out of these clothes, I want to run by tongue
over every inch of you, taste you and drink you in until I'm drunk."

Severus' head fell back to let Remus do as he pleased to the pale skin. "That goes both ways. I want to touch and taste you too, to take you in my mouth, my throat and swallow your cum down." He shifted to work at the buttons of his robes.

"Oh fuck I want that, to feel your mouth around me, sucking and swallowing...I'm so hard, want you so much." Remus' teeth scraped against his mate's skin. "I apologize in advance for this but I cannot wait." He bunched his hands in Severus' robes and ripped, his wolf strength making the fabric tear easily until he could peel the torn robes away from Severus' body. His mouth was instantly on his mate's collar bone and a hand came up to find and fondle a pale pink nipple.

The black haired man arched into the touch as it seemed it was connected directly to his cock. His hands went to Remus' arse and pulled him close to rub their groins together, rolling up against his werewolf's body. "I want you Remus, so badly. I want your hands on my naked body. I want your fingers to prepare me for you and i want your cock pushing into me. I want you to take me, claim me, make me yours and fuck me until I can barely speak and all I can think about is how you make me feel, how it feels to have you inside me."

A low, dangerous growl rose from Remus' throat at those words, that's what he wanted too, to be so deep inside his mate that Severus would always feel him there. "Turn around, brace your hands against the wall and push that fucking gorgeous arse out."

Severus wasn't going to argue. He wanted this, had waited for it, and he felt safe here. Safe with Remus. He knew his mate wouldn't hurt him, knew it now on an instinctive level and he was more than willing to give all of himself up to the other man. He turned around, placed his hands on the wall, and arched his back so his arse was out for whatever Remus chose to do.

"So beautiful." Remus crooned and ran his hand from Severus' neck, over a pale, slender and scarred back down to the swell of his arse. The skin was warm and smooth under Remus' touch; he had never seen something that beautiful in his life. Remus dropped to his knees behind Severus, cupping his mate's arse cheeks in his hands before pulling them apart, looking at the rosy entrance hidden between them. Remus' mouth watered at the mere sight of his and he blew over the little rosebud before leaning in and running the flat of his tongue over it, his nose nuzzling Severus' crack.

The other man shivered then moaned, his head dropping down and his arse pushing back into that sinful mouth. His erection bobbed with the movement and he could feel the cool air of the dungeon sliding over his skin and cooling on the beads of precum that leaked from his cock. Where Remus touched him felt like a hot brand of the most exquisite burn and then the cold air contrasting it went to his head and set it spinning.
That's it; you taste so good, are so beautiful. Do like having my tongue on your arse, does it feel good?" Remus was almost primal by now, the wolf and the man striving only to bring their mate pleasure, drive him crazy and claim him. One of Remus' hands released a soft arse cheek to travel lower and palm Severus' soft balls as he nibbled on the sensitive skin around Severus' hole before pointing his tongue and sliding it into that right, clenching heat.

Severus made a strangled noise, his voice growing lower and huskier as the fire within him blazed higher, "Yes, fuck yes so good Remus."

Remus growled, pleased to hear those kind of pleased noises coming from his mate. He stabbed his tongue in and out of that tiny, little hole, mimicking what he wanted to do with his cock. Severus was so tight and hot around him as he swirled his tongue around, feeling those soft, velvety inner walls clench around him. It was enough to drive him crazy. He continued to tongue fuck the other until his jaw ached. "You have no idea what you do to me Severus, how hard my prick is. I want to fuck you. Fuck you so hard and so deep that I'll be a part of you forever, you'll always be able to feel me inside." The hand he had on Severus' balls crept forward until he was circling the other man's weeping cockhead with just the tip of a single finger in a teasing touch that was barely there.

Remus was a kind man but he did want to tease his mate, drive him out of his mind until all Severus could think about was Remus and what Remus was doing to him, giving him. Despite his gentle nature he was an alpha and the wolf had a need to claim his mate on every level possible. He would make love to Severus, gentle and slow and loving but right now...Right now he needed to claim him and to fuck him.

"Are you feeling needy Severus? Tell me, tell me how you feel. Do you like it?" Remus went back to circling the glistening, winking pucker with his tongue, just like his finger was moving on the other's cock, before he locked his lips around the twitching entrance and sucked.

A loud keen came from the other man and his hands tensed and clenched on the wall, dragging nails over the cold stone. "By Merlin yes, fuck yes...Remus," he moaned again, "I feel like I'm standing in the middle of a fire I'm so hot and needy for you," he pressed back against that teasing, heated mouth, "I want you, I want you inside, I want you pounding into me, hard and fast and so fucking good. I can't wait to feel your cock filling me up, for you to claim me."

Every part of his body was on fire, all his nerves singing for more, begging to be taken, to have his mate inside.

That was exactly what Remus wanted to hear. He loved that he could do this to his wonderful mate, that Severus would allow himself to lose control with him. That Severus trusted him enough to let
go, It made Remus' heart soar and his cock ache. It was a dizzying, possessive feeling to know that no one else would ever see Severus like this. This gorgeous, wanton and needy creature was his and his alone. Remus had to shift on his knees, his hard prick hurting against the fastenings of his trousers.

Remus cast a wordless lubricus and removed his mouth so that he could insert a slick finger inside Severus, moaning at the tight heat surrounding his finger too. Severus was almost too hot inside and Remus couldn't wait to replace his finger with his cock. "I'll do that love, I'm going to pound you until you scream, until your knees give out but I need to take care of you first. Not going to hurt you." Even with the wolf howling in his mind Remus wouldn't do anything that would hurt his mate, that was just unthinkable. He added another finger, stretching and scissoring them inside Severus as he continued to lick and nibble around the rim of that pink little hole.

Severus made a needy whimper at the invasion and stretch. He'd been riding his own fingers almost daily so it didn't even sting, not yet, but it felt so damn good. It was Remus' fingers inside him now, getting him ready for his cock, not his own fingers as he fantasized about this exact thing. "More, Remus please more." His hips were shifting, riding his mate's fingers, chasing the sensation and wanting more, wanting to be fuller.

He added yet another finger and curled them inside Severus, pressing and tickling the other's prostate. Remus moved his mouth lower and sucked on Severus' balls gently as his other hand left Severus' erection to unbutton his own trousers and shove them down his thighs to give his straining prick some room. It wasn't easy since he was still on his knees but he couldn't remove himself from Severus even for a second, wanting to keep touching and tasting.

The brush of those fingers prompted a startled, pleasured cry from the other man before another moan slid from his throat, "Fuck, Remus your mouth," heavy breaths fell from his mouth and he could feel his knees trembling as the hunger the sheer want nearly made him desperate, "good, so, so good." He shifted so that his legs would be just a little bit wider and arched in invitation.

"What you do to me Severus, you are pure temptation in human form." Remus couldn't hold back his growls any longer. He needed Severus; he needed to be inside his mate. "Are you ready for my cock? Are you ready for me to slide inside you? Stretch you and claim you?" Remus got up off his knees and hurriedly tore his shirt over his head. His trousers were still hanging around his hips but he didn't have the time to remove them completely. Remus ran his tongue up Severus' back, tracing his spine until he licked at his mate's neck and his cock lay between Severus' arse cheeks teasingly. "You want it?"

Another whimper came from Snape, "Yes, more I need it. Please Remus, I've made us wait long enough, please, make me yours, fill me up." The feel of that heavy shaft resting between his buttocks, the teasing lick on his neck, the heat behind him as opposed to the cold wall before him, it made him pant in desire. "No more waiting."
"Mine!" Remus agreed in a sharp growl and slicked his cock up with hurried movements before nudging that tight pucker with his blunt head. He moaned against the soft skin of Severus’ neck as he slid inside, nothing had ever felt like this before. Besides frying his entire being with mind-numbing pleasure it also felt like coming home, like this was what Remus had waited for his whole life. "So good! You feel so fucking good around me, sucking me in." Remus' balls were flush against Severus' cheeks and he was trembling with the effort to hold himself still, to give his mate time. "Love you!"

An almost embarrassing whine escaped him at the vague burn of being filled and impaled. His head fell back to rest on Remus' shoulder as he adjusted to the feeling. It was nearly too much, he felt stretched wide and open. One hand left the wall to bury in Remus' hair, anchoring himself in the feel of his mate. It was overwhelming and for the first time in memory he felt almost complete. He shifted his hips experimentally, moaning softly, "Move, please love move in me."

"Oh fuck yes." Remus' arms came around Severus, holding him close to his own body. His right hand came to rest over his mate's heart as he slowly pulled out, only to ram himself back inside. Remus tried to start out slow but it was so hard. He was finally inside his mate, feeling the delicious friction and the way Severus' fluttered and clenched around him. He tilted his head down and to the side so that he could capture Severus' mouth, licking inside his mouth as his cock moved in and out in frantic movements.

He moaned into Remus' mouth, the friction of the cock pulling out then shoving back inside him stoking the fire inside him higher, making him shudder as pleasure suffused him. He took his other hand off the wall, placing it over Remus', trusting his mate to support him, to hold him and keep him from falling. He sucked on the tongue invading his mouth just as he tightened deliberately on the cock in his arse. He loved this, loved the heady feeling of being able to let go and being able to trust that there was someone there to catch him.

Moaning into his mate's mouth Remus continued to thrust inside him. It was too much and it felt so good. Remus really wanted this to last; he wanted to be able to feel this way and to be inside Severus' forever but he could already feel his balls starting to tighten up and the telltale sparks run down his spine. He kept one hand firmly over Severus' heart and encircled his mate's cock with his other hand, stroking it in time with his thrusts. "I want to...I need to...Can I bite?" Remus' teeth actually itched to bury themselves in Severus' skin but he would never put an unwelcome mate-mark on his beloved.

The heat rushing through him and the slow tension making its way through his entire body had Severus' mind blank for a moment before the question registered and he caught his breath. He knew the bite would be the final step, that it would bind them tighter than any ceremony that existed; they would be married in the eyes of everyone, including Magic herself. Could he do that? Could he forever link himself in such an irrevocable way to Remus? Could he both be that selfish and that trusting? A surge of pleasure interrupted his thoughts as his mate's cock brushed against his prostate,
shocks going through him. When his vision cleared he opened his mouth to ask a question, needing reassurance from Remus, "P-promise?"

Remus stilled, only giving shallow, light thrusts as he went back to kissing Severus. "Love you, need you, want you. Forever is not long enough...I'll love you, treasure you, care for you and lean on you forever and always. No one but you...Ever." His arm tightened around his mate, almost as if Remus wanted to crawl inside his mate completely. "I can live without the bite Severus...Can't live without you."

Snape closed his eyes and searched himself briefly before the hand in Remus' hair tightened just a bit as he leaned his head to the side and brought Remus' mouth to his neck, "Then bite."

Remus knew that Severus would never offer if he wasn't sure, still Remus hesitated, feeling humbled that his mate trusted him enough to take this final step. "I love you, thank you so much for being you and for being the one for me." Remus nuzzled Severus' neck as he picked up the pace of his thrusts again, slamming into his mate at the same time as his hand stroked, squeezed and teased. He wanted Severus to feel nothing but pleasure as his teeth elongated and slid into warm skin until he could feel Severus' blood on his tongue.

Severus cried out, feeling only the barest edge of pain as his mate pounded into him but there was more, his magic rose, independent of his will, flooding his body, increasing the pleasure he felt and wrapping around Remus. Something burned briefly on his arm as the claiming bite, the magic of a full mating surged through him but he barely noticed as his body tensed, white hot ecstasy blazing through him and pouring out of him in a pleasured scream. His knees gave out and he slumped back against Remus as he came. His orgasm crashing through him with the force of flash flood as he spilled over Remus' hand and the floor.

The taste of Severus on his tongue, feeling him spasm around him and knowing that they were irrevocably bound by magic now made him soar over the edge. He removed his teeth from Severus' neck and licked the wound closed as he emptied himself inside his mate with a loud howl. His knees gave out and he sunk to the floor, still holding on to Severus tightly, making sure Severus landed on top of him and wasn't crushed. His heartbeat sounded like thunder in his ears and all he could taste and feel was Severus. They were one now and Remus wouldn't want it any other way.

Snape shivered and panted, his pulse racing and his body relaxing as the wave of pleasure subsided leaving only peace and contentment behind. Now he did feel complete, the missing piece of himself having fallen into place. He traced his fingers lazily over the back of Remus' hand, "I love you."

"I love you too, more than I could have ever thought possible." Remus was finally whole, in balance and it was all due to Severus. He pulled his wand out of his trouser pocket and kicked off his trousers. Remus pointed his wand towards his shirt and transfigured it to a soft, thin blanket,
wrapping it around them before he transfigured Severus' robes into a pillow, making a nest for them right there on the floor. His magic answered like never before, it felt a lot stronger now that he had his mate beside him where he belonged. "I'm sorry we didn't make it to a bed, I couldn't wait, wanted you too much." He grabbed Severus' hand and run his lips over the inside of his mate's wrist freezing when he noticed something...or rather the lack of something that should be there.

Severus made a lazy hum, "Am I complaining?" He noticed the stillness of his mate, "What is it?"

"I'm not sure." Remus answered quietly, not knowing if he could believe his eyes. He ran his thumb over the smooth unmarred skin before gathering Severus' other arm as well just to make sure. "Look love; tell me it's not just my mind making things up." He held Severus' hands in his and angled his wrists and forearms up so his mate could look at them.

"What are you on a-" his voice stuttered as he saw the pale unmarked skin of his inner arms. His unmarked skin. Unmarked. In an economical move that he'd have said five seconds ago he was incapable of, he was on his feet and slightly limping towards his lab. He had an intensely bright light burning and his wand out casting diagnostics on his arm in an trice.

Remus blinked as he watched his very naked mate hobble away from him. Despite his empty arms he couldn't help but grin, Severus wouldn't be Severus if he hadn't rushed towards his lab, trying to figure out what was going on. Remus got up from the floor, grabbed his transfigured shirt, wrapped it around himself and followed his wayward mate.

Severus was aware of Remus entering the room, an odd ruffle at the back of his mind like silky fur brushing against skin, but didn't look up from his intense study of his arm. He used his magic to prod at his system, to see if the magic of the mark had retreated somewhere else but the only foreign magic he felt in his body was that of the mate mark on his neck. He stilled, a brow twitching in soft amusement before he began laughing, his hand falling to the table before him to support himself as he laughed a bit like a loon.

One eyebrow rose and Remus walked across the floor to press himself close to Severus and lean his chin on the other's shoulder. "Share the humor love, what has you laughing?" Of course Remus had his suspicions but he wanted to hear Severus say it, needed to know that it was real.

Remus' touch interrupted the laughter before it could bloom into relief filled hysteria and he leaned back into the other's body. "Two magical marks of 'ownership' can't survive at the same time." He closed his eyes, a smile on his face, "It's gone. All traces of it are gone."

Remus kissed Severus' neck before running his fingers over the mate-mark. "My mark will never
ever be used to hurt you or cripple you in any way. It's to show I belong to you, body and soul." He held his mate tightly, the consequences of the disappearance of the Dark Mark running through his mind. Severus was free now, no more curse. If they wanted to, somewhere along the way they would be able to give Teddy a little brother or sister. Remus was happy and he knew Severus was too, he also knew that this would make his mate even more determined to find a way to release his friends from the curse they were under as well.

"I know that idiot fleabag." Amusement and affection echoed in Snape's voice, "I'd never have agreed otherwise. It's just too bad neither Lucius nor Narcissa have any active creature blood, it would have made things easier and more, it would have been amusing to tell Lucius that he'd have to accept a mark of 'ownership' from Cissa. Not that she doesn't already own him body, heart, and soul but it would still have been amusing."

Remus chuckled. "My wicked, stubborn and beautiful mate." He nibbled behind Severus' ear. "You will find a way to help them eventually; you are the smartest man I have ever known. If all else fails I can send some wolves their way and hope for the best or maybe a troll or two." His eyes shone with humor as he continued to hold Severus close.

Severus laughed again, softer this time, "I can't remove the mark from them, but with some time I am fairly certain I can shift it in a manner of speaking, change just one aspect of the magic so they can have more children so no need to send any wolves to them. Of course i could always give Narcissa a potion that would activate her latent blood but I somehow doubt she'd thank me for that."

"Narcissa Malfoy is scary enough as she is without awaken any creature blood inside her...I don't think the world is quite ready for a creature Malfoy just yet." He began to walk backwards towards the door, still holding on to Severus. "Come now love, I'll let you work and experiment your heart out later but right now you are here and naked and I'm not quite done with you yet." Remus' voice grew husky and low. "Let's see if we can make it to bed this time...I'm not making any promises."

"Again, you will not hear me complaining." He let Remus walk him out and decided not to mention that if the way life worked for Harry held true, and he and Draco ever had another child, the world would very likely be dealing with a creature Malfoy. He turned in his mate's arms, smirking, and hitched his legs around Remus' waist, "The couch is fairly comfortable too you know."

Smirking Remus moved his hands to cup a very delectable arse. "You don't say...Well it is closer and we should try its comfort levels, it's almost our duty." He walked out of the lab in search of the fluffy couch. "This time you can be on top...I can't wait to have you ride me." He grinned and walked faster when Severus tightened his legs around him...Maybe the couch was too far away after all.

Severus leaned close and ran his tongue around the shell of Remus' ear, "Ride you hm? A pity I don't have my Hessians here then but I'll make do," he nipped the lobe of his mate's ear.
The thought of Severus in shiny black leather boots and nothing else made Remus groan and he pulled Severus down for a wet, deep and dirty kiss. "Next time we'll take time to get the boots." With those words Remus figured they had made it far enough and pulled them both down to the floor.

To Be Continued…
Draco rolled his shoulders and stepped through the floo into the foyer of Black Manor, cocking his head and listening, a smile curving his lips as he heard bright laughter coming from the library. He walked along the hall and leaned in the doorway to watch Harry make faces and noises at Jason, tickling the baby with the stuffed dragon.

Jason had finally learned to smile properly. Harry was of a firm mind that he had smiled for a long time even though Molly insisted that it was just gas that made him grimace but there was no doubt that it was true smiles. Harry wiggled the dragon plushie in front of his son and chuckled happily when he saw that smile and watched small arms flail to grab the dragon. Harry looked up and caught sight of Draco. "Oh look Jason, Daddy's home." He sent Draco a beaming smile.

The blond walked over and knelt next to Harry on the floor, giving the brunette a short kiss before kissing Jason on the forehead and getting a happy squeal and two little hands patting his cheeks. "So what have the two of you been up to today?"

"Oh we've been very busy; we've bathed and exercised with the baby gym. Later we managed to get our little hands on Crookshanks, sucking on a furry ear." Harry looked up at Draco. "Poor Crooks, I think he's still hiding under our bed." If someone had told Harry that he would be happy staying at home, raising a baby he would have called them insane but his days were full and everyday Jason learned something new. "How was your day? We've missed you."

"Busy, Uncle Severus was practically...hyper and I refuse to contemplate why, the limp was explanation enough." Draco gave a shudder. "He had me working on windfall potions while he fiddled with some arithmetic algorithm. There's some bee in his bonnet but I've no idea what it is."
Harry chuckled though the thought of a limping, hyper Snape was just a tiny bit scary. "I'm glad he and Remus are happy, they deserve it. Sorry that he's running you haggard though, he'll tell you what he's on about as soon as he figure it out I think. It's not really like him to keep you in the dark." Harry tickled Jason's tummy while he spoke with Draco. "I spoke with Poppy today." Harry bit his lip, wondering what Draco would say about the thoughts Harry had been having lately.

Draco's hand lifted to play with the hair at the nape of his fiancé's neck, his brows furrowed, "Is everything alright? You're not having any complications are you?"

"Oh no, it's nothing like that. I'm completely healthy, almost ridiculously so." Harry leaned in and gave Draco a quick peck. "Didn't mean to worry you." He grew quiet, thinking about how to word things. "I love being at home with Jason, watching him grow and develop from day to day but I can't do it forever...I would go crazy. You know me Draco; know that I need something to do. I've been thinking about things a lot lately, being alone here with Jason. I...I think I want to become a Healer. A Healer specializing in pediatrics...I know it's three years of hard studying before the trainee period begins. I know it will be a lot of work but it's the only thing I can see myself doing. I'm so tired of dark magic and chasing bad guys...From now on out I want to help people instead. Poppy said she could be my mentor if I wanted her to." Harry looked up at Draco from beneath his bangs. "Do you think I'm kidding myself? Being able to do this with Jason and everything? I'm not doing anything right now though, I still need to be with Jason, want to be with him but maybe later, when he's older?"

Draco cupped Harry's face in his hands, "Love you spent seven years being hounded, hunted, and threatened by the evilest man our world has ever produced with the weight of the world on your shoulders because everyone expected you to be the one to save them and you won. You can do anything you want to Harry so long as you want it enough. I don't just think that or just believe it, I know it. So long as it's what you want I will stand behind you all the way. By the time Jason is older I'll be finished with my apprenticeship and making my own potions here at home so I can look after him while you study."

Harry felt relief rush through him, relief and gratitude that Draco believed in him, that he was willing to stand by him. "I love you, I love you so much." He leaned in to kiss Draco, still marveling that this brilliant and beautiful man was his.

He pressed his lips against Harry's in a soft, slow kiss putting all that he felt for the other into it before pulling back, brow resting on Harry's, "I'm a lucky man that you gave me the chance to help you, get to know you, and fall in love with you. Luck doesn't quite describe the insane good fortune I have that you love me back."

"Oh Draco, I'm the lucky one." Harry's hand came up to run through soft, blond hair. "So lucky."
He smiled against Draco's lips. "But I do think we need to have a talk with your mother and Molly, our wedding is beginning to look more like a circus than a bonding ceremony...And your mother is adamant about us wearing white wedding robes." Harry glanced down at Jason. "A little late for that for me I think."

The two older witches had bonded over planning their wedding but Harry was afraid it was going way overboard. All he wanted was an intimate wedding with only their closest ones present, family and friends. Molly and Narcissa didn't agree.

Draco pinched Harry's arm, "Don't. Say. That. Completely ignoring that white means something different to muggles than it does to wizards, you are more than worthy of wearing white Harry James Potter. You are not any less than you were before the rat pulled his stunt and I refuse to let you think you are."

"Not less perhaps but I am different than I was. I don't regret anything because it gave me Jason and it gave me you but it did change me and I'm not exactly pure." Harry rubbed his arm, Draco did not hold back with that pinch. Harry was a little worried, he couldn't help it. Draco talked big but he still hadn't made any move to take their relationship further. He was completely healed physically now but Draco still hadn't touched him other that a few kisses and hugs. Harry didn't want to pressure him or bring it up but it was there in the background all the time, like a thorn buried in his skin.

Draco cast a modified muffilato so Jason wouldn't hear him but they could still hear the baby, "Bullshite! You have the purest heart and spirit of anyone I know Harry and if having had sex before marriage makes someone impure then bloody well put me, Blaise, and even Pansy in black robes with scarlet lettering on our chests. None of us were slags but it was war and none of us wanted to die virgins either."

"I don't think any of you are slags of any kind. I know people have sex before marriage...I'm one of them." Harry gave Draco a wide-eyed look, wondering where this temper came from. "I haven't accused anyone of being dirty or easy. I just tried to explain that I don't feel comfortable wearing white." Harry sighed. "Will you watch Jason; I'm going to take a shower."

Draco caught his wrist before he could get up, "Harry my point isn't that I think you think we're dirty or easy, my point is that you are not impure." He lifted his free hand to cup Harry's cheek, "In wizarding terms the white robes mean that the feelings between those being bonded are honest and true. It's a symbol that you and I love each other but symbols can be put aside. If it really makes you uncomfortable we can wear colored robes. My mother and I have a feeling Molly as well, are simply traditionalists."

"Draco I love you but I haven't been pure since the first time I looked into Voldemort's mind when I was eleven. That's a taint that will never wash out. Let the robes be white." Harry pried Draco's hand
off him and got up, kissing Draco's forehead before standing up completely. "Now I really need that shower. I'm covered in baby sick." He pressed out a smile and escaped towards their bathroom.

The blond groaned in frustration and got up, carrying Jason on his hip, to floo his mother, "Maman, help."

Narcissa's face appeared in the grate, "Draco? What's wrong darling?"

He gave her a quick rundown on the conversation he'd had with Harry, running a hand over his face, "I don't know what to do. How am I supposed to prove to Harry that he's not tainted, that he's never been tainted?"

Narcissa's brows furrowed, "Oh dear. This is something I don't think I have the answer to, something that...I just don't know. Perhaps you should ask Severus?"

"I can't do that, he's...giddy with happy. I don't want to ruin that." Draco settled into a chair, "I love him so much Maman and it hurts to know he's hurting over this." He nuzzled the baby's hair, "I'm not worthy of him, I was such a horrid little bully and cruel git for so long, it's a miracle I'm where I am now. I'm still not worthy of him, or of Jason but I'm far too selfish to let either of them go to find someone worthy of them."

"What on earth are you talking about? Did you sniff the forbidden potions when Snape's back were turned?" Harry had only made it as far as the bedroom before he felt bad and turned back, wanting to talk things out more. Now he returned to hear Draco spew such utter nonsense. "Every night before I fall asleep and every morning as soon as I wake up I thank the fates that I was so lucky that you fell in love with me...So lucky Draco. You could have anyone you wanted and you chose me, I still have a hard time wrapping my head around that."

Draco turned to look at Harry, his heart in his eyes, "How could I not want you? You, the man who rather than condemn my entire family, helped us instead despite the right you had to consign us to hell. A man who died for his friends, for everyone on that battlefield. You never once sought to get even with me for anything I did, sixth year you tried to find out what I was up to but not because you hated me, but because you wanted to protect everyone. I was awful to you, a 'loathsome foul evil little cockroach' but still by some amazing power you love me. You think I could have anyone I want? Harry you could have everyone in the world at just the crook of a finger. They'd lay themselves prostrate at your feet and beg for the chance to love you. You've such a big; forgiving heart, open to everyone. I'm closed off to all but a few very close friends and family and you. I'm vindictive, violent, and if I perceive a threat I'll use every last ounce of ruthless Slytherin cunning and dark spells to eliminate it. You're so much better than me and you could do so much better. You and Jason are my miracle."
Harry walked over and sunk down to his knees in front of Draco, running his hands through Draco's hair before cupping his face. "Oh Draco, those people you talk about...They don't want me, none of them do. They want the boy who lived, the one who defeated Voldemort." There was a slight bitterness in Harry's voice. "I'm not perfect Draco and I'm certainly not a saint. I'm full of faults and I've made plenty of mistakes. For a while, on top of that Astronomy tower I hated you Draco, hated you for raising your wand against Dumbledore, hated you for fixing that fucking cabinet and letting the Death Eaters in, you allowed people to get hurt, Bill to get maimed and I hated you." Harry rubbed his thumb over Draco's cheekbone. "Then we came to the manor and you didn't tell...You knew it was me but you didn't tell and I looked into your eyes and thought...Oh, he's just like me, Draco Malfoy is afraid too. You are loyal and brave, doing what you have to do. I love everything you are Draco, the good and the bad. You are worthy, the most worthy because you are the only one I want. Please...please just don't put me on a pedestal; it will hurt so much when I fall."

"Silly man," Draco cupped Harry's cheek, "don't you know I'll always catch you? I know you're not perfect, you're amazing but not perfect but you're not and never have been tainted either." He kissed the corner of Harry's mouth. "You're human love; you've seen horrors, lived through them, been slapped down and gotten back up again every time. I love everything you are too Harry, the good and the bad and the 'dear Merlin it's driving me insane' frustrating. You have a beautiful spirit that I hope with all my heart Jason has inherited."

Harry wrapped his arms rightly around Draco, making sure not to squish a sleeping Jason between them. He leaned in so he could whisper in Draco's ear so that no one could hear since the floo was still activated. "Then by Gryffindor's toenails why won't you touch me?"

Draco blinked, smirked, then nuzzled Harry's neck, "Because I don't want to start something I probably won't be able to finish before our son wakes up, calls for food, or a diaper change but don't doubt that I want you Harry," he murmured softly into Harry's ear, "Haven't you noticed how long I take in the shower? I'm not conditioning my hair all that time in there you know love. I'm thinking of you, of what I can't wait to do to you, and touching myself so I can manage to fall asleep without a painful boner."

Harry shivered against him, goose bumps rising on his skin at Draco's words. "Merlin I want you..." He slowly detangled himself and got up off his knees. "Now I really do need that shower." Harry gave Draco a smoldering look. "Don't worry if I take my time." He gave his fiancé a crooked smile and walked out of the room with a new bounce in his steps, he was glad they had talked this through; he didn't want anything between them when they got married.

Draco pursed his lips and watched the way Harry's arse moved as he walked out of the room before smirking in satisfaction. A throat clearing brought his embarrassed attention back to his amused mother in the floo.
"Better now bebe?" Narcissa's blue eyes glimmered with humor.

"Er yes, much. Thank you Maman. Just, would you and Molly consult Harry about the robes, what he wants? And don't turn it into a circus."

"I'll adjust the robes but no promises on the second. You're my only baby and I want your wedding to be feted."

He sighed, "Very well Maman but if Harry gets upset, we're eloping."

"Oh that's just mean. Talk to you again soon bebe."

"Love you Maman, take care." He chuckled as she disappeared and the flames turned from green to orange. He'd been serious about the eloping, if Harry felt it was getting ridiculous they'd keep that as the ace in the hole.

He got up and went to the bedroom, smirking again at the sound of the shower running, and set the sleeping baby on the bed, surrounded by pillows to keep him from rolling off, and set about changing from his potion robes into a comfortable silk t-shirt and simple trousers.

When he finally stepped out of the shower he felt much better. His right hand was nothing compared to the gorgeous man he was engaged to but it had at least taken the edge off. Harry dried off quickly before wrapping a blue, fluffy towel around his waist and walking out into the bedroom, his breath catching when he caught sight of his family...Gods he was so lucky to have them.

Blond brows rose and silver eyes trailed hungrily over the still slightly damp body of his fiancé as Draco looked up from where he was lying on his side watching Jason sleep, "You trying to send me to my own shower early love?"

Honestly Harry hadn't even thought about that but when his eyes snapped up to meet heated mercury ones he had to admit that the idea had merit. A slow smile spread over full lips and Harry reached to scratch lightly at a spot just below his navel, where a thin line of inky black hair disappeared underneath the towel. "Maybe." Was all that Harry said before walking over to a large, ebony dresser, pulling out a drawer and taking out a pair of dark green boxer-briefs. Turning his back on his fiancé, Harry let the towel fall, exposing his naked backside before he slipped the clean underwear on.
A long low breath hissed out of him as Draco's eyes fixed firmly on the rounded cheeks of his fiancé's arse. He cleared his throat but his voice remained a bit huskier than usual, "You're evil love." he could feel his body responding and did his best to think of things that would cool his ardor.

Harry looked at Draco over his shoulder. "But you like it." He had never thought of his body as anything special before but seeing the effect he had on his controlled and composed fiancé...It was empowering. Harry felt truly wanted and it was something he had never felt before. He continued to get dressed in soft, black linen pants and a blue, long sleeved t-shirt before padding over to the bed on bare feet to lie down on the other side of the sleeping baby.

Draco reached across to trace his fingers along Harry's features, "True I do like your wicked streak, even when it's used to drive me crazy."

He closed his eyes and concentrated on the feeling of Draco's fingertips on his face. "We've always driven each other crazy, one way or another since we first met." Green eyes opened again and Harry smiled at Draco.

The corner of the other man's mouth kicked up, "This is true, like metal and flint we strike sparks off each other." One finger trailed down Harry's nose, "Pretty soon I expect we'll catch fire." His tone made it clear he wasn't specking in the negative.

"What a way to burn." Harry replied, still smiling. He moved to lean over Jason to give Draco a kiss but was interrupted by a displeased grumble. He looked down to meet eyes as green as his own. "Awake already Jason, that wasn't a long nap." He brushed his lips over the baby's brow instead, hoping to erase the frown there.

Draco chuckled as the baby made a squeak then yawned, smacking his lips as one little hand waved haphazardly in the air. "This is what I meant earlier." He leaned in to brush a kiss against Harry's cheek, "Do you know I think his hair is getting darker. Not less red, just a darker red than Molly's." He ran his hand over the baby's head gently, smiling at the happy sound Jason made before grabbing one of his fingers and bringing it to his mouth to chew on it.

"Our very own little chastity belt." Harry ran his fingers over a small tummy. "I think you're right about the hair, it's almost redder than Weasley's, not much orange in it. Such a cutie you are." He kissed his son again because he couldn't help himself; Harry was still amazed that this perfect little human was theirs.

Jason squealed at the tickle and gurgled, prompting another chuckle from his Papa. "And he knows it too. He'll take Hogwarts by storm when he goes I think."
"He will, he'll be chased by everyone, boys and girls alike...And he'll have a Mama following his every step until he's at least seventeen. No one's going to hurt my baby." Harry grinned, he was joking...Well mostly. "I spoke to your father of all people the other day; he says we need to get a good tracking spell attached to Jason. I don't really like it but he is right, there are a lot of psycho's out in the world and if someone should manage to get their paws on Jason, and Gods I hope that will never happen, we need a way to find him. Lucius said he had a tracking spell on you until you were sixteen, did you know that?"

Draco nodded, "I knew. Most pureblooded families have tracking spells on their children even if they don't actually care about them because they're their heirs. Maman and Father love me though just like we love Jason. Father used a, technically illegal, darker tracking spell that would injure anyone who tried to harm me since he knew he wouldn't always be able to just Apparate to me right away. For Jason though, since I have no intentions of putting either of us at risk of arrest, I'd suggest hiring the goblins to place a tracking spell on our son. There are no stronger or better tracking spells than a Gringotts tracking spell."

"I do want the very best for Jason but do you think you could talk to the goblins about it? The goblins and I, we still have...Issues from when we broke in. They are not happy with me at all and I can't really look at them the same way after the way they treated that poor dragon. I can't help but wonder if they have more creatures chained up in there somewhere." Harry continued to nuzzle Jason as he spoke. "If I didn't have the vaults I have I really don't think they would allow me inside Gringotts anymore."

"I'll arrange it love," he took Harry's hand and kissed the center of his palm, "What ever happened to that dragon by the way?"

"After the end battle there were reports of the dragon hovering over Oxford for some reason. They wanted to take her out as a feral creature but I managed to get a hold of Charlie. She's living in the reservation now, doing rather well as far as I know. Still scared of loud noises so they have to keep her away from the others but at least she's not in chains and she can see the sky and stretch her wings."

"Poor old girl. There aren't many creatures used to guard vaults these days, mainly because the goblins don't fancy getting eaten, and she was probably the last dragon that was there because of the endangered magical species act, even the goblins have to comply with that. Another reason is that blood recognizing vault doors are more secure, had the Lestrange vault had one of those you'd never have gotten in. The creatures that guard vaults are always provided by the owners if they wish a creature rather than the safer, more secure blood magic doors."

"I don't care who provides the creatures, it shouldn't be allowed at all." Harry said stubbornly with a set jaw. That was one aspect of the wizarding world that he would never understand and never condone. "Despite everything I'm glad the Lestrange’s didn't have blood recognizing vault doors, if
we hadn't been able to get the cup then I wouldn't have been able to stop Voldemort."

Draco kissed the stubborn look off his fiancé’s face, "I'm not saying I agree with it pet. I don't. I'm certainly glad that you were able to get in as well though. It was far past time that cancer got cut out."

"I won't disagree with that." Harry said with feeling, tilting his face towards Draco's kisses. "It's amazing is it not? How the world has changed in less than two years since he disappeared?" Harry had a whole new life, a child and a man he loved more than anything, he couldn't be happier about it.

"Amazing and very welcome," Draco leaned his head against Harry's shoulder, "So many good things are happening. It's a little dizzying. Before Blaise would never have felt comfortable even being in the same room as Ginny, Pans would never have jumped for her walking oak tree, Uncle Severus would still be trapped, and I don't even want to think about where I'd be."

Harry kissed him. "I would like to think that we would have found some way to each other despite everything but I don't know...Voldemort cast a very long shadow. We have one and other now though and that is all that matters."

Draco smiled into the kiss, "Yes, it is. Now, mind if I ask what kind of robes you do want to wear for our wedding love? Or would you rather poke at my mother and Molly over that yourself?"

"No, I don't mind talking to you about it. I don't mind white accents but I don't want all white robes...You'll look like an angel in them and I'll look like some swarthy gutter rat next to you. It will just be so very clear how beneath you I am." Harry smiled as Jason suckled noisily on Draco's fingers. "I wouldn't mind silvery gray robes though, the color of your eyes."

Surprise flittered through Draco's eyes before he smiled and he leaned his brow on Harry's, "You have a talent for surprising me beloved. Would you like to know what the silver means?"

Harry nodded and ran a hand through Draco's silky hair. "Yes please, I only know what kind of colors I like, not what they mean."

"In wedding robes it means eternity 'I will forever feel this way for you', constancy 'I will stand beside you no matter what', and it asks for the blessing of the moon on the bonding." He leaned into Harry's touch, eyes half closed in enjoyment.
"That's perfect then because that's exactly how I feel, how I will always feel." Harry continued to run his fingers through blond hair, lightly scratching the scalp. He had to smile at how much Draco enjoyed the simple touch, like Crookshanks when he was petted and scratched behind his ears.

Draco turned his head so he could kiss the inside of Harry's wrist. "I'll tell Maman. Neither she nor Molly will have the slightest problem with the change. Je suis amour toi plus que la vie."

"Thank you, I don't mean to be difficult about the wedding. I want nothing more than to bond with you, it's just growing so big, makes me panic a bit." He moved closer so he could nuzzle Draco's neck. "As long as I get to become one with you I don't really care what happens."

The blond chuckled, "I told Maman that if she and Molly turn it into a circus I'll take you to the Ministry offices and elope so I'm rather certain she'll control herself with that in mind love."

"Oh thank you, thank you, and thank you." Harry grinned with relief and kissed Draco's neck before sitting up. Jason was growing bored chewing and sucking on his Daddy's fingers and he wasn't afraid to let his parents know of his boredom either. "I think I should go give our son some real food before he works himself up too much." He lifted the frowning baby and held him close. "Rest if you want, I know you've had a busy day."

"Mmm," lazy silver eyes smiled at him, "just so long as you come back and snuggle up with me once our son has had his fill. It's become strange not having you beside me in bed."

"I promise, I'll be back as soon as Jason's stomach is filled." Draco was so adorable, lying on their bed all rumpled, sleepy and smiling. Harry wanted to crawl into next to him right away but a grumble reminded him that he had a hungry son. "See you soon love." Harry padded towards the kitchen, the Black manor already feeling like home in a way nothing had before, not even Hogwarts.

Draco just smiled and drifted off, content with his fiancé’s promise to return. He absently set an occlumantastic reminder to speak with his mother about the change in robes; if Harry was going to wear silver then he'd wear its traditional companion in gold.

To Be Continued…
Chapter Twenty-Six

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Warnings: Angst, lots of it, Male Pregnancy, mental torture, infant in peril, boys in love, friendships broken and new friends gained. Disregards canon in so many ways.

MOCKINGBIRD

Chapter Twenty-Six.

Severus prodded the last magical thread loosened by the potion into the new arrangement and set it into permanence, aware of the sharp eyed, disdainful guard watching his every move. Hah, as if he'd help release this man, a man who had raped and tortured not just men and women but children. That had always been a line Severus had drawn. Never had he harmed a child, never had he struck one or bled one. He straightened and moved to allow the Azkaban healer to cast diagnostic spells on the incarcerated and currently sedated Death Eater he'd been allowed to test his theory on. Perhaps he should feel badly that all these people were was meat to the Ministry but he couldn't, he truly couldn't. These were the worst of the worst in the Death Eater ranks, Death Eaters that even Bellatrix, for all her insane devotion, had disdained.

He stood off to the side and waited for the medi-wizard to make his pronouncement.

The white robed man looked up and nodded, "It works, and without any harm to his magical core, body, or mind. Not that he could get much more insane."

Severus nodded, a grim expression of satisfaction on his face, "Your time has been appreciated. Now, if you'll excuse me," he simply turned and walked out of the room, winding his way down through the prison until he was outside in the warm summer air and sunshine again. He walked to the Apparation point and flashed to Hogsmeade for a brief stop in at the Three Broomsticks. He'd not told Remus where he was going or what he'd be doing aside from saying that it had to do with his reworking of the Dark Mark. Some part of him wondered if his mate would heavily disapprove of the fact that he'd tested it on an unwilling person. He stepped into the pub and sat at the bar, "Rosemearta."

"Hello dearie." Rosemearta nodded to him and finished pouring the small wizard at the end of the
bar a pint of honeysuckle mead. She walked over to Snape, her glittering heels clicking against the wooden floor. "What can I do for you professor? It's not many Hogwarts people here during summer." She smiled and pushed her curly, dark hair behind an ear.

"If you still have that elf wine from last summer I would appreciate a glass and an order of chips." Severus only planned on that one glass to take the rough edge of worry off before he went home. He knew better than to drink more than a single glass of elf wine as it was even stronger than firewhiskey without the heavy burn.

"Of course, one moment dearie." Rosemearta dug behind the counter to pull out a dusty, sharp blue glass bottle. She placed a tall glass in front of Snape and topped it off with the elf wine. "Not many who has the stomach for this luv, you're my best customer." She grinned brightly. "Now about those chips, you want vinegar with them?"

He nodded, "Please yes." The bite of the vinegar would off-set the deceptive sweetness of the wine perfectly. It didn't take long for her to get the chips up and he took the first long sip of the wine, letting the complex flavors dance over his tongue before swallowing and breathing out. He picked up a chip and bit in, his lips quirking as he thought that the wine and chips represented Remus and himself rather well. Remus, sweet, complex, and a stronger version of your every day professor, he had a habit of sneaking up on you until your head was spinning with intoxication just like the wine. Himself, plain and common place with a sharp bite that few wished to experience just like the chips. He slowly sipped and ate his way through the wine and chips, paid Rosemearta, and then left to walk back to Hogwarts. He paused by the Whomping Willow, a safe distance away of course, and stood watching it in contemplation.

"Strange huh? How such a rather simple tree can hold so much history? I usually avoid it as much as I can...Not many pleasant memories." Remus regarded his mate with a small smile. He and Teddy had been out on the grounds playing. Remus didn't look much like the professor he was, wearing worn and ripped jeans, an old t-shirt and comfortable sneakers. His graying brown hair was done up in two stubby tails on top of his head, sort of like wolf ears and he had a streak of dirt across his nose. "It's good to see that you're back."

Severus lifted a brow, "You look ridiculous." He glanced back at the tree, "Sometimes I wonder if the tree thinks sentiently and if so what she thinks about all of us, fumbling about her a bit like insects."

"Thank you; you look smashing as well and yes, I missed you too." Remus smiled and went to wrap his arms around Severus from behind, turning his head to check that Teddy was still in sight. "I honestly don't think the tree gives a bloody fuck what we do as long as we leave her alone. Wind, water, the sun on her leaves and deep fertile soil, that's her thoughts I think."
Severus closed his eyes and leaned back into Remus' hold, "Snark is my department remember?" He turned in his mate's arms and snuggled his face into the crook of his neck. "I did miss you though."

"Well I have to pick up the slack when you're all gloomy." He ran his hands up and down Snape's back soothingly. "Are you alright Severus? Has something happened?"

"I completed the adjustment to the mark; I'll be able to keep my promise to Lucius." He drank in Remus' touch. "I tested it on an Azkaban resident."

Remus stiffened, he couldn't help himself. He knew a thing or two about being a lab rat, used to test potions and reactions on werewolves. He understood why Severus had done it, understood but he didn't like it. "Oh Severus, I'm sorry you had to do something like that."

The other man just shook his head after flinching almost imperceptibly at his mate stiffening. He didn't think he could explain that he was bothered because he wasn't sorry. He felt no remorse over using a child rapist and murderer as a lab rat. No remorse just because he was a member of the same species. He was bothered because he felt no compassion for him, or any of the others like the human guinea pig. It made him question whether he had any real emotion or if he was just an empty shell of a man who played at being a decent human being.

"Thank you for telling me Severus." Remus held the other man tighter, feeling his mate's distress about something and feeling bad that he couldn't do anything to make it better. "You know enough about me and my past to know I wouldn't like this and you still told me, I love you Severus, no matter what happens and what you do I love you and it will never change. Your willingness to help friends and to keep your promises is one of the things I admire most about you. Imagine the joy you'll bring to Lucius and Narcissa. Think about the good you're doing."

Feeling Remus relax and hold him closer made relief shimmer through him and he lifted his head, "Remus, shut up and just kiss me."

"Gladly." Remus pulled Severus close and slanted his mouth over his mate's, kissing him with everything he had, trying his best to show how much he loved him.

The heat of the kiss exploded through him, lighting him up from the inside and stirring the deep love and passion he felt for his mate to the forefront of his mind. The force of it erased the numbness that had been with him since he’d finished modifying that mark and he kissed back almost desperately, pouring everything he was into the kiss. He jolted a bit, breaking the kiss when tiny hands tugged on his robe sleeve. He looked down at Teddy who smiled up at him and held his arms out, "I get kisses too Papa!"
Severus smiled and stooped to pick the toddler up, kissing his cheek, warmth and love melting the ice and filling his heart.

"You get all the kisses you want cub." Remus grinned and pulled on one of the tails on top of Teddy's head that mirrored his own. "Hey Teddy bear...I think Severus needs wolf ears too, how is he going to be pack otherwise?" He gave his mate a look filled with mischief.

Severus narrowed his eyes and sneakily transferred Teddy to Remus' arms before stepping back, "You will have to catch me first," he turned on the ball of his foot, giving Remus a challenging look, and took off at a run towards the castle. He'd let them catch him, in their quarters but not before. He was human, loved, and did indeed feel, but he also had a reputation among the remaining summer staff to maintain.

Remus laughed loudly and hoisted Teddy up on his shoulders. "Come on then Teds, let's catch our running wolf." Both the Lupins gave up loud howls and chased after Severus with laughs and giggles.

Snape made it into the castle and had to weave around Minerva as she was coming out of the Great Hall, "Excuse me Minerva," he ignored her startled look and continued on towards the stairs, vaulting over a railing and up towards Remus' tower quarters.

Teddy giggled and waved at the headmistress as he and his Daddy ran by, "Hi Aunt Minnie we gonna catch ow runnin woof! Bye Aunt Minnie!"

"Sorry!" Remus called over his shoulder as he took the stairs three steps at a time, for once thankful for his wolf speed. "It looks as if our runner is planning to hide in the den, we should definitely be able to catch him there don't you think?" Remus noticed the open doors to their quarters and slowed down, planning to sneak up on his mate. Of course there was no way Severus wouldn't hear them coming with Teddy's giggles and howls.

Teddy nodded excitedly, giggled again, then fell silent so they could sneak up on Papa.

Severus waited behind the door, lips twitching as Remus crept in with Teddy on his shoulders. He held his finger to his lips when Teddy turned and saw him through the crack between the door and the doorjamb, his dark eyes gleaming with playfulness. He waited until they were both far enough into the room that he could shut the door and then he swung it so it clanged shut and locked. He folded his arms and lifted a brow, "Really? You mean to tell me I was able to hide behind the door
love?"

Remus grinned. "I blame you, you're very...Distracting." He plucked Teddy from his shoulders and placed him on the floor. "Oh no, our wolf has trapped us in our own den, what should we do now?" Remus crept closer towards Severus, looking forward to a wrestling match with his mate even with their cub in the room.

Teddy giggled, "Tickle!" He surged forwards, shrieking happily when Snape caught him up in his arms, neatly avoided Remus, and fell backward onto the couch.

"Oh no! Not tickling! Perhaps I shall tickle you?!" He wiggled his fingers along Teddy's ribs, delighting in the shrieked giggles of the child.

Remus watched his family with his heart in his eyes before he dived down, joining the tickling match. "Cower in fear; the big bad wolf is going to get you both." He jumped on them, mindful not to hurt either of them as he started to tickle them both.

Both Severus and Teddy laughed and squirmed and cried mercy until Severus took matters into his own hands and grabbed the back of Remus' head and brought him down for a kiss, distracting him from the tickling.

He melted into the kiss immediately, tasting Severus' lips with a happy sigh, all thoughts of tickling and being the big bad wolf forgotten. Merlin, he loved Severus so much and seeing his mate like this, happy and free and so god damned gorgeous. It was a privilege and Remus would never take it for granted, the wonderful fortune that had landed him Severus Snape as his soul mate, his other half and his perfect match in every way. "See, I told you...So very distracting." Remus smiled against Severus' lips when the soft kiss ended.

"Hmm, well if one has the ability, one must use it," The curve of Snape's lips matched his mate's. A giggle made him aware that there were small hands in his hair and he looked into Remus' eyes, "He put pigtails in didn't he?"

Remus' eyes glittered with mirth and he pulled back some so that he was able to watch a pair of very lopsided pigtails residing on top of Severus' head. "Yup, you're a wolfie now, just like us."

Teddy giggled and kissed his Papa's forehead, "We a pack now!"
Severus smiled, "I have no complaints about that," he looked into the warm honey eyes of his mate, "none at all."

Once again Remus was filled with warmth and pure happiness at his mate's acceptance of them, of all that both he and Teddy were. "That's good love because once you're pack, you never go back." Remus couldn't help but grin at his own lameness but he couldn't care less, he was happy.

Snape smiled wider, "Good, now before evening comes and I call Lucius," he twisted and grabbed Teddy to blow raspberries on the giggling boy's tummy. He fully intended to immerse himself in his family's love for the rest of the day.

To Be Continued…
Chapter Twenty-Seven

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Warnings: Angst, lots of it, Male Pregnancy, mental torture, infant in peril, boys in love, friendships broken and new friends gained. Disregards canon in so many ways.

Chapter Twenty-Seven.

Lucius was in the sitting room, a sniffer of nice cognac in front of him and the Prophet's daily cross word in his lap when the floo blared to life and the wards chimed, showing that he had a floo call. He put the cross word down and knelt in front of the fireplace, making out his long time friend's face in the green tinted flames. "Severus." He called out, pleasantly surprised to hear from his friend. "How are you? Do you want to come through?"

Severus paused for a moment, his original plan had been to simply tell Lucius over the floo and then make an appointment but thinking about it now, this wasn't the sort of news you gave over floo but in person. He nodded, "Yes I rather think I should. One moment while I tell Remus." He pulled his head from the flames and turned to where Remus was reading to Teddy, "I'll be going to Malfoy Manor to tell him love, but I'll be back soon."

"'Kay." Remus looked up from the brightly colored book and gave his mate a smile. "Be safe." He looked down at the freshly bathed boy in his lap and continued reading.

Lucius was ready when Severus came through; having moved out of the way so Snape wouldn't trip over him.

The potion master stepped out easily as always, dusting off his shoulders on the hearth. "Lucius," he took in the location of the sitting room vaguely surprised as he knew his friend tended towards spending his evenings in his study, "has Narcissa taken over your sanctum for wedding plans?"

Lucius groaned. "It's a bloody nightmare, fabrics, flower samples, cake samples, table settings, table
seating’s and a redheaded Weasley woman is in there. I can't wait for the wedding to be over and done with.” He motioned to a chair. "Please do sit down, cognac?"

"No. Thank you but I've had my daily allotment of alcohol already, elf wine.” He settled in the wingback chair opposite that of Lucius’, he knew his old friend would understand the implications of him drinking elf wine as opposed to the milder alcohols.

A silvery blond brow rose. "Oh dear, what's happened Severus? Do I need to skin a wolf?” Severus was always very moderate when it came to alcohol and he only had elf wine when he was in turmoil over something.

"Hardly,” Snape bridged his fingers, "I had business in Azkaban, testing a method of modifying the Mark on one of the residents, Mulhaney. I'm sure you recall him. It had me questioning my humanity for a bit until my wolf and Teddy appeared to drag me out of my morose mood."

"Oh please, Mulhaney can't be called human on any level; he's not even on par with the animals...A mineral maybe, a rock." Lucius wasn't a good man, he really wasn't but he knew the importance of holding on to your humanity. "You are human Severus, always have been, too much so at times. I'm glad your mutts could help you see that.” He took a sip of from his snifter and glanced at Severus, trying desperately to sound casual. "Did you have any success?...With the mark?"

"I did. It can't be removed, but it can be modified so the infertility aspect is gone."

Vulnerable gray eyes locked on Severus. "Are you sure? I don't doubt your competence but are you really, really sure? I cannot mention anything to Cissy unless it's definite, she's had her heart broken so many times already...I can't be the one to hurt her again, I've done it too much as it is.” To his frustration the hand holding the crystal snifter trembled.

"Lucius, you should know me better than to think I'd come here and say I've done it when there is any doubt. I would not hurt you or Narcissa in such a way. I am certain. I can modify your Mark without any damage to your magical core, your body, life, or mind. Not today as I'm a bit drained from the earlier modification but at your next earliest convenience."

Lucius closed his eyes, knowing he could trust Severus but it still felt unreal. "I'm ready whenever you are Severus. By Salazar's grace, thank you so, so much for this. A simple thank you isn't enough but I don't know what else to offer.” Lucius wasn't an innocent victim, he deserved the mark and everything that came with it but Narcissa didn't and Lucius would do absolutely anything for his wife.
Severus shook his head, "You do not have to offer anything Lucius. You are my friend, has remained my friend throughout both wars, and you named me as your son's godfather. You are family."

"Yes we are family but we are also both Slytherins, old habits die very hard and it's still difficult to believe than one may have something without giving something in return." Lucius gave a tight lipped smile, still not entirely comfortable showing emotions, even with family. "Thank you Severus and thank you for coming through and telling me this in person, I appreciate it."

Snape inclined his head, "It was not the sort of news one gives any other way. If it will set you at ease, consider it repayment for taking a young, gawky, awkward half-blood under your wing so to speak." He smirked at Lucius, remembering the older man's odd kindness as he'd tried to assimilate into Slytherin.

Lucius waved his hand in dismissal. "Snakes look out for their own, you were a snake it's that simple. Besides, you were brilliant even then; it was a clever move to align myself with such a brain. Who knew your snark would grow on me?" He smiled as he said it to show his friend he was...Mostly joking.

Severus' smirk grew wider, "All a part of my devious plot to-"

"Oh Severus! I wasn't aware you were here."

The potion master turned to look at Lucius' wife, "Narcissa. Lucius tells me you and Molly are enjoying yourselves."

She walked into the sitting room to perch on the arm of her husband's chair, "We are. I just saw her home after we finished arranging the changes to Harry and Draco's robes," her eyes gleamed with happiness, "Harry chose silver robes and Draco the gold both with white trim."

Dark brows rose in mild surprise, he knew of the meaning behind the color choices of course but he wondered if Potter did.

"I'm finally starting to see how Potter could've bested the Dark Lord, he managed to stand up to you two regarding the robes and Merlin knows you can be scary." Lucius smirked at his wife as he placed a hand on her back. Severus' news had made him almost giddy.
She swatted at him gently, "Oh hush. I'm allowed to be excited, our baby is getting married." She leaned into his touch and gave Severus another smile, "So what brings you to visit Severus?"

Snape looked at Lucius and lifted a meaningful brow at him. This was something the blond man should tell Narcissa not him.

"Severus came bearing good news Cissy, the best news." The hand on her back tightened just a bit. "It seems our brilliant friend has found a way to modify the mark...To take away the infertility curse safely." Lucius knew it was only in his mind but it felt as if simply talking about it made the Dark Mark ache on his arm.

Narcissa gasped and turned a questioning gaze on Severus, "We could have another child really Severus?"

He nodded, "Yes. I'll come by tomorrow after luncheon if that's a good time for Lucius."

She looked back down at her husband and leaned her brow on the crown of his head, "We'll finally be able to have that little boy or girl we always talked about, Lucius." Her arms wound around his neck, unashamed of her emotion as happy tears slipped from her eyes.

"Yes love; we can finally have another child, get the family that was always our dream." Lucius pulled his wife down on his lap to hold her tight. He looked over her shoulder at Severus. "Oh and after luncheon will be brilliant, even if I had been busy I would have put anything off for this."

Severus nodded and stood as Narcissa clung to her husband, "I will see you then. I'll leave you your privacy for now; I have to get back to help Remus tuck Teddy in." He lifted a hand in farewell and stepped to the fireplace, tossing a handful of floo powder in and calling out the dungeon floo in his quarters. He stepped into the room greeted by the sight of a yawning Teddy in a fondly exasperated Remus' arms. "The cub refusing to sleep until I returned?"

Remus smiled as he met Severus' eyes. "Got it on one, he swears he can't fall asleep without kisses from both Daddy and Papa." He nuzzled his son's hair, almost impressed by the way Teddy managed to keep himself awake even though he was so tired that he couldn't stop yawning and was barely able to keep his eyes open.

Snape chuckled and walked forward, taking Teddy from his mate, "Alright little bear, time for bed."
The toddler yawned hugely and nodded, "Kay Papa. Was Unca Whooshes happy with what you told him?"

"Yes Uncle Whooshes was very happy as was his wife," Severus carried Teddy to the little room that had appeared off his bedroom for the cub not long after he and Remus had finalized the mating and laid him down, tucking the blankets up over the toddler. "I'll be going over tomorrow after lunch to help them with something so you stay out of here while I'm gone unless your Daddy is with you understood?"

Teddy nodded, "Uh-huh. What's Unca Whooshes' wife's name?"

"Narcissa," Snape sat on the side of Teddy's bed.

"So she's Aunt Nawcissa?"

A smile curved the potion master's lips, "Yes," he leaned down to give Teddy a kiss on the brow.

Remus stepped in and walked over to kiss Teddy on both cheeks and to make sure he had his favorite plushie close. "Sleep now cub, both your Papa and I are here to watch over you." He grabbed Severus' hand as they waited for Teddy to drift off to sleep.

"Night Daddy, Papa, wuv you both."

Severus used his free hand to brush fading blue hair off Teddy's brow, "I love you too little bear. Sleep."

It didn't take long for the toddler to fall asleep, curling up on his side around his plushie like a little wolf cub.

Remus and Severus walked back out into the living room, setting the wards so they would know if Teddy would need them in any way. Remus walked to the plush sofa sat down and pulled Severus down next to him. "It's good to have you home again, I'm spoiled now, feeling bereft when you're not with me."
Snape settled comfortably against Remus, "I'll always come back to you Remus, always."

Remus shifted so he was leaning against the arm of the sofa, pulling Severus close to his chest and wrapping his arms around his mate. "That's the most important thing...I will always be here waiting as well."

"Mmm," Severus closed his eyes, the warmth and comfort he felt combining with the tiredness from the day to set him drifting, "good. I'd hate to have to hunt you down."

"Hmm, that is an idea though; I don't think I'd mind you chasing me." Remus chuckled and began to run his fingers through Severus' hair, feeling his mate grow heavy and relaxed against him. "Sleep love, I'm here to hold you."

Another soft hum came from the potion master as he let himself tumble into sleep, content to let his wolf watch over him.

OoOoOoOoO

Draco had his hand in the small of Harry's back as they walked through Malfoy Manor, Jason in his Mama's arms. He paused when he heard a cheerful whistle coming from the sitting room and they moved to have a look. His brows lifted as he saw his father sorting through paperwork whistling as if he had not a care in the world.

Harry's eyes widened at the sight of Lucius *I'm the purest, snarkiest pureblood in the world* Malfoy relaxed and whistling...Whistling, if Harry wasn't wrong he was even whistling one of Molly's favorite songs, popular on the wizard wireless. This sight was almost up there with Voldemort himself in terms of scary.

Lucius looked up and caught sight of them, smiling broadly. "Draco, Harry and lovely Jason. How nice it is to see all of you."

"Is your father sick?" Harry leaned in to whisper in Draco's ear. "He called me Harry instead of Potter."
Draco murmured back, "I've no idea but it's...odd. Just go with it?" He turned his attention back to his father who'd raised an eyebrow in question, "Father, you look well. Is there a new investment paying off handsomely?" He nodded at the papers Lucius was shuffling.

"Investment?" Lucius looked thoughtful. "I guess perhaps you can call it that, an investment of the most precious and important kind." He looked up at them again. "Well come in, come in don't stand there in the doorway looking silly. Come let me hold my grandson."

Draco turned to nudge Harry forward, murmuring softly, "I've no idea what's got him in such a good mood but we should capitalize on it while we can."

"If you say so." Harry said, still feeling slightly freaked out but he walked over to his future father in law and handed Jason over to the cooing and smiling older wizard.

"Narcissa is around; she's in my study being a wedding general." Lucius grinned and nuzzled Jason's red hair.

The infant gurgled and cooed and smiled as his grandpapa one tiny hand managing to grab and hold a hunk of long white blond hair.

Draco raised a brow as his father began the careful process of gently extricating his hair from Jason's grasp, "She's not going overboard is she? I told Maman not to turn it into a circus."

A matching blond brow rose on Lucius. "What do you think Draconis? Her only son is marrying; she hasn't been able to throw a single party since before the second war. I was kicked out when she and Weasley woman started to discuss albino hippogriffs to pull the wedding carriage." He didn't even grimace when Jason pulled his hair into his mouth to suck on it.

Harry though grew a little pale at what he was hearing.

Draco lifted his gaze to the ceiling, "Oh mercy, come on Harry let's go try and rein Maman in. Jason is perfectly safe going to Gringotts with father," he looped his arm around Harry's waist.

Harry threw a long look at Jason but decided to follow Draco and leave his son in Lucius' hands.
"We'll be fine." Lucius called after them. "We'll be back as soon as it's done."

Draco nodded and tossed his father a wave, confident in Jason's safety with Lucius; he'd survived to adulthood under his father's care after all. Now to stop his mother from making his wedding ridiculous. He approached his father's study and had to pause again when he heard bright happy singing from within. His mother was more likely to express happiness but it had been years since he'd heard her sing anything this...cheerful and by bloody hell that was a muggle song she was singing too.

"Such falderal and fiddle-dee-dee of course is, impossible. But the world is full of Zanies and fools, who don't believe in sensible rules, and won't believe what sensible people say. And because these daft and dewy-eyed dopes keep building up impossible hopes, impossible, things are happening every day." In the crack of the door you could see Narcissa twirling a white hyacinth around to the tune of the music.

"Really Dray, what have your parents sniffed?" Harry asked in bewilderment. Every image he'd ever had of the cold and aloof Malfoys were washed away as he watched Narcissa sing and dance. He would never even have imagined Lady Malfoy to know any muggle songs. He and Draco pushed the door open and stepped inside.

Sparkling pale blue eyes lifted and Narcissa smiled brightly at them, "Draco darling," she went and caught Draco in a hug, kissing his cheek before doing the same to Harry, "and Harry dear. You both look wonderful. I take it Lucius is getting Jason the tracking spell?"

Draco blinked at his mother, wondering, much like Harry, just what she'd been dipping into but he was not about to argue with his mother being in a good mood. "Er yes. I thought we'd check up on you and make sure you're not going too far with the wedding plans."

She chuckled and tapped him on the nose, "Don't worry sweetheart. Molly and I both decided hippogriffs were a bad idea and have decided on the white Abraxans in the stables instead. Or was it the flock of white flitter birds you were worried about?"

Harry swallowed loudly, not sure how to reply. Carriages and flocks of birds...He just wanted to get married to the man he loved. "Err...I thought we had agreed to tone it down some?" He didn't want to upset on insult lady Malfoy in any way but his throat almost closed up at the mere thought of such extravagance.

She set about fiddling with the brunette's hair pondering the best way for it to lie on the big day. "It's just two Abraxans pulling an open carriage to take you and Draco back to Black Manor and we
decided against the birds. Of course since it's being held on our property the peacocks will be about but they're always here. We've limited the guest list to two hundred and no press. The Abraxans are Lucius' gift to the two of you to start your own stables; Draco always loved the horses quite a bit."

Okay, when she worded it like that Harry felt he couldn't refuse. It was quite a compromise to what she and Molly had first planned. "Thank you Narcissa." Harry leaned in and kissed her cheek quickly. "I appreciate it, that you're listening to us."

She chuckled and pat his cheek, "Well it is your wedding after all and both Molly and I appreciate you indulging us. Oh, let me get the measuring tape," she turned and pushed a few sheaf's of paper aside to get a magic measuring tape, "I rather thought you'd prefer me getting your measurements for the robes instead of having to go in to the tailor ten thousand times. Draco your measurements are already on file at Malkins yes?"

The blond nodded, "Yes Maman."

"Good then we'll only need a final fitting the day of the ceremony," she wagged her finger at Draco, "and remember the rule it's one tradition you are not breaking."

Harry watched with amusement as Draco nodded his head like a little boy under his mother's scolding gaze. Then everything became a haze as Narcissa made him stand on a stool while she measured him in every way possible while she continued to smile and sing as she scribbled down his measurements in a notebook with a pure white, peacock quill.

Draco watched his mother in curiosity, "Maman has something else happened recently? Father was actually whistling in the sitting room it's...unlike him."

Narcissa glanced at her baby boy and realized they'd never told him why he had no siblings. She gestured at a chair nearby, "Sit down dear." She continued taking Harry's measurements, "It goes back to Voldemort I'm afraid. You see he never told any of those joining his cause that there was more to the mark than met the eye. It wasn't just a sign of loyalty or a way to call all his followers to him. It was a leash, controlling the magic and even certain functions of the body of those it was placed upon. One of the far reaching consequences was an infertility curse woven into an anchored mark."

Draco inhaled sharply, his hand going to his own arm where the mark he'd once been branded with a mark that was never anchored, one that had disappeared with Voldemort's death. "Then how...I mean I..."
She smiled sadly, "Voldemort controlled when the curse was activated. For his male marked it was only activated after said male had sired an heir, the women never got that chance and were rendered incapable of conceiving as soon as they took the mark."

"That's horrible, unbearably cruel." Harry hissed and stepped off the stool, not really caring if he was done with the measurements or not. "No one, no matter who should have any control over someone else's body or mind. It's more than wrong." Sometimes, like now Harry almost wished that Voldemort would come back so Harry could kill him all over again...Dragging out the agony this time around. "Are you...Have you...You're happy now." Harry reached out and ran his hand up and down Narcissa's back. "Have you gotten good news?"

Draco got to his feet and joined Harry with his mother, "Maman?"

She smiled a bit teary eyed and grabbed for a handkerchief, nodding, "Severus found a way to modify the mark since it can't be removed, ending the infertility curse. I saw the healer just yesterday; you'll finally have a little sister."

He wrapped his arms around his mother in a tight hug as she laughed and cried at the same time, smiling at the thought of a baby sister, "That's wonderful Maman. I'll look forward to meeting her. You'll finally have your Cassiopeia."

"Congratulations Narcissa, that's absolutely amazing." On impulse Harry hugged his fiancé’s mother tightly. "I'm so happy for you and Jason will love to have an Aunt his own age to play with. It's really brilliant news." He smiled brightly at her as he stepped closer to Draco. "You must come over to Black mansion this weekend for a proper celebration, I'll cook."

She beamed at them, mopping at her eyes, "I'd like that, do invite Severus, Remus and Rommy's grandchild as well. I would like to finally meet my great nephew in person, especially as he's calling my husband Whooshes," she laughed melodically, "I was in the room when that little voice called over the floo for his Papa and said 'Oh hewo Unca Whooshes' I don't think I've seen Lucius look so discomfited in ages."

"Oh you'll adore Teddy, it's impossible not to once you meet him." Harry smiled happily when he thought about his godson. "I've heard that he and 'Whooshes' have had several very serious conversations about hugs as well as Quidditch. I do believe my godson has managed to wrap your husband around his finger without even meeting him in person."
Narcissa remained smiling, "Oh I daresay, after all Lucius Abraxas Malfoy allowing someone to call him Whooshes?" She sank into her chair chuckling, "I really do have to thank you Harry you and my son coming together like this has just opened doors that I once thought closed forever. Thank you, for loving my son."

Harry flushed. "How can I not love him? You've raised him to be a wonderful man Narcissa, I am so lucky to have him." He reached out to grab Draco's hand, tangling their fingers together.

Narcissa watched as her son brought Harry's hand to his lips and kissed the brunette's knuckles with his heart in his eyes.

"That goes both ways love." Draco squeezed Harry's hand.

Smiling Harry leaned his head on Draco's shoulder, still keeping their hands entangled. Oh yes, he could brave horses, birds and carriages as long as this beautiful, wonderful man became his husband.

Narcissa dabbed at her eyes again, so happy she could burst. Life simply couldn't get any more perfect.

To Be Continued…
Chapter Twenty-Eight

Disclaimer: Neither Acherona nor trulywicked have any claim on Harry Potter or any characters or locations thereof.

Warnings: Angst, lots of it, Male Pregnancy, mental torture, infant in peril, boys in love, friendships broken and new friends gained. Disregards canon in so many ways.

Extra warnings for this chapter, violence, mind control, forced auto-cannibalism and more.

MOCKINGBIRD

Chapter Twenty-Eight.

Life couldn't get any worse. Ever since he'd seen that paper Ron had been missing Quaffles and was getting chewed out by the coach and captain and every where he turned he heard gossip about Harry's upcoming wedding and how he and Malfoy would be in gold and silver, the oldest wedding colors in their world with the deepest meaning and when he wasn't hearing about that he heard whispers of the 'absolutely adorable' heir to the Black and Potter fortunes and how his red hair was such a lovely dark russet, just like pictures of Lily Potter. The little bastard had no mark from him, nothing. And even though there were girls aplenty around who he stared at and longed to take to bed, his cock wouldn't stir for anything thanks to that foul curse Hermione had left on him. It made him want to punch something but no matter where he went or what he did he could feel eyes on him, someone was watching him.

He slammed into his quarters and went to his trunk. He hadn't spent seven years helping Harry dodge Voldemort and his minions for nothing and that final year, on the hunt for the Horcruxes he'd picked up enough knowledge of how to avoid a tail that he could easily shake this one. He shrank down his trunk and put a feather light charm on it before stuffing it in his pocket and taking up his broom for practice. He marched out to the field, feeling the tail hang back as he was surrounded by his teammates, assured that he had eyes on him and the tail could take a break.

Ron went through the first half of practice as always but when they were called down for a break he instead flew higher, shooting up so fast into cloud cover he was a blur. He used the cloud cover to hide as he disillusioned himself and flew in the direction of home. It was time to start with the first stage of his plan.
The doorbell kept on ringing. At first Vernon Dursley had happily ignored it, watching his favorite football team wipe their rival's arses on the telly. Petunia was at the shop with Dudley, buying supper and Vernon had hoped that whoever was at the door would give up and leave but apparently they wouldn't since the doorbell kept ringing.

"Alright, alright, keep your trousers on. I'm coming." Vernon hoisted himself up from his favorite, wingback chair and walked backwards towards the door, wanting to watch as much of the football game as possible. He yanked the door open and stared the brunet on the other side down. "Yes? What can I do for you? It's Sunday you know and decent people are at home watching the game." Vernon's mustache fluttered in irritation at having been disturbed. Especially by this man that he was sure he had never met before. "If you're looking for Dudley, he's not home right now."

Ron, disguised so as not to arouse the suspicions of anyone who might be watching the house, gave a false smile, "Actually sir, I'm looking for a Mr. Vernon Dursley," he lifted a fancy leather briefcase with the embossed letters of an important and well known barrister firm embossed on the brown leather, "to deliver documents involving the matter of an inheritance. Do I have the wrong address?"

"Inheritance you say?" Vernon's beady little eyes lit with interest as he eyed the briefcase. He did recognize the logo of the barrister firm. He had no idea what the inheritance could be about but everything was of interest. Maybe that freak had finally gone and died...Well Vernon for one wouldn't morn him if that was the case. "No, no this is the right address, please do come in." Vernon plastered on a buttery smile and held the door open wide.

"Thank you," Ron felt the odd shimmer of wards to prevent anything but invited entrance wash over him. The Aurors had protected this fat whale of a man and his family well but not well enough. He was going to enjoy this part of his plan, perhaps a bit too much but it would be fun nonetheless. He followed Vernon Dursley into the living room and took a seat. He'd always been disgusted by this filthy muggle who dared to think of his people as the freaks when he was the one abusing a child simply because he didn't like who his parents had been. It smacked of hypocrisy.

"I'm sorry my wife isn't here but can I get you something? Biscuits? Tea?" That was about all the cooking Vernon could manage, Petunia did everything for him right down to the smallest sandwich and that was the way Vernon liked it. A wife's place was at home, taking care of house and family. "So what about this inheritance then? Who has...passed if I might be so bold as to ask?"

Ron smiled and reached into the briefcase withdrawing a wand as he let his glamour melt away, "Eventually, you. Ah-ah," he flicked his wand and had Vernon tied up and silenced in a trice, "You see I'm in need of a temporary base of operations and what better place than in the home of the people who turned my best friend into a snake." He tapped his wand against his bottom lip, "I do
rather think it is your fault you know. All those years of abuse and neglect just churning round inside him, it turned Harry into a bloody Slytherin," he spat the word, "which lead me to my current predicament as an unemployable, hated wizard."

He studied the red face and outrage of the hugely fat man with dark amusement, "Now now don't pop a vessel I don't want you dead, yet." Ron twirled his wand around his fingers enjoying the paling of Vernon's face, "Yes I do think it's your fault and so I'm going to make you and your horse of a wife and little bully of a son pay for it. And we'll start with this, Imperio!"

Vernon blinked twice before his face became completely blank and he smiled pleasantly at Ron, not caring in the slightest that he was tied up and placed under a silencing spell. All he knew now was that everything was alright and as it should be and that he would do anything and everything the man in front of him asked him to do.

Ron smiled nastily as he unbound the man, "Good now when your family comes home I want you to help them carry the groceries in then once they're all in and the door is closed I want you to beat first your son, then your wife until I tell you to stop." He hummed contentedly as Vernon's chins jiggled with his nod.

Dudley held the car door open for his mother, a sack of groceries already in one big brawny arm. He was still large, still called Big D but it was all muscle now. In the time since Harry's disappearance he'd gotten serious about his boxing, really putting his all into it when his academic grades dropped lower than a sea slug's slime trail, and as he'd put so much effort into becoming a good boxer and hadn't concentrated on food any longer the pounds had melted off or been replaced with muscle instead of fat. It had felt good, especially when he looked in the mirror and knew that when his mother called her handsome little boy, he really was handsome now. Girls bloody well panted after him, much to his awkward embarrassment. He wasn't very good with them having spent no time around girls who were pretty, smart, and decent before. It was weird not knowing what to do for once. He looked up and blinked in surprise when his father came out and took two sacks of groceries from the car to carry them in. His father never helped with the groceries. "Dad?"

"Yes son?" Vernon smiled the same pleasant smile once again and hoisted the grocery bags higher in his grasp. "Let's get inside shall we? I know it's summer but it's rather chilly for the season don't you think?"

Petunia was all but gaping. It was Sunday afternoon, her husband didn't move from his seat when it was football Sunday. Usually she had to serve him supper on a tray so he could eat in front of the telly as he watched his sports.

Vernon carried the groceries inside and held the door open for his family. "Come on then, no dawdling."
Dudley frowned and exchanged a look with his mother before shrugging wide shoulders and gathering the rest of the heavy groceries and carrying them inside behind his mother who had the lighter groceries. He set all the heavy bags down, "I'll go get the water Mum, you go ahead and get the putting away started." He went and fetched the flat of bottled water, closed and locked the car, then carried it inside, shutting the door with a foot before he carried the flat into the kitchen, blinking at his father again as he just stood there watching Petunia putting things up in the icebox. He turned, bent, and shifted the flat of water into place in the pantry and was about to straighten when something coshed him on the back of the head, sending him sprawling onto the floor. He turned over, the shriek of his mother ringing in his ear as his vision doubled and he saw his father, fists bunched, standing over him, a pleasant smile on his face before he started raining those fists down on him.

Ron chuckled from his disillusioned spot in the kitchen, watching as the muscled Dudley couldn't defend himself just because he was taken by surprise.

"Vernon, Vernon stop! What are you doing? It's Dudley!" Petunia wasn't large and she wasn't brave but this was her son, the pride of her life that her husband was beating on. She walked over and tried to pull Vernon away but her husband only kept hitting and hitting. It was as if he couldn't get tired, as if he didn't even feel his knuckles splitting open and bleeding. Oh god, she didn't even want to think about the force it had to take to make his fists look like that...Oh Dudley.

When Dudley, finally lay unmoving, blood pooling around his muscular form Vernon turned to the tiny, frail woman still hanging on his arm, trying to pull him back. The same vacant, pleasant smile was still stretched across his face, making his eyes almost disappear in his cheeks. Without a word he grabbed his wife by her throat, lifting her off the floor, uncaring about her choked gasps and the way her nails clawed at his hands in panic. He still didn't say anything as he threw her across the room, making her collide with the edge of the stove with a resounding crack and he only smiled as he walked over to the still woman and raises his fists once again.

Ron watched with a smirk as he dropped the disillusionment, watched until he heard the crack of a broken jaw, "Enough Vernon." It was just a heady thrill of power for his command to be instantly obeyed, to have control over someone to this extent, to the point he could make them beat and stop beating their own flesh and blood so easily. He tapped his wand on his palm, cast a stasis spell on Petunia and Dudley so they wouldn't die yet, and pondered what to do with Vernon now. He didn't particularly want to get blood on himself. He smirked when he spotted the butcher block with its assortment of knives. "Vernon now I want you to carry your wife and son into the living room, arrange them sitting up on the couch, then come back in here, take the filet knife from the butcher block, sit down at the table just as if you had a nice thick sandwich, then start cutting pieces from yourself and eat them."

Nodding silently Vernon did as ordered, carrying first Petunia to the couch and sat her down surprisingly gently, arranging her hands and legs so it looked as if she was simply resting. Then he
did the same to his son, grunting a little under Dudley's form but not complaining. Once he was done he took the knife from the butcher block and he sat down in his normal seat at the table. He placed his thick, meaty arm on the table top and didn't even flinch when the sharp edge bit into his skin and blood welled up from the cut.

Ron hummed and just walked out into the living room, not even looking at the bloody beaten forms of the other two residents of the house. He didn't need to sit and watch as Vernon ate himself to death. He pulled out a sheaf of papers from the briefcase and a quill to fine tune his plan. He was going to get his hands on Harry's spawn and falsely ransom the little bastard before handing it off to a vampire baby broker and walking away. Once in the hands of a vampire family as a future human servant Harry would have no chance of getting the little spawn back and he'd have a nice chunk of the Black and Potter money as well as what the vampires pay for a quality magical human. He'd be set for life and able to hide himself comfortably in some pretty foreign country and Harry wouldn't be able to do anything about it.

OoOoOoOoO

The, thankfully empty, glass phial in Draco's hand shattered, a cauldron exploded behind him, all the candles and wall torches in the room flared dangerously high, and a sharp, bitingly cold wind blew through Snape's potion lab as the young blond stared at his father, icy temper snapping in his eyes, "You mean to tell me that one of the men hired to keep an eye on the rat, to make sure he stayed on Easter Island, slacked off for fish and chips and let him get away?"

None of the anger was directed at his father, it all focused squarely on the incompetent idiot who took his eyes off Ronald Weasley, but it was clear in the pale cheeks, the very slight tremble in his hands, and the flaring magic in the room that dropped the temperature so low you could see your breath that Draco was just shades away from killing something.

"Believe me Draco, no one is more disappointed than I am and I can assure you that the lack of attention on my hired man's part has been dealt with." That was said in the same cool, icy tone of his son. Lucius Malfoy didn't tolerate failure and when someone he had hired failed that failure reflected back on him. "I have people out there trying to pick up Weasley's magical signature but so far they haven't come up with anything. I don't know where he's hoarded himself away but I will find him."

Severus cleaned up the shattered glass and exploded potion as Draco shook, trying to gain control of himself, then set everything aside, "Draco go home to Harry, he needs to know about this so he can take the proper precautions and I would also suggest contacting Miss Granger. The three of them spent months avoiding Snatchers and Death Eaters while hunting for and destroying Horcruxes. They'll know most of Ronald Weasley's tricks to hide."

Draco nodded sharply, "May I use your floo?"
"Of course. Go." Snape sighed and rubbed the center of his forehead as his godson stalked out into the living area and he heard the floo roar to life. He met Lucius' eyes, "This is a disaster."

"I know." Lucius replied and shook broken glass out of his long, blond hair. "There is no chance the Weasel won't go after Harry and Jason, he wouldn't have run if he didn't have a plan." He sighed deeply. "The boy's not right, that makes in highly unpredictable as well, and there is no way to figure their mind out and no way to reason with them. It's just like with Bella all over again."

"Not right no, but he was considered Gryffindor's miniature chess master for a reason," Severus pulled a headache potion from his stores and handed it to Lucius, "he'll stay under cover until he's ready to strike and that will only happen once he's assured of success." He frowned into the now empty cauldron, "The question is what his game is going to be. Death or something worse?"

"If I were Ronald Weasley, having been scorned, ridiculed and having my dream job yanked away from me all because of a single night of fucking...I wouldn't go for something as easy as death. I would strike where it would hurt the most and I would make sure it kept on hurting for as long as possible. All to get back on the ones I consider responsible for my downfall. In this case meaning Harry, Jason and to some extent Draco." Lucius downed the headache potion, hoping it would work its magic quickly; he didn't have time to have a headache. "We only need to figure out how to stop him from whatever it is he's planning to do."

Severus nodded, "I'll speak to Molly and Arthur and see if they might know of any places he might hide out at. Finnegan and Thomas as well, until he denied Jason he was still close friends with them. And Lucius, I would suggest to root around in your more shadowy contacts and have them put their ears to the ground. One good thing is that you thought to have the goblins put the tracking spell on Jason. No wizard made wards will block it."

Lucius nodded grimly. "Jason will always be a high profile target. You and I know that the world isn't made of sunshine and goodness, as much as I hope that tracking spell won't ever be needed it is necessary." He raised a brow. "And who do you take me for Severus, my shady contacts is already out there, dragging their ears to the ground if they know what's good for them. I have even contacted some of the snatchers that weren't captured, they are lowlifes of the worst degree but no one can track like they can...Except for your wolf maybe."

The potion master grimaced, "And speaking of my wolf, I have to tell him about this." He reached up and traced a finger over his mate mark. "He'll positively explode as well. I'm glad this is Andromeda's weekend with Teddy."

"I'm going to have to tell Cissy as well." Lucius made a face. "I don't want to, she needs to take it
easy but you and I both know she will skin me alive if I kept this from her." Lucius studied his nails, mostly just because he was a Malfoy and he refused to fidget. "How do you think Potter will react to this? I know he took out the Dark Lord but this is about his child, can he keep his calm do you think?"

A dark brow rose, "I do believe you were in the Department of Mysteries when Black met his end, what do you think?"

"I think we should be worried then." Lucius replied calmly even though calm was the last thing he was. It wouldn't help to rage and panic though. As much as he hated it the ball was in the Weasel's court to use crude muggle language.

"Very much so though I think Draco will help to calm him down. Now, I have to go beard a wolf and you have to beard your wife," A dark brow quirked, "You have my utmost sympathy." It was a weak bit of humor but it was necessary right now.

"I wish you the best of luck Severus and thank you for your sympathy...As it is now I think it might be needed." Lucius sighed again. "Okay if I use your floo as well?"

"Yes. Just cancel it behind you." He walked towards the door. He was not looking forward to interrupting Remus' reading time for this but it had to be done and done quickly. He hoped Draco might have an easier time of it with Harry though it was doubtful.

**To Be Continued…**
Chapter-Nine

Disclaimer: Neither Acherona nor trulywicked have any claim on Harry Potter or any characters or locations thereof.

Warnings: Angst, lots of it, Male Pregnancy, mental torture, infant in peril, boys in love, friendships broken and new friends gained. Disregards canon in so many ways.

MOCKINGBIRD

Chapter Twenty-Nine.

Draco flooed into the foyer and cast a point me spell, walking swiftly to the garden where Harry was playing with Jason among the bluebells. He paused to collect himself. He knew Harry would not take this well and one of them had to be calm and in control here but Merlin it was difficult. There was a threat to his family, to his son and Harry. He wanted to scoop them both up and hide them away in a bloody Gringotts vault while he hunted the rat down and eviscerated him, slowly. He walked over to Harry and knelt, closing his arms around his son and future husband, holding them close to him.

"Hi love, what's the matter?" Harry blinked curiously and petted Draco with the hand that wasn't holding Jason. "Did something happen with Severus? With one of the potions? Are you alright?" As his fiancé didn't say anything, just kept holding him Harry grew worried. "What's wrong Draco?"

"Best to explain that inside to love," Draco nuzzled Harry's temple then took Jason into one arm tugging Harry up with the other, still holding them both close, holding them safe.

"You know you're freaking me out here." Harry walked with Draco, through the garden and in through the open French doors. Without really thinking about it he tightened his hold on Jason. "Please Draco; please just tell me what's happened."

Draco kissed Harry's brow as the doors closed, "Weasley gave the man watching him the slip yesterday," he held Harry tighter as the brunette tensed, "and he's seemed to have disappeared."

All cabinet doors in the kitchen flew open, some right off their hinges. Harry's magic whirled around
them like a storm, only Jason remained safe and unaffected by it, cradled close to Harry's chest. "I knew it would happen, I knew I should never have allowed myself to feel safe." Harry struggled to get out of Draco's hold. "Ron wouldn't have disappeared unless he was coming after Jason...I need to go, I must pack and get out of here."

"No," Draco's voice was firm and he held Harry tighter as some of Harry's magic actually cut into his cheek. He pressed his brow on the crown of Harry's head, "No, we're safe here love. Maman and Father both made sure that the floo wards only allow you, me, Jason, and those who we've invited in to come through. The house wards only allow the family members who were here when Jason was born in unless we key someone else into them. He could find you elsewhere that's not as strongly warded, he knows of Grimmauld Place, the secret passages into Hogwarts. Where else could we go?"

"I don't know," Harry raised his voice, he knew none of this was Draco's fault but panic clawed inside him with sharp claws. "I have no idea where to go but to sit here; waiting to get picked off like fish in a barrel...I can't do that." A choked sob came from him. "I've killed before, everyone says it's easier the second time around...But it's Ron. I know he's not the same person he once was but he was my best friend, my brother for years. How Draco? How could he become like this without me noticing something? Without me sensing that something was wrong? Was I that selfish? Thinking only about myself?"

Draco kissed the tears from Harry's eyes, "No love, no. You've never been selfish. You were always thinking of what was best for those around you, what would keep them safe. I don't know when Weasley lost his grip but it's not, in any way your fault. Some people are flawed Harry and they can go years without it surfacing or years hiding it from those closest to them. Bellatrix was like that until she married Rodolphus and those two sick souls just fed on each other's madness. Ronald's madness has been fed by what he wants but can never have due to his own actions." His hands rubbed up and down Harry's back as Jason began to fuss and cry, not liking his Mama being so upset.

Harry gave a shuddering sigh, doing best to reign in both his emotions and his wild magic. "If it's money he wants he can have it, I've never cared about the vaults anyway. But he'll never have Jason...Never! I couldn't take that, not sure I'd survive." The magic still swirled and whirled around them but it wasn't as violent as it had been. Harry reached up his hand and placed his finger over the wound on Draco's cheek, whispering a soft healing spell Poppy had taught him. "I'm sorry, I never meant to hurt you." He leaned his forehead against Draco's shoulder. "Fuck Draco...What are we going to do?"

"It's fine love," He held his family close, "We'll strengthen the wards here but you're right about not being able to just sit and wait. Father's got people tracking him but the tricks you used while hunting for the Horcruxes are probably helping him hide so you and Granger should both think about those tricks and make a list my father can spread to his contacts." He swayed from side to side to comfort both Harry and Jason. "We'll keep our wands in wrist holsters and always have someone trusted watching our backs when we go out."
Harry nodded and brought Jason up so he could kiss and nuzzle dark red hair. He didn't want Jason to cry, no matter how scared and upset Harry was, Jason should never be sad that way. "I need Mione. She was the brain behind our camping trip, the one with the spells to keep us hidden. If anyone can help it's her."

"Then we'll give her a floo call, she's renting an apartment from the Twins while working for them part time isn't she?" Draco ran his fingers through short dark hair.

"Yeah she is, thankfully the apartment is on top of their storage building and not the shop or the lab." Harry tried to smile but it only came out as a stiff grimace. He held Draco's hand tightly as he moved to the floo in parlor closest to the kitchen. Harry reached into the blue vase on top of the mantle and tossed the floo powder into the flames, calling out for Hermione and praying that she was at home.

It didn't take too long for the woman's head to appear in the flames though her hair was messier than usual, much messier than usual. She gave them a smile, "Hello Harry," she quirked a brow at Draco, "Malfoy," then beamed at the baby, "and of course sweet Jason. What brings you to floo?"

Harry raised a brow at Hermione's dishelved hair and swollen lips but he didn't say anything. He didn't have it in him to joke at the moment. Right now it felt like he was held together by the weakest glue imaginable, one poke in the wrong place and he would shatter like glass. "Mione, I need you to come through right away."

Her smile dropped and her brows drew down instantly as she studied him closely then nodded, "One minute. Just me or do you want Luna there as well?"

Biting his lip Harry exchanged a look with Draco. He trusted Luna completely, she had been his rock when he needed her most, and she was Jason's godmother. "Luna can come, of course she can. Just step on through."

Draco ran his hand up and down Harry's arm as they waited. It wasn't long before first Hermione and then Luna were stepping through, both in loose throw on sundresses. Hermione stepped forward and hugged her best friend, "What's wrong?"

"Ron has slipped through Lucius net, he's disappeared...We need to find him Mione, before he gets his chance." Harry hugged back tightly for some reason the smell of Hermione, a mixture of parchment, ink and flowers always made him believe that maybe they had a chance to fix things.
Hermione inhaled long and slowly and pet his hair, "Okay. Well most of his stealth comes from what we did on the hunt or in school so we'll start there." She looked over at Draco, "Library or is there a study that would be better for planning?"

"The library should be good, Harry?" Draco ran his hand up his fiance's back.

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"The library should be good, Harry?" Draco ran his hand up his fiance's back.

"Yeah, the library is good and most of our research books are there so it's probably the best place. Besides Jason likes it in the library." Harry still felt strangely disconnected and he still held Jason close, not keen on ever letting him go again.

Luna watched in silence, wanting to comfort but not knowing what to say. No empty words could help at a time like this.

Hermione nodded, "Let's get started then," she held out a hand to Luna, "Do you think your father could print something, not anything that would make it look like Ron's a criminal since that would get him in trouble but just," she pursed her lips, "a missing announcement?"
Draco looped his arm around Harry's waist, "With an offer of a large reward for information leading to locating him to get the less noble to bother looking. I'll provide the reward."

Luna nodded. "I don't think that will be a problem. Papa would have done it simply because we asked him but this is big news and a chance to out scoop the Prophet always puts him in a good mood. I'll make sure it's a simple missing announcement followed by the reward. I don't think agitating Ron is the best move we can make at the moment. Better to make it sound as if his family are concerned."

Hermione squeezed Luna's hand as they entered the library, "You go ahead and floo Xenophilius then sweetheart and I'll start writing down the tricks we used during the hunt. And then," her eyes got the heated look they always did when she was working on solving a problem that could cause trouble for Harry, "Then we'll weave some magic to find the little rat."

Draco tugged Harry down into his lap at the table as Hermione spread out parchment and they all got to work.

OoOoOoOoO

Severus drew in a breath then pushed the door to Remus' tower quarters open, tension crawling across his shoulders at having to bring this news. He was not looking forward to it.

"Okay, spill. What's wrong?" Remus stood leaning against the door jamb of the living room, waiting for Severus. He had felt Severus emotions through the mating bond and he knew something had happened.

Dark eyes turned to his mate and Severus walked over, tugged Remus to sit on the couch, and straddled him, hands gripping the werewolf's shoulders, hoping it would keep his mate from jumping up to go hunting. "Lucius came into the lab with bad news. Ronald slipped his tail and has disappeared."

The low growl came first, followed by glowing amber eyes. "Please move Severus." Remus placed his hands on his mate's waist, ready to remove him but not wanting to hurt Severus. He wouldn't let that insane bastard touch even one hair on either Harry or Jason. He would protect his cubs at all costs. "You really should have let me killed him back when I first wanted to."

"And then I wouldn't have had you," he wrapped his legs tightly around Remus' waist letting him
know he wouldn't be moved. He looked into the feral amber eyes, "Draco is telling Harry right now and getting a hold of Hermione to start getting into Ronald's head inasmuch as the sane can. Lucius has as many of his less than scrupulous contacts looking, including Snatchers who weren't found. I need you," he pressed his brow against Remus', "to come with me to the Burrow to get Arthur and Molly's help, some old belongings of Ronald's to send to any other wolves you know to find him." He threaded his fingers through his mate's hair, "I need you to help me protect them with that sharp mind of yours more than the sharp claws right now."

Remus let out a sharp breath through his nose and closed his eyes tightly. When he opened them again the amber was just a glimmer through the regular honey color. "Damn you for being reasonable when I just want to hunt and rip throats out." His hands wrapped around Severus, embracing him instead of getting ready to dislodge him. "You're right, I know you are right but I can't lose another precious person. I can't do it Sev. I need to protect Harry, protect Jason and Teddy and you...I need to keep you safe Severus."

Severus relaxed against Remus, "You won't lose any of us Remus, not to Ron Weasley. We're all warned now so we can be on guard and Ronald Weasley stands no chance against any of us on our guard."

"Don't underestimate him Severus, he's crazy and desperate, not the class clown he once was." Remus buried his face in Severus' neck, breathing in his mate's familiar and at the moment calming scent. "I underestimated Peter for years and look what came out of that. I lost everyone in one swoop."

Snape kissed the other man ear, "I'm not love. He's a threat but his strength is in planning and unpredictability. Head to head he can't stand against both Draco and Harry or you and me, he's not that well trained. Our strength will be in numbers against him if we have to face him head on."

Remus nodded against Severus' neck. "First we need to find him, then we can take him on head on. I want him gone...Don't care how. Harry and Draco deserve to be happy and free and safe to raise their family in peace and frankly so do we." He kissed the mate-mark before moving up and claiming Severus' lips. "I love you Severus, I want us to be able to raise our family in peace too...Maybe someday expand it."

"As do I Remus," he nibbled on his mate's lip, "this one last hurdle and we can relax as much as we ever do."

Remus chuckled through his frustration and upset. "We'll never have boring lives, it's the psychotic killers I could do with a little less of." He kissed his mate again, drawing strength from Severus. "We should get to the Burrow, let Arthur and Molly know and won't that be fun." He took his want out of its holster, wanting to send a patronus to the wolves he knew, letting them know he would be
coming with clothes for them all to sniff. Remus cast the patronus and flushed a little as the silvery raven swooped around the two of them before it disappeared, his mate had never seen his new patronus form before this.

A black brow rose in first amusement then satisfaction before Severus stole another kiss from Remus. Ravens had long been his favorite animals and it was just nice to see that Remus was as affected as he was. "Come on then love, the Burrow awaits." He got to his feet and held a hand out for the werewolf.

Remus took it and hoisted himself up to his feet. He was glad that Severus hadn't made a big deal out of the patronus form. Remus couldn't help it, it hadn't been a conscious choice, Severus was what made Remus feel happy and safe and once they had mated his patronus had changed its form on its own. "Yeah, let's go." Remus squeezed his mate's hand as they moved towards the fireplace. Thankfully Minerva allowed certain floo travel in Hogwarts during summer.

Molly and Arthur were bound to be less than thrilled but Severus knew they'd spare no effort to find Ronald both to protect Harry and Jason and also to get Ronald put away in a place where they felt he'd get the mental help they would think he needed. He wasn't going to let them know that Ronald wouldn't live a month past being located, he was simply too dangerous to risk it anymore.

OoOoOoOoO

Ron hummed cheerfully as he worked a bit of transfiguration. Not his best subject but he could manage this little bit, transforming a windup toy bird into an owl wasn't too big a change nor was the charm put on it. He couldn't get to the little spawn in person but the Black Manor didn't have wards set against owls.

To Be Continued…
Chapter Thirty

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Warnings: Angst, lots of it, Male Pregnancy, mental torture, infant in peril, boys in love, friendships broken and new friends gained. Disregards canon in so many ways.

MOCKINGBIRD

Chapter Thirty.

Draco looked in on Hermione and Luna, who were still working in the library and shooed him out quick enough, and then went back to his and Harry's bedroom, where his fiancé was sitting, watching Jason sleep in the bassinet next to the bed. He came to sit behind the brunette, wrapping his arms around him, "Harry?"

"Hmm?" Harry didn't take his eyes off his sleeping son, he didn't dare to but he relaxed somewhat in Draco's arms, finally able to unclench his fists, not even caring about the bloody half moon shaped marks in both his palms. He felt so scared and so powerless and it was driving him crazy.

"Oh love," Draco lifted Harry's hands in his, bringing them to his mouth and whispering the episkey spell to heal them, "don't, don't hurt yourself."

"I'm not," Harry glanced at his newly healed hands before quickly returning his eyes on Jason's sleeping form. "I didn't even notice it, it's no big deal. Are Hermione and Luna getting somewhere?"

"Hermione is working a tracking spell that will follow the impotency spell she put on the rat, it's complicated and it'll take all night to work the arithmetic equations out but both she and Luna are confident that once complete it will work." Draco watched Crookshanks jump onto the bed, bump against Harry's arm, then jump onto a shelf over the bassinet before settling to keep watch. He pressed a kiss to Harry's jaw, "Uncle Severus said Remus has wolves all across the country and in others tracking his scent and my father has minions of his own looking. Everything that can be done is being done."
"I know...I know that and I'm so grateful for it. It's just...Every second Ron's out there our son isn't safe." Harry rubbed at his red rimmed eyes; it felt as if someone had dumped a sack of sand into them. He reached out with his other hand, stroking light fingertips over a chubby little cheek. "He's so tiny, so trusting and defenseless. He can't look out for himself so I have to protect him, I can't fail."

Draco nuzzled his face against Harry's shoulder, "I know, by Merlin I know. I've been going over our wards and a thousand defensive strategies in my head since Papa told me about this." It had been years since he'd called his father Papa, not since his first year at Hogwarts but he needed the odd comfort of the childhood term. "I keep looking for holes in it all so I can plug them up and I'm terrified I'm missing something."

"You are being wonderful." Harry didn't look away from Jason but he reached up to stroke Draco's face and run his fingers through blond hair. "I know it might not seem like it at the moment but you are what's keeping me sane, what's keeping me here. If it wasn't for you I would have taken Jason and ran, no matter the consequences. I love you...Really love you, so much that it almost hurts. I'm so afraid that you'll be a target too, that Ron will hurt you just because I love you."

"I wish he would come at me, just me," he turned his head to kiss the tips of Harry's fingers, "because then I could take care of the problem permanently. I could hex him out of our lives if he came out and at me like a man and not a sneaky little rat."

Harry's voice was rough when he replied, the edges of it ragged and sharp like broken glass. "Ron's too much of a cowardly ninny to ever face either of us man to man. That is what scares me the most, I know him and I know that he will strike where we are weakest and where it will make the most damage. Like a dagger to the back."

Draco rubbed Harry's arms, hating that he couldn't say anything to make his beloved feel better, hating that words were useless. He'd always had a silver tongue but anything he could say now would be empty platitudes. He pressed his face into the crook of Harry's neck, "I don't know what else to do, how to make it better. I've got nothing but empty words that don't have any meaning until he's found and ended."

"There is nothing to say but trust me love, you are making it better just by being here. When this is over, when Ron is caught and our family is safe...Then Luna and Mione are going to have to watch Jason for the night because I will take you to bed and have you so deep inside me we will never be two persons again. We'll always be one." Harry smiled stiffly but at least he was trying. "So let's find that excuse for a wizard fast yeah?"

Draco kissed the skin beneath his mouth, "Not fair teasing me like that. Just one more thing to punish the rat for. For now though let's get a little sleep, we can put Jason between us if you like."
Harry looked hesitant, he didn't think he would be able to sleep at all but he still lifted Jason out of the bassinet and cradled the sleeping baby close. Maybe Draco could get some rest at least. "It's not teasing, it's a promise." He looked up to meet Draco's eyes as he moved to the bed and pulled down the comforter before laying down, Jason still in his arms, the sweet baby breath washing over his skin the best comfort ever. "Come and lay with me love."

Draco plucked the lullaby dragon out of the bassinet and squeezed it gently, laying down with Harry and reaching a protective arm across their son to run the fingers through his fiancé's dark hair as he sang along with the tune.

Even though he really didn't want to Harry could feel himself relaxing and his eyes growing heavy. Draco's touch and the soft sound of his voice as he sang made Harry uncoil and sink deeper into the bed. He stubbornly kept his eyes on Jason resting between them until his eyes simply slid shut and Harry drifted off to sleep.

Draco whispered a shield charm that would feed off his own energy while he slept, casting it around the three of them, and let himself drift off into a light alert slumber.

Down in the library, Hermione was meticulously etching runes onto a blank parchment in a circle arrangement and writing arithmetic equations as she worked. She'd asked Snape to send through a long lasting alertness potion so she wouldn't fall asleep or make a mistake because she was tired. She was going to get this locator spell finished before breakfast if she had to employ a bloody time turner.

Luna did her best to help, contributing with runes and input but since Hermione was the one that had cast the impotency spell on Ron it was ultimately she who had to figure out the locator spell in the end. Instead Luna tried to be helpful by gathering books and anything else that Hermione might need, trying to be quietly supportive.

The bushy haired woman was well aware of Luna's presence and quiet, solid support. As soon as this mess was over she planned to sequester herself in the apartment with Luna for a weekend and pamper the blond rotten to show her appreciation. When Luna set another rune book beside her, she reached over and trailed her fingers across the back of Luna's hand in thanks and acknowledgement.

Smiling Luna bent to place a quick kiss to the crown of her girlfriend's head before making sure that Hermione's teacup was filled and that she had some chocolate biscuits on a plate. Luna wouldn't let Hermione forget to eat or drink while she was ensconced in her studying. It wouldn't help anyone if Hermione collapsed from hunger and exhaustion and Luna was there to make sure it wouldn't happen.
Hermione heard the hello whistle Cygnus, the brill whistler, gave Luna, no longer was the little creature warning the blond off, and smiled as she etched down another rune. The kiss and the whistle were just the right comfort she needed right now and she hoped that everyone else working on this had their own little comforts.

OoOoOoOoO

In the dungeons of Hogwarts, Severus worked on the potion with exacting care, the voices of Molly, Arthur, Remus, Narcissa, and Lucius background noise as he brewed the Felix Felicis. He was making enough so that several of the people searching would have better chances of finding Ronald as well as enough to last Harry, Jason, and Draco a month, which was the longest it was safe to take the potion daily. In another giant cauldron he had a massive amount of Wolfsbane brewing for the wolves that were helping. It was, to his mind, the least he could do.

Remus walked into the lab, pinching the bridge of his nose. Everyone present wanted to find Ron and wanted to keep Harry and his family safe but Remus still felt incredibly frustrated. It was plenty of talking and very little action in his eyes. He knew it was necessary but that didn't make it easier. "I've spoken to Rommie...She'll keep Teddy with her until this situation is resolved." Remus clutched at his chest, already feeling the emptiness the absence of his cub put there. "She's taking him to her cottage on Ireland just to be safe."

Severus couldn't afford to look up as he added the unicorn horn but he sent a pulse of comfort along the mating bond. "We'll pick him back up in a few days love." His voice was low but confident. With so many sharp minds and noses looking for Ronald it wouldn't take more than a few days he knew. The question was if they'd find him before he struck not if they'd find him at all.

"I know, it's just...I've never been away from him more than two days in a row before. Not even during the war." Remus sighed. "I know he'll be okay, he's probably having the time of his life with his grandmum...It just feels wrong." He smiled crookedly. "I'm going to leave you alone to brew in peace. I thought you should know and I just wanted to see you."

"You don't have to leave you know. Just because I can't take my eyes off the brewing Felix doesn't mean you're unwelcome." He stirred the potion delicately, using the precise movement for it right down to the slightest tick.

"I'd like nothing more than to stay love but things are still tense between Arthur and Whooshes out there...I can at least be a buffer between them while they bicker." Remus wanted to step closer but he didn't want to ruin things for his mate so he stayed in place. "I love you."
"I love you too Remus." He sent another pulse down the bond, this one of love and affection. "Before you go back, how is Molly?" He was worried for the motherly woman. She loved all her children so much and for one of them to be an honest threat to the other had to be hurting her.

"It's rough on her, she's trying to be strong and brave but she's inches away from breaking." Remus ran his hand through graying hair. "Worst thing is that there's nothing anyone can say, there won't be any redemption for Ron."

Severus sprinkled the lady bug wings into the potion as he nodded, "He's her baby boy and she knows, if he presents a true threat and isn't just hiding in another country his insanity a harm only to himself, that Harry's future in laws won't let that threat remain. He could be a squib and weighed down with more chains than the Marley brothers and Draco's parents would still take him out." He angled his head to the cabinet, "Far left corner, Calming Draughts."

"Thank you." Remus sent love through the bond and walked to pick up a Calming Draught for Molly. He knew Severus was right; no matter how this would turn out there was no chance at all that Ron would make it out of it alive. The Malfoy's were not the forgiving kind and their first and foremost motto was family first. "I'll see you later, when you've finished."

"It should be done by dawn, give Molly a hug from me."

"Will do." Remus sent more love through their bond and fiddled with the potion vial in his hands as he walked out of the lab to rejoin the others.

Narcissa looked up from her seat across from a knitting Molly. She'd been silent this entire time because she knew she couldn't offer Molly any real comfort. Molly knew that if her youngest son didn't die being apprehended then either Narcissa or Lucius would kill him and nothing Narcissa could say would ease that pain or that burden. She understood that, understood exactly that she had no comfort to offer, not here, not in this situation.

Molly kept her eyes firmly on her knitting. Jason would need socks and some thicker sweaters when fall came. All these images kept running through her mind. Ron's first steps, the first time he'd said Mummy...Long, waking nights carrying him through dragon pox and the flu. He was her sweet baby boy and she couldn't understand what she had done wrong, where she had messed up to make him turn out this way. Somewhere along the way she must have made a mistake but no matter how hard she thought about it, she couldn't figure out when.
Beside her Arthur hand his fingers bridged in front of his mouth, his normally soft brown eyes grim and hard and staring at Lucius. He was no fool. He knew exactly what would happen to Ronald once found if he wasn't able to get his son away into a place where he'd be kept under lock and key, where even Lucius Malfoy couldn't reach. Even as he wracked his brain thinking of places his son would disappear to, none of them common hidey holes but rather places that only a strategist would think of using and no matter how far he'd fallen Ron was a strategist. Arthur knew he couldn't completely protect Ronald from losing everything without endangering Harry and Jason so he wouldn't. He'd strip the magic from his son and lock the chains himself if he must but he couldn't allow his child to die. He'd feel the same if it was Harry who'd lost his mind and mistreated and become a threat to Ron. They were both his boys.

Lucius met Arthur's stare straight on. He knew exactly what the other man was thinking. He would think and do just the same if it was his son. He also knew that this was one time he wouldn't be able to accommodate Arthur Weasley for the sake of Harry and Jason. Ronald had used up all his chances, he would always be a threat from here on out and he had to be eliminated. No matter how securely you locked someone away they could always find a way out as long as they were left alive. Bellatrix Lestrange was a perfect example of that. Lucius had learned his lesson the hard way and he would never leave his family that vulnerable again.

Remus walked in and noticed the tension directly. Apparently Arthur and Lucius had given up their bickering to simply stare at one and other. He walked over to Molly and knelt in front of her, handing her the Calming Draught and making sure she drank it. It wouldn't take the pain away completely but it would take the sharpest edge off.

Narcissa shifted where she was, wishing she had something to do with her hands as the tension in the room grew thicker. She could feel her stomach clench and roil, knowing exactly what Molly and Arthur were feeling but also knowing what she and Lucius would to protect Jason and Draco and Harry. Her hands started to shake as she considered the new life growing within her and how her own sister had turned out and the possibility of the baby she would have soon growing up to become like Bellatrix and her stomach gave a heave and then she was on her feet, rushing for the bin, retching up her dinner and crying at the same time.

Lucius broke off his staring contest with Arthur instantly and rushed to his wife's side, stroking her back and whispering soothingly in her ear. When she was done heaving he wiped her tears away and kissed her cheeks, one hand coming to rest on her still completely flat stomach. "Shh love, it's going to be okay...Somehow." Lucius held her close, wanting to protect her from the world and hating the fact that he couldn't.

She turned into him, crying into his shoulder as she only would when they were alone or when her hormones were running rampant as they were now. Things had been so wonderful and now she was afraid, afraid for her son, afraid for Jason, and afraid for her unborn daughter and all because one man lost his marbles.
It was almost painful to see, the strong, proud and cool Narcissa Malfoy break down like that. Remus felt for her, he felt for them all. He petted Molly's hands before getting back on his feet and walking back to the lab once again. "Severus, is Calming Draught safe for you if you're pregnant? Narcissa has had a break down...Things are bad out there."

Dark eyes darted up at Remus briefly, "The bottle with the yellow band in section beside the normal Draughts. It's made especially for pregnant women." He sighed, longing to go out there with his friends but knowing that he was better serving in here, brewing the potion.

"Again, thank you." Remus collected the right vial and as he was walking back towards the exit he couldn't help himself, he stopped to give Severus a quick kiss on the cheek, careful not to disturb anything. He just needed to touch his mate, no matter how briefly. "I'd better get this out there." Remus walked back out to the other's quickly before he decided to stay with his mate. He walked straight up to Lucius and Narcissa and handed her the vial.

She let Lucius coax the Calming Draught down her and chose to just curl up in his lap, hand over her stomach. She wanted this over with, now.

Remus found himself sitting in between two couples, both lost in their own pain. He had never wanted Severus more.

Severus could feel Remus' longing and a surge of guilt went through him. He wanted to be out there with his mate so badly, wanted to lean against him and offer comfort but he couldn't. They needed every edge they could get in what was coming.

Molly was leaning heavily against Arthur, the knitting still in her lap and Lucius was stroking Narcissa's hair, still mumbling comforting words only she could hear.

Remus knew that Severus was needed where he was and he knew the best place for him was right here but that didn't make it easier.

Arthur wrapped his arm around his wife, rubbing up and down her arm and looked over at Remus, "Remus, go be with Severus. We won't blow anything up or hex each other." His voice was gentle, "You need your love, we'll be fine, as fine as we can be until this is all resolved."

Opening his mouth to protest, Remus closed it again. Arthur was right; they were adults and as things were right now Remus knew that both Arthur and Lucius first priority were their life mates. Giving the red headed wizard a thankful nod Remus got up from his seat and walked down to the lab for the third time in a very short time. This time he planned to stay with his mate though, unless
something happened. "Hi." He said softly as he entered the lab and sat down in a chair, placed where he wouldn't be a bother to Severus. "Needed you."

Severus looked up briefly, eyes connecting with his mate's, and just smiled, sending Remus his love down the bond in welcome before returning to his task.

To Be Continued…
Ron looked out of the window of the bedroom Harry had once been forced to call his own, the bars now off of the windows, and smirked. The owl transfigured from a port key toy rested on his hand as he handed it a note and then he tossed it out into the lightening gloom of predawn. It would only take half a day for the owl to get to Black Manor and then he'd have Harry's spawn and be holding his onetime best friend by the bollocks.

Draco rocked Jason absently while Harry took a shower and got dressed again before they all headed down to the library, where Hermione was laying out the final runes, piles of discarded parchment with equations on them set off to the side.

Harry had lingered somewhat in the showers, just letting the hot water pelt down on him. He felt dirty in a way he couldn't explain and he hated that Ron made him feel like this even when he wasn't near. At least Harry hoped he wasn't near. He finally turned off the shower and dried off quickly before slipping into the clothes he had brought with him to the bathroom before stepping out into the bedroom where Draco and Jason were.

The blond held out his arm, "Come here," he wrapped the arm around Harry's shoulders and pressed a soft kiss to the brunette's lips, "I love you."

"I love you too." Harry leaned against him for a moment and kissed back before pulling away and taking Jason from Draco's arms, smiling down at the curious, wide awake green eyes. "Should we
"Let's," he opened the door for them, leaving their sanctuary behind with an icy feeling of trepidation. They walked down to the library and saw Hermione tossing crumpled balls of used parchment into the fireplace, Luna standing behind her, rubbing tension out of her shoulders. The brunette looked up at their entrance and gave a tired smile, "Hey."

"Hi Mione, Luna. You guys alright?" Harry noticed how tired they both looked, especially Hermione. He desperately wanted to ask if Mione had figured the location spell out yet but he knew she would have told him if she had. He was grateful they were there at all and felt awful that he still wanted to push for it to go faster. "Has Tooty brought you breakfast?"

Hermione shook her head, "We wanted to wait for you. I've got the equations worked out, now I just have to finish laying down the runes. I should be done with that by noon and with a little luck and a lot of magic it should work."

"If you need magic let me know okay? I've got plenty." Harry spoke softly even as he called for Tooty and asked the tiny elf to bring them all a light breakfast in the library. He didn't really have an appetite but knew that food was a necessity. If Ron struck they all needed their strength.

She moved over to give him a quick kiss on the cheek, "I will. Professor Snape called not long ago; he'll be bringing us a Felix felicis potion later."

"Good, I think we'll need every ounce of luck we can get." Harry smiled and gave her a one armed hug as Tooty popped into the room, carrying a very large tray filled with all kinds of breakfast foods. Harry hurried to levitate the heavy tray to a low, unoccupied table before Tooty crumbled under the weight of it. "Thank you so much Tooty." He smiled at the house elf and picked up Jason's bottle, checking the temperature of the formula on the inside of his wrist before placing it at Jason's mouth, making him suck greedily.

Hermione scooped up a breakfast sandwich and started nibbling at it pausing with a raised eyebrow when Draco looked at her oddly. "What?"

"I just want to say thank you...Hermione." He went to join his fiancé and son for breakfast, leaving a gaping Hermione staring at the back of his head.

Luna walked over and wrapped her arms around her gobsmacked girlfriend. "See, a silver lining to
everything." She smiled and took a bite out of Hermione's sandwich. Luna knew the situation was serious but if they let Ron push them down and take away their emotions other than anger and fear than he would win. She would not let that happen.

Harry smiled at Draco. "I'm proud of you love."

Silver eyes blinked innocently, "What? It is her name." He plucked up a slice of bacon.

"Indeed it is." Harry agreed calmly and continued to feed Jason, strangely comforted by his son's suckling, grunting noises as he ate. "I'm just surprised to hear you say it, thought it might be a too tough name for you to pronounce. Thought that you might have a speech impediment so you couldn't say it...You know like Viktor...Hermy-Ninni." He gave his fiancé a sweet, angelic smile and nabbed the bacon slice right out of Draco's hand with his teeth, munching on it happily.

Draco snorted, "Hardly. If I can pronounce my exiled uncle's name, which I can, her name is no difficulty." He picked up some toast, spreading a bit of jam on it and biting into the corner.

"If you say so." Harry said, still smiling as he moved Jason up and patted him on his back gently so that he could burp.

Luna smiled, there...There the Harry she knew and loved was. She understood all about being scared but right now she could see Harry's fighting spirit emerging. She'd missed it.

Hermione relaxed a bit, leaning back into Luna with a smile, seeing Harry rally his spirit. "So what's this exiled uncle's name? And why is he exiled?"

"Aeschylus, and they tried to eat one of my grandfather's hounds." Draco took a sip of apple juice.

Harry blinked and turned to Draco just as Jason let out a massive burp. "Impressive." He told his son with a smile before returning his attention to Draco. "He tried to eat a dog? Why?"

"He's not exactly right in the head; my grandfather literally dropped him on it when he was around four. He's harmless, to people, but he erm likes to get his meat himself from unusual sources and he likes it...well no fire required." Draco lifted a shoulder, "Grand’Mere, from what I hear, slapped my grandfather at least once a day for the rest of their lives for dropping Aeschylus and damaging his head."

"Have you checked your uncle for grubble bugs?" Luna asked, this was very interesting, she
wouldn't mind meeting this Aeschylus.

Harry was still stuck on the meat part. "So he hunts his own meat and eats it...raw? Remind me to hide away Crookshanks if he ever comes to visit."

"He won't be. He's in an institution for the safety of himself and England's animal population. He's actually rather funny when not around anything furry and four legged."

Hermione stared hard at the blond, "That's...both sad and somewhat horrifying. So your grandmother slapped her husband daily because of that accident?"

Draco lifted a brow, "I never said it was an accident."

"That's just horrible." Harry gasped and brushed his lips over Jason's hair. "Why would he ever drop his own son on his head on purpose? Your grandmother should have done more than slap him."

"Well as they never had any more children I rather think she did." Draco wrapped his arm around Harry's shoulders, "my grandfather was not in any way a good man. Uncle Severus has often, when speaking of him by name, called him Abraxas 'evil bastard' Malfoy. He wasn't insane by any means but he was cold, heartless and cared for no one but himself and surprisingly Grand'Mere. They'd been in a waiting line at the Ministry all day and Uncle Aeschylus was hungry, and kept tugging on Grand mere’s skirt asking for something to eat. To 'teach' him not to make a fuss Abraxas picked him up and dropped him," he shook his head, "evil is truly the only way to describe him. My father never let me get within arms' length of him, something I'm eternally grateful for."

"Me too." Harry leaned his head against Draco's shoulder as Jason gurgled happily. "Poor Lucius, no wonder he's mini-evil."

Luna hid her snicker snort in Hermione's hair.

Luna's snicker combined with Cygnus' whistle and had Hermione chuckling, "And no wonder Draco is such a spoiled rotten prat," she smirked at the blond man, "your dad was overcompensating."

Draco rolled his eyes and kissed Harry's brow, content to let that pass as they all ate.
Hermione polished off her breakfast and dove back into crafting the location spell's parchment. Once finished it would create an image of a map with a red dot where Ron was with a tap of her wand.

Harry finished his breakfast and went to give Jason his bath. He watched Jason gurgle happily as he flapped both arms and legs in the baby bath, spashing water all over. Afterwards he dressed his son in a soft, mini Weasley sweater and knitted booties. It was summer but it could get a bit cold and drafty in the old mansion.

Walking back into the library Harry felt better than he had since he'd gotten the news. Hermione was working on the spell without rest and Luna and Draco were brilliantly intelligent. They could do this, find Ron before something happened. He conjured Jason's usual play mat and his favorite toys before carefully setting the baby down on the mat. It was placed just by his feet so he could watch Jason all the time. "Anything I can do to help now that my hands are free?"

Hermione pointed at a blank parchment, "As you're pants at runes and Arithmancy, Mr. Divination," her brow quirked the reference to the 'easy' class, "start with an action plan for when we find him, best spells to use and whatnot."

Rolling his eyes Harry nabbed the plank parchment and sat down after grabbing one of Draco's extravagant quills. He made sure he could still keep his eyes on Jason and then he settled, sucking in the tip of the quill as he thought about useful spells to use.

Draco worked with Hermione to etch down the runes where ordered, making sure not to make a single error. He would not risk bugging this spell up, too much was at stake. They worked in silent concert for a time until a flap of wings caught Draco's attention and he looked up as a small owl flew into the library, dropping a note before Harry. A quiver of instinctive warning went through him and he dropped his quill and lunged to try and get to Jason just as the owl dove, turned into a tiny wind up bird, and landed on the baby. A soft rush and Jason was gone, the play mat empty.

There was a heartbreaking scream echoing throughout the whole mansion and it took some time for Harry to realize that it was him who was screaming. He couldn't take his eyes off the empty play mat; it felt as if his heart was ripped out of his body. The note lay unopened in front of him, Harry was still screaming.

Draco spun around and moved to take Harry into his arms, rocking him even as his own body shook and his stomach felt as if it was made of ice, "We'll find him baby, we'll get him back."
Hermione had gasped as soon as Jason had winked out and now her hand trembled as she reached for the note and opened it, reading the short message within, afraid of what she'd find inside. Her eyes scanned over the familiar writing and relief and disgust flooded her. She moved over to Harry and Draco, "He won't hurt him Harry," she ran a shaking hand up and down his back; "he's after money."

Harry blinked up at her with hollow eyes as he sat slumped in Draco's arms. "I don't think so Mione...I know he's greedy but come on. Ron knows that I would empty every single vault I own for Jason. He's in it to hurt me, hurt us. I will give him the money of course but I don't think it will be that easy."

Luna nibbled on her bottom lip. As much as she hated to admit it she thought Harry was right. "We will get him back Harry." She turned to her girlfriend. "Hermione, finish the spell. Now we need to be able to locate Ron more than ever. I'll floo the others, they need to know." She walked over to the fireplace and crouched down in front of it.

Draco shook his head, "Not Hermione's spell, Jason has a Gringotts tracking spell on him. Hermione, in my study, third door down from the dining room in the top desk drawer is the locating globe for the tracking spell. Not that I don't appreciate your working on your location spell but this is faster."

She was out the door in an instant, just as two Malfoys, two Weasleys, Snape and Remus stepped out of the floo into the room after Luna had called.

Severus walked over and handed Draco three vials, two with Felix felicis and one a calming draught for Harry.

Molly was crying as she stepped through but her hands were steady as she walked over to crouch besides Harry, coaxing him to drink the calming draught.

Lucius caught Draco's eye, raising an eyebrow in question. Jason was Draco's son as well and Lucius wanted to know how his son was coping.

Draco let his calm, composed mask fall for just one moment so his father could see the gut-wrenching fear and the sharp, icy fury he felt at the moment before he went back to holding and rocking Harry.
Arthur had seen that flash and closed his eyes slumping for a moment before tugging Harry's planning parchment over to himself and scratching through a few things before adding their more lethal versions.

Hermione came back into the library with a pale blue tracking orb and handed it carefully to Lucius.

Lucius took it with a quiet thank you. He'd seen the fear and pain in Draco's eyes and he would do absolutely anything to take it away. He really did feel sorry for the Weasleys but there was no way he would let Ronald live after this. He pulled his snake handle wand out of its perch in his cane and tapped the softly glowing orb. It shone brighter and brighter until it projected a sort of three dimensional image in front of itself of a map. Lucius could see rolling hills and rivers that gave away to roads, cars and lots of cramped houses. It looked like a muggle society of some sorts. Lucius narrowed his eyes. "Surrey?"

Harry's head whipped up at the word and panic clawed inside him.

Draco looked down at his fiancé and ran his hands up and down Harry's arms, "Harry, love? What is it?"

Lucius sounded baffled. "Why in Circe's name would the Weas...Ronald take Jason to Surrey? To a muggle street?"

Narcissa frowned and peered closely, "Why isn't the spell getting closer? It should go through any wizard made wards."

Arthur hung his head, running a hand over his balding hair, "The blood wards."

Hermione inhaled sharply as she spotted the street sign, "That bloody foul little bastard." Her jaw clenched and her hands shook in anger as the fire in the grate flared briefly, her magic flashing high before she put a clamp on it.

Remus was growling. "Well at least we know exactly where he is." The werewolf ignored Lucius and Narcissa's questioning looks.

"This day just keep getting better." Harry's voice was filled with bitterness. "I doubt Uncle and Aunty Dearest invited him in happily." Despite everything that had happened at the Dursleys Harry
hoped they were safe, they had never asked to be dragged into the wizarding world and if anything had happened to them it would be Harry's fault. "I should be able to get through the wards without a problem; they are set after my blood after all."

Draco frowned and looked at the map again, "Your aunt and uncle? Harry where...?"

Hermione answered him, "Number 4 Privet Drive, a charming little Surrey suburban house with a nasty secret. That secret being that the residents are bigoted, abusive, foul, loathsome, gobshites that like to pose as human beings."

Draco's jaw dropped hearing her curse as it was so rare and never quite so foul. Then his brain caught up with his ears and he tightened his arms around Harry and asked softly, "Abusive Harry?"

"No, it's really no big deal." Harry shot Hermione a steely glance. The last thing he wanted right now was to get into a poor little Harry conversation. "The only thing we should be discussing is how we're going to get there and take our son back."

Draco nodded and whispered into Harry's ear, "Later then."

Harry kept quiet, he didn't much want to talk about it later either but hopefully Draco would forget all about it once they had Jason back.

Severus nodded at the vials of gold Felix in Draco's hand, "To start with drink the bloody potions." He moved to the projected map and pointed out one of the cookie cutter houses, "This one Lucius. The blood wards aren't strong enough anymore, even with Jason there, to keep people out. That's why Aurors placed wards to prevent uninvited entry after the Dark Lord's fall."

Arthur cursed, "How are we to get in then, those will keep even Harry out."

Snape exchanged a look with Lucius, "Leave that to us."

Lucius nodded as they all downed the potions Severus had passed out to them. "Just be ready to get in there and do what you have to do to get Jason back. We'll get you inside." Together he and Severus knew ways to break through even Auror wards that would curl Arthur Weasley's toes if he knew. Lucius didn't feel the slightest bit guilty; he had never claimed to be a good man.
Draco squeezed Harry in a hug, "You and I will come in the front door, distracting the rat, though I think I should use your cloak so he thinks you're alone, while the rest sneak in from elsewhere."

Hermione nodded, "Let him underestimate us. Luna are Pansy, Blaise, and Neville on their way? I heard you tell Ginny to stay put for her practice."

Luna nodded, despite bravery and a will to stand up for Harry, Ginny didn't need to be a part of the group taking her older brother down. "I did and I told Blaise to stay with her, she shouldn't be alone. Pansy and Neville should be here any minute though."

"Even with my cloak you need to be careful Draco." Harry looked up at him. "Stay a little behind me while I go to the door, Ron knows about the cloak and I believe he will check around me to make sure I'm alone." He moved away from Draco's arms and pointed to the house. "There's a hatch in the roof, right here." He motioned with his finger. "It's made so that chimney sweepers can get on the roof easily and it leads to a small attic. I highly doubt that Ron even knows about it. Some of you can come in that way."

Hermione squeezed Luna's hand, "Luna and I will take that entrance."

Severus nodded, "Remus and I will come in the back door, Lucius you, Pansy and Longbottom use the window of the master bedroom. Narcissa you-

"Will be staying here, I know." Her hand smoothed over her stomach, "I have no intentions of risking Cassie."

Molly spoke up quietly. "I will stay here with you Narcissa. In case Ron sends another note." She couldn't do it; she couldn't face down Ron, no matter how much she wanted Jason back.

Harry walked over and hugged his surrogate mother. "Thank you Molly, look out for the house and lady Malfoy."

She hugged him back fiercely, brushing the hair off his forehead and kissing it. "I know you'll come back with my grandson safe and sound...I know it."
Draco went over as Harry slipped upstairs to get the cloak and murmured softly, "I'm sorry. I wish..." He looked at the map, lips compressed as he tried to find the right way to express that he wished there was another way than what was going to happen.

Agonized blue eyes locked on his. "I know." Molly pulled Draco into a short hug. "You just concentrate to get one of my boys and my grandson home safe." She released him to go over to Arthur, to hug her husband and cry on his shoulder.

Arthur just wrapped his arms around his wife, pressing a kiss to her head. This was leaving them all bleeding and he hated it. Where had he gone wrong? What value had he not taught Ron that would allow him to do this?

The floo roared and a battle ready Pansy, followed by a grim Neville stepped out. The other man nodded at Draco in greeting.

The blond accepted a hug from Pansy, "Thanks for coming Pans, I know you'd come through hell to help but still...thanks."

"You'd do the same for me." She said simply, that was just how it was. "We're going to have your son back in your arms in no time."

Luna and Hermione whispered quietly to each other, working out what spells to use once they'd made it inside the Dursley home.

Harry walked back downstairs, nodding at Pansy and Neville and handed the folded up cloak to Draco. "Are we ready to go?"

Everyone checked themselves one last time and nodded. Draco put on the cloak and ran a hand down Harry's back, "Yes. Now let's get our son back."

To Be Continued…
Chapter Thirty-Two

Disclaimer: Neither Acherona nor trulywicked have any claim on Harry Potter or any characters or locations thereof.

Warnings: Angst, lots of it, Male Pregnancy, mental torture, infant in peril, boys in love, friendships broken and new friends gained. Disregards canon in so many ways.

Chapter Thirty-Two.

Ron slammed the cupboard door closed and cast a silencing charm on it, sighing in relief. From the second the little bastard had shown up he’d been crying and Ron simply couldn't take it anymore and had put the baby in the cupboard while he waited for the vampire broker. He sat in the living room where Harry's aunt and cousin still sat under stasis, "Your great nephew is a loud one Petunia, was Harry that loud and that's why you stuck him in the cupboard? Ah well I suppose it doesn't matter now." He kicked back and doodled on the parchment he'd written out his plans on out of boredom.

Harry walked up the short driveway leading up to the house where he'd grown up. Even now his palms grew sweaty when he thought about all the things that had taken place inside this small and oh so ordinary house. He was glad that Draco was behind him somewhere; even though Harry couldn't see him and didn't dare to speak to him...At least he was there. He took his wand out and placed it on the ground in front of the door before he rang the doorbell, Ron would never let him inside if he still had his wand. Harry rung the doorbell again and waited with a dry mouth and pounding heart.

Ron frowned at the ringing doorbell and snuck over to the window, growling when he saw Harry. How the bloody hell? He glanced back at the cupboard as he remembered the practice of placing tracking charms on children. Fuck. At least Harry had come alone. Ron snorted, he'd probably gone off while everyone else was busy making plans to rescue the brat but that was just fine, now Ron could take some payment out of Harry in person. He stood back from the door and used magic to open it, "Well, well Potter. Come to get your bastard?"

"Yes." Harry answered simply as he searched Ron's features for some sign that his friend was still in there somewhere but coming up empty. "There's my wand." He pointed to the slender piece of holly on the ground. "I'm alone and wandless...Please let me see Jason. You know you can have all my vaults if you want them, just let me have him back."
Ron sneered, "Come inside and we'll talk." He shot a casual stunner behind Harry in case there was someone in the cloak there. When nothing happened he shrugged as the brunette came in and used magic to close the door behind him, not even noticing that the holly wand on the ground disappeared. "You don't really think I'm just going to hand the brat over do you? I'm ruined because of you and that bastard you carried."

Harry grit his teeth and bit down on the words that wanted to slip out. The only one responsible for Ron's misfortune was Ron himself. "Then what can I do for you Ron? What can I do to make it better?" Harry kept his voice even though it was among the most difficult things he'd done. He looked around the house, wondering why it was so silent. Where was Jason and where were the Dursleys?" "I'll do anything for you, anything at all."

Behind Harry Draco's hand tensed on his fiancé’s wand as well as his own. There was a scent in the air, it smelled of death and blood and made him want to stun Ron right then and go looking for his son but if he'd hidden Jason with magic they'd never find him without the redhead's cooperation.

Ron smirked nastily, not even noticing the slight tingle that was the invitation wards falling, "Oh I like that little pleading tone in your voice. You've always been an arrogant twat, doing everything you want without getting in trouble. You're not top dog anymore though."

Hermione nearly gagged at Ron's voice as she and Luna snuck in while disillusioned and then she had to stifle a gasp when she saw Harry's aunt and cousin. Dear Circe what had Ron become?

Luna ran her hand over Hermione's in silent comfort while she tried to fight down her own repulsion.

Harry continued to speak softly with Ron, agreeing with everything he was saying and continuing to ask what he had to do to get Jason back.

Remus and Severus slunk in the back door, wearing heavy disillusion charms. Remus looked up and took a step back in pure horror as he saw the corpse sitting at the kitchen table, knife still in hand and blood everywhere. Oh god, Ron was nothing but a monster, just as bad and rotten as Voldemort had ever been.

Snape's jaw tightened at the dead man and the piece of flesh hanging out of his mouth and the mutilated body but he crept in quietly past the gruesome sight so he could get into position behind Ronald.
Neville paused behind Pansy and Lucius on the stair landing, in the perfect position to strike Ron from above.

Arthur had come in behind Remus and he wanted to cry at the evidence of his son's darkness and insanity. He couldn't do this, even knowing what Lucius or Draco would do; he couldn't go further and see what else his youngest son had become. He couldn't take that.

Ron felt his temper starting to boil over at Harry's easy agreement and snapped, "Stop that!" he brandished his wand, "You don't really mean any of that, you're just telling me what you think I want to hear. I'm not stupid!"

"No you're not stupid, a stupid person would never have thought of hiding out here or transfiguring a port key into an owl." Harry looked straight into blue eyes, clouded by madness. "The sight of you makes my skin crawl Ron Weasley but regardless of that you are holding the upper hand here and I really will do anything to get my son back. How's that for honesty?" Harry hoped that he hadn't pushed too far.

Remus turned and noticed Arthur's expression and his heart broke for the other man. He silently motioned for Arthur to walk back outside and guard the doors instead.

Arthur's expression of gratitude was nearly pathetic as he slipped back out and stood at the door.

Hermione was stiff and her stomach turned as she crept to form the final wall that would box Ron in. Her one time friend wasn't unkempt or ugly; he looked pleasant despite the flush of anger on his face as he ranted.

"Anything? You'll do anything?" An insane light burned brighter in Ron's eyes sending a shiver down everyone's spine.

Draco remembered well the last time he'd seen that kind of light, it had been when his aunt had been teaching him Occlumency and delighting in dragging his most humiliating and painful memories to the surface.

Lucius face was stony and expressionless as he held his wand ready in a steady hand. This wasn't the time to feel anything at all; this was a time for action and to get results. Later, when his family was safe then he could feel.
"Give him back Ron!" Harry took a step closer to his former friend. "You don't want him, I'll pay you everything I have but give him back to me. Where is he? Why isn't he crying?" Harry was starting to lose his grip, his spine and scalp prickling with panic.

Ron grinned, "I don't think I will. Matter of fact I think I'll leave you here for Malfoy to find after I get rid of the brat since he's just as guilty as you."

Draco felt a chill go down his back at those words and he was getting ready to cast at the next before Ron could finish the incantation.

The redhead opened his mouth, "Avada Ke-" he froze eyes going wide as his wand fell from his grip and then he hit his knees, screaming and holding his head as a yellow light seemed to swell from inside him then turn on him.

Hermione dropped her disillusionment, wand half way through a flick, as she stared at the pure magic attacking Ron. "W-what in Merlin's name?"

Even Lucius' eyes widened as magic herself attacked the screaming redhead. It looked as if none of them would have to do anything to Ron; magic was taking care of it on its own.

"What's happening? Why's magic turning on him." Remus asked as his eyes were fixed on what was going on.

Harry stared for a while but then he ran deeper into the house, calling out for his son. A choked sob left him when he saw his aunt and cousin sitting at the couch beaten almost beyond recognition. Then it was as if a force pulled him towards the cupboard where he'd lived for eleven years. The deadbolt on the outside was still there and Harry found himself standing in front of the small cupboard, shaking and unable to move at all.

Draco followed after Harry just as Ron fell to the floor in a slump and the magic he'd cast disappeared with him and a loud cry came from the cupboard. He was reaching out and ripping to door open in a second and reaching in to bring Jason out in his arms, the tiny face screwed up in fury as he cried. "Shh, Papa's here little one and so is Maman, we're here, you're safe."

Harry was still shaking, looking into the cupboard as if it was hell itself, pupils blown wide with fear and with shock for what had happened. It didn't really register with him that Draco had Jason in his arms and that he was safe.
Lucius took command, firmly closing the door to the kitchen before any of the young ones saw what was in there. "Pansy, Longbottom. Apparate the muggles to...Poppy at Hogwarts but keep the stasis charm on them. They need to be healed."

Remus slipped outside to talk to Arthur. "Arthur, it's over. Ron...Ron is gone but none of us did anything, not even Malfoy. He...He started to cast the killing curse on Harry and magic turned on him."

Arthur sank to the ground, hands covering his face, his voice choked, "The life debt. Harry died for Ron, for everyone and Ron violated that debt." He sobbed, for his now lost son and what his little Quidditch star had become.

Draco turned to Harry, feeling his heart clench at the look on his fiancé’s face. He stepped forward, cupping the brunette’s chin and turning him to look away from the cupboard into his own face, Jason still cradled in one arm, still crying, "Harry look at me. Look at me baby."

Blinking owlishly Harry finally managed to break out of the trance he'd fallen into. Tears welled up in his eyes and he leaned against Draco momentarily before all his attention was on Jason. "Shhh, it's alright, we're here now and we have you. You're safe." He took the baby from Draco's arms. "Papa and Mummy are right here Squiggles...Shhh, you're safe." Harry didn't even notice that he'd gone back to calling Jason Squiggles as he rocked the crying baby.

Draco ran his hand over Harry's hair then Jason's head, his insides quivering in relief despite the crying of their son.

Hermione's eyes shimmered with tears even as she was aware of the pops of apparition as Neville and Pansy took the Dursleys to Poppy. She turned and wrapped her arms around Luna, burying her face in her girlfriend's shoulder.

Severus reached into a moleskin bag he’d brought and pulled out a baby bottle and things for a diaper change before walking over and offering them to Harry, "I doubt he was fed or changed by..."

"Thank you Severus." Harry took the offered items and sat down right on the floor where he was, not wanting to see anymore of this house than he had to. First he changed a very wet diaper and then he got the bottle ready with magic, after Draco had handed him his wand back. "There you go sweetie, all dry and comfortable again. Here's food Jason...Mummy's here."
The baby gave a shudder of relief and closed his rosy little lips around the bottle, his tiny arm petting Harry as if checking that his mummy was really there.

Draco sat down behind Harry and wrapped his arms around both his fiancé and their son and looked up at his godfather, "What now?"

Severus sighed, "We'll have to call in the Aurors because of what happened to the Dursleys as well as confirm Ronald's cause of death. Though that won't take more than five seconds and a diagnostic spell, Vernon's will be more difficult."

Harry looked up. "Vernon's dead?" How was he supposed to feel about that? Harry had no idea. "Poor aunt Petunia." He said finally and leaned back against Draco, needing to feel that he was there.

"The Aurors are on their way. I sent Arthur back to Black manor; he needs to be with Molly right now." Remus walked up to his mate, brushing his hand the length of Severus' arm just to touch him.

Snape leaned into the touch and sighed, "It's morbid to say but it's better this way. Ronald wouldn't have gotten better and no one's hands are bloodied by his death."

Remus nodded and wrapped his arm more firmly around Severus. "None of us would have been able to protect him even if we'd wanted to. Even though the Ministry is getting better they wouldn't have accepted just lock down for someone who'd do this to muggles without remorse. He would have gotten the kiss."

Hermione shook her head, "I don't understand this. What happened to him? He used to be so...and then...what happened?"

A brief flash interrupted any reply that might have been made as Aurors appeared. One of them took a look at Harry and shook his head; poor lad never got a break. "Alright, if you'll all pop over to the Ministry with Bellows and Racert here," he indicated two other Aurors, "they'll take your statements while we investigate."

Knowing from experience that the sooner you compiled the sooner it would be over Harry got up from the floor. He waited for Draco to get up to before he walked towards the Aurors. He really didn't want to be here any longer than he had to and even the Ministry seemed a better choice than to
stay here. Harry reached out for Draco's hand. "No cupboards at home okay? Let's tear them all out."

Draco brought Harry in close, brushing a kiss over his temple, "No cupboards I promise pet."

Luna kept a firm grip on Hermione as they followed Harry and Draco. She wanted to take Hermione home where she could hold her properly and comfort her but she knew the trip to the Ministry was a must.

Everyone followed the Aurors to a port key made of a shoelace and then in a blink they were in the Ministry and the long task of being interviewed began.

To Be Continued…
Hermione rubbed her temples to ease the awful headache the mental probing had given her. In examining Ron it had been found that the long exposure to Slytherin's Locket had intensified his faults and worsened them, making his sanity so fragile that it had snapped when he'd felt so jealous and angry at Harry after he'd been re-sorted. The mind healers had then been called in to make sure neither she nor Harry had suffered similar effects. Fortunately they hadn't but just the thought bothered her.

Harry sat next to her, rubbing at his own head. Neither Luna nor Draco had been allowed to be there for the examination and Harry was glad Hermione was there so that none of them had to go through it completely alone. "I'm sorry Mione; I should have never brought you on the Horcrux hunt. Then none of this would've happened."

She leaned her head on his shoulder, "Harry this isn't your fault. It was our choice to join you, just like it was our choice to join you in fifth year when we went to the Department of Mysteries. It was our choice and if you recall both myself and Ron were too stubborn to let you go alone. I just...I'm glad to know that there's a reason for what Ron did but I hate it at the same time, does that make any sense?"

"It makes perfect sense." He reached up to pet, shiny brown hair as she leaned on his shoulder. "I'm glad there's a reason too. Despite how hollow he was in the end he was our friend, he was good and I'm glad that that wasn't a lie, that the Ron we knew was real at one point." Harry blinked his eyes in an attempt to blink away the tears that threatened to fall. "And it's so low of me but I can't help but to be relieved...Knowing that there was an outside reason for his madness, that I don't have to worry that Jason will inherit it."
She nodded, "That taint is gone from the world now. No more Riddle nor his mad bloodline." She produced a tissue out of nowhere and handed it to Harry, "and now we can tell our children about Uncle Ron and how he threw up slugs and caught the Quaffle turning Malfoy's nasty little tune on itself and even better how he got attacked by brains." She gave a nostalgic laugh, "That was always funny to me."

"Yeah...Me too." Harry crumpled and turned to Hermione to bury his teary face in the crook of her neck. "I know he was already gone but I'm going to miss him so much Mione. His completely orange room, the way he tried to turn Scabbers yellow when we first met him and his bottomless stomach." Harry wrapped his arms around his oldest friend and just cried.

She embraced him in return, rocked, and joined him in crying for the loss of their friend, the first time she'd allowed herself to do so. The Golden Trio well and truly ripped apart with the complete loss of their last member, the remaining two taking comfort in each other for the time being.

Luna sat outside the room where the mind healers had taken Hermione and Harry; she petted the blue brill whistler absently as she waited. "How long do you think it will take?" She asked the other blond in the waiting room. Luna found the mere notion that either Harry or Hermione would be affected by the locket to be utter rubbish.

Draco rocked Jason as the infant slept, "I don't know but not much longer I should think." It couldn't take much longer because the longer it took the more likely something was wrong and he'd lose his own mind if something was wrong with Harry.

Hm, I hope so." Luna nodded and went back to petting the blue fluffball perched on her shoulder. She didn't like hospitals, not even the more informal types like this was. The air was so sterile and...empty. Not even nargles or wrackspurts liked this kind of environment.

Minutes ticked by but soon the door clicked open and a puffy eyed Harry and Hermione stepped out. Hermione went straight to Luna and wrapped her in a hug, smiling just a bit when Cygnus jumped onto her shoulder.

Luna held her girlfriend tightly, whispering softly in her ear as Cygnus whistled happily at having her favorite person close again.

Harry knew he must look a fright, blotchy in the face, puffy eyed and red nosed but despite all that he felt lighter now. It had helped to have a good cry with Hermione, to be allowed to remember and mourn a lost friend.
Draco drew Harry in, kissing the puffy eyes as their son slept on, "Everything okay love?"

"Yeah, I'm fine." Harry smiled at his fiancé, kissing both Draco and Jason lightly. "Completely fine."

Hermione nodded from over where she stood with Luna, one hand stroking down the long blond hair while the brill whistler took its familiar refuge in her own hair, "No lasting damage, nothing but bad memories from that time."

Harry exchanged a look with Hermione, knowing that they both felt better after what had happened in that room. Now it was time to be with their loved ones to soak in the comfort only they could give. "Bad memories but that's all they are...Memories, it's in the past and now it's time to move forward."

Hermione nodded, "Are we all done here with the Aurors and everything?"

"Yes," Draco looked down at Harry, "er there is one thing. Your aunt woke up not long ago and had to be sedated before she injured herself further because she panicked over being in Hogwarts. Your cousin is also awake though much less...disturbed over where he finds himself. They can't be moved to a muggle hospital until they both can choose whether they want to be oblivited or not and every time your aunt wakes..."

Harry wrapped his arms around himself as guilt crept through him. "I should probably go see them. Aunt Petunia may not like me very much but at least I'm familiar, maybe she can be calm enough to talk to me and make her choice." Harry didn't have much faith him that but he had to try. He owed them that much.

Draco kissed his fiancé’s brow, "It can wait until tomorrow if you'd rather."

"No, let's get it over and done with." Harry leaned against Draco. "Remind me to talk to Gringotts as well. I want to convert some of my assets to muggle money and make sure neither Petunia nor Dudley will have to worry about money."

Hermione couldn't help the disbelieving squeak she made at first but she raised her hand when Harry was about to chastise her over it, "I know, but you can't blame me for my instinctive reaction."
"I understand Mione but it's something I need to do. Not only because I'm the reason her husband is dead and my cousin's lost his father. If I don't do this...I'm not going to be able to let go and god I want to let go so badly." Harry gave a deep sigh.

"I know, I get it but I'm still mad about how she treated you and how she let you be treated," she walked over to kiss his cheek, "so I'll be the petty one and you can be the magnanimous one."

"Okay." Harry hugged her. "But you don't have to be mad any longer," He looked over at his fiancé and his son. "Things turned out alright you know." He gave her a smile before delivering her back into Luna's arms.

Hermione hrumphed, "I can be sympathetic to her situation now but I'm always going to want to hex something when I think about how you were raised. It's just part of who I am little brother." She gave him a smile, "Luna and I will head back to the apartment, unless you need us for anything?"

"No, go, be with each other, snuggle down and relax." That was what Harry wanted to do as well but he needed to sort this Dursley situation out first. "We'll talk later when things are a bit calmer."

She nodded and looked at Malfoy, "You're a sneaky, snarky, irritating, arrogant, spoiled little git but I think I'm somewhat proud that you're going to be a sort of brother in law of mine Draco."

The blond smirked and put a hand over his heart, "Please all this effusive praise will bring me to blush Hermione."

Luna snickered and held on tightly to Hermione. "Come on honey-love, let's go home before all this fluffiness turns into a weep fest and we attract the tear warblers."

Harry laughed, loving his strange little family with all his heart. "Yes honey-love, get out of here and have some fun."

Hermione stuck her tongue out at him, "You're just jealous that your fiancé isn't as creative with a pet name as my girlfriend is. Good evening Harry." She tugged Luna away in search of a floo. The wakefulness potion was beginning to wear off and she wanted to be home before she crashed.

Draco pursed his lips, "Not creative hmm?"
"You don't have to take everything Mione says as a challenge you know." Harry pinched his arm. "I'm quite happy with my pet names or lack thereof." He reached out and took Jason from Draco, giving his fiancé’s arms a rest. "Will you come with me to Hogwarts? I just want it to be over with."

"You don't honestly think I'd let you out of my sight again right now do you?" Draco wrapped an arm around Harry's waist, "Come on then my green eyed raven, let's get this mess over and done with and get home so we can 'snuggle down' as a family."

"Green eyed raven? Oh I expect you to do better than that icefire." Harry chuckled and walked in search of a floo that would take them to Minerva's office.

**To Be Continued…**
Thankfully Dumbledore was not in his portrait frame. Harry loved the old man but he had no wish to get into a conversation with the painted version of the previous headmaster. His stomach sunk with every step he took towards the hospital wing and he would have traded almost anything to not have to do this.

Draco squeezed Harry's waist, "It will be okay mon soleil."

"Yeah." Harry said but it sounded unconvincing even in his own ears. He slowly pushed the door to the infirmary open. "Hello madam Pomfrey."

The woman blinked, looking up from some parchment she was marking down on, "Oh Mr. Potter! I er take it you're here to see your relatives."

"I am yes." Harry nodded and held Jason close, he felt the warmth of Draco next to him and he was extremely grateful that his family was with him. It didn't matter that he was grown and had a child of his own; a part of him would still be that small boy in the cupboard when he dealt with the Dursleys. "How are they doing?"

"Well I'm afraid I've yet to be able to get anything but shrieking from your aunt about...well it's a bit incomprehensible but the word freaks is bandied about each time I try to bring her out of sedation. Your cousin is brooding. Quiet and he sits staring out the window as if he's trying to work something out."
"Shrieking and freaks...It actually sounds like aunt Petunia on a normal day." Harry mumbled, mostly to himself. "Maybe I can talk with Dudley to start with?" If he could speak with Dudley and make him speak to Petunia in turn then maybe his aunt would be calm for as long as it took to get through to her.

"Of course dear," Pomfrey lead the way to a curtained off area and gestured at it, "just call when you're ready for me to wake Mrs. Dursley."

Draco ran his hand up and down Harry's back as they slowly walked behind the curtain. He studied the blank, calm face of the large muscled muggle with its rainbow of healing bruises.

Dudley took in Harry's nerves and how much healthier he looked compared to the last time he'd seen him. The last several hours since he'd woken he'd been thinking about what that man in the dark red robes had said. His father had been under a spell, something called an Imperious curse, that had forced him to follow the orders of the person who cast it no matter what they were. He didn't understand why someone would do that but he guessed that the reason his family had been targeted had something to do with Harry. He looked at his cousin and frowned, "Harry. What's going on? Why did someone cast some sort of spell, well the guy who explained why Dad...did what he did said it was a curse, but why Dad, why us?"

Harry bit his lip, not knowing what to say. "I don't know why R--...Why the evil wizard went after you. He had absolutely no reason to and I'm so, so sorry that he did." Harry looked down at Jason who was still sleeping soundly. "The evil wizard stole my son; he wanted some sort of revenge on me. Believed that I was responsible for everything that had ever gone wrong in his life. I'm so sorry Dudley. I never thought he would go for you...He knew the ties between us were cut...As terrible as it sounds I think he went after you just because he could. He knew you would have no chance to stand up to him or defend yourself."

Dudley's eyes cut to the redheaded baby, the frown still on his face, "We had to leave that one time because people were after you." Dudley tapped a finger on his bed sheet, "Mum said once that you had to stay with us because you'd be dead otherwise. Are people always after you Harry?"

"It's beginning to look that way yeah." Harry replied and beat down the urge to laugh hysterically. "I'm sort of hoping that trend will end now though."

The older man wanted to hate his cousin just then, wanted to scream at him and blame him and close himself off to be just as hateful of magic as his mother was, as his father had been but...he couldn't. He sometimes got hated and accused of using steroids because other boxers did even though he was clean as a whistle in that regard. He didn't do drugs of any kind or take any kind of illegal enhancements because he liked knowing it was all him in the ring when he won. It always felt bitter when someone accused him otherwise just because 'every other boxer does it' and he really couldn't
blame an entire bloody race because of something one did. He looked at his hands, "They look pretty big and strong don't they Harry?"

"Um...Yeah, I suppose." Harry could certainly remember how it felt to be beaten by those hands; they had seemed very big and strong back then. He didn't know how to act, this quiet Dudley confused him. He'd expected hateful words, shouting and maybe even a beating by now...A part of him felt like he deserved it, like he should be punished.

"I can knock someone bigger than me out in three rounds, carry heavy loads that most people buckle under, I can pick Mum up with one hand but I'm helpless against someone like you."

Draco cleared his throat, "That's not entirely true Mr. Dursley.” He met the eyes that jerked up to his steadily, "magic may give us an edge but if you're fast enough you can just dodge then close in and knock a wizard or witch out before a spell can hit you. You were caught off guard but another non-magical person could do that too with, what is that weapon that throws metal balls?"

"A gun Draco, that weapon's called a gun." Harry took a step closer to his fiancé. "I'm really; really sorry this happened to your family Dudley but Draco's right. A mug- non magical person could have attacked and caught you off guard just as easily. I'm not saying that in attempt to excuse what happened but it's the truth." Harry looked at his cousin. "Listen, you have two choices. You can leave here when you're well, go back to your lives as best you can or you can be obliviated...We take your memories of what happened...Of everything magic...Of me. You'll remember your whole lives...You'll remember everything about V-Vernon except those last moments with him. Just the magic part will be gone."

Dudley frowned and thought it over, looking out the window, which had a good view of the Whomping Willow, "I don't...I don't know what Mum will want but, people may still want to come after you, those people a couple years back, the lady with the funny pink hair and the really scarred man were real keen on protecting you so I'm guessing you're a pretty big deal here."

Draco wrapped his arms around Harry and nodded, "He is, he saved us all from a wizard more evil than the one who hurt your family and he's a Lord in our world."

Dudley nodded, "People who are important have trouble and that trouble could always find me and Mum again," he met Harry's eyes, "I'm not much against magic but I can try to protect Mum and myself but only if I know there's something I have to protect us from. I'll keep all my memories thanks."

"Fair enough." Harry nodded. "We can make you unplottable, make sure none of my kind can find
you but there's always a chance someone will find away, you're right about that." Harry bit his lip again and handed a stirring Jason over to Draco. "He's about to wake up and if Petunia does something stupid when she sees me I want him safe." Harry turned to Dudley again. "I want you to help me convince aunt Petunia to have her memories removed. She's always hated everything to do with magic; it's been a burden for her. Her whole life has revolved around Vernon and around you. It's going to be hard enough for her to move on without remembering what Vernon did to the two of you. I...I really think she'll be happier to forget all about that and about magic."

Dudley studied Harry, "Harry, I'm sorry. For how we treated you."

Harry's eyes widened, that was absolutely the last thing he'd ever expected to hear from Big D Dursley. "I...don't...Well...It's okay, water under the bridge now." He stammered.

"Still, you care about what happens to me and about Mum being happy no matter how bad we were to you; you're a better man than me Harry." He nodded at his mother, "Call that nurse lady to wake Mum up? The sooner we get this done the better for us all."

"Thank you Dudley." Harry called for madam Pomfrey and steeled himself for the shrieking to begin.

Poppy bustled back and took a deep breath before tapping her wand on Petunia's forehead and then stepping back as the horse faced woman stirred then shot up with a shriek.

"Get away from me! Get away you horrible, twisted freak!" The thin horse like woman crawled up towards the headrest, trying to get as far away from Pomfrey as she could. She looked around with wide, empty eyes. "Why am I here? I want to go home, not be here. I want Vernon."

"Aunt Petunia." Harry walked closer to the bed.

"You! What are you doing here? I should have known it had to do with you. Get away you freak!"

Draco's jaw clenched at the insult against Harry as the woman continued shrieking and insulting and actually picked up a water glass to throw and he snapped, "By Merlin woman enough!" The cold aristocratic tone was commanding and could freeze anyone midsentence and it certainly worked on the woman as she gawped at him, eyes wide. "Sweet Circe if it wasn't for us 'freaks' you'd be dead right now so I'll kindly thank you to reduce the decibels you're employing. A little respect to your nephew wouldn't go amiss either."
Petunia stared at the blond young man with watery blue eyes too frightened and awed to say much of anything. She still held the water class in her hand but at least she wasn't planning on throwing it.

"Aunt Petunia, I'm sorry for your loss, please just hear us out and then you can go home." Harry said softly and motioned for Dudley to speak to his mother, she would listen to him.

Dudley had to tear his gaze away from the blond who'd actually managed to silence his mother with only three sentences then looked over at her, speaking softly, "Mum this isn't Harry's fault, it's never been his fault."

She grabbed Dudley's hand in both hers, pressing it against her cheek. "Oh Dudders, it's always been his fault, his and his parents before him. This riff raff of freaks are responsible for it all." She flashed a fearful glance towards Draco. "I don't want to be here Diddy, take me home please."

Harry sighed deeply, it was very clear to him that Petunia would never listen to anything he had to say. He hoped Dudley would be able to convince her to the obliviation, then she wouldn't even have to remember that he's ever existed.

"No Mum it's not his fault, it's no one's fault just sometimes bad things happen for no reason, remember? That's what you told me when Piers was in that accident. Harry's never hurt us and he's never wanted us hurt even though we were always so bad to him."

"I didn't want to be bad. I just wanted him to be normal. Lily went away to this horrible place and it changed her, it changed her and then she died...I didn't want that for her son." Petunia still clutched her son's hand to her thin and worn cheek and she both looked and sounded so small that Harry's heart hurt.

Dudley managed to get himself out of his hospital bed despite Madame Pomfrey's protests about his ribs and hugged his mother, "But what he is, what he can do, is normal mum. Not for you or me but for him and for lots of people in the world too."

Draco spoke up softly, "A little over one million worldwide."

Dudley nodded, "They're not freaks, not really, just different. Like...like Mikey Pritchet," he named the little boy he'd once been friends with who'd blown through all twelve grades before Dudley was twelve, "or Tyson Gay," a world record track runner, "they have stuff we don't is all."
Draco studied Petunia and his voice gentled, grew kinder, "You wanted to have the magic too didn't you? To stay with your sister?"

"It was...It was always Lily and I. Our parents both worked and they were always very busy. I looked out for her; she was so wild, so free and never scared to try anything." Petunia fiddled with the bed linen and her eyes were far away as she remembered. "Then that letter came and I was, I was just left behind. It had always been the two of us and I was suddenly all alone. No letters came and when she return over holidays she wasn't the same, she wasn't my Lily anymore. I tried...I really did but everything I suggested was boring or not how they did things at school, finally I decided that if I wasn't enough, if she didn't want me then I didn't want her either. I could manage just fine without her and I did."

Harry swallowed around the lump in his throat. It hurt to see his aunt like a human being; it hurt a lot more than he'd thought it would.

Dudley pat her shoulder gently, "It's okay Mum, Harry just wants us to be happy. We don't have to
be strong."

Draco looked at Madam Pomfrey, "When can an obliviator be called so they can go home?"

"She's got another two hours to let the bones finish knitting and then I'll call them."

The blond nodded and looked back at Petunia, "Two hours then you'll forget about magic Mrs. Dursley."

"Thank you." Petunia nodded shakily, still a bit wary to look at the mediwitch and also ashamed of how she'd acted when she'd been woken.

"Um...aunt Petunia, Dudley. This is Draco Malfoy, we're getting married and this," He motioned to the baby in Draco's arms. "this is our son Jason." Harry figured that if she was going to forget everything in two hours there wouldn't be any harm in telling her.

"Y-your son?" Petunia looked shocked. They were two men, how could they have had a child together. Blinking Petunia decided that she didn't want to know. Instead she looked at the baby who had just opened his eyes. "Oh lord, he looks exactly like Lily." She gasped and watched the baby peer up at the blond as he let out a huge yawn, scrunching his face up from the force of it.

Dudley peered at the baby, "He's a cute little thing."

Draco chuckled and shifted the baby so they could both see him better, "Yes, to both. He's not my son biologically but I was there the entire time he was gestating and I've adopted him as my son. And yes he is cute and we do keep hearing how much he looks like his Grandmama." He noted the hesitant longing in Petunia's eyes and slid a soft glance over at Harry in question.

After a brief pause he nodded, ashamed of the fear that had gripped him momentarily. He knew that that his aunt wouldn't hurt his son but the urge to protect him from the people that had caused him pain was still there. He watched as Draco settled Jason in Petunia's arms carefully and went to grab his fiancé’s hand so he wouldn't do anything stupid.

Petunia looked down at the little face with the softest expression Harry had ever seen on her face except for when she doted on Dudley. "He is beautiful, his coloring is Lily but his features are all yours Harry."
"Thank you..." Harry held on to Draco's hand tighter, he couldn't really remember his aunt to call him by his given name before today.

Draco squeezed the hand holding his tightly and brought it to his mouth to kiss the knuckles.

Dudley peered close at his new little cousin over his mother's shoulder, "Blimey you made a good looking kid Harry. This one's gonna be beating the birds off with a stick." he looked at Harry and Draco and shrugged casually, "or the blokes."

"Whatever he'll choose will be fine by me." Harry said. "Love is love." He was very pleasantly surprised that there were no poufter or shirtlifter comments.

Dudley grinned up at the brunette, "Surprised you didn't I? My coach is married to a bloke who can kick my bum six ways to Tuesday. I learned tolerance."

"Good for you Dudley, I'm glad." Harry grinned back, his eyes darting to Petunia when her arms started to shake; her bones were still knitting together after all. He walked over and picked up Jason, feeling bad for feeling a lot better with Jason back in his arms.

Draco wrapped his arms around Harry's shoulders and whispered in his ear, "I'm so proud of you love and so proud that I get to call you mine." He looked at the muggles, "I'm sorry but Harry and I need to get home so we can feed and put Jason down for his nap."

Dudley nodded, "It's fine, Mum should probably get some more rest before those guys come to bring us home in two hours."

Draco inclined his head and went to Poppy scribbling down orders regarding Petunia Dursleys memory on a blank parchment of her clipboard, "Tell the obliviators to follow those instructions to a t. She lost her sister once; she shouldn't have to do so again."

Harry said his goodbyes to Petunia and Dudley, he wasn't sure he would meet them again and frankly he wasn't sure he even wanted to. It was okay though, he'd gotten the closure he'd never even knew he needed. Harry thought he could close the door to the cupboard for good now.
He walked over to Draco and leaned his head on the blond's shoulder. "Come on Draco, let's go home." They should probably go visit Remus and Severus now that they were here but Harry was so tired, both physically and mentally. All he wanted was to go home and be with his family, just the three of them.

The blond nodded and walked with Harry out of the infirmary. It didn't take long at all for them to find themselves standing in the library where Hermione's study materials were still scattered about, the play mat was still there, and nothing had changed since they'd left except for the very slight frush Draco noticed in the wards. He smiled, took out his wand, squeezed Harry's hand, "Magic with me love, Father made an addition but you and I need to set it."

Harry wasn't really sure what Draco felt, he must feel the change in the wards since it was his father who had made an addition. He did trust Draco completely though so he took out his wand as well and let his magic flow, prepared to follow Draco's lead.

Draco intoned softly, "In permanentia," hearing Harry echo his words and a brief swirl and flash around the house as the addition to the wards set itself with their approval. He put his wand away and looked on the mantle, seeing a neat square of parchment resting there with a message in a militarily precise script for them, 'Draco, Harry I have corrected the oversight though you will need to set it. Forgive me for not thinking of it before.'

He lifted the note off the mantle and handed it to Harry, "He added a layer to keep owls out unless we let them in."

"That's good; it feels nice to have it done." Harry put his wand away again and looked around the room, he was glad that it didn't feel different to him. It still felt safe and like home, he'd been scared that it wouldn't, that all he would see was Jason disappearing but luckily that wasn't the case. "I don't even feel sad to have a ward so we can screen the owls; I need this place to be a safe haven. We must thank your father."

Draco brushed a kiss over Harry's cheek, "Let him baby-sit Jason whenever we can next bear to let him out of our sight. He'll be thrilled."

Harry chuckled. "We better hurry with that then because when your baby sister comes I believe Lucius will have his hands full." Harry started to walk towards the kitchen to make a bottle for Jason; it was such a small thing. Nothing to call the house elves for and besides he liked to do it on his own. He was pleased to see that Draco followed him. "Poor little guy." Harry nuzzled a fidgeting Jason. "We need to spend some real time with him later; it feels like all he's been doing since we got him back is eat and sleep with nothing in between...It's just so hard to let him out of my arms you know." He looked up at Draco as he fixed the bottle easily with one hand, while holding Jason with the other. "Any hope that this whole thing will stay out of the papers?" Harry listened to Draco's silence.
"No I didn't think so either."

"The whole thing no," Draco went over, much like Harry couldn't stand to let Jason out of his arms, he had a hard time keeping from touching both Harry and their son, "but the details will be foggy and I asked Father to see to it that it's known that Ronald wasn't acting as himself. He said he'd get it out that he'd been under Imperious from one of the lower ranked Death Eaters that managed to escape the battlefield."

"Thank you." Harry leaned against Draco as he tested the formula temperature on Draco's wrist; at the blonds' nod he put the bottle to Jason's mouth. "It means a lot to me and it will mean a lot for Arthur and Molly as well. It's been hard for them, almost losing Fred and now this. I know Ron will still be lost but at least he won't be remembered poorly."

"I never much liked him, you know that, but I knew it would be important to you," he nuzzled Harry's shoulder, "also I've become almost...fond of the redheaded army and I understand family."

Harry smiled. "They have a way to grow on you. Soon you'll be wearing Weasley sweaters with the rest of us and cheering for the cannons." He didn't bother to try and defend Ron, even if Ron hadn't snapped Harry doubted that he and Draco would ever have gotten along, not really.

"Never shall I ever cheer for that gods awful team, the sweaters are negotiable," he kissed Harry's cheek.

"Tell you a secret...I really don't cheer for the cannons either, their seeker sucks." Harry chuckled and tilted his head so he could capture Draco's lips.

Draco made a soft pleased murmur and sank into the kiss, drawing in the sweet warmth that went through him. "That's my Harry." He nuzzled his fiancé's nose with his own, "I knew you had good taste, after all you're marrying me."

"Yeah, how could I resist someone so humble?" Harry kissed him again, finding that he'd become absolutely addicted to Draco's taste. Even the tiniest kiss felt better and more explosive than any other kiss Harry'd had, not that there were very many but still.

He chuckled against Harry's lips and took the other man's bottom lip between his own, sucking and nibbling on it, the taste of him a delight as always. No one else was nearly as good to kiss as his Harry, absolutely no one. "Humble I may not be but I am all yours mon soleil."
"I like the sound of that, I'm all yours too." Harry was more than content to snuggle and kiss Draco but unfortunately Jason didn't feel the same, having eaten a little too quickly and throwing up all over his Mummy.

Draco, by now used to the spit up, shook his head and took Jason from Harry, "I'll clean him up, you do the same for yourself so we can all curl up and get some rest."

"Merlin yesss." The moment Draco even mentioned rest Harry could feel how utterly bone tired he was. "Okay, meet you in bed then." Harry pulled off his soiled shirt and vanished it to the laundry before walking to a bathroom to clean the sick off his skin.

"Come on then little one, let's get you fresh and clean," he took Jason to the nursery, cleaned him up, then walked into the bedroom just as Harry was shimmying into a pair of pajama pants. He pursed his lips and watched Harry, his eyes lingering hungrily on the naked chest and the bum outlined in soft flannel.

"Like what you see?" Harry wiggled his covered bum before grabbing a soft t-shirt and pulling it over his head. "If I knew it was that easy to shut you up I would have walked in only pajama pants throughout my Hogwarts career." A soft pink color spread over Harry's cheekbones as he spoke, he still couldn't believe that Draco Malfoy could find him attractive in any way.

"I'd have ended up dragging you into some dark shadowy alcove and seduced the hell out of you before announcing to the entire school that you were mine and if anyone dared to touch they'd be missing appendages." He gently placed Jason in his bassinet, squeezing the dragon plush, then went over to Harry, smoothing his hands down over his shoulders and arms.

"Somehow I don't think I would have minded that very much. I would just have had to claim you right back." The fine hairs on his arms stood on end just from Draco's simple touch. "I swear your hands are magic."

"Hmm," Draco's arms slipped around Harry's waist and he began swaying then guided Harry into simple smooth steps of a slow dance. "The magic isn't in my hands, it's here," he brought Harry's hand to his heart before laying his own hand over Harry's heart. "You and I, we're in each other's hearts, it makes everything magic."

Harry really wanted to say something in return but he couldn't find the words and he didn't want to ruin the moment by saying the wrong thing. This was too special for that. Instead he smiled up at his
fiancé before leaning his head on Draco's shoulder, feeling the soft thump of his heart as they slow danced around their bedroom, Jason sleeping safe and sound in his bassinet.

To Be Continued…
Severus followed Remus into a simple crofter's cottage, feeling the heavy wards examine him before letting him through, and into the magically expanded interior of the small, by Black standards, home. He was feeling the exhaustion of the last two days creep over him and dearly needed to find a bed soon before he literally passed out in mid-step, a less than pleasant side effect of using alertness potions to remain awake for longer than 24 hours.

Remus was tired too but he knew that his mate had it worse, having had to be very alert and concentrated to brew very complicated potions. Now he only wanted to curl around his mate and sleep for a solid day, get some of the horror he'd seen out of his mind and feel like himself again. A flick of his wand had the lanterns lit, showing a cozy bedroom a large bed covered in a quilt standing in the middle of it. "Ready to sleep love?"

"I think we should leave a note letting Andromeda know we're here so we don't give her a heart attack when she wakes up first don't you?" He rubbed the middle of his brow and sat on the bed, "Or rather you should leave a note." The headache that was the major warning of the approach of the potion crash was beginning to hammer at his temples.

Remus looked somewhat sheepish. "That might be a good idea yes, the woman hex first and asks later." He turned so he was facing Severus, cupping his face. "Go to bed before you crash where you stand. I'll go into the kitchen and leave a note and then I'll be right back." He brought his hands up to rub at Severus' temples before leaning in and kissing him gently. "Bed...You." Remus walked out to write a note to Andromeda, letting her know they were there and to keep Teddy out of the guest room until Severus had had a proper sleep."

Snape just magicked himself into sleep trousers and continued to sit on the edge of the bed, his eyes
closed as he riffled through his Occlumency exercises, organizing everything that had happened since last he'd had a moment. He paused on the memory of Vernon Dursleys corpse, remembering something similar he'd once seen done at the hands of the Dark Lord himself, then he stowed it away with all the other memories he had no desire to crack open and examine again. He heard the soft pad of Remus' feet and opened his eyes to see his mate looking at him in exasperation.

"You've never listened to me before so why start now?" Honey colored eyes looked down at Severus. "Get under the covers and lie down before I make you...Believe me right now I could take you." He gave his mate a stern look and peeled his clothes off until he was only in his underwear. Remus walked over to the small window and cracked it open so the gentle lull of the ocean could be heard in the bedroom before he sat down on the other side of the bed, placing his wand on the bedside table.

"I can't rest easily without you there anymore." It was a simple and matter of fact statement as Severus moved to lie down, knowing that Remus would do the same in a moment. "I'm not sure I ever could."

"I feel the same way and I promise that if I have anything to say about it, you'll never have to." Remus crawled under the colorful quilt and pulled Severus close, wrapping himself around his mate like an octopus. A whispered, wandless 'Nox' left the room in velvety darkness and Remus' eyes were closed before he could even register it.

Severus let out an amused breath. He was the one edging towards a crash and it was his mate who fell asleep first. He closed his eyes and nestled his face into the crook of Remus' neck, breathing him in and letting the warm and scent of the other man soothe him into sleep.

OoOoOoOoO

Arthur stepped quietly into Ronald's old room and stood for a moment watching Molly hold one of their son's favorite Cannons jerseys, tears slipping down her face as she sat on the bed. He moved to sit beside her, wrapping his arms around her and pressing a kiss to the top of her head.

Sniffling Molly leaned into her husband's embrace, still holding the jersey close in a tight fingered grip. "You weren't supposed to see this." Molly wiped at her eyes, she had gone up to Ron's room to start packing it up but she couldn't do it. Her baby boy was still present here, in every poster, every piece of clothing, his magazines and the few Quidditch books lying spread out over the orange carpet.

He ran a hand down her graying red curls, "My strong Molly, if you don't let me see you when
you're down who can you lean on?" He gave her a squeeze, "At least...at least we know now that it wasn't...it wasn't really Ron. Doesn't help much I know." He leaned his head against hers, his own tears starting to fall.

She was grateful for that knowledge but Arthur was right, that didn't matter at all right now. Molly twisted so she could wrap her arms tightly around Arthur as they cried together for a lost child.

He rocked them both as they cried, his heart ripped up in his chest knowing he'd failed his youngest boy, failed to protect him, failed to save him and now he was gone and nothing could be done about it. All they could do was hope and pray that Ron was at peace and hold on to the good memories once the pain had eased.

OoOoOoOoO

Narcissa stared out the bedroom window, stared into the darkness of night, one hand smoothing over her flat belly and the other playing pensively with a pendant she wore. Her mind was on the Weasleys and how she knew Molly must be feeling right now. It would be cold or no comfort at all to know that Ronald hadn't been in control, that he'd been affected and broken by something too evil to stand. Especially since he wasn't in St. Mungos getting treated but would be buried in a few days time.

Lucius stepped up behind her, placing his hand over hers on the flat stomach. He truly sympathized with the Weasleys as well, he did but he also recognized that they had been lucky. It could have ended so much worse than it had. "Come to bed Cissy, it might sound crass and cold but we need to concentrate on this little one inside you right now. You need to rest, for both your sakes."

She let him lead her to bed and snuggled close up beside him in his arms and rested her cheek against his heartbeat, "Why must that evil man's reach be so long? Will we ever truly be rid of him?"

Sighing deeply Lucius ran his fingers through his wife's long unbound blonde hair. "I don't know Cissy, sometimes I fear I will never get out from underneath his shadow. I was so young and power-hungry that I didn't see him for the monster he was until it was much too late. I only hope things will be lighter and brighter for our children from here on out."

She nodded and closed her eyes, "You also had the pressure from Abraxas prodding you to join as well. You're still a good man, no matter the mistakes of the past, my good man." She placed a soft kiss over his heart, "I am still and always happy to be your wife."
"You are my bright light Narcissa, my shining star, leading me right. Without you I doubt I would have escaped both my father and then the madman that followed." He pulled her closet, kissing the top of her head. "I'll try to make fewer mistakes with our new little star, curb my ambition and settle for being a doting and extremely over protective father. No dating until she's at least twenty-five."

She chuckled lightly, "You'll do Lucius, and you’ll do. Je t'aime." She still felt badly for Molly and Arthur but nothing could be changed or done in that regard and her husband was right, stress and lack of rest was not a good thing right now. She allowed herself to drift into sleep.

Lucius held her close, listening to Narcissa's soft, even breathing as he stared out into the darkness. Yes he would do his very best to become the good man his wife believed him to be, Lucius knew better but for her, for his family he wanted to try. He closed his eyes and dreamed of a better tomorrow.

OoOoOoOoO

Ginny sat in the circle of Blaise's arms, having finished her storm of tears and now she just felt bruised, her heart battered and bleeding. She'd been so mad at Ron but he was still her brother and there was always that hope that he'd be redeemed. Now he was, in a way, but he was gone as well. Never would she hear him complain or snipe at her again nor be able to snipe back. It hurt, it just hurt like being stabbed in the gut. She turned deeper into her fiancé’s embrace and heard him murmur to her in soft Italian. He'd not once tried to make light of the situation, the only thing he'd said after news had come had been 'I'm so sorry amore.' and then he'd taken her in his arms and not let go once. She knew he'd be standing beside her at the funeral, strong and steady for her and she fell just a little more in love with him for it even as she began crying again, the tears exhausting her and carrying her into sleep.

OoOoOoOoO

Neville leaned on a tree in his garden, staring up at the stars in contemplation.

"Are they giving you any answers?" Pansy called from the darkness, walking over and sitting down on the dew damp and chilled ground, folding her legs beneath her. "I've found that only the humans named after them talk to me." She looked up at her big, strong lion, wanting to be able to say the right thing, to be comforting but not knowing if she had it in her.

His lips tilted a bit, "Oh the stars talk to people, you just have to know how to listen, ask any centaur." He shook his head, "In this case though, I don't really think there are answers to be had." He settled down beside her, scooping her up off the chilly ground into the warmth of his lap. "We
could ask 'why' questions until the world ended but all we'd get in answer would be 'just because'.
Why did the locket affect Ron so badly, why didn't anyone notice that it had, why did it turn out like
this? Just because. The only question I have that could have another answer is how can I best help
his family now?"

"You are wonderful Nev and you have such a big and loving heart. You'll help them just by being
you, kind and supportive, the strongest and best man I've ever met." Pansy wrapped her arms around
his neck and leaned her forehead against his jawline. "I know you're hurting too but still your first
thought is how you can help someone else, to make it better for them. I love you for that, for being
everything I'm not."

He stroked his hand down her back, "It's bitter. I wasn't as close to Ron as others so it's bitter, like
drinking scalding black coffee. It burns and leaves a bitter taste behind but the Weasleys, Harry, and
Hermione will be hurting so much worse so I want to help. If it was Draco or Blaise hurting like
they're hurting you'd want to make things better too, even if you were hurting Pansy." he kissed her
temple, "You'd just take a more violent route to hurt the ones who hurt your friends is all."

"I just want to make things better for you; I care about the others too. Harry, Ginny and Granger
have become good friends, Harry about to become family but you come first Neville. You carry my
heart in yours." She shifted in his lap. "We'll do our best, be there when we're needed and try to look
forward, no matter how hard it is sometimes."

He dipped his head and brushed his lips against the corner of her mouth, "See, you've got a big heart
too, you just hide it. Thank you. Just for being you, for being the girl I'm completely mad for."

"I'll always be me, even when you wish I wasn't and if it looks as if I have a big heart it's because it's
with yours. You're teaching by example and to my horror I'm actually learning." She lifted her head
so she could kiss the corner of his mouth.

"Hey you know what they say; it's never too late to learn." He pressed his forehead against hers,
"But don't worry, it'll be our little secret. Besides you own my heart too you know."

"I'd better because I don't have any plans letting you go, not after working so hard getting you in the
first place." She hugged him tight. "Let's go inside, I'm cold and need a bath, you can wash my
back."

A wicked glint sparked in his eyes, one he'd learned from her, "Just your back or do I get to play?"
"What fun is bathing without play?" She blinked faux innocent eyes up at him. "First of all I need to be washed all over...It's a very good thing your tub is big enough for four, we're going to need the room."

He laughed and lifted her as he rose to his feet, carrying her inside, "Well we'd better get started then."

To Be Continued…
Chapter Thirty-Six

Disclaimer: Neither Acherona nor trulywicked have any claim on Harry Potter or any characters or locations thereof.

Warnings: Angst, lots of it, Male Pregnancy, mental torture, infant in peril, boys in love, friendships broken and new friends gained. Disregards canon in so many ways.

MOCKINGBIRD

Chapter Thirty-Six.

Draco eyed the owl that stood looking like if it could tap a talon in impatience it would and the rolled up paper tied to its leg. He sighed and took the paper before directing the owl to a perch beneath an overhang that held treats and water. He took the paper inside where Harry and Jason sat at the breakfast table and unrolled it. Both brows lifting at the headline and the picture of the Golden Trio.

A FALLEN HERO LOST BEFORE HIS TIME

Dear Readers it is this reporter's sad duty to inform you that Ronald Bilius Weasley, a man we have all previously condemned and sneered at, was a victim of a deep and horrible crime. A Death Eater that escaped the final battle, Jamison Erudice, was the cause behind Mr. Weasley's actions towards our world's savior, Harry Potter. This Death Eater managed to corner Mr. Weasley and cast an Imperious Curse upon him, forcing him to betray his best friend in the worst ways possible as we have already reported.

All this came to a head two days ago when the Imperioused Mr. Weasley kidnapped the child he'd sired on The-Man-Who-Conquered. During the rescue mission to save his son, Mr. Potter discovered the truth behind his friend's actions too late to save Mr. Weasley. Erudice, seeing his plan of vengeance on The Chosen One was failing, attempted to kill Mr. Potter himself, just as Mr. Weasley was able to break free of the Imperious. In a tribute to his long friendship with Harry Potter, Ronald Weasley stepped in front of him, taking a Killing Curse for his long time friend.

Aurors apprehended Erudice and interrogated him, discovering the deepness of his crime. Erudice will face the Veil for his crimes as voted on by the Wizengamot.
To the Weasley family, Mr. Potter, and Ms. Hermione Granger we offer our deepest sympathies in this trying time of grief and our apologies for previous articles on Mr. Ronald Weasley.

I urge you, our readers, to burn those previous articles and to remember Mr. Weasley as he truly was, a hero to us all and a great friend until the very end.

"Well, it's not as bad as it could have been." Harry did his best to swallow down the bile that rose in his throat. "He'll be remembered as a hero and he was one...He just lost his way. Merlin I'm glad for the extra wards, if I have to read even one phony sympathy letter I think I'll scream. Sometimes I really, really hate it Draco, that everyone and their grandmother feel that they have a right to know all that's going on in my life...Haven't I paid my dues?"

"Overpaid I'd say love," He rubbed his hand over the back of Harry's neck, "but you've 'saved' us all from Voldemort and even with the few Death Eaters still stumbling about everyone is free and safe. As long as we live the public will want to know what you're up to, how you're doing, etcetera, etcetera, ad infinitum. Dumbledore had to deal with it all his life after taking down Grindlewald; we'll have to deal with nosey twits as well." He kissed Harry's cheek, "I suggest we hire another extra elf to sort through the mail."

"Yes please, let's." Harry turned and kissed Draco's cheek as well before lifting Jason so he could do the same, although that was more like an open mouthed, very wet lick than a kiss but it was the thought that counts. "I do understand the public's interest...No I really don't but most days I can live with it. I'm just having a woe is me day today. Still I'd appreciate an extra elf to handle the mail. I might have to live with being a person of 'interest' but I don't want to read the crap people write me."

Draco delicately wiped the slobber off his cheek, "Then that's what we'll do. Have an elf to sort through the mail and divide it into sections, fan mail will be junk mail and used to feed the fires."

"Sounds brilliant." Harry kissed him again and then looked out the kitchen window at the pale blue sky and the grass that was so green that it almost hurt. "Hey Draco, can we go flying today? I haven't been on a broom for a bloody year, what if I haven't got it any longer?"

Draco snorted in disbelief, "Like hell but I fully support a fly. What about Jason though? Do you want to call Arthur and Molly or my parents to look after him while we go mad in the air?"

Harry bit his lip, honestly if he could he would strap Jason to him even when he flew but he knew that wasn't possible. Also he knew he and Draco had to let go a little, despite what had happen it wasn't healthy for any of them not to be able to let Jason go even for a short time. "I think Arthur and Molly need him most, especially after today's paper. I believe spending some alone time with their grandson will be a good thing."
"Do you want to floo them or should I?"

"I can do it if you pack a bag with things Jason will need, diapers, his bottle and formula, change of clothes and his lullaby dragon."

Draco gave his fiancé another kiss on the cheek, "Consider it done." He got up and headed for the nursery to pack as requested. He could swear he almost felt the air whipping round him already as he raced and flew with Harry for the first time in a long, long time.

OoOoOoOoO

Harry's knees were wobbly when he finally dismounted but he had the largest grin on his face. Merlin he had missed flying, it really wasn't anything like it in the world. The speed and the sense of freedom made his heart sing. "That was fucking unbelievable; I thought we would crash back in the forest. You're mental for riding that low." He couldn't wipe the grin off his face though as he walked over and jumped on Draco the moment the other's feet touched the ground, wrapping his legs around Draco's waist and his arms around his neck.

The blond didn't even stagger, just beamed right back and hooked his hands under Harry's thighs. "I'm mental? Who was it who went into a death drop dive and pulled up barely a second before he impacted with the ground?"

Harry laughed before he attached his mouth to Draco's neck, sucking and nibbling. "I just had to do it," He murmured against, pale, salty skin. "A bloody perfect Wronsky feint and you were the only one to see it...So sad."

Draco made a growl, adrenaline and thrill still pulsing through his veins and mixing with the lust that was already starting to burn as Harry plied his mouth against his skin. "No one saying you can't do it again." His hand moved to stroke and massage one perfect arse cheek.

"Mmm, true. I do feel a strong urge to lower and rise over and over again as a matter of fact." Harry continued to taste and kiss Draco's skin, working his way up to the hollow behind Draco's ear as he tightened his legs around his fiancé and pushed down. The song of flight was still inside him, warring with the desire he felt for Draco, a desire that only grew with each day he spent with the blond.
A hiss slid out of Draco's throat and he pulled Harry closer, grinding them against each other, "Tease."

"Oh but Draco...It's not teasing if you plan to back it up." Harry grinned against Draco's skin as he slid his open mouth over Draco's cheek and jaw until he could capture his lips.

Draco made another growl and opened his mouth to slip his tongue into Harry's mouth and explore it thoroughly, the heat in his blood taking a far more sensual turn. He drew Harry's bottom lip between his and purred, "Oh and do you plan to back it up then?"

"Oh yes, back it up, down...Fuck I'll even do it sideways if that's what you want." Harry panted into Draco's mouth, flicking his tongue over Draco's lips before dragging it over the roof of his mouth, tasting everything he could.

Draco angled his head to scrape his bottom teeth up the column of Harry's throat, "Bed then?"

"If you insist, right now the nearest flat surface sounds mighty tempting." He tightened his legs around Draco again and made a noise with his tongue, as if getting a horse to move. "To bed!"

He nipped harshly at Harry's neck, "I am not having my first time with you on the ground outside the broom shed," he soothed the bite with his tongue as he walked into the house, "we'll save that one for later."

Harry wiggled. "Promises, promises." Inside he was actually embarrassingly happy that Draco wanted their bed. Harry planned to take his time with his gorgeous fiancé, no quick shag; he wanted to savor it, taste, lick until he knew how every inch of Draco tasted. "We have a beautiful bedroom and a very comfy bed, would be a shame not to use it."

"Mmmhmm," Draco climbed the stairs, kissing along Harry's jaw, flicking his tongue out along it as he walked down the hallway and into their bedroom, closing and locking the door behind him. He smirked against Harry's skin before he managed to unhook his fiancé's legs from around him and toss the brunette down onto the bed. He pulled his shirt up over his head even as he moved to crouch over Harry, taking his mouth in a deep kiss.

That kiss did all kinds of interesting things to Harry's insides; he couldn't get enough of it. Arching up and pressing closer to Draco, running his hands over the expanse of Draco's back, loving the feel of silky smooth skin underneath his fingers and palms. His hands crept lower until he could cup his
soon to be lover’s very, very fine arse and pull it down towards his aching groan. "Mine! I claim you Draco Malfoy both body and soul."

Draco kissed down Harry's throat, "Yours, all of me is yours just as you are mine. Every flaw, every virtue, every scar visible and not. We belong to each other." He rolled his hips down more than willingly, catching his breath at the slivers of pleasure darting through him as they ground against each other.

"Fuck yeah! Feels so good." Harry squirmed underneath Draco, not being passive in any sense of the word. He hooked his leg around Draco, digging his heel into the other's buttock, pressing him down. "Feels really good but too much clothes, strip lover. I want to see all of you, see, touch, lick and suck." Harry's glasses dug into his nose and he pulled them off with an impatient movement, dropping them over the side of the bed.

Draco licked a long line up Harry's throat, "Oh but then I have to get up to get my trousers off." He sucked on Harry's earlobe, his hands working underneath the shirt he wore, stroking over the firm body.

"Hmm, want you in the buff but not keen on letting you go...What to do?" Harry moved his hands over the smooth expanse of skin on Draco's back until he was cupping his fiancé’s behind. He gave Draco a wicked smile and suddenly Draco's trousers practically melted off. "There you go, so much better."

"Mmm some debate about that," he worried the earlobe with his teeth, ran his tongue around the shell of Harry's ear, and blew gently on the wet trail left behind, "You're still dressed." He curled his fingers so that he could gently scrape his nails over Harry's flat belly, just light scraping circles and swirls that left no marks.

"Well I'm enjoying the view, very, very much." Harry purred and arched his body up towards Draco again, every touch the other made felt like fire on his skin. He braced himself against the mattress and flipped them over so he was straddling Draco. Sitting up on Draco's hips Harry slowly pulled his sweater over his head and tossed it across the room.

Draco, for his part, had no complaints about the new position and instead used the opportunity to run his hands over the newly exposed skin as if memorizing every last change in texture, every dip and rise, every flex of muscle. His fingers brushed curiously over a scar in the center of Harry's chest, round and the size of an egg, looking like it had been caused by a burn. "Where did this come from?"

Harry shuddered, both in pleasure and from the less than pleasant memories. "Slytherin's locket, a magical scar can't be healed." He leaned down and brushed his lips over a pebbled, pink nipple.
"Not the time to stroll down memory lane right now...Please."

A soft murmur of pleasure escaped Draco before he gently pushed Harry back a bit and half sat up so he could kiss the burn scar and run his tongue over it. He kissed up to Harry's collarbone then down his right arm, lingering over the scar where a basilisk fang had once impaled the flesh and giving that one the same loving treatment. His lips made their way down to the words scored into Harry's hand, tracing each letter with his tongue. He worshiped those badges of honor that he could reach with his mouth, his hands worshiping the rest of Harry's body, flicking his thumbs over the tight nipples and stroking down his sides to unfasten the trousers.

Harry shifted, lifting his hips to make it easier for Draco to unfasten and push off his trousers. His eyes shone with emotion as he looked down at Draco, sadly his lover was a little on the blurry side without his glasses but he would map out every feature with tongue and fingers instead. "I love you." He ran his own fingers over the thin, silvery scars on Draco's torso. "I'm so sorry about this...So sorry."

Draco pushed the trousers and boxers off Harry's hips, working them down and down until he got impatient and whispered a spell to remove them completely. He then caught Harry's hand and kissed the tips of his fingers, "Shh, I attacked you, you defended yourself. It's over and done with love." He released Harry's hand and ran his own hands down his lover's flanks, "I'm alive and well, and that's because of you."

"No Draco, you saved yourself and I'm so happy you did because I really don't think I could live without you." Harry suddenly realized that he was on top of Draco, both of them very much naked...How interesting? He shifted experimentally, groaning as he felt Draco's hardness underneath him. "Now I think we have better things to do than talk, don't you?"

"Mmmm," Draco nearly purred at the little shift, "we do indeed." His lips quirked into a slight smirk, his hands going to Harry's lower back as he lifted his mouth to one pert, brown nipple, tonguing it, scraping his teeth over it, and kissing it teasingly.

"Mmm." It was only a soft purr but it was all Harry could press out as he pushed into Draco's mouth, it felt so good. Harry wanted to give pleasure too, not only receive it so he crawled down the long, lean body underneath him, kissing the soft skin as he went. He was trying for graceful but was afraid he came off more like spastic, once he was face to...Well cock with Draco's long, thick and beautifully flushed erection all other thoughts went out of his head and he reached out to wrap his hand around it and leaned in for a kiss, barely tasting the sticky precum.

A low groan escaped Draco as he watched Harry eye his erection, felt the heat spring up in the wake of his touch on it, and saw the glisten of his precum on those bright, sinfully shaped lips. He reached down to run his fingers through silky dark hair as Harry's hand touched and stroked almost
hesitantly. They were both flying on instinct, impulse, and hunger but Harry was inexperienced though he was doing marvelously without the experience but he knew his lover would want to know what best pleased him, just as Draco wanted to know what set Harry's blood on fire. He ran the tips of his fingers down Harry's cheek, over his lips, and along the back of his hand before covering it with his own and tightening the grip just a bit, "A little firmer baby."

Harry looked up at Draco and tightened his grip on his own. He had never backed down from any sort of challenge in his life and he wasn't about to start now. Keeping his grip firm he started to move his hand in a twisting motion up and down the swollen shaft, running his thumb over the glistening head before replacing the digit with his tongue, flicking it over the cockhead like a snake. Harry's other hand stroked Draco's thigh, caressing the seam where thigh and torso met and moving down to caress a silky inner thigh. Keeping his eyes on the pale oval of Draco's face he opened his mouth wider and sunk it down over Draco's erection, sucking lightly while still stroking what didn't fit in his mouth firmly.

Draco made a hissing moan, knowing he was spilling more precum into Harry's mouth. The sight of Harry taking him in, those striking green eyes fixed on his face, made the firestorm slowly enveloping his senses rise higher and he was approaching painful hardness. His lover was entirely too good at this without even trying, Merlin help him once Harry had plenty of experience under his belt. He sank his teeth into his bottom lip, not bothering to conceal the pleasured sound he made. "Fuck, Harry your mouth...so hot. Does it taste bad?" His hand went to Harry's cheek again then back into his hair, not holding, just stroking through.

Harry's mouth came off Draco's cock and he licked his lips with a low hum. "How could any part of you ever taste bad? Pumpkin juice it's not...It's different but not bad at all." He nuzzled his cheek against the now saliva slicked erection before taking it back in his mouth, spurred by the breathless noises of pleasure Draco had let out earlier he wanted to work harder to hear more of them. Giving Draco pleasure made him feel good and he was practically humping the mattress in between Draco's legs as he bobbed his head up and down with more vigor.

A groan came from his throat as Draco let his head fall back and he had to drop his hands to the mattress, clenching his fingers in the coverlet so he wouldn't arch his hips up and choke Harry. He shivered, the pleasure dancing up his spine, and opened his mouth to gasp out a spell to give Harry pleasure as well, "Proin digiti."

Green eyes flew open and Harry swallowed around the cock lodged deep in his mouth in surprise as invisible fingers rubbed, squeezed, tickled and caressed every sensitive spot on his body. It was an overload of sensations, almost too much. He squirmed under the invisible touch as he pulled off Draco's erection once again. "Hey, that's cheating."

Draco was already breathing hard from the swallow but he managed to lift his head and smirk, "Slytherin remember?"
Harry hmphd and blew on the wet cock in front of him. Obviously he wasn't doing things right if Draco could still smirk. He went lower to mouth at Draco's bollocks as his free hand disappeared behind him. A wandless, wordless spell made his fingers slick and he ran them up and down his own crack before sliding one finger inside with a low grunt.

The breath left him in a whoosh, seeing Harry's hand reaching back, knowing exactly what his lover was doing to himself. The hot mouth on his balls and what his imagination was coming up with made Draco almost whine and lift his hips up just a bit. "I repeat, tease." He licked his lips, "Do you know what I want to do Harry? I want to flip you around and use my mouth and tongue on the hole your fingers are playing with now. I want to push my tongue into you, lick all around that little pucker, and suck it."

Those words turned Harry into mush and into fire at the same time. A garbled noise left his throat and he pushed his finger deeper inside before pulling it out as he gave a feather light nibble to Draco's soft balls. He looked up at Draco, a challenge clear in his lust filled eyes. "Why don't you then?"

Liquid silver eyes heated and in an instant Harry found himself flipped around, facing Draco's feet, as he palmed and spread the cheeks of Harry's arse. He ran his tongue up from the perineum, blew a hot breath over the rosebud exposed to his gaze, then rasped his tongue over it. With teasing little flicks, long savoring laps, a gentle nibble, and sucking kisses, he applied himself to driving Harry out of his mind even before he pushing his tongue into him. One hand slid under Harry's body and curled around his cock just as he slipped his tongue past the puckered ring of muscle.

Harry shook and shuddered, he had never, ever even known that anything could feel like this. He moaned and mewled and pushed his arse up against Draco's mouth shamelessly. His hole clenched and convulsed around the slick muscle inside him. Harry licked at the forgotten erection bobbing in front him, not wanting to forget Draco's pleasure as his own mind was blown.

Draco moaned as he wiggled and thrust his tongue in and out of Harry's hole, his hand sliding up and down his lover's cock in time to his tongue's motions. He pulled his tongue out and lapped around the pucker again, his voice husky and deep, "Do you want me to prep you with my fingers or a charm?"

"Considering I'm seconds away from blowing I say a charm. I'm so empty, want you inside right now." He punctuated every word with another kiss and lick on Draco's cock. "Oh and add a contraception charm as well, I love you but I'm not ready for another baby." Harry didn't want to ruin the mood but it had to be said.
Draco nuzzled one of Harry's cheeks, "I know love," he summoned his wand for the extra surety and cast first the contraceptive charm and then the lubricating and stretching charm.

The cool stretching sensation inside him wasn't the most pleasant of feelings but the knowledge about what was to come was more than made up for it. With seeker speed Harry rose and twisted so that he was facing Draco again, Draco's cock in one hand and his arse poised above it about to sink down on it.

Draco put his hands on Harry's hips and guided him down, his teeth grit, a soft hiss escaping him as he was slowly engulfed by Harry's body. "Fuck, so hot and tight. I'm not hurting you am I?" Heated silver eyes searched Harry's face for any sign of pain.

Harry had closed his eyes as Draco entered him but now he opened them and looked down at his lover. "No, the charm did its job well, just take it easy yeah?" He continued to lower himself until he was firmly seated on Draco's cock, feeling the other's balls snug against his arse. "So deep, so full." Harry rolled his hips experimentally, groaning at the feeling of being filled with Draco, he was so hard and slick and wide inside him, filling him up perfectly.

Draco moaned, his thumbs tracing soft circles on Harry's hipbones. "Merlin, you feel so good around me Harry." His hands slid up his lover's sides, the thumbs rubbing over perked nipples, "So hot and tight, swallowing me right up."

His nipples it seemed, were directly wired to his cock and with the one lodged inside him as well the sensation became heady. Harry let out a needy noise and lifted himself up only to drop back down rather harshly. Trying to get Draco's prick even deeper inside. "Mmmmmmm" A long purring sound escaped him as Harry tossed his head back and rode the waves of pleasure coursing through him as he rode Draco.

He caught his breath, watching Harry's pleasure as he lifted and lowered on him. He was breathtaking, flushed and toned and scarred skin glowing in the sunlight streaming through the windows. He braced his feet on the mattress and lifted his hips as Harry's lowered, rolling up into the downward slide to give his lover more pleasure and seek his own.

The added pressure as Draco pushed up as he pushed down made Harry come closer and closer to the edge. Every nerve ending was on fire and even as his toes curled in pleasure he never wanted it to end. "So bloody deep, so fucking good." Harry moaned as he bounced up and down with more vigor, one hand fisting his own cock and the other pinching and plucking at a nipple.

Draco groaned and reared up, his mouth latching onto the nipple Harry wasn't playing with. His
hands stroked down Harry's back, over his hips, pulled him down in a tiny, hard jolt that had both of them moaning. Tension and heat built with each movement and ecstasy shimmered through him like glittering butterfly wings.

"Love you, love you so much." Harry whisper-groaned like a mantra as his bounces grew erratic and his hand flew over his cock. He was so, so close to coming. Everything was hot, dirty and simply wonderful. He pulled Draco away from his nipple and leaned down to kiss Draco awkwardly as he continued to chase his pleasure.

The blond slipped his tongue into Harry's mouth, sliding it against his lover's tenderly. His hands guided Harry's hips into a slightly different angle trying to aim for his prostate, to give him the electric flash of pleasure that would come with that stimulation.

"Holy bloody fuck!" Harry's back arched as lightning flashed before his eyes, he'd thought it felt good before but it was nothing like this. Why hadn't they ever done this before? Hell why didn't they do it all the time? Harry upped his pace and squeezed his prick as he stroked it madly.

"That's it Harry love, take your pleasure," Draco's mouth moved along his jaw and down his neck, "You look so delectable like this, wild and free and lost in sensation. It makes me want to just," he flicked his tongue over Harry's collarbone, "eat you up."

"Mm, yes. The feeling is very much mutual." Harry gasped out as all of his muscles tensed, muscles he didn't even know he had as heat pooled in his stomach and lightning shot up and down his spine as his orgasm hit. Sweat dripped down his body and he clenched and fluttered around Draco. Harry's semen shooting out, covering his hand and splattering over Draco's pale skin.

By Merlin Harry was beautiful when he came. Draco panted softly as he helped Harry's hips continue to rise and fall as his lover rode out his orgasm. He could feel his own approaching with all the force of an avalanche, his balls drawing up as Harry tightened around him, and soon he was falling over the edge with his fiancé, spilling himself deep within Harry's body. His hands clenched on slim athletic hips and a sharp, short cry escaped him that held the flavor of Harry's name to it.

Feeling Draco come inside him was also something Harry couldn't even begin to explain. He knew it had happen before since he had the child to prove it but nothing, nothing had ever felt like this before. Heart racing and breathing like he'd run ten kilometers chased by death eaters Harry slumped down on top of Draco, kissing his skin where ever he could reach lazily.

Draco's arms locked around Harry like a precious, priceless treasure as he fell back to lie on the bed, pulling his lover down with him. He nuzzled the top of Harry's head as his heart rate and breathing
calmed. A very satisfied smile, not quite a smirk, curved up his lips, "That was absolutely worth waiting for."

"Fuck yeah and we're doing it again as soon as possible. Often...*Often!*" Now that Harry knew what he'd been missing he would do everything in his power to catch up. "Even better than flying. Love you."

The blonds’ hands stroked up, then down Harry's back affectionately, "I love you too. I have no objection to doing that as often as possible either. Hopefully our son will manage to start sleeping through the night soon."

"Mmm, hopefully...Or we'll be having a lot of quickies in the closets all around the manor." Harry agreed and stretched like a cat on top of Draco. He was sore, no question about that but it was a feeling he wouldn't change for the world.

Draco chuckled and pulled a cover up over them as the air made him shiver as sweat cooled, "Malfoys are too dignified to grope in closets. There are plenty of unused rooms with locking doors around for that."

"Pfft, if I want to have a dirty, quick grope in a closet you'll comply. Even if I have to drag you in there and mount you." Harry molded himself against Draco, shivering a little as Draco's erection slid out of him.

"Not if I manage to drag you into an unused room first," he nuzzled at Harry's temple, "For now let's capitalize on a few hours and take a nap before we pick up our son hmm?"

"Brilliant idea, you have your moments Draco." Harry grinned against Draco's skin before he licked it apologetically. He was boneless and tired and right now everything felt right.

**To Be Continued...**
Here we are, at the end of the road of this story. Thank you so, so much to all of you for reading, commenting and showing your support for this fic, we appreciate it very much. Thank you so much for everything.

Disclaimer: Neither Acherona nor Trulywicked have any claim on Harry Potter or any characters or locations thereof.

Warnings: Angst, lots of it, Male Pregnancy, mental torture, infant in peril, boys in love, friendships broken and new friends gained. Disregards canon in so many ways.

Chapter Thirty-Seven.

EPILOGUE.

Severus stood watching, a bit like a silent sentinel, as Teddy and Victoire scrambled over the dunes. Several meters behind him he could hear the chatter and occasional laugh as the Weasleys, Malfoys, Lovegoods, Grangers, Pansy, Longbottoms, and Andromeda Tonks worked together to get the lunch for the day set up on the tables. A burbling baby's laugh followed by Narcissa's familiar thrilled laughter had his lips twitching a bit in amusement. It had been six months since Ron Weasley's death and though the events of that day still marked them all, they'd all healed as well and grown closer as family. Since Lucius had become almost rabidly overprotective, something Severus remembered well from Narcissa's pregnancy with Draco, his wife had taken over looking after Jason while the others worked.

He himself was doing what he preferred during these odd little get togethers and looking after the only children old enough to scramble over dunes and chase after shells. It was a bit chilly as it was early spring but warming charms were applied to the eating area and he rather liked the bite of the wind.

Remus walked up to his mate, his feet sinking down in the fine sand as he wrapped his arms around
Severus. All the open space of the beach and the sea freaked his wolf out a little, there was no place to take cover. It was a nice place to visit but Remus would never be able to live in such an open surrounding. "Everything's okay? Kiddies behaving themselves without running you ragged?"

"They never run me ragged. I should think I can keep up with two three and a half year olds with little difficulty." He caught sight of Teddy bending over a clear glistening lump and reaching out to touch it and raised his voice just enough for the boy to hear him, "Stop!" When Teddy turned towards him with a pout he lifted his brows and shook his head once, "Shells only unless you want to go inside and stay there until dinner."

He had to chuckle at the mighty whine and pout that got before Teddy turned away from the beached jellyfish and went to rejoin Victoire in hunting for shells.

"No need to brag love." Remus said as he squeezed his arms around Severus in appreciation that his mate had told Teddy to leave the jellyfish alone. He may not always like it but Teddy had great respect for Severus and he almost always listened to his Papa. "I believe myself to be in decent shape but I'll admit that they can tire me out, especially my ears. Victoire never stops talking and asking questions, have you noticed that?"

"Of course. She pauses when you're answering however and will accept an 'I don't know' with only minimal pouting. It's quite usual for most children, especially girls." He looked over his shoulder at his mate, "You'll learn."

Remus grimaced behind Severus' back before smiling and kissing his neck. His mate was superior and haughty at times but that was just one more thing he loved about him. "I don't doubt it, not when I have you to teach me."

Severus smiled and watched Teddy excitedly show Victoire some amazing shell, or possibly sea glass from the green glint, he'd found. His voice went soft and almost secretive, a sound and tone only for Remus, "I won't be the only one teaching you."

Honey colored eyes widened almost comically and Remus shifted so he was facing Severus, his hands dropping to cover his mate's flat, almost skinny stomach. "You mean?"

One long, elegant hand, tips a bit stained with potion ingredients, moved to rest over one Remus'. "Yes. In approximately thirty four weeks Teddy will have a baby sister." His eyes glimmered in amusement, "Apparently we forgot the contraceptive charm in the Shrieking Shack." That had been a heated morning after the full moon and it was still an arousing memory.
Remus grinned so wide his face was close to cracking in half and he felt an insane and overwhelming urge to tilt his head up and howl his joy to the heavens. He wasn't sure his mate would appreciate to have such attention drawn to them though so instead he cupped Severus' face tenderly and kissed him with all his might. When he finally pulled away his eyes were glistening with unshed tears. "This is the most brilliant news I've ever heard. A little girl...Oh I love you, my bristly, brilliant and wonderful mate."

"Flea-bitten idiot," Severus tilted his head and deepened the kiss even as he snapped his fingers and pointed disapprovingly at Teddy, who'd begin creeping back towards the jellyfish.

Over where he and Harry were reinforcing the tent, Draco chuckled and shook his head, "And I thought werewolf senses were supposed to be strong even outside of a full moon. He had to be told."

"I think that had it been anyone but Snape then Remus would have known even before the person in question. Snape has always jumbled Remus' mind. I think it's cute, just look at how happy he is." Harry smiled and guided his wand with lazy flicks to reinforce the tent.

Draco snorted, "For Morgana's sake even Blaise, besotted and thick as he is, theorized why my godfather has been so...mellow lately. It's actually somewhat frightening seeing him so calm and...not snarking."

"That's...True, a mellow Snape just feels wrong somehow." Harry agreed with a soft chuckle. "Still at least now he knows and all is well. I can't wait until he starts to waddle."

Silver eyes gave Harry a flat look, "Don't even chuckle when that happens as I want to keep you around a very long time Mr. Potter-Malfoy."

"I'll try to contain myself and keep my chuckles on my inside since I want to be around you for a very long time Mr. Potter-Malfoy." Harry grinned and leaned in to kiss his husband. "Come on though...Admit it will be funny."

"Of course it will, and pensieve memories will forever show that but I'm not risking a hex by admitting it out loud in any way around Uncle Severus." He took Harry's hand in his, the bonding cuffs they wore gleaming in the sunlight. "Maman has something to say to us all after dinner, just before it's time to go home, but I wanted to give you a bit of fair warning." He brought Harry close to murmur so no one, not even Bill could hear him, "There's a spot in Diagon Alley, it's been covered and concealed for the last three months, Maman bought it not long ago and commissioned a
"That's very kind of her." Harry sobered, the topic of Ron was still a little sensitive to him but he had more good memories than bad of his lost friend when he thought about him these days and Harry figured that that was progress. "Arthur and Molly, along with the rest of the family will appreciate it very much. Ron deserves to be remembered and in a good way."

Draco ran his fingers over the shell of Harry's ear, "Maman I think did it mostly for Molly. She understands being a mother and somewhat of how Molly feels with the loss. It's a gift to everyone he was close to but most especially from one mother to another."

"It's a very thoughtful and lovely gift and Molly will understand." Harry lowered his wand and wrapped his arms around Draco. "It will be nice for Molly to have somewhere to go and remember Ron, somewhere else than a grave I mean, somewhere lighter to really remember who he was, alive, loud and kind."

"For all his family and friends," Draco kissed Harry's brow, "when they're ready." He swayed with Harry, tugging him into a surprise dance, "Things are good. My father can even spend three minutes in Arthur's company without scowling."

Harry swayed along with his husband, pulling him as close as he could. He thought about their large rag tag family, that they were happy in the great scheme of things. "Oh yes Draco, things are good."

Narcissa watched her son and his husband dance while Jason burbled and babbled in her lap, occasionally poking curiously at her belly as if trying to figure out why it was so hard as opposed to Molly's erm...full figure. She kissed the top of the dark red head and rocked from side to side in contentment. Her son was happy, she'd have a daughter to spoil rotten in a few months, and her own husband was softening and allowing himself to act naturally around those who were becoming more and more like family. Her gaze found Molly, who was scolding one of the twins for snatching a biscuit and she hoped her surprise would be taken well. She didn't want to cause more pain but offer some better comfort than a cold graveside.

It was amazing really, the ability to heal and move forward with life. Six months ago Molly thought she would never stop crying, that the bleeding oozing wound inside her would never stop hurting. The wound was still there and it was still hurting but it had scabbed over. She could laugh again and she could actually go whole days now without feeling that suctioning, overpowering sense of loss. Ron was gone, there would always be a hollow place in her soul due to that but she could laugh again, could see the joy and worth of life. Her other babies were alive and doing well for themselves. She had two amazing grandchildren, three if she counted Teddy and she did and she hoped to have more soon. She smiled at Narcissa who sat with Jason and hit George over his knuckles with a spoon as he made another go at the biscuits. She had a wonderful family and good friends, both old and
new and she really felt that life was worth living, that's what Ron would have wanted too, he never did like being still or sad.

Hermione laughed, leaning her head on Luna's shoulder, Cygnus whistling in her ear, as the evening drew to a close. Snape had announced his condition half-way through the dinner and Fred had ended up with a roll beaming him in the forehead after praying outloud that Snape's daughter wouldn't inherit her mother's nose. Other than that it had all been good food, good fun, and good company. It was still odd and held a painful ache, like prodding a bad tooth with your tongue, that Ron wasn't there in body but there was something, some feeling she'd have discounted before falling in love with Luna, that told her he was there in spirit, making faces at Jason to make him smile, sending a rogue bit of wind to ruffle someone's hair, just...feelings.

Harry smiled at Hermione, thankful that his friend had found love. Luna and Hermione were good for each other, they balanced each other out. Much like he and Draco did. When he'd been in the midst of war he could never have imagined this in his wildest dreams. He was married to a man he loved more than anything, he had a child who grew with every day and family and friends he could always count on. He was so thankful for his life and he knew that Ron would have been happy for him, teasing him mercilessly but happy all the same. Harry hid a smile as Jason managed to fling a spoonful of mushed peas at Lucius elegant robes. His father in law only raised a silvery eyebrow and wiped at the expensive silk with his napkin. Oh yes, Harry was happy. Even with everything that had happened it felt like he'd had his happy ending and the best part of all was that it was only the beginning.

~:Finis:~

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