Papillon
by lumoxy

Summary

The only boy joining the girls of Beauxbatons at their voyage to Hogwarts is named Draco Malfoy. Beside from looking after the girls, he also displays how talented a French student can be at both magic as seducing the unannounced 4th Champion of the Tournament, Harry Potter.

Notes

Disclaimer: I don't own anything Harry Potter. My Mother language also isn't English so please excuse any mistakes I made.

{Papillon; means butterfly in French}

Noticing that there aren't really any long Beauxbatons!Draco fics out there, I decided to create my own. I don't really know where it will lead to yet, but I'm sure it'll become an interesting project to write. I enjoyed writing this first chapter and I hope you'll enjoy reading it as much! A tip to make this fic even more enjoyable is to read every sentence Draco says with a French accent; I'm 100% sure it'll be super cute and fun, haha! I will make up a lot of Beauxbatons things that aren't 'canon' to make the story more interesting. Also, I'm not really a smut writer but we'll see where this will go... It will mostly be written from Draco's perspective but perhaps I will throw in some Harry here and there to explain
his feelings better! There will also be quite a lot of French in this fic but nothing too
difficult; anyone with a basic knowledge will understand and otherwise Google Translate
will be your best friend! Also, my French reading is better than writing so if I make any
mistakes in French, be free to point them out and I will happily adjust them!
New chapter hopefully once/multiple times every week so make sure to check frequently
for updates!

But enough talking, just read the fic and try to enjoy it! :)
Comments are always welcome!

(Anonymous comments/asks are always welcome on lumoxy.tumblr.com)
CHAPTER 01

Draco

Blue violets dancing atop white marble. Reflections of gold and ivory; dancing girls in the hallways. Their hair like spun gold, dresses like flower petals. It was quite the sight; the girls of Beauxbatons, yet Draco didn’t feel moved by any of them. They were attractive — a lot of them even part Veela — but never really seemed to touch his soul. The other male students of the French Wizarding school felt different about that. As soon as they saw gold combined with blue; they ran. Running after the girls always seemed to bring them joy. Smiles as bright as ever, laughing that could be described as an indecent thing to do.
But Draco always kept himself to walking — or even remaining seated. Why chase a girl he didn’t have feelings for? Why chase a heart that didn’t beat at the same pace?

Madame Maxime hurried herself around the corridor, long legs chasing the boys away from the girls. ‘On ne cours pas!’ She shouted, her loud voice shaking the chandelier’s crystals. Ting ting.

Draco was left alone in the large sunroom; enjoying the view of the Pyrenees. Trees as tall as castles, lakes expanding as far as seas and mountains reaching a point close to heaven. A fresh school year’s start; another year at the chateau.

Seated for dinner at the boy's table in the chateau's dining chamber, Draco awaited what Madame Maxime was about to announce. It was clear to the boy that she had something to say to her beloved students; there wasn't any food on the tables yet and Madame kept moving nervously on her chair. Nobody else seemed to notice, though — all caught up in conversations they didn't even seem to miss the presence of food.

Draco’s eyes took in his fellow students once more; a thing he liked to do whenever he felt bored. His friends were sitting around him, dressed in shades of pastel blue. Their hair always so flawless, eyes bright and shiny. But they could try as much as they wanted; Draco always thought he was the most handsome out of all. His friends couldn't fake a beautiful pearl complexion like he had nor his beautiful silver Veela-like hair.

Vain but true, Draco thought as he glanced over at the girl's table. He was friends with almost all the girls at Beauxbatons; they simple adored him. It was not only because he could do the most intricate hairstyles, but also because he beamed a certain elegance they all wished to be surrounded by. Draco had never minded their attention; he loved it.

'You seem to be in a terrible mood today, Draco,' his friend, André said to him.

André's skin was the opposite of Draco's; a beautiful dark brown but eyes as bright as the ocean. He must admit the boy had always been competition to him when it came to whom looked best of the boys. Not to mention that there were two of him; his twin-brother Ansel was the exact reflection of the boy.

'I'm just a little hungry, alright? Can't Madame hurry up already?' he responded with a sigh.

The twins glanced at each other and then back at Draco with confused eyes. 'How do you mean, hurry up?' André asked, clearly not seeing what Draco saw.

'Is she going to announce something?' Ansel added with the same blind sight as his brother.

Of course they hadn't noticed anything; they never did. Draco opened his mouth to reply but got interrupted by Madame Maxime clearing her throat. Finally, he thought, and turned himself towards her. The tall woman was wearing beautiful purple robes with a large golden brooch on her chest. Taking a step forward and clearing her throat once again, she prepared to bring the news of the century.

'Mes amours,' she started, always calling her students that way, 'I have some great news to share with all of you. This year, notre école and two other Wizarding Schools have decided to organize
the Triwizard Tournament again.'

The dining chamber was quickly filled with whispers; the words Triwizard and Tournament spreading like wildfire. Draco himself drew up his eyebrows, giving the twins a wide-eyed stare. Getting one returned he tried to remember everything he had learnt during *Histoire de la Magie*. The only thing his mind seemed to remember were the many death-cases that had happened during the Tournament, and all the chaos around it. *Was it really worth trying to host another one, he wondered.*

'It has been *years* since the last Tournament was held — as most of you should know. It is therefore an honor and also an opportunity *unique* to show what our *école* is capable of! The Tournament will be held at the *chateau* of Hogwarts in Scotland,' Madame continued. 'Only the best *étudiants* in their seventh year will be able to participate. I want to bring my most beautiful and talented *filles* with me to defend this school and show that a *Witch* can win this Tournament as well.'

Hogwarts? Scotland? *Only* seventh years and *only* girls? It wasn't fair! What was wrong with hosting the Tournament at Draco's beloved Beauxbatons? And why couldn't *he*, heir of the powerful and respected Malfoy-line, participate in a Tournament this exclusive and important? Alright, a lot of students had died in the Tournament in the past, but that was years ago! And of course Madame Maxime had a plan set up to only bring girls; she had always been quite a feminist herself. It was a hard world for powerful Witches, Draco knew. He had heard stories about Madame having to fight her way to the position she was at now. Apparently she had been dragged down and pushed aside a lot by other Wizards whom believed Beauxbatons should forever remain in the hands of a powerful Wizard instead of a Witch — but ever since she had become Headmistress of the school, she had ruled like no-one else had ever before.

With a pout he crossed his arms like a lot of other students did. André and Ansel also didn't seemed pleased with the news, as they both were fond of blasting hexes and jinxes at others. Competition was in their blood; as well as in Draco's.

'But don't be sad, *mes amours*, I will also select a few from other years to join us on this exciting *voyage* to Scotland,' Madame explained. Those words lightened up Draco's mood in a second, making the pout disappear and lifting his chin a bit. The twins also straightened their backs and fixed their uniforms as if to impress Madame from afar.

'All *les filles* in their seventh year, please wait at your table after dinner so we can discuss more of the details. Now, I have selected a few lucky *étudiants* of other years and will call their names one by one. If your name is chosen, please remain at you table after dinner as well. Let's begin.'

Everybody held their breath as the names of female students rolled off Madame Maxime's tongue; all of them sounding familiar in Draco's ears. The girls were either very talented for their age or extremely beautiful, meaning that Madame knew exactly who she was choosing and why; she wanted to impress Hogwarts at all costs.

'And at last, we have decided to only bring one *garçon* with us,' Madame announced.

Voices were raised at his table; all the boys protesting against the matter immediately. They had kept to some sort of quiet at the start, but having such a small chance at visiting another Wizarding School just outraged them all. Draco bit his bottom lip and felt nervous all of the sudden. He really wanted to go to Hogwarts; to support his school and experience things no other boy of his school would experience. Would Madame choose him? What if she chose one of the twins? They were both the perfect candidate; talented *and* beautiful. Perhaps Draco could always send a letter to Father if he didn't get selected; he was sure he would turn things around easily.
'Draco Malfoy, you are coming with the lovely ladies,' Madame Maxime's voice then declared.

Hearing his name getting called, Draco took a deep breath and listened to the applauding hands of his fellow students and friends. I made it. I'm going to Scotland. Always had Draco hoped he would visit another Wizarding School in his life — and he must admit that he had heard a lot of good things from Hogwarts. He might not be able to participate in the Tournament, but who knew what other great experiences were lying ahead of him; waiting for him to grab with both hands and devour.

'Now, let's eat!'

The golden doors of the dining chamber got thrown open and house-elves walked in holding trays of food. A buffet started to gather on the two tables, filling the room with scents of the most delicious foods. Starting with soup and some bread, followed by complicated dishes like escargot; the French cuisine would definitely be missed in Scotland.

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A pale blue carriage with winged horses was eagerly waiting by the chateau's entrance; ready to bring the students of Beauxbatons to a different location. As big as a house, the carriage was and as large as elephants the horses were. Draco felt intimidated by its size but encouraged at the same time. Madame Maxime stood by one of the horses, making the giant creature look a little smaller. André and Ansel said their last goodbyes to Draco before disappearing into the chateau again, waving their hands over-dramatically.

The last few girls boarded the carriage and Draco remained the last one outside; staring at the chateau over his shoulder. Saying good-bye to it for a year hit him rather hard; he would miss every nook of the magical building. He had always preferred staying at the chateau than at home; holidays meant Pureblood lectures in a gloomy Manor.

'Don't worry, mon amour,' Madame Maxime said to him, interrupting his thoughts. 'You'll feel at home in Scotland as well; je suis sûr.'

Draco faced her and put on a little smile. He himself wasn't entirely sure about that, but her words were reassuring in some way. 'Why did you choose me, out of all the boys?' he asked her.

The tall woman sighed, cupping Draco's cheek in the large palm of her hand. 'Ne demandez pas des choses que vous connaissez déjà, mon cher,' she answered. And it was right; maybe Draco secretly knew why he had been chosen. He had always been ahead of his year and had never shown interest in girls the way most boys did. It wasn't because he didn't like the girls; it was because he didn't particularly like them that way. Maybe Madame also needed him to encourage the girls; to make them look beautiful and to be like a guide to them.

One step inside the carriage and he was immediately reminded of a train; a passageway with many doors to small compartments on each side. One of the girls of which he knew was in his year — named Marie — appeared behind him and guided him to one of the doors numbered eleven. The compartment was around the size of a train's compartment as well; holding just enough space for a small bed, sink with a mirror above and the tiniest desk he had ever seen. Seated on the bed, Marie pointed out the door that held a small bathroom; only to use if highly necessary. With a firm nod she disappeared, leaving Draco behind in his small, new room.
A voice shouted at the horses; demanding them to take off. The giant round wheels of the carriage left the ground in seconds, the weight now being carried by wings. Nose pressed against the small window of his compartment, Draco looked outside to see the chateau disappear behind some clouds. They were up so high already! Draco wasn't very keen on flying ever since he had gotten an accident in his first year; rather preferred staying with both feet solid on the ground. But what had to be done, had to be done — and traveling by flying horses had always been a tradition to the school of Beauxbatons.

At night he felt the carriage slowly sweep from left to right with neighing horses in the background. The girls were deadly quiet; not a single sound was made and no footsteps were heard. But Draco couldn't contain himself from opening his door slightly and taking a peek outside; only to find the small passageway deserted. A yellow lamp flickered and swung from the ceiling; making grim shadows on other doors. Door closed and back pressed against his mattress again, he decided to get some sleep. Tomorrow would be a busy day; meeting new students, learning new culture and trying to swallow Scottish food. And most importantly; overseeing the girls.

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'Réveillez-vous!' Madame Maxime shouted around the carriage.

Wide awake in seconds Draco started to get dressed, washing his face in the small sink he was provided with and making the small bed he slept in. Orange light shined in through the window, giving his blue robes a golden gleam. With a comb the same gold as reflected he brushed slowly through his long hair, eyes fixed on his reflexion in the mirror. He always found it interesting how his face could look so different when his hair was hung loose, the tips brushing all the way to his elbows. It almost made him look like he was one of the girls.

Knocking on his door made Draco drop his comb, finding Fleur on the other side. 'Can I use your comb? I think I forgot mine,' she asked, her eyes already glancing at the mentioned golden object that had fallen to the floor.

'I wasn't done with it yet!' Draco sneered at her, picking up the comb but handing it to Fleur anyway.

She flashed a few bright teeth at him, a smile Draco didn't return — but he wanted Fleur to look beautiful today as Draco expected her to join the Tournament — she was the brightest Witch of her year. Of course there were other girls that were capable of participating in the Tournament as well, but Fleur just had that little extra touch. Probably the Veela touch, that could enchant people and was a big advantage to her. Draco combed a little further through his hair with his fingers, tied it up perfectly and hid it beneath Beauxbatons' signature blue hat. He was ready for today and hoped that the girls were as well; they had to be as enchanting as possible. They had to beam and they had to be able to make any boy drop to his knees at the slightest glance thrown in their direction. As Draco opened his door and took a peek down the passageway again, he could see some girls running from one compartment to another; looking simply marvelous.

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A large lake approached Draco's view, followed by a beautiful castle on top of huge rock formations. His eyes looked at it as if mesmerized; it seemed like something from a fairytale. Scotland was more beautiful than he had thought. At least, Hogwarts was. He could see many tiny windows and the smallest architectural details that another set of eyes would simply ignore. Gargoyles in every magical creature's shape; it was all quite the sight.

As they approached the castle he could see a man, waving signs as for where the horses should land. The carriage passed a bridge as it made a turn to its landing — dozens of faces stared at the flash of pale blue passing by in awe. *Are those the students of Hogwarts,* Draco wondered. They looked like small black dots with hints of color. The horses came to a halt beside the man Draco saw earlier; he was quite tall and hairy, with a big fur coat covering most of his body. Next to him sat a large dog, dripping drool out of its mouth. Whoever this man was; Draco found him as interesting to look at as the castle beside him.

Madame Maxime was the first one to get off, stretching out her hand for the mystery man to kiss. The man seemed to be bit surprised by it but accepted Madame's hand and kissed it with great delicacy, as if her hand was made out of porcelain. Madame showed him her brightest smile and got one in return, followed by a blush of pink cheeks. Draco could vaguely hear the man tell Madame his name; Hagrid or something likewise — a name Draco had never heard before. Even though this Hagrid appeared tall to Draco, he couldn't compete against the long and slender figure that was Madame Maxime.

Draco was the second one to leave the carriage, hands neatly behind his back and chin held up high. He helped the girls get out; taking each one of their hands and either complimenting them or correcting some of their flaws. *Tuck away that strand of hair, Marie. You missed a button, Chloé. With a sour face like that, you're not even going to impress a ghost, Ella…'*

He inhaled the morning air and looked up at the castle. A few faces had appeared in front of the windows and in the distance he could see a few students eagerly hoping to catch a glimpse of what was going on. A gust of wind hit his face and made him shiver. He quickly retrieved a silk scarf from his suitcase, wrapping it around his neck before handing the round piece of luggage to Hagrid. The tall man then carefully placed them on a neat pile next to the carriage, making sure that Madame Maxime approved of his method of stacking order.

The girls all held their chins up high, just like Draco did. With their robes flaring around them, they must've been resembling butterflies fluttering against the wind as they made their way towards the castle. Especially the girls with their hair hanging loose over their shoulders; waving in sync with their robes. Draco followed their quick pace and watched each one of them carefully; making mental notes to compliment them on their elegancy later. They passed a few students whom wore the same black robes Draco had seen before; topped with brightly colored scarfs in red, green, blue and yellow. *House colors,* Draco thought. Hadn't he read about it somewhere in a history book? Beauxbatons didn't have something like houses; they were only divided into boys and girls but an unity otherwise. Of course there were conflicts sometimes but they were usually quickly resolved, knowing that they were all too sublime to fight.

Draco looked over his shoulder at Madame Maxime, talking to Hagrid. She looked glad to have found someone as tall as the hairy man, smiling brightly and pointing eagerly at her beautiful winged horses. As Draco turned his head towards the girls again, another gust of wind hit his face and blew his silk scar from his neck. The fabric floated in the air for a while like a feather before landing in front of a dark-haired boy. A bright red scarf and spectacles as round as buttons disappeared a few inches lower as the boy reached out for Draco's scarf, picking it up from the
ground. Green eyes as bright as morning grass stared right into Draco's greys as the boy lifted his head again, making Draco's heart skip a beat.

'Here you go,' the boy said to him with a nervous smile.

Draco took in the boy's face while retrieving his scarf; noticing the lightning bolt scar above the boy's eyebrow and feeling his heart skip once again. *It's him. It's the boy from the tales.*

'Merci,' he thanked the boy, quickly catching up with the girls.

Keeping his eyes fixed on them, he couldn't help but feel confused at the recognition of the boy. He had heard so many tales, so many rumors. Were they true? Maybe the boy just had a similar scar… And his eyes, they were so green.

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As Madame had told them, the Headmaster of Hogwarts had a grand entrance planned for the two foreign schools. The man himself was currently talking to his own students in what they called the Great Hall but could be found similar to the dining chamber back at Beauxbatons. Draco and the girls were waiting on one side of the wide hallway, the boys of Durmstrang on the other side. Positioned in front of the girls, Draco tried to block the view on his lovely ladies from the Bulgarian beasts. Beside keeping his chin up high, he also kept his eyes locked with that of the youngest Quidditch star in history; Viktor Krum. Taking in his strong facial features and posture, he found his heart skip for a third time that very day. It wasn't the same as when he had seen the boy's green eyes, though. Those eyes were mesmerizing compared to Krum's dull browns.

Madame Maxime appeared from around the corner, giving Draco a simple sign with her hand. Quickly Draco positioned the girls to where they had to be, encouraging them as he went. He joined Madame by her side and watched the grand doors open up to the Great Hall. A ceiling enchanted to mimic a night sky, floating candles and many eyes casted upon them. Full of confidence the girls made their way through the Hall, making butterflies appear out of nowhere and throwing enchanting glances at the boys seated nearby. Fleur's sister Gabrielle followed them with a few flexible moves, showing the students of Hogwarts the other talents the students of Beauxbatons possessed.

As they reached the front of the Hall, bowing to their audience, Madame Maxime was announced and strode down the Hall with Draco by her side. She beamed and so did he as he felt all eyes on the pair of them. Some faces were shocked by how tall his Headmistress was, others were surprised to see Beauxbatons also had a male student in their midst. Reaching the middle of the Hall, Madame stopped her pace to let Draco take a step before her. Opening his arms with both palms of his hands held up to the ceiling, the floating candles unlit themselves followed by every single star displayed in the magical night sky. A few students let out a scream because of the sudden darkness but Draco quickly made their worries disappear; out of his left hand he made a glowing butterfly appear, fluttering its wings and leaving trails of brightly glowing stars and glitter behind. The beautiful creature made its way throughout the Great Hall, lighting up the faces of a few students before landing on Draco's palm and returning all the light to the Hall again.

Students rose from their seats, clapping their hands as Draco bowed for what was now his audience. It was only then that he noticed the boy to his left; looking at him with huge eyes and a bright smile, clapping his hands the fastest of all. Without a second guess Draco gave the butterfly
on his hand a blow and it fluttered towards him, taking its landing on the boy's nose. Draco gave him a little smile before joining the girls at the front, bowing with them once again.

As they seated themselves amongst students dressed with blue details — he later discovered were called 'Ravenclaws' — he felt a little disappointed for not being able to talk to the boy he now had encountered twice. Never mind, he thought, he would have plenty of time in the future to get to know him.
Ravenclaws liked to talk a lot, Draco noticed. Only seated for a few seconds he already got loaded with questions; What was Beauxbatons like? Did it look like Hogwarts? Did they always wear those blue robes and those funny looking hats?

Funny, Draco thought, what was funny about their hats? Ignoring their questions, he leaned closer to Fleur whom sat beside him. 'I wonder what Durmstrang will do to top our entrée,' he said to her in French. At times like that he was happy he spoke a language others didn't understand; it kept curious Ravenclaws out of his conversations.

At only the mention of the word Durmstrang, the doors of the Great Hall once again were swung open; revealing the beasts of the Northern school lined up in neat rows of two. With sticks in their hands they shouted and hit the Hall's stone floor. It was funny how Draco didn't feel intimidated at all but rather felt worried about Hogwarts' floor getting ruined. He lifted up his face again to take a good look at the men, only to get surprised by them breaking out into a sudden run. Fleur took ahold of his arm, a bit shocked by how brutal the men were. Other Hogwarts students also gasped; equally as surprised as Fleur. Draco placed his hand atop of Fleur's and gave her a small smile as a reassurance. He wouldn't let any of those Northern beasts get near the girls, he decided then and there.

Followed by the running students were Viktor Krum he saw earlier, looking straight ahead and ignoring everyone around him. They all stared at him with longing eyes, suddenly aware of having a celebrity in their midst. And of course, Headmaster of Durmstrang Igor Karkarov closed the parade of students. Dressed in white he couldn't stand out more — but wether that was a good thing, Draco didn't know. Rumor had it that he and Madame Maxime couldn't stand each other and therefore Draco also glared at him with stares of pure hate. The man didn't seem to notice though,
only kept his eyes straight ahead as Krum had done. Reaching Hogwarts' Headmaster, Dumbledore, he exposed some awfully rotten teeth and embraced him in what could be called an awkward hug.

Fire suddenly passed by, almost scorching Draco's elbow, and transformed into a hawk before disappearing into nothingness. Cursing some words in French he gave the man responsible a glare of death. Yet he had to be honest; their entrance had also been quite exciting and the fire-hawk was a grand way to end it.

The students of Durmstrang chose to sit down at a table surrounded by Hogwarts students dressed with accents of green. 'That's the Slytherin table,' one of the Ravenclaws whispered. It sounded negative in her mouth and Draco looked over to their table. Nothing seemed to point out that any of the students were evil, beside from maybe a few irritated glares.

'What about that table?' Draco asked the same Ravenclaw, a girl with blonde hair. He pointed at the table where the boy he had seen before was seated. She giggled at his accent, but Draco ignored it with a steel face — waited patiently for her to answer.

'That's the Gryffindor table,' she finally replied. 'The table of the brave.' She laid a long emphasis on the word brave, giggling again and having some of her friends join her.

With a frown Draco gave them a confused look. 'Why is it that you find that amusing?'

The girl shrugged. 'Perhaps because that's the only thing they are. Don't get me wrong, but there aren't a lot of smart students amongst them; except for Granger, that is.'

Draco didn't care; he only cared about the boy. Wether he was smart or brave or evil. As he looked over his shoulder again, his eyes found the boy's greens — but this time the boy quickly looked away, almost feeling caught glancing at Draco himself. He felt a slight blush appear on his cheeks but it disappeared as fast as it came when Dumbledore cleared his throat to make an announcement.

As his eyes focused on the bearded Headmaster of Hogwarts, Draco noticed a new object had made its way to the front of the Hall while he was talking to the Ravenclaws. A stone goblet taller than the Headmaster himself stood beside him, drawing everyone's attention. How hadn't he notice it's appearance? Normally Draco never missed anything that happened around him. Feeling a bit guilty for letting his thoughts wander off so easily to the black-haired boy, he decided to focus extra hard on every word the Headmaster was about to say. 'Behold the Goblet of Fire!' said Dumbledore. 'Students of seventeen and above from all three schools may put their name in the Goblet during the following week. That is, if they may wish to participate in the Triwizard Tournament. At the end of next week, the Goblet of Fire shall choose three Champions to represent their school during the Tournament. To avoid any younger students from participating, as we have discussed before,' Dumbledore's eyes wandered off to take a good look in some of the Hogwarts' students their mischievous eyes, 'the Goblet will be guarded with a magical age-line produced from my very own wand.'

The Headmaster's wand then made an appearance, ticking against the edge of the Goblet just once. A blue fire the same color as Draco's robes flared out of it's pit; reflecting its vibrance in Dumbledore's eyes. Students let out a gasp of awe. Captured by the beauty of the blue flames they couldn't help but keep staring with mouths wide open. Draco turned himself towards Fleur, whom was as mesmerized as most. One look into Draco's eyes and she already knew what he meant to say; her name would flare out of that goblet, selecting her as Beauxbatons' Champion. It made her blush and look away, only to return her stare a second later and accompany it with a smile. 'Vous serez exceptionnel,' Draco whispered to her and it made her cheeks turn a violent red.
After dinner they were guided back to their carriage, able to let all of the new faces and experiences sink in. As Draco entered the house-like vehicle he noticed that the inside had been expanded, making place for a room large enough to comfortably fit all girls and himself at once. Victorian sofas and chairs were spread across pastel blue carpets, a friendly fire roared with flames and even a few Rococo-style paintings had made their way to the walls. Sighs out of relief called from behind his back as the girls strode inside as well, throwing off their robe's capes and collapsing down on the sofas. Marie stretched out her hand from one of them, inviting Draco to come sit by her side. Draco took the invitation with a smile, taking place beside her on the velvet fabric.

'It's lovely, non?' she asked. Her eyes were still roaming the room and Draco followed them, discovering the doors to their compartments were now hidden behind the very Rococo paintings he saw before. 'I think your room is that one', Marie then said, pointing towards the only Rococo painting that held the portrait of a boy. It made Draco smile; such detail could only be produced by Madame Maxime herself.

Leaving his seat, he made his way towards the portrait and faced the blond boy painted in pastel colors. He wore an aureole of flowers, painted in pastels likewise. One single pale hand was also painted, holding a winged key. 'Bonsoir!' the portrait called. 'Je m'appelle Raphael. Would you like to enter your chamber?'

Draco gave the painted boy, Raphael, a firm nod. At the gesture, the wings of the key he was holding fluttered a bit and left his hand. Not even a second later the portrait swung aside, revealing the compartment he had slept in the night before. But, to Draco's relief, everything was a bit expanded as well. The bed was wider, the desk as well and he now even had a wardrobe accompanied by a standing mirror. Everything was decorated in shades of pale blue, gold and white; the colors of Beauxbatons.

'Mes amours,' he suddenly heard. It was Madame Maxime's voice; there was no doubt about that. He leaned against the opened portrait, eyes on Madame as she seated herself next to the fireplace in a large purple sofa. 'Hopefully you are very heureux with your new expanded rooms as I personally took care of it. Everything for mes filles et mon garçon.' Her eyes found Draco's and she gave him a small smile, one that came automatically at the sight of him. 'We still have a bathroom in here as well, but monsieur Dumbledore was so gentil to provide us with a larger one at the chateau. Draco,' she now faced the boy once again, 'I count on you to guide les filles to that bathroom each morning perfectly. Running into one of those bêtes from Durmstrang is something I'd like to avoid.'

Draco bowed his head at her demand. Of course he would guide the girls; she didn't even have to ask. It had already become clear to him that he had to take care of them during the entire trip; it was the main reason why Madame had invited him to come along in the first place. The thought of a large bathroom also made him glad; he had used the smaller one the carriage held the night before and it wasn't much larger than his small compartment had been. Knowing that all the girls, including himself, were rather keen on taking good care of their hygiene and hair; a decent bathroom was a must.

Madame Maxime seemed very tired from the day's events. Her eyelids looked heavy and the smile she had held before started to fade away. She wiped a hand across her forehead and rose from the sofa again. 'Excusez-moi,' she said before disappearing behind a portrait of a tall Witch with a purple cat by her side. Other girls also went into their rooms; portrait after portrait opened up to
only be closed again after a second. When almost all the blue was drained from thecosy new room, Draco also retreated back to his room, closing the portrait of Raphael behind him.

He took his hat off, placed it on his desk and untied his hair. The long silver locks sprung free and fell down his shoulders like water fell down a waterfall. Reaching out to grab his comb from his desk, he noticed it was still gone. Too late to ask it back now, he thought as he cursed Fleur in his head. Seated upon the small stool he stared into the mirror above his desk, long and pale fingers gently brushing through his hair. He looked tired but his eyes were still wide awake; ready to capture more of the beauty that was Scotland. The beauty that was Hogwarts.

One thing was sure; Draco had to find out more about that boy. Of course he knew who it was; everyone knew. Rumors had traveled over the English Channel for years, telling the tale of a baby boy whom had survived the curse of Death. Mother had told him the boy was his age; born in the same year only a month after his very own birthday. Draco had always been interested in hearing stories, and the tale of Harry Potter had been one of his favorites. Because, wasn't it peculiar? How could a baby boy survive a curse that no Witch nor Wizard had ever survived before? Not to mention it had been casted by one of the most powerful Wizards to have ever lived; Le Seigneur des Ténèbres. At least, that was how his parents called him. He heard many different names for the evil man over the years. Everything from Vous-Savez-Quiri Voldemort. But it didn't matter how they called him; each name always sent shivers down Draco's spine. Father often told him not to fear the man; apparently Draco's Father was sure he would return in the future and that they had to be his ally in order to survive. When Draco had asked his parents why that was exactly, his Mother had just replied that his Father had made a mistake in the past; a mistake that had tied him to the evil ruler for life.

Focussing himself on the boy named Harry Potter again, he thought about the glimpse he had gotten of his lightning bolt scar. The famous scar, Draco thought while touching the skin above his right eyebrow. He saw his cheeks turn pink while thinking of the boy and his green eyes. And he had been so kind to retrieve Draco’s scarf from the ground, handing it back to him with that nervous smile of his. Or when he was sitting there, amongst his friends in the Great Hall smiling brightly with a blue butterfly on his nose. It made Draco's heart flutter, his stomach turn around. He shook his head, watching his mirrored reflection do the same. Non, he was here for the girls, not to interact with boys with mesmerizing green eyes.

That night Draco dreamt that he was seventeen, a rightful candidate himself to participate in the Triwizard Tournament. Standing in the middle of the Great Hall surrounded by Hogwarts students with red scarfs and green eyes, he eagerly waited for the Golbet of Fire to announce its first candidate. The blue flames roared, spitting out a piece of parchment shaped in that of a butterfly. Madame Maxime appeared out of nowhere and caught the parchment insect before it could drift off towards the floor. She cleared her throat, a smile already appearing on her face. ’Le premier champion est... Draco Malfoy!’ she called out. The Hogwarts students around Draco started to applaud loudly and as Draco's smile grew, the applause suddenly came to a hold. Madame Maxime had transfigured into a tall man with a black hood pulled over his face. Draco could hear sounds a snake would make resound from underneath, almost as if it spoke in Parseltongue. The man's pale hand stretched out in Draco's direction, ready to grab him by his robes when the boy woke up.

Wiping away the sweat from his forehead, he sat up straight and looked around his room. The pale
moonlight shone inside through the small window, assuring him of no other presence than himself. Relieved, Draco laid his head back down on his pillow. *It was only a dream*, he whispered to himself. *Only a dream.*

There was no sun as Draco woke up but there certainly was rain; falling from the sky as if it hadn't rained in years. Tying his hair up in a bun and rolling up his pajama sleeves, Draco attacked his wardrobe in search of his water-repellent hat. It may sound *funny*, like the Ravenclaw girl had said, to wear hats all the time, but to Draco it was something that simply belonged to the school. It was like those colored ties and scarfs the students of Hogwarts wore; a hat was simply part of the Beauxbatons uniform. Madame Maxime had told him many times before he didn't have to wear a hat all the time, that it was a tradition that went back many centuries ago and didn't have to be taken so seriously. Yet Draco had refused to listen to that advice. Beside, he couldn't show off his long silver hair in front of the other students — it would simply be a disgrace to their ego, looking as disheveled as they did. They would also compare him to the girls; something he'd rather not have. He wasn't a girl even though he had more elegance than most; he was a beautiful boy and would also like to remain seen that way.

He found the hat he was looking for rather quickly; a white, wide brimmed hat. It looked like a hat one would wear to a picnic in the 1900s, and Draco loved it. He threw on a silk blue dressing gown atop of his pajamas and pulled the hat over his bun and ears. 'Êtes-vous prêt?' his mirror asked as he gave himself a glance.

'Oui,' he answered and gave the mirror, and therefore himself, a smile.

The girls were waiting for him on the sofas, all dressed in dressing gowns as well. Some of them had pulled out their water-repellent hats like himself, others held on to enchanted umbrellas. The fireplace was already roaring flames, making the room feel nicely warm and cozy.

'Bonjour, Draco,' some of the girls said to him.

He greeted them back while guiding them to the door; it was time to face the rain and make a run for the bathroom. 'Remember; straight up the stairs and then to the left. Wait in the hallway on the first floor until all girls and myself have arrived. *Vous comprenez*?' he told them. They all nodded their heads and Draco jumped out of the carriage, the girls following in his steps.

Holding on to his hat with both hands, Draco ran as fast as he could. He had never felt rain hit his precious skin that hard before — it felt like he was getting hit by several hexes at the same time. He looked over his shoulder and saw that some girls had pulled irritated faces, but others wore bright smiles. They rather seemed to enjoy running through the rain on a Monday morning — perhaps it gave them a feeling of freedom. Draco himself didn't like it at all and was happy when he was inside the castle, exhausted from the small sprint and soaked because of the rain. He waited by the door, touching each girl's shoulder and counting them in his head. As the last girl, Ella, made her way inside, he let out a breath he didn't knew he had been holding.

'Are- are you ok?' a voice suddenly asked. Draco looked around him but didn't see anyone at first glance. Hearing the shuffling of feet he finally looked up the stairs to see the green-eyed boy, Harry Potter, lean against the balustrade.
'I am fine, *merci,*' Draco responded. He went up the stairs himself, taking in the specks of rain the girls had left behind on each step. Hands clutched around his dressing gown, he pulled the fabric close to his chest. As he reached the top of the staircase, he gave the boy another curious glance before turning himself in the opposite direction.

'M-My name is Harry. Harry Potter,' the boy told to him. Draco froze in his stride, releasing the grip on his dressing gown the tiniest bit. In the distance he could see the girls waiting for him, chatting to each other and pointing at little architectural details of the hallway.

Draco turned around and faced the boy named Harry Potter. 'Je sais. I know,' he replied. 'You are the boy who survived, *non?*'

Of course Draco knew the answer to that question, but asking it was something he thought was fun and daring. Had anyone ever dared to ask Harry Potter himself so straightforward about his past? Perhaps they had. Maybe they had asked that already too many times… Draco suddenly regretted asking the question. What if it had ruined his first impression on the boy?

But Harry Potter didn't seem to mind; he put on a shy smile and scratched his head. His hair was a gigantic mess; a bird's nest even more tidy than that. 'I'm afraid I am… And you are?' his reply called.

Draco once again tightened his grip around his dressing gown, and as he held his chin up high, answered the boy. 'My name is Draco Malfoy. I am the heir of the prestige Malfoy-line and the chaperon of the beautiful girls of Beauxbatons.'

'I've never heard of anyone named Malfoy,' Harry Potter admitted. His brows were frown, as if he was thinking very deeply wether he had ever heard the name before. Maybe the Ravenclaws were right, perhaps the Gryffindors indeed weren't that clever. 'But I do find it quite interesting that you're the only boy from Beauxbatons. Why aren't there more?'

Draco adjusted his hat a bit and pushed a wet lock of hair out of his eyes. 'Why need many when one can do the job? Now, *excusez-moi,* I have to go take care of the girls.'

As Draco turned around again, Harry Potter didn't seem willing to let him leave. 'What about your clothes? They're all wet! Aren't you cold?' The words were followed by the sound of rustling fabric. Draco looked over his shoulder to find the boy's arm outstretched towards him; his black cloak with Hogwarts crest clutched in his hand for Draco to take.

Draco felt his heart skip a beat. *How many more times would this boy be able to do that,* he wondered. 'That is very… gallant of you, *monsieur* Potter. But I think I'll manage.' With only a snap of his fingers, Draco's dressing gown and pajamas were completely dry again. The art of wandless magic; what a treasure it was.

He gave the boy one last glance as he stood there, mouth wide open in awe. It made a smirk appear on Draco's face as he turned back towards the girls. As he helped them further down many hallways, he couldn't stop thinking about Harry Potter; the boy who had offered him his cloak because he had thought Draco was cold. There never had been anyone else that had even thought about helping him in such a way. It simply wasn't done. A girl, perhaps, could have been served the same way. He remembered the many rainy days he had encountered during his years at Beauxbatons; girls soaking wet but kept dry underneath their boyfriend's pale blue cloaks. There was a reason why Draco had learned a drying spell by heart; getting soaked and not getting the same attention as most did was simply something he detested.

But there he was, Harry Potter, willing to give Draco his cloak to keep him warm and dry. Draco's
heart jumped again at the thought of it alone.

The first week passed by quickly and on Friday Fleur finally decided to depose her name into the Goblet of Fire. Draco had been encouraging her ever since they had arrived but she had refused every single time — but today, as the sun finally broke through the dark clouds, she decided to finally make the move.

Draco guided Fleur together with a few of her friends to the Great Hall. Gabrielle, Fleur's sister, also joined their little encouragement group and held on to Draco's hand. She had always loved to be around Draco and today was no difference; after Draco had braided her hair this morning she hadn't wanted to leave his side anymore.

It was around three in the afternoon, a popular hour for students to hang around the Goblet and take a look at whom was brave enough to participate in the Tournament. Because of that, it was no surprise that when they entered the Great Hall in their small blue group, all eyes were immediately fixed upon them. Draco took a step aside to let Fleur take the lead. She gave him a look with her eyes, telling him how nervous she actually felt as she strode through the Hall with a smile on her face. Draco waited a few feet away from the Goblet, taking in its surrounding blue light and the glowing circle that was the age line. He noticed a duo of red haired boys hovering around the Goblet, studying the age-restricting spell in great detail. They immediately reminded him of Ansel and André; mischievous but a quite cute to look at.

As Fleur crossed the age-line, Draco held in his breath. He noticed her friends and some of the surrounding crowd do the same. But nothing happened, of course; Fleur was seventeen and therefore old enough to participate. The smile she wore earlier returned to her face and grew brighter as she stretched out her hand and let the fire devour the piece of parchment that held her name. Gabrielle let go of Draco's hand and stormed off towards her sister, stopping right in time to avoid running into the age-line. The thought of Gabrielle getting launched through the Great Hall alone was scary enough for Draco to sigh out of relief.

His eyes wandered off to look at some students from Durmstrang who also threw parchment pieces into the goblet after Fleur. They all had serious expressions on their faces and gave each other a clap on the shoulder as encouragement. Draco kept his eyes on Fleur's friends when they passed by, making sure they wouldn't dare to glance over at their beauty.

Draco noticed some students of Hogwarts stepping towards the blue flames as well. A boy in a yellow scarf drew the crowd's attention the most; making people stand up and applaud in a loud fashion. As the boy's name disappeared in the blue flames, Draco also noticed Harry Potter standing a bit further down the hall. Beside him stood a tall boy with the same ginger hair as the twins, arms crossed and a smug expression on his face. Whatever was his deal; it was rather serious. A girl with beautiful brown curls hovered close to the pair, a book opened in her hands. It was as if she wanted to come look at possible candidates but also do her homework at the same time. Something I would definitely see myself doing as well, Draco thought.

Before he knew it his feet were already taking him to the trio — perhaps his curiosity to know more about the boy and his friends had grown while he had been lost in thought. Of course Harry Potter noticed him walking over and it made him swallow, Draco could see that even from afar. The boy pushed his glasses a bit further up his nose as Draco stopped in front of them, giving the
three each a nod with his head. 'Bonjour, monsieur Potter. How are you today?' he asked him, grey eyes focused on his greens.

'T'm fine, thanks… Malfoy,' he replied, a bit unsure how to call Draco. It made a smirk appear on Draco's face. Making someone nervous was something he had always enjoyed. It had worked a lot on the male students of Beauxbatons, but seeing that it worked on a complete stranger as well was rather pleasant to observe.

'S'il vous plait, call me Draco.'

His name seemed to draw a reaction from the ginger haired boy; a simple chuckle and a smirk on his freckled face. At least the pout Draco had seen earlier had disappeared like snow. 'You're called 'dragon'?' he snorted, almost in a mocking way.

'Like your name is any better, Ron. You're basically called after a weasel!' the curly-haired girl said before Draco could answer.

Her interruption made him smile; it had made the ginger-haired boy, apparently named Ron, turn a violent red — almost as red as his hair but not quite there. 'It's alright, ne vous inquiétez pas. I get a lot of comments on my name,' Draco explained, letting out a sigh to make his words more dramatic, 'but it is what my parents have chosen for me and we must be happy with their decisions, non?'

Harry Potter seemed to agree, nodding his head while keeping his eyes locked in Draco's. It was almost as if Draco had enchanted him with only a few words. 'And what is your name, belle demoiselle?' Draco then asked the curly-haired girl. His words made her blush, which meant she could understand French at least a little.

As she opened her mouth to answer, Ron interrupted her; 'Her name isn't Belle, it's Hermione!'

The girl, Hermione, let out a long and loud sigh at his words. Not very smart indeed, those Gryffindors, he thought again. And apparently Hermione thought so too. 'He didn't call me 'belle' because he thought it was my name, you complete idiot! It means 'beautiful' in French!'

Taken aback by her words, Ron seemed to be shut up but mumbled a few more words anyway. 'He shouldn't be calling you beautiful either.' Fortunately, Hermione didn't hear him.

'Well, it was nice to meet the three of you — but I have to go now. Keep the girls away from the beasts and such,' he told them, chin held up high and hands put behind his back.

Harry nodded at his words again. Enchanted by every word indeed. Hermione frowned her eyebrows though, not entirely sure of what Draco had just told them. 'What do you mean, beasts?'

Harry nodded at his words again. Enchanted by every word indeed. Hermione frowned her eyebrows though, not entirely sure of what Draco had just told them. 'What do you mean, beasts?'

'You know; those boys from Durmstrang. Northern beasts, that they are.' With her question answered, Draco lifted his hand as a kind of good-bye and strode back to Fleur and her friends. They were talking with some Hogwarts students, including the boy with the yellow scarf that had put himself up as a candidate earlier. As he nearly reached their small group, he suddenly felt a tick on his shoulder. He turned around and got surprised by Harry Potter's face; his green eyes looking blue so close to the light of the Goblet.

'Won't you participate in the Tournament?' he asked Draco. A small smile was visible on his face, his eyes staring directly into Draco's. And there it was again; another jump of his heart.

Draco shook his head. 'Non, I am too young to participate. What about you, monsieur Potter?'
Harry smiled because of his words and shook his head as well. 'I am also too young. Fourth year, you know. Beside, wouldn't even want to participate in the first place. Already had quite enough adventures in the past three years to skip them this time. And please, don't call me monsieur. Just Harry.'

Draco suddenly remembered that Harry was indeed the same age as him; only a month younger actually. But what did the boy mean by enough adventures in the past years? Draco didn't know; he only knew about the tale that made him famous to the Wizarding World. 'I don't know enough about you nor your past to judge on that, but I'll understand your opinion.'

Harry's smile widened because of that and as he opened his mouth to say something else, Draco felt a hand being placed on his shoulder. As he looked to his left, he stared straight into the enchanting eyes of Fleur. 'Who are you talking to, Draco?' she asked him in French.

'It's Harry Potter — you know; the boy from the tales.' Fleur's eyes widened at that and stared Harry up and down as if he was a ghost. 'But not to worry; he is too young to compete against a talented Witch like you.' His words made her smile and face him again. The back of her hand slid across his cheek in a loving gesture; something she only did to him and her little sister. It meant that she was grateful and expressing her love, a delicate move that Draco simply described as Veela.

As she strode away again, Potter seemed to have frozen on the spot; probably mesmerized by Fleur's beauty and their enchanted words in French. 'I must go now, but I am sure we will have more time to talk soon, Harry,' he said to him. His words snapped Harry out of his enchantment. A nervous little smile appeared on his face as he nodded and basically ran back to his friends.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you so much for the lovely comments on my first chapter and all the kudos! It really made me excited to already write a second chapter today. A third might be up as well at the end of this week but we'll see!

{Anonymous comments/asks are always welcome on lumoxy.tumblr.com}
C H A P T E R  0 3

Draco

Sunday evening came faster than Draco had hoped and it made him nervous. Ever since Fleur had put her name in the Goblet of Fire, Draco had been hoping that she would be the chosen one. Of course he would support any girl that would be chosen as Beauxbatons' Champion, but it would hurt his ego a bit if that would be the case.

They had just finished dessert and everyone was anxiously waiting for Dumbledore to make the next move. Draco peered over at the teacher's table and caught Madame Maxime's eyes. His Headmistress looked nervous as well; glancing over at the Goblet every few seconds to then return her eyes to Draco and the girls. He understood her worry; one of her precious filles would be up for many dangerous challenges once chosen. If something went wrong; she would be partly to blame.

Finally Dumbledore rose from his seat and made his way around the table, towards the Goblet. The blue flames were still roaring brightly and as the old man clapped his hands, all other sources of light went out; almost like Draco had done during his entrance. Chatting students shut their mouths and all eyes were focused on the Goblet and its blue fire now. Dumbledore cleared his throat and freed his hands from his sleeves a bit. 'Now, the moment you have all been waiting for; the selection of our three Champions,' Dumbledore called out through the Hall.

Everyone was on the edge of their seat; anxiously and nervously waiting for the next move the Goblet would make. Dumbledore took a step forward, placing a hand atop the Goblet's smooth stone and drawing it back as quick as it was placed. A few seconds passed and Draco bit his bottom lip, waiting. He felt Fleur's hand grab his underneath the table and he gave her palm a slight squeeze.

The blue flames suddenly turned red, almost as if the fire got angry at something. The flames shot up towards the magical ceiling and with their bolt movement came a piece of scorched parchment.
As the flames transformed back to their original blue color, the piece of parchment floated downwards straight into the hands of Dumbledore. The man cleared his throat once again, reading the name on the parchment out loud. 'Our Durmstrang Champion will be… Viktor Krum!'

Shouting and applause broke free from the Slytherin table as all the men of Durmstrang rose to clap their hands for their Champion. Of course it had to be Krum; if it had been someone else it would've been ridiculous and a waste of the celebrity's time to come in the first place. Krum made his way to Dumbledore who congratulated him and gave him a pat on the shoulder. Krum didn't seem the slightest surprised by everything at all and followed Dumbledore's guiding hand to a door in the back of the Great Hall.

The flames colored red again as Dumbledore turned around, facing the Goblet and waiting for the next Champion to be chosen. As the fire shot up again, a parchment butterfly came fluttering down. Draco's heart almost stopped beating as he recognized the parchment not only from his dream but also from Fleur's hand when she had put it in the Goblet herself last Friday. He felt Fleur squeeze his hand with great force when Dumbledore read her name out loud. 'The Champion for Beauxbatons is… Fleur Delacour!'

Draco jumped up from his seat and all the other girls followed almost as fast. As Fleur made her way towards Dumbledore, everyone clapped their hands and Draco decided to blow some magical butterflies behind her. One fluttered down on Fleur's shoulder and she threw a bright smile at Draco before shaking Dumbledore's hand and accepting his congratulations. Before she made her way to the door as well, Dumbledore took the butterfly from her shoulder and looked at it with great curiosity. Madame Maxime beamed from across the room and followed Fleur with her eyes as she left through the door.

The butterfly disappeared in the Headmaster's hands and the flames colored red one last time. Out came the last piece of parchment, neatly folded in four. Unfolding it took longer than the others, and the tension amongst the Hogwarts students grew. Dumbledore then cleared his throat one last time and read the name out loud. 'And finally, the Champion for Hogwarts… Cedric Diggory!'

As Cedric Diggory left through the door, Dumbledore focused on a new item that had entered the Hall. Placed upon the teacher's table was a mystery item veiled beneath a brown cloth. 'Only one of them will go down in history as the winner of this year's Triwizard Tournament. Only one will be able to conquer-' and at those words the item underneath the cloth was revealed, '- the Triwizard Cup!' A beautiful blue cup was revealed with silver detailing and a blue light glowing inside, similar to the color of the Goblet's blue flames.

As everyone stared at the Cup in awe, nobody seemed to notice that the flames of the Goblet of Fire were acting strange. They curved into different angles and acted a bit… wild so to say. Dumbledore also noticed and looked at it with a frown. The Headmaster got surprised by a sudden burst of red flames, shooting up towards the ceiling higher than any of the previous three had done. Another piece of parchment wandered down towards him, landing on the palm of his hand. Dumbledore swallowed at the sight of the written name. 'H-Harry Potter,' he called out, his voice trembling of confusion.

Whispers spread around the Hall and Draco looked at the Gryffindor table over his shoulder.
Almost immediately he caught Harry amongst his friends, frozen and with eyes opened wide. The curly-haired girl, Hermione, gave him a push against his shoulder to get him to move but the boy shook his head. 'Harry Potter!' Dumbledore's voice called again, this time louder and more irritated.

Draco frowned. How could it be that Hogwarts had two Champions? And maybe more importantly; how could it be an underaged Champion? He didn't feel mad about it, but wasn't glad about it either. If Harry Potter could get the opportunity to join the Tournament, why couldn't he?

Harry finally seemed to realize that remaining seated wasn't his best option; he would have to get up sooner or later anyway. The boy seemed extremely nervous and confused as he rose from his seat and made his way towards Dumbledore. And it was also then that students started to shout. 'It isn't fair! He's not even seventeen! Why can Hogwarts have two Champions? He cheated!'

Draco felt bad for Harry as he genuinely looked confused, but on the other hand he also started to feel more and more agitated by the second. The fact that Fleur now had to face three other Champions instead of two made his blood boil. Beside, Harry had blocked the curse of Death as a baby — who knew what magic he was capable of at his current age.

Dumbledore didn't say nor touch Harry while he passed by on his way towards the door. The old Headmaster still seemed confused and a bit annoyed by the event; perhaps he felt embarrassed that something like this was occurring. As the boy left sight, Dumbledore hushed all the other students and told them to go to their common rooms. Without further argument the students listened and started leaving the Great Hall with a lot of noise. But Draco just couldn't let it go; he had to know what this was all about. 'Marie, take the others back to the carriage. I'm going to find out more,' he said to her. She gave him a firm nod and left the Great Hall together with the girls.

Draco stormed towards the teacher's table and found all of them in a great argument about what this was all about. Without being able to say a word, the group moved through the door, down a few stairs and straight into an underground room. Fleur, Krum and Diggory stood by the fireplace, all three with their arms crossed and giving Harry glares of Death. The teachers stormed into the room with Dumbledore at the front and Draco trailing behind them all. He could hear the Headmaster's voice yell at Harry with great force. 'Harry, did you put your name in the Goblet of Fire?'

Harry shook his head as fast as he could, his eyes frightened at Dumbledore's anger. The Headmaster had grabbed him by his shoulders and was staring deeply into his eyes. 'No, I have not, sir,' Harry managed to get out. His breathing sounding rapid and nervous.

'Did somebody else do it for you?' Dumbledore speculated, his anger fading a little.

'No, sir. I promise,' Harry replied.

Madame Maxime tsk'ed as she made her way towards the pair. 'He must be lying, Dumbledore. Je peux voir ça!'

Dumbledore took another long stare in Harry's eyes before he let go and faced Madame Maxime. 'I think he's telling the truth, Madame. The Goblet's magic is too strong for a fourth-year to mess with,' he told her.

Of course that wasn't the end of the argument and with Karakov soon joining in as well, the conversation became rather heated quickly. Draco decided he didn't want to be stuck in any of it and quickly made his way over to Fleur whom was looking blankly into the fireplace.
’Fleur, are you alright?’ he didn't know why he asked just that, he felt like it was the right thing to say.

Fleur recognized his voice and threw her arms around Draco in a tight embrace. ’I am so happy that you're here, Draco,' she said to him in French. ’It's all such a mess.’

’Don't worry, Madame will fix it — I'm sure,’

’But it just isn't fair, is it? They have two Champions now!’ Fleur cried out.

Draco sighed and stroke her hair. ’Of course it isn't fair, but we'll see what they'll say once they've calmed down, alright? Perhaps it was just a mistake.'

Fleur nodded and at that moment the teachers fell silent. Draco turned around to face them again and saw Dumbledore's hand on Harry's shoulder. ’I am afraid, my boy, that there is no way back. The Goblet has chosen you as a Champion and therefore you are expected to compete as well,' he told him.

Madame Maxime and Karkarov looked vile, but didn't argue with his statement. Draco realized at that moment that it was set; Harry Potter would be the fourth Champion wether he liked it or not. And judging by the terrified look on the boy's face; he didn't like it at all.

The weeks before the first task of the Tournament were filled with hate and despise; everybody gave Harry the most vile looks and the poor boy seemed more and more deserted by the day. Already the day after the Champion selection, everybody had turned their back on the boy. Fellow students were angry because they also had wanted a chance to participate, the yellow scarfed students were angry because he was taking away the spotlight from their Cedric Diggory and the foreign students were furious because their school only had one Champion while Hogwarts had two. Draco found it unfair as well, but he didn't place the fault at Harry; he believed that Harry genuinely didn't put his name in the Goblet of Fire — but was it then that did?

What surprised Draco the most of all was how Harry's best friends also didn't seem to believe him; at least the ginger-haired boy didn't. This Ron stormed off every time he caught a glimpse of the boy. And when they ran into each other, they seemed to fight a battle neither of them could win. Hermione on the other hand didn't seem to not believe Harry, but Draco could see the doubt in her eyes every time she was around the poor boy.

And so it became natural for Harry Potter to roam the hallways of Hogwarts alone while getting shouted at, and Draco feeling pity for him. Some blond Slytherin even made awful badges reading ’Potter stinks’ followed by an exclamation mark, a badge that every Hogwarts student seemed to wear. Draco even caught a few of his girls pinning one on their chest, but at the sight of it alone — them making holes in their fine silk robes — Draco had banned them from their figures, carriage and overall life immediately.
They were halfway towards the first task when Madame Maxime woke him up in the middle of the night. He heard his portrait open with a squeaking sound followed by Raphael's yawning at being awoken. As he opened his eyes, he stared right into those of Madame. 'Bonsoir, Draco,' she whispered to him. 'Get dressed and meet me outside toute de suite.' A small smile hovered on her lips and Draco gave her a nod while sitting up straight immediately.

With his dressing gown thrown over his shoulders and a hat pulled over his ears, he sneaked out of his room and out of the carriage, finding Madame waiting by the winged horses a bit further across the grassy field. Draco hurried himself over to her, watched how she held a finger to her lips and looked around before gesturing for him to follow her. She made her way towards a cabin in front of the Forbidden Forest, and as they were only a few feet away she suddenly stopped and turned. 'Wait here and don't get seen, oui?' she whispered to him and Draco nodded in return, hiding on the side of the cabin.

Madame knocked on the wooden door and within a second the face of Hagrid appeared in its opening. A big smile graced his face and he gave Madame's hand another kiss. A giant flower was placed in his fur coat's front pocket and it looked like he had combed his wild hair; it looked slightly different than before. Hagrid invited his Headmistress to follow him towards the Forbidden Forest, and Madame did so after throwing a glance over her shoulder at Draco; a sign that he should follow as well.

Hiding behind trees with every step the pair took, he couldn't help but feel a little like a spy — and he wasn't even a good one as Hagrid noticed the sound of cracking branches and footsteps upon leaves. Fortunately Madame shook them off with asking personal questions about the tall man himself; Draco got to know all the details about his dog, Fang, and how much he loved working as Hogwarts' gamekeeper. Madame Maxime hung to every word the man seemed to say, something Draco was surprised about. He had never seen Madame be so gentle to another man, let alone have a decent conversation with one for longer than a few minutes. Perhaps it was the fact that they were both taller than average and a little… special to say the least.

As the forest grew thicker and darker, Draco started to worry that whatever it was Hagrid wanted to show Madame, might not be what she had expected. Draco was still confused as why he had to join Madame and Hagrid on this kind of date — beside from feeling like a spy he also started to feel like an intruder of possible love. But his worries were faded away fast; a rising flame from amidst the trees froze him to the spot. Another flame followed and the shouting of spells and the screaming of men caught his attention. Madame and Hagrid had also stopped a bit further, closer to the flames and shouting. Draco also moved his feet again after taking a few deep breaths and hid behind a tree close to where Madame was standing.

Four cages appeared behind a few bushes, and within them was the source of the flames; dragons. Draco didn't know how to feel at the sight of the creatures; even though his name meant dragon, he never saw one in real life before and also hadn't really planned to ever meet one. Yet there they were; standing before him and growling into the night. Madame's eyes seemed to lit up though, at the sight of the creatures. She on the other hand had always been fond of large winged animals. 'C'est magnifique!' she called out to Hagrid, whom gave her a content smile in return.

'Misunderstood creatures, that they are! Let's see if I can get yeh a bit closer,' Hagrid said to Madame Maxime, and made his way through the bushes, over to the men that were keeping an eye on the dragons.

Madame saw this as her chance to quickly look for Draco. She found him still hidden behind a tree and looking at the dragons with large eyes. 'You know what to do?' was all she asked and Draco nodded. After giving the dragons another glance, he ran back to the carriage as fast as his legs
could take him. Holding on to his hat with one hand and keeping his dressing gown closed with the other, he stormed through the dark forest and over the Hogwarts grounds.

His mind kept wandering to the dragons; they were the first task no doubt about that. Fleur would have to face them in only a few more weeks time. Draco shivered at the thought of himself having to fight such a creature; he would have been terrified not mortified to do such thing.

Even though it must have been in the middle of the night, he couldn’t keep the secret to himself for any second longer; he had to tell Fleur about it and he had to tell her now! He knew her room was hidden behind a portrait of a mother holding a little baby girl; a reference to her and her little sister Gabrielle. Draco hurried over to the very portrait and watched the baby sleep peacefully in her mother’s arms. The mother herself too seemed to be dozed off into the land of dreams.

‘Er — Mademoiselle?’ he whispered to the portrait. It remained silent, either ignoring his words or genuinely in deep sleep.

‘Elle s’appelle Françoise,’ a voice then whispered to him. Looking over his shoulder he caught the glancing eyes of Raphael, probably still awake to await Draco’s return. A smile lingered on his lips, the key fluttering its wings slightly.

Draco gave him a nod as a thank-you and turned back towards the other portrait. ‘Françoise?’ At the call of her name, the mother immediately opened her eyes and took a look around to see whom it was that had awoken her. With frowned eyebrows she gave Draco a head-to-toe look before her face softened and the smallest of smiles appeared on her face.

‘You called, petit garçon?’ She asked. Petit? He wasn’t that small! I am taller than all the girls and look older than any of those fourth-year Hogwarts boys, Draco thought to himself. He put on a pout and crossed his arms, making the woman smirk.

‘I wish to speak to Fleur, please. It has to do with the Tournament.’

The woman’s eyebrows raised slightly. ‘Un garçon, in Fleur’s room? Non, non, I can’t allow that.’

Draco sighed. He wasn’t in the mood to be arguing with a portrait in the middle of the night. ‘Please, it’s important!’

‘Important enough to wake up a girl from her precious beauty sleep at an hour this late?’

‘Bien sûr! Fleur will agree!’

The woman then was the one to sigh. As she cradled her baby a little in her arms, she gave Draco a firm nod. ‘Bien, but only this once!’

Her portrait swung aside and revealed Fleur’s room. It was exactly the same size and held exactly the same furniture as Draco’s, but Fleur had decorated everything with small seashells and flowers. She had always been interested in everything sea and ocean; she spoke a lot about how she was going to live near the sea once she got married. Draco looked at her slim figure wrapped in a blue blanket and her long silver hair sprawled across her pillow.

‘Fleur,’ Draco whispered. The girl didn't react to it, keeping her eyes firmly shut. Draco sighed and gave her a small push against the shoulder, an action that caused her to frown slightly.

‘Fleur,’ he whispered again. Her eyes then opened slowly, blinking a few times before taking in Draco’s face.
‘Draco?’ Her voice was full of sleep and she sounded confused rather than surprised. ‘What are you doing in my room?’

As she lifted herself up to a sitting position, Draco sat down on her bed as well. ‘The first task; I know what it is.’

At those words, Fleur suddenly seemed fully awake; eyes wide and a bright smile appearing on her face. Every normal boy would have melted at such a sight, yet Draco felt unmoved. *It just isn’t like the boy’s green eyes,* a voice in his head told him. He shook it off as he had more important things to say and do. ‘You’ll have to fight a dragon. I saw them with my own two eyes! They’re hiding them deep inside the Forbidden Forest; spitting fire against trees and under control of a dozen of spells.’

Before Draco knew, two arms were wrapped around his body in a tight embrace; Fleur was giving him a hug. That was the second time within one month — a few more hugs and Draco would slowly melt away in a puddle of limited privacy. ‘Vous êtes génial! How did you find out such a thing?’

She drew back, staring at Draco with still those giant blue eyes. They seemed to be even larger in the moonlight; almost deer-like. ‘Actually, it was Madame Maxime that pointed them out to me. She had an appointment, so to say, with that Hagrid man. She just seemed to know it would have something to do with the first task and that’s why she took me with her to observe everything and tell you afterwards. So here I am!’

Fleur’s smile brightened even more, something Draco had thought was impossible. ‘Merci, a thousand times merci!’ She gave him another hug before flipping her hair over her shoulder and taking a deep breath. ‘Dragons, though.’

Draco swallowed at the second hug; he just didn’t like physical contact, not even by the girls whom he adored so much. And of course he understood Fleur’s worry; he himself had been scared of the dragons as well. ‘Don’t worry about it. I’m sure you’ll do great!’ he assured her anyway, but his words only seemed to worry her more. She seemed lost in thought, suddenly — probably thinking about what she could do to win from a giant winged creature that spitted fire.

Not wanting Fleur to stress herself too much at an hour as late as it was, Draco took ahold of her hand and looked her in the eyes. ‘Now, get more of that beauty sleep your portrait mentioned and we’ll talk about it tomorrow, alright? You'll have enough time to come up with spells and techniques to fight this dragon before the task; it's still weeks away.’

Fleur nodded and lay herself back down on her pillow, giving Draco's hand a slight squeeze before letting it go. Draco also rose from her bed and was about to leave her room when he spotted a familiar item placed upon her desk. ‘I believe that belongs to me,’ he said with a sneer as he retrieved his golden comb. ‘Bonne nuit.’

A little laugh escaped Fleur’s mouth before Draco disappeared, closing the portrait of Françoise and her baby behind his back. ‘Bonne nuit to you as well, Françoise. Et merci,’ he said to her.

The portrait just gave him a blank look and Raphael seemed to beam from across the room, ready for Draco to return back to the room. But as Draco stood in front of the boy's portrait, he suddenly seemed frozen for a second time that night.

‘You’re not coming in?’ Raphael asked, eyebrows a bit frowned.

Draco shook his head. ‘Non, I think my nightly adventure isn’t over yet.’
'Oh? Then where are you going, mon cher?' Raphael rested his face upon his hand in a curious fashion, the key's wings still fluttering between his fingers.

Draco couldn't answer that question as he didn't even know where he could find him in the first place. He knew where the Ravenclaws stayed; a tower somewhere to the west side of the castle — but the Gryffindors'; where could they be sleeping? Perhaps a tower as well as Hogwarts had enough of those... but it didn’t matter; even if he had to roam the entire castle to find him, he had to tell Harry about the first task as well. Of course you have to, he told himself. Nobody else is going to tell the poor boy about it; everyone has turned their back on him! When Draco had seen the dragons before, his thoughts had wandered off towards the green-eyed boy almost immediately after thinking about Fleur; he was in this Tournament unwillingly and had no-one to help. Having to face such creatures was something Harry had wanted to avoid but had now become something he had to do. In Draco's eyes it was simply unfair, and therefore he found it his duty to tell him about the dragons as well.

Without thinking about it for any longer, he stormed out of the carriage again and made his way towards the castle — but as he ran across the grassy field, he suddenly collided into something he couldn't see. He fell backwards onto the ground quite hard, caught in surprise by the invisible obstruction. His breath caught in his throat; whatever it was that he had ran into didn't want to be seen. Suddenly feeling scared, he retrieved his wand from his pocket and pointed it towards an invisible something.

'Lumos,' he whispered and a bright light appeared at the end of his wand. 'Who— Who's there?'

Silence. There was no answer nor sound; only the rustling of trees and a few crows making noises in the background. Draco noticed his hand was slightly shaking and as he started to lower his wand, a pair of green eyes behind round spectacles appeared in his Lumos' light. Harry.

In the boy's hands was an interesting looking cloak. An invisibility cloak, Draco thought. It has to be! Harry reached out a hand towards Draco and Draco took it, getting pulled up to his feet again. Being so close to Harry all of the sudden, he noticed he was a bit taller than the boy himself. He took a step backwards to be a bit more away, the closeness too much for him to bear. 'I'm sorry about that,' Harry then mumbled.

Draco shook his head. 'It's alright; I was looking for you anyway.'

This information seemed to confuse Harry and he frowned his eyebrows. 'Looking for me? Why?'

'I-I wanted to tell you about the first task. Got some information about it... That is, if you are interested of course,' he replied.

Harry's confusion only seemed to grow. 'About the first task?'

Draco swallowed. This conversation appeared to be harder than he had thought; best to get it over with as soon as possible. 'Oui. You will have to fight a dragon but that's all I know. B-but it's really late and I should go now. Bonne nuit!'

With those words blurted out into Harry's face, Draco quickly turned around and made a run towards the carriage again. His heart was beating fast and reached its peak when he felt a hand wrap around his arm, pulling him back. He stared right into Harry's green eyes again that seemed to twinkle a bit in the pale moonlight; reflecting every star above their heads.

'Why are you telling me this? Why do you care?' Harry asked, his voice a bit exhausted by the sprint he had had to make to stop Draco from running away.
Draco actually didn't know. Well, he actually kind of did; he had wanted to tell it to him because he thought it was fair. But now that he had actually said it; it felt like he was betraying Fleur, Madame Maxime and his entire school. He ended up saying the thing he knew Harry would want to hear; the only reason why Harry would believe why he had told him about the dragons. 'Parce que je vous crois. I believe you.'

And it seemed to work; Harry's grip around Draco's arm loosened a bit and his frown disappeared. Draco desperately tried to read his eyes but Harry had them focused on the ground underneath their feet. 'Why would you? Nobody believes me, especially not the girls from your school or those Durmstrang students.'

Draco sighed and it made Harry look up again, his expression blank. Apparently the boy sincerely didn't know how to feel. 'Because I saw it in your eyes. I saw the confusion; la peur.'

'La peur?'

'The fear, Harry. The fear for the Tournament. The fear when your name suddenly got called. I remember when you told me about having had enough awful adventures in the past; I figured you were telling the truth, non?'

'Of course I was telling the truth! I would never have joined the Tournament! Not even if I were seventeen and could legally participate!' Harry seemed to get angry for no reason; hadn't Draco just told him that he believed him? Maybe I should repeat it again, Draco thought. 'I believe you, Harry.'

It didn't seem to work. Harry still looked frustrated or irritated; whatever emotion it was, it wasn't the right one. 'Why aren't you mad at me like all the others? You should hate the fact that Hogwarts now has two Champions and your school only one. You should hate me because I am that second Champion. You should—'

'I should help you, that is what I should do.' Harry seemed startled by Draco's words, looking at him with his mouth still opened. 'Because if I don't, then who will? You don't have your friends their support, non?

Harry shook his head. 'No, they don't believe me. At least, Ron doesn't. Hermione is just… confused, I guess. She doesn't know who to believe or who to support.

'Well then, shouldn't you be happy to have me as a friend?' Draco asked, putting on a small smile. His smile probably looked more like a grimace as he tried to read Harry's feelings. It was so difficult, though, trying to read his eyes when he kept looking away.

Harry seemed surprised by his words, and even his attempt at a smile. 'You're my friend?'

Draco snorted. 'Er — oui?'

Before Draco could have even seen it coming, he got embraced into a hug for the third time that evening. And not a hug from someone he was used to getting hugs from, no; a hug from the green-eyed boy. *The boy from the tales.* Harry Potter himself was giving him a hug. It was even quite tight, as if he had never given anyone a hug before and just didn't know how to *friendly* embrace someone. The way he clung around Draco felt like he was desperate; desperate for a friend apparently.

Draco just stood frozen, that was for the third time that night as well. His arms kept straight by his sides and his chin held up high, only to not touch Harry's messy hair or tanned body. Even his eyes
he kept closed with great force, hoping for the moment to be over soon and never happen again. Harry seemed to notice how uncomfortable Draco was and pulled back. He slid a hand through his hair and tightened his grasp around his invisibility cloak. 'Sorry about that... don't know where that suddenly came from,' he muttered.

'I see,' Draco managed to get out. He swallowed and pulled his dressing gown more closed again. Arms crossed over one another, he tried to break through the sudden awkwardness between them. 'C'est une cape d'invisibilité?' he asked.

Harry frowned but nodded as Draco pointed at the cloak in his hands. 'It was my father's,' the boy replied.

'Why were you wearing it before? Couldn't sleep?'

Harry bit his bottom lip and shook his head. 'About that... I actually already knew about the dragons before you told me.'

Draco then was the one to frown. 'You're saying that you already knew about those fire-breathing beasts?' Harry nodded. 'And that I didn't have to come tell it to you, risking losing Fleur's trust, because you already knew about them?' Harry nodded again. 'Incroyable!' Draco threw his hands in the air, rolled his eyes and turned around, only to turn back and look straight into Harry's eyes again. 'Why didn't you tell me that from the start?'

'I- er — I got distracted, I guess?' He shrugged, shuffled his feet and pushed his spectacles further up his nose.

'Vous devinez? Next thing I know you'll tell me you were spying on Madame Maxime and Hagrid in the Forbidden Forest as well!'

Harry once again pushed up his spectacles and stared at the ground as if he found the grass underneath his feet very interesting. 'Er —maybe?'

Draco felt himself go mad; he could feel it. He could feel how his mind exploded into a million pieces and how his raid to find Harry and to help Harry suddenly felt like a very, very bad idea. A stupid idea. A terrible idea. He had betrayed his school to help someone that didn't even need help; he already knew, l'idiot. 'This—is this was une erreur. A mistake. I should go back, I—'

'Please, don't go! At least, not yet…' Harry took ahold of his arm once again, the palm of his hand radiating a great warmth through Draco's dressing gown. 'Hagrid is a good friend of mine and just wanted to help me like your Headmistress wanted to help you. Or at least, wanted to help Fleur.'

Draco took a deep breath. 'You saw me, non?'

'What do you mean?'

'You saw me there, hiding behind trees and following Madame and Hagrid through the forest, non? You saw me, now admit it.'

Harry swallowed and nodded. Of course he saw Draco, but Draco hadn't seen him. No, Harry had been well hidden away from his eyes underneath his invisibility cloak. And did he even care to tell Draco about that earlier? No, he had not. 'Forget about it,' he then told the boy. It didn't really matter anymore; Draco had done his duty and that was that. Harry was on his own now, he already had to help Fleur starting tomorrow. He had to go to Hogwarts' library with her and search for ways to fight a dragon or go find an empty room somewhere to practice defense spells and curses she could use upon one of the fire-breathing beasts. 'It is time for me to leave, now. Bonne nuit.'
Draco felt like he had already said those two words too many times that night and it made them sound weird and false.

'Good-night to you as well, I guess…' Harry's voice sounded a bit distant and even disappointed at Draco's departure.

As Draco reached the carriage's door, he suddenly heard the boy's voice call out to him one last time. 'Draco?'

Draco turned around, catching the boy still standing at the spot where Draco left him. 'Oui?'

'Thank you!' he then shouted, a little smile gracing his lips.

Draco smirked. 'I don't know what for! Go to bed, Potter!' he shouted back before disappearing into the carriage, leaving the boy behind on the green grasses of Hogwarts' grounds.

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That night Draco dreamt of dragons. And not just about dragons, but dragons in the first task. Hidden in the Forbidden forest was an arena structured out of wood; faceless students seated on tree trunks at it's side. Their eyes were all focused on one boy in the midests of the circle, wobbling on his feet and staring at a dragon with great fear visible in his eyes. The boy had black hair and emerald eyes framed by spectacles. 'Harry!' Draco shouted at him, but the boy didn't seem to hear. Draco called out to him again but the dragon already growled, blowing fire in Harry's direction and scorching the poor boy to death.

Woken by his dream, or maybe better called nightmare, Draco took a few deep breaths and relaxed his mind. He had to help Harry too, he realized. The boy probably had no idea how to fight such a creature compared to Fleur whom had many more knowledge on the matter; she was older and therefore had spent more time at a Wizarding School and had had more Magical classes than Harry. Of course the boy might have been able to already cast off the Death's curse at a baby's age, but that didn't mean he was capable of fighting a dragon fifteen years later.

Draco had to help Harry somehow to get through this Tournament, he felt. He could always decide to work against him and only support Fleur — but something, a tiny voice in his head, a feeling in his heart, told him that he had to help Harry. Why that was, Draco didn't know, but he did know that every time he was around Harry he felt happy, somehow. He felt different. He felt... almost as if he was one of the girls. And even though Draco always had told himself he didn't want to be seen as one of them; he couldn't help the fact that it made him feel special. That it made him feel like he was being chased; that he was somehow being loved.

It was too early to call it love and even the thought of the word itself made Draco flinch. He had hated it terribly when Harry had hugged him, but he also couldn't deny the fact that he was happy to have the boy as his friend. He didn't know anything about Harry but he was eagerly to find out. Eagerly to know why the Goblet of Fire had chosen his name, an underaged name, a name that 'nobody' had put in it in the first place. He was eager to know what it was that made this boy so special beside the fact that he had survived the curse of Death.

Chapter End Notes
Thank you so much once again for all the kudos and comments! So happy you're all super exciting about a long Beauxbatons!Draco fic! Some chapters will be shorter and others will be longer depending on the subject and how I wish to divide them. Hope you had fun reading!

Also thank you Akirafye for pointing out some of my French mistakes! Please, if I do make any more in the future, feel free to correct them as my French isn't that amazing. (I'm better at reading than writing!)
As Draco made his way towards the bathroom the next morning, the girls trailing behind him, rain once again poured down upon their heads. Fortunately it was only a slight drizzle. Still, Draco had pulled his water-repellent hat over his ears again and clutched his dressing gown tightly around his body. Drip drop, getting wet was yet another thing he detested. He awaited the girls by the door like he did every day, touching each shoulder as they passed by. Fleur seemed to be lost in thought already since she had awoken; staring into nothingness. Her wide blue eyes didn't give any of her secrets away. When Draco touched her shoulder she even jumped a little; it had scared her. 'Ça va?' Draco asked and she nodded with a little smile.

'After you left I couldn't help but think about the dragons and the task; all my exhaustion had disappeared. But I've come up with a plan during those nightly hours,' her smile brightened but Draco couldn't return it, sensing there was more to it. 'But?' he asked her curiously.

'But I won't be needing your help with it, mon petit amour.' What was it with all the women in Draco’s life suddenly calling him petit? He basically towered above Fleur's presence right there and then; staring down at her tiny figure in confusion.

'Why not? I could help you do some research and-'

'I will need Madame to help me with this, Draco. To fight a dragon I will need to learn and revise spells that you know nothing about. As much as I want your help, you won't be able to give me what I need. Je suis désolé,' she told him. A little smile lingered upon her lips but it was more one out of regret and for being sorry.
Draco swallowed and gave her a firm nod, keeping his chin high and putting his hands behind his back. 'Of course. I am only a fourth year, aren't I?'

His words were meant to make her feel bad but worked the opposite. She gave him a small pad on his shoulder. 'I knew you would understand, Draco. You always do,' she said as she joined the other girls again.

Draco felt the heat rise to his face. He didn't feel angry nor furious; he felt left behind and pushed aside. He had wanted to give his entire school year to help Fleur with the tasks; to help her do research; to help her practice. But apparently she didn't want his help. Because you're only a fourth year, a voice in Draco's head repeated, it means that you're not talented enough to help her. Apparently he was only good enough to look after the girls and perhaps study a little at a different school.

Telling the girls to go ahead of him, that he would catch up later, he let himself fall down at the bottom of the stairs. He watched the rain fall slowly outside the entrance's doors, the drops falling down faster and harder by the second. Water bubbles hitting stone; coloring the ground a shade darker than usual. In only a few minutes the faint drizzle had become the downpour it had been a few weeks ago. He watched it in silence as he thought of what plan Fleur might have come up with. Whatever it was; Draco wouldn't be a part of it. Of course Fleur wanted him by her side before and after every task, she had made that clear even before she became a Champion — but Draco had thought and hoped he would always be by her side. Staring at the rain he just felt abandoned and suddenly alone. When was the last time he had felt so lonely?

Always had he been surrounded by at least someone; the girls, the twins, his parents. And for the first time in very long, he felt alone. Was this how it felt to be Harry Potter right now, Draco thought to himself. And at that thought, he suddenly didn't feel so sad and lonely anymore; Harry was still his friend. Harry still needed his help... somehow, right? Draco bolted up to his feet in a matter of seconds. He had to find Harry after breakfast and start making plans with him. If he couldn't help Fleur; he could at least help Harry, right?

Harry didn't make an appearance during breakfast but Draco's luck turned when he spotted the boy during lunch. He couldn't help but glance over at the Gryffindor table every minute or so. His eyes kept observing the green-eyed boy, seated all the way at the end of the table, utterly alone. Hermione hovered close to him but the distance between the two friends was too wide to have a decent conversation. Harry also didn't seem to be very hungry; poking into his food every now and then to not take a single bite of it. After around fifteen minutes of staring and poking, the boy pushed his plate away and stood up from his seat.

Taking it as a green light, Draco rose as well and clutched the few books he had taken with him tightly against his chest. 'I'm going to the library to study a bit. If anyone needs anything or wants to go anywhere accompanied, let me know,' he told the girls in French. They all nodded and resumed their previous chatter; no longer paying attention to him.

Draco hurried himself after Harry, out the Great Hall. He heard a few students call the boy names as he walked through the hallway, showing off their Potter stinks! badges with great pleasure. Harry didn't seem to mind them any longer, just clenched his jaw and kept his eyes straight ahead.
He made a turn to the left and Draco noticed they were on their way to the front gates of Hogwarts, which meant they were leaving Hogwarts all together.

It suddenly hit Draco that it was Saturday; the Hogsmeade day. Madame Maxime had informed them that there was such a day coming up very soon; a day which allowed them to leave the Hogwarts premises and visit the nearby little village. Most of the girls hadn't been interested in visiting, they rather wished to stay in to study or gossip in the carriage's common room. Draco on the other hand really had wanted to visit the village, but had found no-one to go with him, which had made him simply disregard it. But with Harry walking in the direction of this Hogsmeade, he realized he now did have someone to go with — and this person was walking right in front him.

He kept his eyes straight on the boy's raven hair while following him in his pace. Harry walked fast for having shorter legs than him, taking large steps at a time. Head pointed towards the floor, hands tucked away in the pockets of his hoodie. They were only a few more feet away from the Main Gates with the winged boars, and with nobody in sight, Draco took a little sprint to catch up with him. He then stopped a little in front of him. 'Bonjour!' he called out.

Harry seemed surprised by Draco's appearance and gave him a questioning look with his emerald eyes. 'Hello, Draco,' he replied, pulling the hood of his hoodie a little straighter.

Saturday meant casual-wear and Harry seemed to take that quite seriously; everything the boy wore was only invented to be comfortable. A pair of jeans that he probably owned for many years already and a simple black hoodie that was three sizes too large for his figure. Draco himself had exchanged his regular blue silk uniform with cape for a white button-down and tailored light-blue trousers to his waist, held up by suspenders. Topped off with a pale blue beret, he found himself being as casually dressed as he could be.

'Are you on your way to Hogsmeade?' Draco asked him, tilting his head slightly and clutching the books he brought a bit closer to his chest.

Harry nodded and tucked his hands a little deeper in his pockets. 'Yeah, I want to visit some shops. Get distracted from all the chaos for a moment. Clear my head.'

'Bien sûre! Care if I join you?' Harry gave Draco a strange look but shrugged. Picking up his pace again, Draco joined him by his side as they passed through the gates — the pair of winged boars looking down upon them with their tiny eyes.

As they passed Hogsmeade station, Harry finally lifted his head to look at Draco. 'I still don't get why you want to be around me. Especially not after last night,' he admitted with a sigh.

Draco frowned. 'Pourquoi? Why would you think that?'

'Well, you seemed quite mad at me because I didn't tell you that I saw the dragons before you told me that you saw the dragons and that I should have seen them but that I already saw them and-'

Draco interrupted Potter's mumbling by shaking his head and raising a hand to put him to a halt. 'Vous êtes incroyable, Harry. And you don't understand a thing about me. I know I am a complicated soul but believe me; when I told you I was your friend, I meant it. And when I told you I wanted to help you, I also meant that. Je promets.'

Harry seemed startled by his words. 'But- what about Fleur? Don't you have to help her?'

'Apparently she thinks I am not qualified enough to help her.' Draco felt a stab through his heart at those words. Admitting it to someone made it real — made him feel like a failure.
'Not qualified enough? What about all the wandless magic I've seen you show off? Those magical butterflies, the drying charm… Hermione is quite jealous of you for being able to pull off that many spells without using a wand; she can't do it and she's the brightest Witch of her year.'

Harry's words gave Draco a warm feeling; at least some people seemed to find him talented enough. Of course it was one of the reasons he was chosen by Madame Maxime to join them as he was the brightest Wizard of his year at Beauxbatons. 'That's very gentil of you to say, Harry, but it won't change anything; she simply doesn't need my help, the smart Witch.' Draco let a smile grace his lips and Harry seemed to copy it by reflex.

A silence grew between them after those words, and they embraced it while walking through the streets of Hogsmeade. Many Hogwarts students had decided to exchange studying for a trip to the little village as well, which made the streets packed with black-cloaked Wizards and Witches. Draco looked at their happy faces as they entered a candy store and returned moments later with arms full of all stuff sweet. His own feet just followed Harry's, which were taking him to a pub with three broomsticks displayed above it's door. 'Fancy a butterbeer?' Harry asked as they entered the pub.

'A butter-what?' Draco replied, eyebrows frown and eyes a bit bigger than usual.

The atmosphere of the pub could've been described as cozy and welcoming, yet it made Draco feel very uncomfortable. There weren't any pubs near Beauxbatons and even if there were, he would never go to one. If he wanted to drink something while out in a village, he stopped by a tea-room or just waited until he was home again. The tea-rooms he was used to were decorated in whites and marbles, details were lain in with gold — but this; this was the complete opposite. Dark walls and wood everywhere Draco's eyes looked. He was glad to have Harry by his side, knowing that if he were alone, he would simply have died at the spot out of embarrassment. Some people just didn't fit in no matter what, and Draco in an environment like that of the Three Broomsticks, was one of them.

'Are you alright?' Harry asked him, looking at his tormented face. He seemed on the verge of bursting into a laugh.

Draco managed to give him a nod as he held on to his books with dear life. 'I'm fine.'

'Why don't you take a seat over there while I get us some drinks, alright?'

Before Draco could protest, the boy had already disappeared into the crowd. Draco remained standing by the door, observing everyone in front of him. They all looked at Draco as if he was part of the furniture; there but not worthy of their attention. A bit hesitant he made his way around the crowd, finding a vacant table and chairs somewhere in the corner of the pub. As he sat himself down, a Wizard beside him gave him a vile head-to-toe glare before returning to his conversation. Another dingy looking Wizard passed by his table, giving him a bright smile of rotten teeth before joining a few others at another table. It all gave Draco the creeps and he gave himself a reminder to wash himself extra thoroughly when he would return, just to make sure no weird bacteria had crept upon him during his stay.

Harry returned a few moments later with two pints of yellow, foamy liquid in his hands. He set them down with a thud and fell down upon his seat the same way. He raised his pint to Draco and with a wobbly hand, Draco took ahold of his own one to cling it against Harry's. As he took a sip, he put on an expression that could tell stories; he didn't like it at all. He immediately missed not having a cup of tea to wash away the foul taste. 'You don't like it, do you?' Harry asked him with a grin and Draco nodded in all honesty.
'Tastes worse than langue de boeuf; and that says a lot,' Draco said to him, pulling another disgusted face.

'And what is that?' Harry asked curiously, resting his face upon a hand.

'A cow's tongue.'

Harry, whom had just taken another sip, spat it out as if the butterbeer had suddenly become the liquid version of the cow's tongue. Draco gave him a smirk and took another sip from his own pint. At least he wanted to pretend like he liked it to the surrounding crowd, but the second time it tasted even worse and he was on the verge of following Harry in his spitting.

Another silence followed as they both awkwardly sat across one another; Harry slowly taking sips from his pint and Draco tracing his fingers over the pages of his books. Hogwarts students kept entering and leaving the pub in quick paces; ordering hot and cold butterbeer and sitting down at tables as far away from Harry as they could. Draco noticed Harry looking over at them a few times; a certain sadness visible in his eyes. Even though he acted like he didn't care; Draco could see it did effect him greatly no matter what he said.

As the silence grew to its peak and Draco decided it may have been a mistake to follow Harry to Hogsmeade in the first place, Harry finally opened his mouth. 'I do, you know,' the boy said. It came out only a little louder than a whisper.

'Je ne comprends pas. You do, what?' Draco asked him.

'About earlier. You told me Fleur doesn't need your help but- but I think I do.' He avoided Draco's eyes as he said it, fidgeting on his chair a little. 'I need a friend and as stupid as it may sound, you're the only one willing to be right now.'

Draco raised an eyebrow and finally let go of his books, placing them upon the wooden table that seemed to wobble underneath their weight. He pushed the top one in Harry's direction, tapping on it with his index finger. 'Well then, let's get started.'

Harry looked up into Draco's grey eyes to then drop them to the book again. 'Dragons from A to Z: A Magical Guide.' Draco piled another book on top and Harry read the title just as confused. 'It Flies and Breathes Fire: How to Handle a Dragon.' A third and last book was added to the pile. 'From Ovum to Draco. Do you want me to read all of these?' Harry's eyes grew wide with those words, a finger pointed at the small pile.

'Don't worry, I have already read them for you,' Draco answered him, putting on a content smile.

Harry seemed confused. 'B-But when? You only found out about the dragons last night!' Draco shrugged. 'Didn't have much to do this morning and I'm a fast reader.'

Harry's mouth fell open out of disbelief. His eyes displayed complete shock and it made Draco smirk. 'Of course I didn't read them this morning, Harry. Nobody is that fast at reading. Non, I have these at home in French and have read them last year. My name means dragon, as your ginger-haired friend pointed out earlier, which makes me quite interested in the creature itself.'

'So you're like an expert on dragons or what?' Harry asked, surprised and still a bit shocked at the same time.

Draco shook his head. 'Beside from these three books, non. Otherwise Fleur probably did need my help. I did some research on the creatures but I'm not very fond of them. I was terrified of them
when seeing them last night. They're quite large and… breathe fire.' 

Harry let out a short laugh. 'I must admit they did look quite scary, right? Can't believe I have to face one within weeks!' His earlier smile turned into a grimace and he looked down at the books again. 'You must tell me everything you know.'

Draco let out a sigh. 'Then say the magic word, Harry.'

'Magic word?' The boy frowned. 'As in Lumos? Alohomora? Wingardium Leviosa?'

'Non, Harry. S'il vous plaît.' Draco laughed a bit himself at Harry's slight stupidity. Gryffindors, he remembered.

'Ah, yes of course,' Harry replied as his ears turned slightly red out of embarrassment. 'Please, Draco. Help me?'

And with those words said, Draco opened up the first book to point out some important chapters Harry should read himself. As they flipped through the pages he also gave him a little summary of each book and the most important aspects of them. Whenever he couldn't remember the English word he tried to explain it to Harry with completely absurd gestures that only made the green-eyed boy laugh. Draco found himself laughing quite a lot as well; either because of Harry's comments, questions or because of the boy's laugh itself. As they sat there in the dingy pub with their heads together, Draco felt their friendship grow and couldn't help but feel proud of succeeding in his plan to get to know the boy from the tales.

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A few cups of tea and butterbeers for Harry later, they had gone over every little aspect Draco knew about dragons. Draco had shrunken the books for Harry to take with him in the pocket of his hoodie; something he himself would have never done but the boy had insisted on doing. The bright blue sky that had hovered above their heads that morning had transformed into a darker blue with some stars. It surprised Draco that time had passed in such a quick pace; normally he was always aware of the time no matter what. He was surprised to see it was already so late, surprised to know that he had spent so much time with Harry without even realizing it.

As they walked back in the direction of the castle, Draco pointed out a few stars by name. He had always been interested in astrology as his parents were as well; organizing midnight adventures to study the stars during holidays. Harry could only nod at every word he said and hung to his lips; eager to hear what the blond had to tell him.

The castle neared and Draco noticed that Harry had gone silent again. The boy was looking down at his feet, hands tucked in his hoodie once again as well. 'Something wrong?' Draco asked him, worry resounding through his voice.

'It's just… you're not supposed to support me and-'

'Didn't we have this conversation two time already?' Draco interrupted him.

'Yes, but- I was trying to say something else,'

Draco stopped in his pace. 'Go on then.'
'My friends are normally the ones to always help me and even though they are acting like giant arses at the moment, they should be the ones to be here by my side instead of you.'

Draco didn't know how to feel about those words. What was Harry trying to say? That he was glad Draco was helping him but that he'd rather wanted help from his friends? It didn't make sense and Draco also didn't want to hear any of it. He had just spent his entire day filling Harry's empty brain with knowledge on dragons and then he acted like that? He shook his head and continued his walk towards the castle, Harry trailing behind him.

'I-I don't mean I don't want you by my side, though. It's just… weird, I guess,' he heard the boy say.

Draco turned around to face Harry again, arms crossed over one another. 'You guess a lot, don't you?' Harry shrugged. 'And whatever you're saying doesn't make any sense to me.' Harry opened his mouth but Draco hushed him. 'Non, it is not because it's not in French. You're rambling words you don't know the meaning of. Vous êtes incroyable!'

With those words out, Draco stormed off towards the carriage, leaving Harry behind. He could hear the boy following him but he ignored it, quickened his pace instead. Harry shouted his name a few times in an apologizing fashion but Draco waved them away; he didn't feel like talking to the boy anymore. He was just rambling nonsense and it irritated him greatly.

Perhaps a blue butterfly just couldn't be friends with a roaring lion. Perhaps all of it was a mistake like he had thought last night. Perhaps he was betraying his school greatly and Harry just wanted to make that clear; didn't want him to get into trouble because of him.

Draco stopped in front of the carriage's door. He then understood what Harry had tried to say; he was just worried Draco would get into trouble for helping him and that he himself would get in trouble with his ignorant and unsupportive friends if they knew he was hanging out with someone from a rivaling school. And wasn't it logical that Harry would have wanted his friends their help instead of Draco's? Wasn't it the same for Draco? Wouldn't he rather want to help Fleur than Harry?

All pieces fell into place and Draco felt mad at himself for not understanding earlier; Harry's words were always just so… so confusing. He turned around to call for the boy but noticed that he had already disappeared, left Draco to storming off. Draco took a deep sigh. Tomorrow there would be time enough to tell Harry he was sorry and had misunderstood his words; misunderstood his feelings.

But Draco's day wasn't over yet. As he entered the carriage, he immediately noticed something was off. There were no girls lounging on the sofas and the fireplace was extinguished. Only a long, slender figure was seated upon her usual purple sofa, her hands folded together. 'Draco,' she said. Her expression was blank but Draco could read the fury in her eyes; she was mad at him.

'M-Madame,' Draco answered, voice trembling slightly. Whatever she was about to say; it wouldn't be any good.

Madame Maxime rose from her sofa, towering above Draco like no-one else could. 'Vous me décevez, Draco.' And the disappointment was clearly readable on her face. Out of all expressions a human face could produce; the look of disappointment was the worst to Draco. It made his heart beat faster and made him feel nauseous. 'You told les filles that you were going to the library, but you weren't there. They looked everywhere for you, Draco! Où étiez-vous?'

Draco looked at his feet, hands behind his back and biting his bottom lip. Could he tell her about
Harry? *No, certainly not.* She would hate him and send him right back to Beauxbatons if he told her about him. 'I went to Hogsmeade. You told us we could go, Madame,' he told her instead. Looking up into her eyes was something he didn't want to but had to do — and to his surprise he noticed their expression had softened at his words.

She sighed deeply as she placed a hand on his shoulder. 'You are here because I trust you, because I know you will look after mes filles. I know you wanted to visited le petit village but you abandoned them for an entire day. And you lied to them,' Madame's words were said in a soft manner but it made Draco feel even worse. He had indeed left the girls behind; he had told them a lie. He hadn't gone to the library but exchanged it for a dingy pub to study dragons with whom was supposed to be his enemy.

'*Je suis très désolé, Madame Maxime,*' he said to her. 'It won't happen again.'

Madame cupped his cheek like she had done before they had left weeks ago, staring into his grey eyes. 'I know it won't. You're not the one to repeat the same mistake twice,' she said. Her voice had turned serious; a tone she only used to make something very clear to someone. Draco knew what that tone meant to him; if he made the mistake of abandoning and lying to the girls one more time, his time at Hogwarts was over.

As Madame left the room, Draco sat himself down on one of the sofas. He had a lot to think about; especially about Harry. Perhaps it was good that they had had a small argument earlier; maybe it would be easier to ignore him now. He had helped him with all the information he had on dragons, hadn't he? Surely he would find *some* way to fight the winged creature, right? Harry probably didn't need his help anymore so Draco could easily ignore him again and take care of the girls like was supposed to do. And study properly again, because that was something he also had abandoned for a while.

A sigh escaped Draco's lips. He took off his beret and let his hair fall loose upon his shoulders. Silver waved over his chest and he stroke the strands with his fingers. Raphael observed him from across the room, face resting upon his single hand again. The portrait seemed to mimic Draco's tired eyes and after taking a deep breath, Draco decided it was better to get some sleep. Tomorrow was another day, he told himself for a second time. Raphael's portrait already swung aside at Draco's nearing presence, not saying a word to him. Flower boy might've also been disappointed in his actions.

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The girls hadn't been as angry at Draco as the boy had thought; they had rather been worried about him. Some girls had wanted to join him at the library but as they hadn't been able to find him, had started to panic. Panic had spread to the other girls as well and as one, blue group they had roamed the castle in search of Draco. Nobody had seen Beauxbatons' sole boy and out of desperation they had informed Madame Maxime about Draco being missing.

Of course Draco hadn't been able to tell them he had gone to Hogsmeade with Harry but he told them he had been too curious and gone off to explore the little village on his own. Upon entering a bookstore, he had gotten lost of all sense of time and returned at an hour way later than he had wanted to. The girls hadn't questioned his story; they took it as the truth without a second thought. Not even one of them asked what books Draco ended up buying nor did they ask to see them; they just believed him.
Draco had seen Harry at breakfast the next morning and the boy had been staring in his direction almost the entire time. As much as Draco wanted to return the stare, he knew he couldn't. He knew that if he would; he wouldn't be able to look away again. He felt like an idiot, ignoring the boy so heartlessly like that, but he didn't know what else to do. He couldn't have him distract him any longer; he couldn't betray his school again.

Draco was glad they didn't have to share classes with Hogwarts students; they had their own private classroom and teacher that helped them with every single subject. Monsieur Bonnet was skilled in every magical field and taught classes according by level of skill. Of course there were enclosed classes for all the seventh year girls Draco wasn't allowed to follow but he didn't really care; all they learned he could learn in the next years at Beauxbatons as well. As there was a lot of self-studying involved, he often didn't even have time to think about Harry or the Tournament at all which was a fortunate thing.

Fleur seemed to be doing well and she had informed Draco that her plan was working out perfectly. Madame Maxime was helping her the best she could, she told him. Draco had just nodded at every word and was happy for her. The disappointment that he couldn't help her had faded away quite fast; he just wanted her to do well and not get scorched to death by the fire-breathing creature.

Ansel and André had also written Draco their first letter; telling stories about how boring Beauxbatons had become without their papillon; a nickname Draco had earned himself through many different events. The twins both already had had detention and were currently being watched closely by replacing Headmistress Madame Bellegarde. Seventy-three years graced the old woman's face as she scowled at the twins for running down hallways, hexing first years and not wearing their uniforms properly. A few girls that Draco was befriended with apparently also missed him terribly; their hair hadn't looked worse in years! Draco grinned at the thought of them, hair a mess like Harry's always was. The thought of Harry had made him feel nauseous and with a sigh he had pushed the letter away.

Harry had given up glancing over at Draco during meal-times and eventually even stopped showing up. Of course it worried Draco; what if the boy was slowly starving himself out of stress and loneliness?

There was also one time that Draco had been talking to a few girls outside in the Clocktower Courtyard when a hint of red had entered his eye's view. He hadn't dared to look up but as the girls fell silent in their conversation, he couldn't ignore the boy any longer. Still, he had kept his eyes staring in the distance; not looking at anything at all.

'Draco?' One of the girls had called. 'I-I think someone wants to talk to you.'

'Tell him I don't want to talk to him,' he had replied in French, biting his tongue and suppressing his emotions. It had felt bad to ignore Harry like that but he knew he had to.

The girl had said something similar to Harry but in the most terrible English Draco had ever heard; making it sound even worse. As he saw the hint of red leave his eyesight, he couldn't help but take a quick glance anyway. He found Harry walking away from their little group, looking at Draco over his shoulder. His grey eyes caught his green ones and Draco tried to project his emotions through them; tried to tell Harry that it wasn't his fault. The boy's emeralds had just looked disappointed as he had turned his head away.
The day of the first task had arrived, making everyone chat loudly in the Great Hall during
breakfast. Breakfast itself had never been so grand; offering all kinds of desserts and pastries for
everyone to devour. Draco didn't feel hungry, though. Neither did Fleur. They sat side by side,
staring at all the delicious goods with a nauseous feeling in their stomachs.

'You'll be fine,' Draco told Fleur for already the hundredth time that morning. 'Your plan will
work, I'm sure!'

Fleur nodded again, remaining silent.

Red, green, blue and even yellow passed by their table to wish Fleur good luck, neither of them
daring to pat Fleur's shoulder like they did with Krum or Diggory. It probably was Fleur's Veela
inheritance that kept them at bay, hands tucked away neatly in their robes' pockets. Fleur returned
all of their words with little smiles and nods. It worried Draco that she was so silent, but perhaps
she was just lost in thought.

Red and gold, seated surprisingly far away from Harry that day, made up for an un-celebrating
crowd. Throwing annoyed glances at Harry, it almost seemed as if Draco had returned to the
Champions Selection day. Those Gryffindors who were smiling and celebrating were wearing too
much yellow compared to red; obviously supporting their other Hogwarts Champion from their
rivaling house. Hermione was seated closer to Harry that day and tried to make him eat by piling
his plate full of small pastries. Harry didn't seem to have an appetite though, as he pushed his plate
away and leaned upon his left hand with a slight pout. He caught Draco staring at him while doing
so and it made the pout fade away, his eyes light up a bit.

Draco had never turned around faster in his life; eyes focused on the empty plate in front of him
again. The muscles in his neck screamed from the sudden turn and he felt his heart skip a beat. 'W-
When did you say we had to go to the arena again?' he asked Fleur — anything to get distracted
from the boy's green eyes. 'We can go now already if you'd like?'

Fleur seemed to agree with his words, nodding faster than she had done all morning. Apparently
she couldn't wait to get away from the exciting crowd around her and neither could Draco. The
girls all gave their last encouraging speeches to Fleur before they stormed out of the Great Hall, not
leaving it fast enough. Draco didn't dare to glance over at the Gryffindor's table as they passed by,
but he certainly could feel Harry's eyes following his every move.

磨损的金属和保护的，闪烁的咒语。石头座位周围有岩石，构成了完美的环境来为
龙准备。旗帜和带有学院和学校徽章的横幅在风中飘扬，捕获了柔和的秋风
它们的鲜艳颜色。有一个奶油色的帐篷在旁边，为冠军提供了一个准备和休息
的地方。

Draco was seated upon one of the four beds that were provided for the Champions to rest on. Fleur
kept pacing through the tent in a nervous fashion, throwing glances at the arena through the small
opening every few seconds. Krum, Diggory and Harry had joined them an hour after their early
arrival and appeared to be nervous as well. Krum kept talking to Karkarov in the Northern
language Draco had no way of understanding and kept throwing his hands up hysterically as if he had already lost. Diggory on the other hand seemed to be calmness himself; but the nervous look in his eyes betrayed him. At least, Draco could see that. Not to mention that his father had made an appearance as well and kept rambling on about possible spells his son could use. As if Diggory hadn't had weeks to prepare for the task and needed his father to come tell him how to defeat the fire-breathing creature ten minutes prior to the act.

And Harry… well, Harry seemed lost. He just stood there; looking at nothing and with a complete blank face. He was wearing his house's colors, red and gold, even though Draco knew non of its other students supported the poor boy. When a dragon's growl resounded, Harry flinched and lifted up a part of the tent's canvas to take a look outside. Draco also noticed that Harry wanted Dumbledore's attention but didn't seem to get it; the old Headmaster was lost in a deep conversation with Madame Maxime and nothing or nobody seemed to be able to snap him out of it.

Lost observing the lone boy, he almost didn't notice Bartemius Crouch Sr., Head of the Department of International Magical Cooperation, had entered the tent. Draco recognized him from a few weeks ago; he had also been present at the Champions Selection but he hadn't paid any attention to the man back then. In his hands he clutched a small purple bag made out of silk, tightly closed with a silver ribbon. His eyes moved between the bag and the participants, then fell upon Dumbledore and drew the man's attention by coughing loudly. Dumbledore ended his conversation with Madame and shook Crouch's hand with the tiniest of smiles upon his lips. 'Shall we begin, professor?' the Ministry man asked.

Dumbledore gave him a firm nod. 'Let's gather all the Champions, shall we?'

Crouch gathered everyone by calling their names, pulling their arms and pushing them into a circle. Draco himself lingered behind Fleur, Madame placing her hands on the girl's shoulders. Every other Headmaster seemed to do the same as they nervously stood by their chosen students. The first task is designed to test your daring; courage in the face of the unknown is an important quality in a wizard,' Crouch explained, but it seemed like every Champion already knew what this unknown thing was. 'The unknown will be awaiting you and it is your task to fight it and obtain the Golden Egg.'

A Golden Egg; Draco didn't know about that detail yet. Well, at least something had to remain a secret, right? Fleur glanced in his direction but seemed to be more focused on the purple bag Crouch held tightly in his hands. Smoke rose from its small opening and circled through the air above their heads. Whatever was inside; it was trying to come out.

'Now-,' Crouch said as he opened the silk bag. 'Miss Delacour, ladies first?'

With the opened bag held out to her, Fleur hesitantly put her hand inside; removing a small green dragon only seconds later with number three around its neck. The dragon let out an innocent yawn as it seated itself on her leather gloved hand. 'The Common Welch Green,' Crouch said to her, eyes opened wide.

Next up was Krum who took out a dragon with fine gold spikes around its face, blowing a bit of fire into the air. 'A Chinese Fireball,' Crouch declared and gave him the same wide-eyed look he had given Fleur. Krum only clenched his jaw and stared at Karakov whom didn't seem to react to the dragons at all. Diggory got a Swedish Short-Snout and seemed to be the only one surprised by the dragons; perhaps nobody had told him the first task had any involved. But hadn't he heard the boy's father whisper about dragons to him earlier? Perhaps the sudden look of one had just frightened the boy.
Harry was the last one to lower his hand into the silk bag with a tormented expression on his face. Draco held in his breath as a Hungarian Horntail made its appearance. Harry seemed to recognize the dragon from one of Draco's books as well and it didn't seem to relieve him at all. The Hungarian Horntail was one of the toughest dragons out in the Wizarding World. With its many spikes and sharp teeth, it had always been a difficulty to fight or capture one. A challenge laid ahead of the boy, Draco knew. And Harry seemed to know that as well.

A crowd made itself presence by applauding their hands at the appearance of their first Champion. Diggory had left the tent with a face whiter than Draco's pale complexion as he faced the dragon that was awaiting him on the other side of the tent's canvas. Draco didn't even bother to go look at his performance; he already knew the Hogwarts boy would be smart enough to handle the dragon in some sort of way. Remaining by Fleur's side and encouraging her with sweet words, he knew he wouldn't run into Harry by accident or have the boy talk to him. Of course he also wanted to tell him that he could do it, that he was strong and skilled enough but in front of Fleur and Madame Maxime, it was impossible to do so.

Krum was the second one to leave; looking less nervous than Diggory but also not quite confidence himself. Karkarov gave him a pat on his back as he stared into the boy's eyes. They seemed to radiate a certain expectation; apparently Krum's Headmaster was expecting Krum to do his very best and out-stand all the other Champions. If he would succeed, Draco didn't know as he remained in the tent this time around at well. Fleur was becoming more and more nervous by the minute and even though she had told Draco many times before that what she had in store for the dragon was a very simple spell; it still seemed to bother her that there was always the possibility of it going wrong.

When a loud applause broke free on the other side of the canvas; both Draco and Fleur knew it was time for Beauxbatons' Champion to prove herself. Fleur took a deep breath and gave Draco a quick hug before taking Madame's hand, letting her guide her towards the arena. Draco himself followed in their pace and gave Fleur a firm nod before she left the tent and got welcomed by many applauding hands. Madame Maxime threw a worrying smile after her and left the tent through an opening a little more to the left. As Draco made his way towards that exit as well, he almost ran into Dumbledore who entered the tent at the same time.

'Aha, mister Malfoy,' he said. 'Would you perhaps stay with Harry for a little while? Apparently the Hungarian Horntail is acting a bit... fiery to say the least, and the caretakers have asked me to come help them before the dragon's thrown into the arena.'

'But,' Draco protested. 'Fleur's up now and-'

'Oh, well, I don't think miss Delacour would mind it if you stayed here to support your other friend, would she?' Dumbledore's voice was determined and full of confidence.

'Friend? But how did you-

'I must go now, mister Malfoy. Please say some soothing words to Harry and I'll be back before you now.' With those words said, the Headmaster of Hogwarts left the tent, leaving Draco alone with Harry.
How had Dumbledore found out that they were friends, Draco thought to himself as he stood frozen for a few seconds.

He looked at the green-eyed boy over his shoulder and saw him seated on one of the beds, face a paler shade than usual and worry visible on his face. Well, we are alone now anyway, Draco thought to himself, perhaps I should go talk to him. His feet were faster than his mind and he was standing in front of the boy even before he knew. Harry's emerald eyes looked up into Draco's and seemed surprised. His lips parted to say something but Draco hushed him, holding up a finger to the boy's mouth. First of all, I want to apologize. I should have told you it's impossible for me to remain your friend as it would be betrayal to my dear Beauxbatons. For that, je suis désolé. And-

Harry waved Draco's finger away from his lips, a gesture that surprised Draco slightly. He had never been interrupted by anyone before. 'Apologize later. Right now, I really need your help.' And it was readable in Harry's eyes; desperation flowed through them like water through a river.

'My help? But I already told you everything I know about dragons,' Draco could only say, but Harry shook his head.

'Don't you know something else? Perhaps a spell or a certain technique?'

'I don't know, Harry. I told you my knowledge on dragons was limited to those books I gave you. Where are those books anyway?'

'Doesn't matter. Please, there must be something!' Harry seemed to be on the verge of becoming hysterical and it pained Draco to see him that way. A little voice in Draco's head told him Harry had probably been completely lost without the help of him nor any of his friends. It therefore wouldn't have surprised Draco if Harry hadn't come up with any sort of plan; just hoped he would be able to fight a huge fire-breathing creature somehow.

'Well, what are you good at? Maybe if I know what you're capable of I can come up with something,' Draco suggested. His hand hovered somewhere near Harry's elbow, still deciding wether to rest upon it or not.

Harry apparently seemed to know what his strength was as he didn't have to think about it for longer than a few seconds. 'Flying. I'm good at flying,' he answered.

Draco frowned. He himself was terrible at flying and hadn't touched a broom since the accident he had three year ago. Even the thought of it made shivers run down his spine.

'But I don't have a broom here so-

'Then summon it!'

Harry's eyes grew wider and a smile appeared on his face. 'Of course! Draco, you're brilliant!'

'Merci…?' Draco replied, stunned as Harry's arms wrapped around his thin figure.

Draco still didn't like getting hugged by Harry, but somehow it felt different this time; almost as if it waved all the empty days without being able to talk to Harry away. He still held up his hands though, avoiding as much physical contact with the boy as possible. Harry's eyes were at the same level of Draco's lips and their difference in height made the whole hug feel even more awkward.

Not to mention that at the moment Harry held Draco in an embrace, a bright flash went off and an evenly brighter smile appeared. 'Wonderful! Our youngest Champion; in love with the lone boy from his rivalry school!' A voice cried out. Blonde curls bounced on her shoulders with every
move she made and her green robes stood out more than a dark cloud to a clear sky.

Draco pushed Harry away from him, shocked by the woman's words. 'And you are?' he asked as he faced her with crossed arms.

'Rita Skeeter, dear,' she replied, a self-writing quill penning down unspoken words by her side.

Heat rose to Draco's head and he couldn't help but feel embarrassed by it all; he hadn't wanted Harry to hug him in the first place and now his whole school including two others would know about their friendship. He glanced over at Harry to see the boy in a slightly surprised state as well; eyes focused on Skeeter with confusion and hate all displayed at the same time.

Fortunately, Dumbledore made an appearance right that moment and 'accidentally' ran into Skeeter's photographer. The magical camera hit the ground with a thud and a bit of smoke rose from it. Dumbledore held up his hands as if to surrender and gave Draco a wink, one that confused the blond a lot. Had he just done that on purpose?

'Miss Skeeter, I don't believe it is allowed for anyone other than the Champions to enter the tent,' he reminded the woman. She huffed and left the tent immediately, followed by her photographer whom snatched his camera from the ground in an irritated way.

Dumbledore followed them with his eyes and Draco could swear he saw a small smile linger upon his lips. The Headmaster then turned himself towards the two boys and placed a hand upon Draco's shoulder. 'Fleur did great,' he told him. 'She is waiting on the bench reserved for the Champions in the arena. Perhaps you could join her to watch Harry's performance of fighting his dragon?'

Draco only nodded to his words and didn't dare to glance over at Harry again. His cheeks still felt hot and probably remained a blush pink as he left the tent thinking about Skeeter's words. The hug had looked nothing like a loving one, had it? Harry had hugged him because he was thankful that Draco had helped him find a way to fight his dragon, right? Suddenly Draco felt sick to his stomach and didn't feel any better as he took place beside Fleur. Her skirt was scorched at the ends and a few strands of hair had escaped from her neatly done ponytail. She didn't say anything to Draco but also didn't seem to radiate a certain detest towards him for not watching her performance.

At least that was something he didn't have to worry about, Draco thought to himself. He already had to worry about Harry who was going to try and fight a dragon by summoning a broom.

And he did it. The boy from the tales, the boy with the beautiful green eyes fought against a dragon by flying! It had shocked the entire crowd and as Harry held up his Golden Egg above his head, the loudest applause of the day broke free. Students jumped up from their seats and called Harry's name as if he had been their favorite all along. Draco stood up as well, more in a moderate way and clapped his hands slowly while keeping his eyes on the green-eyed boy. Harry noticed Draco's stare right away and returned it with a smile. Draco himself couldn't help but smile back and clapped his hands a little faster, smile growing with every clap. The boy had done it; he had succeeded thanks to *his* help. Maybe he nor Harry were such failures after all.
I changed the original order in which the Champions have to fight a bit to have Draco left behind all alone with Harry. Also, sorry for breaking the boys apart for a little while but I find it a very Beauxbatons!Draco thing that he would be confused wether to be friends with Harry or stay super loyal to his school. Also, he's kind of quickly irritated at things, as you will notice in future chapters as well :)

Thanks for all the kudos and comments!
Surrounded by his ginger- and curly-haired friends, Harry beamed from across the courtyard. He was laughing again, Draco noticed. And he deserved it. From the moment the green-eyed boy had obtained the Golden Egg; everyone that had been against him had become his biggest fan. They’d all seemed to realize that Harry should've been mad for wanting to join the Tournament on purpose — the dragons had scared them all and had made them realize Harry would've never looked for such adventure himself. They all knew his past, and Draco’d also heard about what happened during Harry's prior years at Hogwarts from wandering gossip.

It was Sunday and Draco had left the girls behind in their carriage's common room. He had decided to go for a walk. A white scarf graced his neck upon a pale blue, thick knitted jumper and of course he was wearing one of his many hats again. He’d passed by a part of the Black Lake and Hagrid’s little cabin to then return back to the castle itself and follow the natural path towards the clocktower courtyard. And it had been then that he had found Harry, talking to his friends as if no argument had ever happened. He’d felt betrayed at first, but quickly reminded himself that he’d been the one to actually end his friendship with Harry — which gave no right to feel any kind of jealously at all.

But Draco also knew that he somehow owed Harry something; he owed him for being such an idiot and not explaining his situation better. He had just abandoned Harry and let him roam the hallways of Hogwarts all by himself as the boy’d tried to figure out how to fight a dragon. Of course he had helped Harry in the end anyway, but Draco still felt like it wasn't enough; that he should help him again. And a little voice inside his mind dearly wanted to help him until the end; until this tormenting Tournament would finally be over.

And of course he did want to be friends with Harry again, even though he wasn't entirely sure if
their friendship had ever even ended. Perhaps one could compare it to the small break-up Harry had with his best friends. Would the boy see it that way as well? For the first time in probably ever, Draco didn't have the courage to go over to the boy himself and ask.

As Draco was about to leave the courtyard, he suddenly heard Harry's voice call his name. The green-eyed boy had spotted him and with his Gryffindor bravery sparking up inside, he wouldn't let Draco just leave like that.

Draco turned to see that Harry's friends had gone quiet while throwing Draco confused glances. Harry on the other hand still smiled brightly and threw one end of his red and yellow scarf over his shoulder. The boy gestured for Draco to come over and Draco's feet obeyed without second thought.

‘Draco! I haven't seen you around in a while,’ Harry greeted, his smile still set.

Draco felt the four eyes of his friends upon him, still staring with mixed feelings — probably wondering when Harry had become so friendly with one of their rivaling schools' students. Of course they knew that Harry knew Draco, but had they any idea that the blond had helped their friend prepare for the first task? 'I-I have been busy. Taking classes, studying, looking after les filles…’ Draco answered, biting his bottom lop.

Harry's emerald eyes stared into Draco's silvers and it made his heart skip a beat; something the boy had already done too many times. He gave Draco a nod and seemed to wait for more words Draco didn't have. Well maybe, he had, but he couldn't talk about it in the presence of his friends. ‘Harry, can we talk for a second?’

‘Well, aren't we talking right now?’

‘In private, perhaps?’ Draco took a quick glance at Ron and Hermione, who looked back with suspicion still visible in their eyes.

Harry didn't seem to realize his friends were still there, as he first frowned and then pulled up his eyebrows. ‘Oh, yes. Of course.’

They wandered off a bit further away from Ron and Hermione and Draco watched as Harry leaned against one of the many walls that structured Hogwarts. He seemed so relaxed, as if nothing of an argument had even happened between them. It confused Draco and threw him off a little, but he decided he still had to say the words he had planned to say.

‘I just wanted to apologize again. You know; for acting the way I did,’ he told Harry.

‘It’s alright, Draco. I should’ve known it was impossible for you to be my friend. Loyalty to your school means a lot to you, am I right?’ The boy smiled as he said those words, as if he himself could feel what that loyalty was like. Draco knew that Hogwarts also meant a lot to Harry; it probably was like a home to him.

‘It does, effectivement. But— but being your friend means a lot to me as well.’ Draco didn’t dare to look into Harry’s eyes as he said those words, rather fancied looking at his overly polished shoes. ‘I really liked helping you and I think it was quite amazing what we achieved together; my brains and your skills.’

The boy frowned, but hidden behind his green eyes there was also the slightest glimpse of hope visible. ‘So, what you’re trying to say is that you do want to be my friend?’

Draco met Harry’s eyes again. ‘Oui. If you still want to be mine as well, that is,’ Draco's heart was
beating at a pace he had never felt before as he nervously awaited the boy's answer. Had any other boy ever made him that nervous?

But Harry didn't even have to think about his answer. A bright smile appeared on the boy's face again as he placed a hand on Draco's shoulder. 'Of course! I must admit I was absolutely lost without having you around. And don’t think I only missed you because of your help; you radiate a certain feeling or emotion that just makes everything feel alright.'

Draco swore his cheeks turned a blush pink at those words, so he focused his eyes on Harry's hand, still placed upon his shoulder. How dearly he wished he didn’t turn red so quick. 'But— don’t you want your friends their help instead?'

‘Because they suddenly stopped sulking doesn’t mean I don’t want you around anymore, Draco. And they can help me in different ways; Hermione with her books and Ron... by being Ron I suppose.’

Draco smiled slightly and gently lowered Harry's hand from his shoulder. Physical contact was still not his favorite thing ever, even if they just had become friends again. ‘I see. Well, then. To make it absolutely clear that I’m supporting you, and am very sorry for the way I behaved—’

‘You don’t have to be sorry, I was an arse as well,' Harry interrupted him, grinning at himself.

‘Oui, mais... Do you know where the Prefect's bathroom is located?’ Draco asked him.

Harry's smile was replaced by a confused look and once again a frown. ‘Er — yes.’

‘Bien. Meet me there tonight at ten. And don’t be late, s'il vous plaît. I really hate that.’

‘There seem to be a lot of things that you hate, no?’ A smirk lingered on the boy's lips and Draco raised his chin in defense.

‘There are also a lot of things that I like as well,’ he replied. Like your green eyes, messy hair and the faint scent of pine that defines your presence. 'Now, I must go before anyone else sees us together.'

Harry looked around him, spotting his friends as the only other students in the courtyard. 'Does it matter to you then, if someone sees us?'

‘It does if you want to be, and this time remain, friends,' Draco replied, looking around himself himself and noticing the irritated expressions hadn't faded from Hermione and Ron's faces. He turned back to Harry and whispered his last words to him before basically running back into the castle. 'Ten. Tonight, monsieur Potter. And bring you Golden Egg.'

‘My Golden Egg? Why?’ he heard Potter call after him but he didn't reply; only smirked as he made his way back towards the carriage.

☾ *:｡°

A mermaid's song in the Merpeople's language. Draco had been lucky that he had heard it; it had given him all the information that he needed. When Fleur had opened her Golden Egg proudly in the carriage's common room, the same screeching sounds the mermaid had made erupted from
inside. As all girls had held their hands to their ears, Draco had remained calm and had made the connection; it had to be a message in Mermish.

Even though his first thought should've been telling it to Fleur, he had thought immediately about telling it to Harry. Of course, in the end, he planned on telling them both, but the fact that he had thought about the boy first, made him realize that he cared about him already too much. What was it that made him so **attracted** and **invested** in this raven-haired and green-eyed boy?

Fleur had deciphered the Golden Egg's message with Draco's help, but had once again declared that she would be able to figure out the rest on her own. Draco didn't feel hurt by it anymore; he had Harry to help instead. And without having to help Fleur any further, he could dedicate himself fully to helping the boy.

As he waited by the Prefect's bathroom door, he wondered why exactly he hadn't just told him the password and made the boy figure the message out by himself. **Maybe you just want to see his reaction,** Draco told himself. But another voice inside his head told him otherwise; **maybe you just want to spend more time with him.** Alone.

Draco waved away his thoughts and pinched the bridge of his nose. He had to stop thinking those things or it would ruin his friendship with Harry all over again. At the thought of his name, Harry himself appeared in the dimmed hallway. Or at least his head did. The rest of his body was hidden beneath his invisibility cloak and therefore impossible to see. It would have surprised Draco if he hadn't known Harry owned one of those cloaks. A weird sight, that's what it was.

'Can you please tell me what we're doing outside the Prefect's bathroom?' Harry's head asked.

Draco crossed his arms over one another. 'This year it is not the Prefect’s bathroom; it is the Beauxbatons' bathroom.'

'Oh, I see. Let me rephrase it then; what are we doing outside the Beauxbatons' bathroom?'

Confusion and a hint of irritation graced the boy's bodiless face as he looked directly into Draco's eyes.

'There is something I need to show you. Something that will help you with your second task.'

Dark clouds seemed to clear from Harry's eyes and the sun shone brightly through his emeralds. He took off his invisibility cloak and held out his Golden Egg to Draco. 'Is that why I had to bring the Egg?'

'Oui, l'oeuf d'or is the whole reason why we're here,' Draco replied as he turned his back to Harry and faced the bathroom door. 'Pin frais,' Draco whispered to the wood and it clicked as it swung open.

It revealed a beautiful room with glass-stained windows from floor to ceiling, a large bathtub the size of a pool in the centre and as they entered, it seemed like they were walking through a thick mist reaching up to their knees. A mermaid was pictured on the window in the middle, brushing through her hair with her fingers as she swung her fin from left to right with much elegance. Draco took a glance at Harry's face as he looked around, mesmerized.

'It's so- so big!' He called out, facing Draco for the first time since they'd entered. His eyes looked away almost immediately again to take a better look at the depicted mermaid as she wove her hand at him. 'Can you use this bathroom every day?'

'Oui. The girls and I use it every morning before our classes. It was really nice of Headmaster
Dumbledore to provide us with it.’ Draco was still really thankful for being able to use such a beautiful room; it reminded him of the bathrooms they had at Beauxbatons — there they were smaller but just as elegant.

Harry had turned himself to Draco again and had a look in his eyes Draco couldn't quite decipher. ‘So, you- you bathe together with- with the-’

A smirk appeared on Draco's face as he realized what was bothering the poor boy. ‘Before you ask silly questions that will turn your head the color of une tomate; oui, I do bathe together with the girls. It’s really not as awkward as you may think, Harry. The girls are used to seeing me naked by now and I am totally fine with it.’

Harry seemed utterly shocked by his words and it was also readable on his face. ‘But- isn’t Madame Maxime worried that-’

‘That what? I will molest a group of twenty girls and they won’t be able to do anything about it? Please, Harry, you’re underestimating a Witch’s powers. Non, non, I would never even lay a finger upon them. Beside, Madame knows I don’t look at the girls that way.’ Maybe at first Draco had felt a little uncomfortable about it and the girls had grinned a lot, but that was weeks ago and by now it didn't matter to any of them anymore.

Draco thought he had assured Harry's worries but realized that he probably had confused the boy even more. ‘H-how do you mean-,’ he started, eyes still focused in Draco's. They expressed real confusion now and Draco didn't like the look of that at all.

He waved Harry's words away as he shook his head. ‘Just take your clothes off, Harry,’ he told him as he pulled his own jumper off over his head.

The boy's eyes had opened up to full size, staring at Draco as if he had gone mad. ‘Take- take off my clothes?’

‘Oui! We have to take a bath for my plan to work. And hurry up a bit, we don't have all night!’ Draco took off the white shirt he wore underneath his jumper and at the sight of his pale, bare chest Harry seemed to wince. It only made Draco roll his eyes as he watched the boy hesitantly take off his own jumper.

Stripped down to their underwear, the boys stood awkwardly side-by-side in front of the bath. The mermaid had started grinning at their sight and brushed through her hair more fervently. Draco turned himself towards Harry but found the boy's eyes everywhere but on the blond in front of him. Draco on the other hand took his chance to take in the other boy's body; his broad shoulders, tanned skin, slightly muscular arms from flying probably and a few faint scars here and there. Harry couldn't be more the opposite of Draco whom was as pale as pale could be and basically bones covered with flesh. Well, he wasn't that thin but one could say he should probably eat a bit more.

‘Harry,’ he then called out to the boy. He still didn't lift up his eyes but answered with a questioned yes as he stared at a cloud of foam that had appeared on the water's surface. ‘I’m about to show you something I have never shown any other boy before. Beside from the twins, that is.’

Harry's eyes shot up directly to look at Draco's, first making eye contact with the French's lips before remembering their height difference again. ‘T-twins?’ he stuttered.

‘Ansel and André; my best friends back at Beauxbatons.’
‘I-I see.’ Was it such a problem that Draco had his own pair of best friends as well? Why else would Harry act so weird and awkward all of the sudden? Perhaps he wasn't used to standing half-naked next to another boy.

Not wanting the waste any more time, Draco took off the beret he had been wearing all day and tossed it somewhere next to his clothes. Untying his bun of silver hair, he kept his eyes locked in those of Harry. He could see the white reflect in the boy's round spectacles when his hair fell down on and over his shoulders. Harry's eyes grew large again at the sight of Draco's long locks and Draco had to suppress his cheeks from blushing. It was true that he had never shown his hair to anyone else beside from the twins and the girls; he just didn't like everyone to know about it. Of course, if you looked at him closely, you could see that underneath one of his hats his hair wasn't short but going upward in a tied-up way. But nobody who didn't know had ever mentioned it, which had led to him never having to explain or show it unwillingly before. The rare occasions that Draco wore his hair down were during the night, during bathing and on lazy days at home.

Exposing his hair to Harry felt like a huge step in their friendship, and to him it felt like a sign of trust. Wether Harry could understand that or not.

‘Your hair! It's so- so long!’ Harry blurted out, eyes still opened wide and focused on Draco's locks.

‘It’s my dearest possession, je dirais. But I don’t like to show it to just anyone; it makes people feminize me quite fast,’ Draco said. He let a hand go through his long locks and Harry watched his every move with a strange look of hunger in his eyes, almost as if he himself would like to try brush through the silver as well.

‘And would that be a bad thing?’ the boy asked.

‘Non, perhaps not,’ Draco answered. It didn't matter what other people thought as long as they didn't make a problem of it. ‘Though, I rather keep it to myself and my friends. I would like it if you wouldn’t tell anyone about it?’

‘No, no. Don’t worry. It can be our secret.’ A smile lingered upon Harry's lips and his eyes were twinkling. Was the boy proud to share a secret with Draco? It almost seemed that way.

‘Bien. Let’s get in the water now before we catch a cold, shall be?’

They both lowered themselves in the warm water of the bathtub and immediately a few of the many taps the bath possessed shot colorful soaps and foams into the liquid. Draco smelled the scent of pine mixed with that of lemons. He knew Harry carried the pine scent and he himself had always been told a faint lemony scent lingered around his presence. The taps worked accordingly to whom entered its waters; adding the scents they liked the most. Harry seemed to relax at smelling the scent of pine and Draco watched as his green eyes disappeared behind his foggy spectacles.

He moved a little closer to the boy and swept the haziness away with his wet thumbs. The glass of Harry's spectacles squeaked because of the movement and he winced at the sudden closeness of Draco. It made Draco smirk again as he backed away and looked up at the mermaid. ‘Do you know anything about the Merpeople?’ he asked Harry.

Harry followed his eyes to the mermaid and shook his head. 'Beside from them having a fin and living in the water; I have no clue.'

'There are different kinds. Elle, our glass-stained friend, is a Siren. A beautiful mermaid to explain it in a simple way. But le Lac Noir, the one here at Hogwarts, holds other kinds,' Draco explained.
Harry listened to his words with his eyes still focused upon the mermaid. 'And what does that have to do with the second task?'

Draco gave him a side-glance and then pointed over at Harry's Golden Egg with his eyes as well. Harry followed and reached out to the Egg which he had positioned by the edge of the bathtub. He gave Draco a questioning look but Draco only smirked and took Harry's spectacles from his face. The boy looked even more confused as Draco placed them where the Egg had once been. He then sank himself further into the water, head fully under. With his eyes still widely opened, he watched Harry follow his every move as he clamped the Golden Egg in his hands. With a few gestures Draco tried to explain that he had to open it, and Harry did so almost immediately. From the inside of the golden oval erupted the song Draco had heard before; a song in Mermish by the Merpeople.

'Come seek us where our voices sound,
We cannot sing above the ground,
And while you're searching, ponder this;
We've taken what you'll sorely miss,
An hour long you'll have to look,
And recover what we took,
But past an hour — the prospect's black,
Too late, it's gone, it won't come back.'

The message ended and Draco rose back to the surface, catching for breath as he watched Harry do the same. 'The Black Lake! It's where the next task will be, right?'

Draco nodded. ‘Oui. And because of that you will have to know what lives there and how to fight or avoid them. Not to mention that you will have to be able to stay underwater for an hour.'

'But that's impossible! I can't breathe underwater! No-one can! How am I supposed to do that?'

'Well, magic of course!' Draco said with a grin.

He knew about many different ways one could breathe underwater but none of them would last for an hour; he had a lot of research to do starting tomorrow. But that was fine; helping Harry was something he loved to do and with the boy's best friends supporting him again, Draco was sure they would help search for something as well.

'So, how did you find out how to decipher the Egg’s message anyway?’ Harry asked.

Draco shrugged. ‘One night I came here alone, without the girls. It seemed like the mermaid was more comfortable to only have me in her presence as she sang a song to me; something she never did before.’

‘She, a glass-stained window, sang a song to you?’ Harry’s voice dripped with disbelief but Draco nodded fervently and glanced up at the mermaid, whom nodded as well. ‘I always heard rumors about her not being able to speak.’

‘Then those rumors were wrong. Or don’t you believe me, monsieur Potter?’

Harry’s cheeks turned a bit more pink. ‘Stop calling me monsieur Potter. It makes me feel
uncomfortable...’

‘It does?’ Draco asked as he moved closer to the boy in question, eyes locked in his. It made Harry move away a little as well, but hesitantly, as if he actually didn’t want to. ‘Her song’s words were sang in Mermish. I couldn’t understand any of it. When Fleur opened her Golden Egg, I heard the same screeching sounds and immediately knew it was Mermish. It took me only a few minutes to figure out the message would be clear underwater. C'était simple!’

‘Perhaps to you it's simple, Draco, as you are so damn clever! I would have never figured it out on my own. I really don't get why Fleur doesn't want any more of your help; she should be thankful to have you by her side,’ Harry said.

Draco felt his cheeks heat up and quickly looked away from the boy. ‘S'il vous plaît, Harry. You’re making me blush.’

‘That’ll make two of us then.’

Harry gave Draco a smile, one that reached his eyes as well and made the tiniest of wrinkles appear around his eyes. It was a beautiful, genuine smile that Draco answered and made his cheeks feel even warmer. What was it about this boy that made him feel so… so good?

A silence fell between them as they sat in the hot water, the scent of pine and lemon still lingering around them. They both had the remains of the smile on their faces and looked at nothing in particular; some foam, a few bubbles, the mermaid — but then Harry's eyes fell upon Draco's chest and stayed there. The smile disappeared from the boy's face as he drew his eyebrows into a frown. Draco immediately knew what it was that Harry was so intensely staring at; his scar.

Draco covered his upper body with foam in seconds and looked away from the boy. If there was one thing he hated about himself; it was the ugly scar the size of a large button on his heart. It was a disgrace to his elegant and sublime self, he found. He had always seen himself as near-perfect, as vain as that may sound, but the scar had been an eyesore to him.

‘Can— can I ask you something?’ Harry then said, his voice a slight whisper.

Draco shook his head. ‘If it’s about the scar then non.’

‘Why not?’ The boy’s eyes filled with curiosity and wonder.

‘I-I don’t like talking about it. It’s rather embarrassing,’ Draco replied.

‘Oh. I understand,’ Harry sympathised as he looked at his hands, a slight blur underneath the water's surface. ‘Sometimes, I also hate my lightning bolt scar. People know it’s story without me being able to hide it.’ The boy sighed at those words. ‘At least you can hide it away.’

Draco took a deep breath and scratched his forehead. His eyes glanced at the mermaid above them, brightly colored in glass as she still brushed her hair. ‘Flying,’ he then said as he looked back at Harry.

‘What about it?’

‘I got it from flying a broom. My first time flying, en fait,’ Draco told him. Harry remained silent as he awaited his story. ‘Notre professeur looked away for only a second and off I went; up way too high in the sky. She tried to stop the broom by shooting spells but hit me instead, threw me off in a matter of seconds. She was utterly shocked by it and as I fell down she became incapable of protecting me, afraid she would mess up again.’ Draco took a break there and moved his hands
through the water, fingers widely spread. ‘I was lucky there were a lot of trees to catch my fall, but I was badly injured. Broke a lot of bones and somehow got this butterfly-shaped scar. Un papillon.’

Harry was silent and seemed to think about Draco’s words; probably picturing the accident in his head as well. A small smile appeared on his face as he looked at Draco again. ‘It’s a beautiful scar, though,’ he told the blond.

Draco couldn’t agree as he hated, even detested it. It was a disgrace to his pearl complexion, yet somehow he couldn’t tell Harry that. Somehow it felt as if Harry truly thought his scar was beautiful. ‘Well merci, Harry,’ he replied instead. It is partly why the twins and the girls often refer to me as their papillon; their butterfly.’

A grin appeared on the boy’s face. ‘Let me guess; you also chose to use the magical butterflies for Beauxbatons’ entrance in September then?’

‘I indeed did, Harry. How observant of you,’ Draco replied as he returned the grin.

Harry's eyes found their way back to Draco’s scar which had become fully exposed again as the foam had slowly melted away. ‘But—’ The boy cut off his own question, perhaps too afraid to ask.

Draco couldn’t let it go, though. ‘But what?’

‘You don’t know the exact reason why it has that shape? What caused it?’

‘I do know the exact reason… but it’s hard to talk about.’ Draco slid his fingers across his scar and then looked at Harry’s forehead, eyes searching for his scar. He pushed the boy’s hair a bit more out of his face and laid a finger upon the lightning bolt without even asking. Harry didn’t complain; just watched Draco’s every move in silence. ‘I guess you could say it’s a bit similar to yours. It’s a scar that reminds me of how close I was to dying. One of the branches I fell upon nearly speared me; only a few inches deeper and it would’ve gone right through mon coeur.’

Draco pointed at his heart which also made him point at his special shaped-scar. It had healed quite well since the accident, but sometimes it would still itch terribly.

‘That would’ve been a shame,’ was all the boy could manage to say.

But it made Draco smile, even though it was a weak one. ‘La même pour vous. Same goes for you, Harry.’

The boys sat in silence for another few minutes before getting out of the bath and dressing themselves again. Fully clothed and hair tucked away beneath his hat, Draco suddenly felt more awkward than he had half-naked. Harry seemed to feel the same way as he couldn’t stop looking at his feet, eyes a bit wider than usual as if he was lost in his thoughts.

‘Let’s meet the day after tomorrow by the lake. I’ll tell you everything I know about the Merpeople,’ Draco told him.

Harry nodded. ‘Alright, I’ll be there.’

‘Bien. Perhaps, after lunch? The girls often go to the library which allows me to have some free time.’

Green eyes looked up into Draco's again. ‘You care a lot about those girls, don’t you?’ Harry stated with a smile.
‘Oui. I do, very much,’ Draco replied.

Harry didn’t seem to know what to say next as he opened and closed his mouth a few times. He stared at his feet again and clutched the Golden Egg a bit more to his chest. ‘I think it’s wonderful. I think— I think you’re wonderful,’ he then said, eyes still cast away.

Draco could feel his cheeks turn a violent red at those words; a color that looked terrible with all the shades of blue he wore. ‘You’re doing it again, Harry.’

The boy shot his head up at those words with a confused, even almost terrified look in his eyes. He must’ve thought he said something wrong. ‘Doing what?’ he asked hesitantly.

‘Making me blush. You have to stop doing that,’ Draco replied with a smile.

‘Because it’s another thing that you dislike?’

‘Because it’s another thing I love.’

☾:

A heart beating too loudly, too fast, too much. A chest rose in it’s pace, trying to keep up with the movements of the heart. Lungs filled with everything but air, a pressure as if a winged horse had taken place upon them. Draco felt like he was suffocating as he lay down in his bed. His hair was still wet, making damp spots on his pillow. He closed his eyes to only see Harry appear in the dark again, smiling at him and telling him he was wonderful. Had anyone ever told him that before? Draco rolled onto his side and pulled up his knees. Butterflies raced through his stomach and it finally hit him that he was falling in love with the boy.

Merde.

Concentration wasn’t there the next day as Draco sat in their classroom, the girls eagerly taking notes of everything Monsieur Bonnet told them. He himself had only scrawled down a few words, too lost in thought. One second his mind was thinking about Harry, the other time about how he could let him breathe underwater for his second task. Before he even knew it he had produced an origami creature; a small crane bird made out of his notes — something his Mother had taught him over the holidays. As to why he had made it, he didn’t know but with a simple flick of his wand, he sent it out the opened classroom window. He took a new piece of parchment and started writing notes properly again, focussing his mind and paying attention to Monsieur Bonnet’s words.

During lunchtime he couldn’t help but let his mind wander off again. Only this time, his eyes chose to wander off as well. They found Harry quite quickly; talking eagerly to his friends and making large gestures with his arms and hands. He smiled brightly while explaining something and Draco felt himself melt away at the sight of a passionate boy.

Fleur nudged him in his side and gave him a glare. Obviously she had noticed he was staring and
behaving weirdly, something she couldn't have. Fleur had the habit of wanting to know everything that was going on, especially when it came to Draco. 'Why do you keep staring at les lions?' she asked in French. She, as well as all the other girls, referred to the Hogwarts students according to their House's animal. Les lions, les serpents, les blaireaux et les aigles. They seemed unwilling to learn students by name or refer to them by their correct House names. Draco just found it funny, and therefore didn't comment on it at all.

'It's nothing. They just seem… excited, that's all,' he answered.

Fleur frowned her eyebrows and gave him a look. 'Excited? Since when do you care about whether people are excited or not?' Her voice betrayed a slight irritation and Draco sighed deeply because of it.

'Since I found out that they are quite nice; the Hogwarts students.'

Fleur let out a mocking laugh. 'You're kidding, right? Pas d élégance! And they have two Champions which still isn't fair.'

'Well, Harry didn't choose to be a Champion, did he?' Draco had never felt angry at Fleur before but could now feel the emotion slowly boil up inside of him.

'You believe le petit garçon?' Fleur pulled up her eyebrows as she shook her head.

'Oui, I do. And you should do so as well,' Draco told her. With those words said he rose from his seat. 'I'm going to study at the library. Et oui, this time I truly mean it.'

He stormed out of the Great Hall, chin held up high as he tried not to sulk over Fleur's words. Just because she didn't want to communicate with anyone from the other school, didn't mean Draco couldn't. Of course he kept the girls as far away from the other students as he could, but that didn't mean they couldn't be friends with any. It was just a precaution to try and avoid hearts getting broken. Did no-one understand?

Draco's own heart beat faster than usual again; but this time it was because of his rage. He always had been able to maintain his anger quite well but ever since he met the boy from the tales, it felt like he had become more emotional. Harry was truly changing many things inside of Draco and the blond didn't know whether he liked it or not. He liked how his heart skipped a beat whenever he saw the boy and how he blushed when Harry said nice words to him — but he didn't like that it also made him defensive, as if he needed to protect Harry. Was this what it was like to love someone, Draco wondered.

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The library was empty beside from a fourth year girl with lovely brown curls. She sat bent over an old book and followed the lines of words with her finger as she read them. Draco recognized her as Hermione Granger, one of Harry's best friends. It then struck him that he indeed hadn't seen her at the Gryffindor's table. Perhaps she had some homework she felt like doing during her lunch-break.

Draco moved closer to her and hovered by the seat on the opposite side of the table. 'Excusez-moi. Mind if I sit here?' he asked her.

Hermione lifted her head and didn't even seem the slightest surprised to see Draco standing in front
of her. She just put on a little smile and gestured for him to sit down with her hand. 'Take a seat, Draco. I wanted to talk to you anyway,' she replied.

Draco frowned as he sat down and placed the small blue bag he carried on the seat beside him. 'Talk to me? About what, exactly?'

'About Harry,' she answered, a smile lingering upon her lips.

Draco fidgeted on his chair a little as he awaited her words. Why would she want to talk to him about Harry? Had the boy told her everything he knew? About the Egg, the bathroom, all the help he had gotten with the dragons?

'I just want to know what your intentions are,' she then said. Draco's frown deepened at her words. Intentions? It sounded like she accused him of planning to murder the poor boy. 'It isn't really normal for a student from a rivaling school to be so friendly with another Champion, is it?'

Well, clever the girl was for noticing that but Draco couldn't help but feel that it wasn't all she wanted to say. Hermione remained quiet, awaiting Draco's answer as she closed the old book she had been reading. 'I just want to help him,' Draco admitted.

'Help him? I'm sorry but that's even more strange.' Hermione shook her head and tucked a strand of curly hair behind her ear.

'Well, you also seem quite close to that Northern beast, Krum. And let's say that it also isn't really normal for a Champion's best friend to befriend another Champion. *J'ai raison, n'est-ce pas?*'

Draco knew he had played the little game well as Hermione's face paled a bit and she looked away from Draco's grey eyes. Nothing went unnoticed to Draco; he had seen Hermione glance over at Krum quite a lot the past days. He even saw them talk a few times, looking around them all suspiciously.

He watched her swallow and cross her arms over one another. 'It's not entirely the same though; I'm not helping Krum,' was her answer.

Draco smirked at her words. 'Someone had to help Harry when his friends had abandoned him.'

'We apologized!' Hermione spat out, raising her voice and getting ssh-t by the librarian almost as fast. 'Harry knows we're sorry. He knows we didn't mean it that way. I was just confused and Ron — well Ron was just jealous.'

Draco took a deep breath. 'Look, it doesn't matter what happened or who you're friends with or why I want to help Harry; what matters is that he succeeds in his next task. And I think you're willing to help him with that as much as I am, non?'

Hermione went silent at his words and uncrossed her arms. She leaned a little closer to him but remained far enough to not invade his personal space. 'He told me about the clue he got from the Golden Egg and... I kind of figured out he must have gotten it from you. Am I right?' Draco nodded at her words. There was no need to deny it; she would find out eventually anyway. 'So, what do you reckon we do now?'

So she all of the sudden wanted to work together in helping Harry? *Fine,* Draco thought, *but we're going to do it my way.* 'Research. We read every book there is to find about the Merpeople and the Black Lake in particular. *Après,* we'll read books on possible spells he could use or potions,' Draco told her.

Hermione nodded and got up to her feet. 'Let's get to work, then.'
And to work they got. Hours later they were still seated at the same table they had claimed before, but this time it was covered with books on all the subjects they had to look into. So far they had found out about the Bubble-Head charm but Draco found it too risky for Harry to use it for the span of an hour; it could collapse at any moment if intervened by any of the living creatures of the lake. Beside, he wanted something more powerful for Harry. Something that would make him finish the task faster than the given hour. Hermione hadn't agreed on that; she found the Bubble-Head charm the ideal spell for Harry to use. Of course time was an issue, she had said, but Draco knew that it was a spell that verged a lot of power and wisdom that only a seventh year had learnt about.

Draco was reading a book about transfiguration on sea-creatures when a hint of bright orange caught his eye's attention. Hovering beside their packed library table the slender figure of Ron had appeared, Harry's other best friend. 'What is he doing here?' the ginger boy grumbled.

Hermione gave her friend an irritated look. 'Draco is helping us with helping Harry,' she simply told him and went back to reading whatever it was she had been reading.

'Why would he help Harry? He's from our rivaling school!' His loud voice got ssh-t by the librarian as well and he threw a glare at the woman from afar.

'So? Doesn't mean he can't be friends with Harry or help him?' Hermione replied. It was as if she was talking to her book, her face not even glancing at Ron as she said those words.

Ron huffed as he sat down on the chair next ti her. Draco sighed and closed the book he was reading. 'Ron, I know it's hard to believe but I care about Harry as well.'

'Why would you?'

Draco sighed again, deeper this time as he threw his hands up in the air out of frustration. Didn't he have this same conversation only a few hours ago? 'Because I find it unfair that he has to all these tasks très dangereux when he didn't even want to participate. Tales travel further than the border of this country, you know. Harry has had enough trouble in his life. And I think you know that as well, non?'

His words seemed to sink in the way Draco hoped they would; Ron's irritated expression cleared and was replaced by something like pity. Perhaps he had put his jealousy for his best friend away and realized that Harry had never asked to be the person he was; it had been decided by something — someone greater than them all. 'Alright, I believe you. But that doesn't mean I won't be watching you, Draco!'

After another ssh from the librarian, they continued their research with a new set of eyes. But it wasn't long until that same new set drifted off in a deep sleep upon a book about Merpeople.

'Are you sure about this?'

'Oui, Hermione and I have done enough research about it to know it'll work. But for how long; neither of us can say.'

It was the day of Harry and Draco's appointment by the Lake. Their reflections could be seen in the
dark water as they stood close by, Harry's wand pointed at himself and Draco opposite him with an old timepiece at hand. They had decided to give the Bubble-Head charm a try; see if it was strong enough for Harry to cast and maintain underwater. Draco had brought the golden timepiece with him that he had gotten from his parents for Christmas last year. It had a beautiful butterfly etched on the back together with the words 'pour notre papillon'.

'I-I don't know if this is a good idea,' Harry stammered. The poor boy was shivering as he had taken off his jumper and cloak to warm him once he would return from his dive in the Lake.

Draco sighed and a cloud of warmth hovered away from him. He himself was also freezing as the temperatures had dropped significantly over the past few days. A thick scarf wrapped around his neck and a warming charm kept him warmer than Harry at that moment, though. 'Just do it! We have to practice it, non? Or do you want it to fail during your second task?'

Harry took a deep breath and closed his eyes. He then opened them again and whispered the incantation. A slight silver spark left his wand and Draco noticed how a bubble started to form around Harry's head. It grew larger and larger and when it finally had fully enclosed itself around his head, Draco didn't even hesitate to push the boy into the Lake. Harry's body disappeared into the dark water with a loud splash and for a moment Draco wondered if the boy could even swim.

Telling himself that Harry wouldn't be that stupid, his eyes focused themselves on his timepiece; the goal was for Harry to stay underwater for as long as possible. A few minutes passed but Draco knew it was too early to applaud and congratulate himself on finding a decent technique for Harry to use. His feeling was right as the tiny clock only marked seven minutes and forty-five seconds when Harry's bubble-less head appeared on the surface.

Draco remained calmness himself compared to Harry whom climbed out of the Lake in an angry fashion. 'It's not working! It nearly drowned me!' he shouted at Draco.

Draco waved his words away and tucked his timepiece in one of his pockets. 'Not to worry; tomorrow we will try again.' He bent through his knees and grabbed Harry's jumper and cloak from the floor. As he handed it to the boy, he took a good look into his green eyes and tried to project reassurance; everything would be alright.

But it wouldn't. For two whole weeks they wandered off to the Lake after lunch; Harry casting the Bubble-Head charm on himself and Draco timing his dive into the water — but it just didn't work. The times would differ in odd ways; one day Harry would be able to stay underwater for over half an hour and other days he would only succeed in maintaining the bubble for a mere few minutes. It had nothing to do with mood, weather or which part of the Lake they used which made it impossible for them to know just why it wouldn't work. It frustrated both boys greatly as Christmas was coming closer and closer; the second task only planned two months after the festivities. Draco kept telling Harry it would all be fine, that he and Hermione would find something else. Harry had also joined their research days a few times and had followed Ron in falling asleep upon the thick, boring books that held no information they could use.

Draco had already told him everything he knew and had learnt about the Merpeople. A few simple defense spells would help Harry to keep them at bay. Once they would become aggressive though, it would be more difficult to fight them. 'So it's only a matter of not upsetting them?' Harry had asked and Draco had nodded in return. As long as Harry kept himself to the rules and do only whatever he had to do, the Merpeople would probably remain calm.
During the first night of December, Draco had a nightmare about the second task. They had decided to use the Bubble-Head charm anyway, no matter the failures of their try-outs. Harry had cast it on himself before he had jumped into the Lake, the other three contestants jumping by his side as well. Draco stood frozen on the edge of the pier, his golden timepiece in hand as he watched the water's surface slowly turn to calmness again.

Suddenly he was in the water with Harry; watching him dive deeper and deeper. The charm was working just fine and Harry seemed to smile because of it. Why was the boy always smiling so much? But as Harry went even more deeper, the Lake grew darker as well. Its bottom came in sight and Harry's toes touched the muddy ground, eyes searching for something that wasn't there. There was only darkness around them and a single beam of daylight that shone upon Harry and his bubble. And then it happened; the bubble snapped. Harry started to panic as he swam back up as fast as he could — but he was too deep, the surface was too far. Draco tried to reach out for him but found that he had no hands, no arms, no body. He simply wasn't there physically; only a witness to an unintentional crime.

He woke up, face wet from sweating and his hair sticking to his face. A few deep breaths later he turned his pillow around and lay his head back down on the cold cotton material. It had only been a nightmare, he told himself. Everything would be fine. Harry would be fine.

Chapter End Notes

I decided to leave Moaning Myrtle out of the bathroom part as I find her quite... annoying? Perhaps others will miss her in this fic but I think the focus should be on Harry, Draco and the mermaid; not on Harry, Draco and Moaning Myrtle. But that's just my opinion and it is my fic so I guess that's that then :)

I hope you enjoyed it! Next chapter will be fully dedicated to the Yule Ball and I can't wait!
December didn't only mark the start of winter to most students, it also marked the twenty-five days there were left until the Yule Ball. There was not one student from any of the three school that hadn't mentioned it before. Rumors had been spread of a Yule Ball ever since the Triwizard Tournament had been announced, but nobody had known there actually would be one until Headmaster Dumbledore made his announcement.

The second of December it was and Draco was seated at the Ravenclaw table as usual. Surrounded by the girls from his school and a few Ravenclaw girls as well, he listened to the words the old Wizard had to say. He cleared his throat, Draco noticed like he usually did, and spread his arms out wide. ‘Dear students of Hogwarts and those of Beauxbatons and Durmstrang. Today, I am honored to announce a tradition to the Triwizard Tournament that once again will be revived; the Yule Ball.’

Whispers broke loose and smiles appeared all throughout the Great Hall. Draco himself even smiled, as he had always loved dressing up; especially for something as grand as a ball. Dumbledore explained a bit more about it and when it would take place. Hogwarts students from fourth year and up would be allowed to attend; younger students could go as well when asked by an older student. Only fair, Draco thought. At least then there won't be any mischievous children running around the ballroom. A professor named McGonagall rose from her seat after Dumbledore's short speech to inform the students that there would be dance lessons provided by herself that they would have to attend, weather they liked it or not. Judging by the many pouts and grumbles, Draco knew the students of Hogwarts didn't like it.

'Did you know,' Fleur suddenly said to Draco. 'That the Champions have to open the Ball with a dance?' She looked into his eyes and put on a smile that could hold many different meanings.

'Well, then you better find someone who doesn't have two left feet,' Draco replied as he turned his
head away from her.

Fleur didn't seem satisfied with his answer and took ahold of his arm. 'You're a good dancer, oui? I've seen you dance; l'élégance, not even a girl could dance more gracefully than you, Draco.' Her eyes shined, almost sparkled as she said those words.

But Draco didn't feel moved by them at all. If she had asked him to the Yule Ball months ago, before she had declined all of his help, perhaps then he would have asked if she wanted to go together. Now things had changed and Draco already had someone else he wanted to go with. 'I guess that's more the reason to choose someone else, as I would draw all the attention from you,' he said to her.

The sparkle in Fleur's eyes faded away and so did her smile. Draco pushed her hand off his arm and turned his head away once again. He hadn't forgotten how she had talked about Harry or acted towards him. Besides, she could ask any boy from Hogwarts or Durmstrang that she wanted and he would most likely say yes. She simply didn't need Draco and Draco simply didn't need her.

And so another task was added to Draco's list; providing all of the girls with dates. Every girl from Beauxbatons seemed to want his opinion on their date, dress and hairstyle. The blond got dragged from one corner of Hogwarts to another, taking a look at possible candidates. The girls somehow even planned a day for Durmstrang students to take a chance at asking one of them to the Yule Ball. It was quite the sight seeing those Northern beasts lined up outside in the cold wind, chins held up high and faces expressionless as Draco strode past them. He inspected the boy's face, body, haircut and even fingernails to see if they were fit candidates for the girls. The ones he didn't like, he just sent away by shaking his head at them.

And they weren't even mad about it; they put their arms to their sides, bowed deeply and took off to the castle again. Draco was surprised by such good manners and had often taken regret in sending them away. Only seven Durmstrang boys he found fit enough and therefore he could only please seven of the girls as well — but those whom didn't get a date from Durmstrang quickly found theirs amongst the Hogwarts students.

It also wasn't as if Draco himself went unnoticed; he got approached multiple times by both girls and boys. A group of Hufflepuff girls had been following him on his way to the library, asking wether he already had a date. Draco had answered with a simple non and that had already been enough to make the girls giggle. His French accent was what made many of the Hogwarts' girls' hearts melt, apparently. The boys that approached him all had to get pushed in his direction by a friend or stopped in front of him to then take off as quickly as they came. Am I that intimidating, Draco thought to himself as yet another boy ran away from him without even asking anything at all.

One boy from Durmstrang had also dared to approach him. The boy had marched through the hallway all alone, face set to determination. He had stopped in front of Draco with the sound of clicking heels and the whole approach had frozen Draco to the spot. He had been alone as well, books clutched to his chest. 'I, Orlin Teodorov Ivanov, want to ask you, Draco Lucius Malfoy, to the Yule Ball,' the boy had announced with a rough Bulgarian accent while bowing his head. Draco had dropped one of his books out of surprise and this Orlin had picked it up for him immediately without hesitation.
What had shocked Draco probably the most was that the Drumstrang boy had known his full name; something he hadn't told anyone from the other schools. It was a detail one could only know if they paid close attention to him; it was written on the bag he always carried and on a few of his notebooks. The Drumstrang boy must have been watching me, Draco had thought.

And this Orlin hadn't even been that ugly; he had a strong jawline, eyes as dark as the night and hair the color of chestnuts. Not to mention that he had been as tall as Draco, looking into the blond's eyes at a perfect level. Draco hadn't known what to say. 'I- I don't know,' he had answered in the end, followed by slight disappointment in the Durmstrang's eyes, but it had faded away almost as fast as the boy had rightened his posture.

'Please, think about it. For you, I have all the time in the world,' he had replied to Draco's confusion. And before he had left, he had taken ahold of Draco's hand and kissed it. Frozen once again, Draco had watched how Orlin marched away through the hallway again as if Draco had said oui instead of je ne sais pas.

Draco himself waited eagerly for the right moment to ask Harry. It had been clear to him from the start that he wanted to go with the boy; even if it was just as friends. He still wasn't certain if Harry would ever return his feelings the way he would want them returned. Did the boy even like other boys? Draco had no idea and therefore kept postponing the moment he would ask Harry to go to the Yule Ball with him. On the other hand he was also waiting for Harry to ask him. He had always wanted to be asked to a ball by someone and as Harry was the first ever person to make his heart pace at a speed too high to be healthy, he seemed the perfect candidate to do so. But Harry hadn't asked him anything yet, didn't even mention the ball at all and it had already been two weeks since the announcement.

Even Fleur declared that she had been asked by the captain of the Ravenclaw Quidditch team; a certain Roger Davies. Draco slowly started to feel tempted to accept Orlin's offer and go to the Yule Ball with him instead if Harry wasn't going to ask him any time soon.

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It was the 15th of December when Draco couldn't take it any longer and decided to go find Harry. If the green-eyed boy didn't plan to ask Draco, then Draco would have to ask the green-eyed boy instead. It was as simple as that.

But it wasn't that simple as Harry was nowhere to be found. Not by the Lake where they still practiced the Bubble-Head charm three times a week, not by Hagrid's hut whom Draco knew was Harry's friend, not in the clocktower courtyard nor at the library. Draco started to become frustrated when he ran into Harry's ginger-haired friend. He was easy to spot from a distance as he was taller than Draco and therefore always towered above the other students.

'Ron!' Draco called out as he neared the ginger-haired boy. 'Have you seen Harry?'

Ron stopped in front of him and shook his head. He seemed a little surprised to have Draco approach him and Draco had to admit he was surprised by himself as well. Desperate times called for desperate manners, one would say. 'Haven't seen him since this morning. Must say he's been feeling nervous all day; something about the Yule Ball."

'Nervous? The Yule Ball?' Draco asked. Would Harry perhaps be looking for him as well? Maybe
he wanted to ask Draco today like Draco wanted to ask him? Maybe—

'Yeah. Heard him talk about this Ravenclaw girl earlier this week. Cho Chang, or what's her name? Think he's gone out to find her and ask her to the bloody Ball.'

Draco felt heat rise to his head at Ron's words. He knew very well who Cho Chang was. Ravenclaw seeker, beautiful girl with Asian eyes and hair as black as that of a raven. Beside from a sudden anger he also felt disappointed and almost… heartbroken. 'Oh,' he could only manage to say as he looked at his feet.

'Why? Did you find something new for the second task?' Ron asked.

Draco shook his head. He hadn't found anything new the past weeks and also hadn't even thought about it anymore; his head had been filled with the Yule Ball the entire time. 'Non, just… Nevermind.' He waved his own words away with his hand.

As he turned to leave he felt Ron's hand on his arm, keeping him from going. 'Hey, Draco. I — er — was also wondering if maybe one of the Beauxbatons girls still needed a date,' he asked, hesitant.

Draco let out a deep sigh and shook his head. 'Les filles all have a date. Sorry, Ron,' he replied and genuinely meant it.

'Is alright,' Ron told him. 'But are you?' Draco waved his words away again. Of course he wasn't alright, but how could he tell Ron that? Not saying another word, Draco returned the way he came, leaving Ron behind feeling a bit confused.

Of course Harry was asking a girl to the Yule Ball, how blind could I have been, Draco thought to himself. How could he, Harry Potter, ever fall for another boy? It was clear as day that the boy was straight... wasn’t it? Yet all Draco's mind could think about was how the boy had called him wonderful, had made his heart beat too fast and butterflies flutter in his stomach. And all those smiles that he had been given, all from him. The sparkles he had seen in the boy's green eyes whenever he was around Draco. Had they all just been out of friendship alone?

A stab, as if given by a sharp knife, went through Draco’s heart as he finally reached the carriage. The common room appeared in front of his eyes, deserted. Draco guessed the girls were probably discussing what to wear in their little compartments, or at the library doing research about intricate hairstyles.

Draco didn’t mind being alone, he actually preferred it. Wet drops of salt started to run down his cheeks, though it took him a moment to realize he was actually crying.

'Are you alright, monsieur?' Raphael asked, his voice full of concern. A sad look lingered upon the portrait's face, and the key's wings seemed to flutter less fervently than usual.

'It's- it's nothing, Raphael. Just let me in, s'il vous plaît,' he told the portrait with a sob. The portrait swung aside and let him enter his small room. Draco immediately dropped himself upon his bed, pulled his pillow closer and buried his face within it.

Draco’s cries weren’t loud, nor did he even make a single sound at all. It were silent tears that fell down, that helped him get rid of all the emotions welled up inside his chest.

How could Harry do this to me, he thought. Why doesn't he love me as much as I love him? It was a perfect example of la douleur exquise; the heartache of wanting someone you simply cannot
have. Draco’d had so many hopes for them to be something; for them to be more than just friends. But apparently he wasn't good enough. And would he ever be? He wasn't good enough for Fleur and now he wasn't even good enough for Harry anymore. At least, that’s what Draco thought as he buried his face in his pillow even deeper.

Practicing the Bubble-Head charm became something Draco wanted to avoid rather than look forward to. Prior weeks he hadn't been able to wait until lunch was over to go spend some time with Harry by the Lake, help him with his task and talk about many other things afterwards. He had told the boy stories about Beauxbatons, his parents, his personal life. It had all been so natural and comfortable to talk to Harry about everything; and Harry had felt the same way. At least, Draco had thought he did.

But it didn't feel that way anymore.

As Harry came closer to Draco, whom was already standing by the edge of the Lake, a bright smile lingered upon his lips. Draco huffed because of it and crossed his arms, chin lifted again as he looked away from the boy. 'Something wrong?' Harry asked as he took in Draco's presence.

'Non,' Draco simply answered. 'Let's start.'

Harry nodded, deciding not to push the subject and casted the Bubble-Head charm upon himself for what felt like the hundredth time. As the bubble enclosed around his head fully, Draco once again, like he had done the first time, pushed Harry into the Lake. They had agreed on never doing so again, as Harry didn’t like it, but Draco just couldn't help himself from doing so once more. He felt all the anger boil up to the surface as his pale hand pushed the boy into the dark void that was the Black Lake.

Draco didn’t even bother to take out his timepiece and check the time; he didn't care about it anymore. His mind was too occupied, his eyes too hazed of anger to look at a small clock. Harry stayed underwater for what seemed like hours, but couldn’t have been longer than a few minutes. As his head appeared out of the water, he seemed utterly frustrated.

'I thought you wouldn’t push me anymore!' he shouted, giving Draco a vile look. Noticing that Draco wasn't holding his timepiece either, seemed to make the boy even more furious. 'And you weren’t even timing me? What’s wrong with you today? Have you finally given up on this stupid charm?'

The anger Draco had felt in his chest couldn't be controlled any longer. 'Stupid? I have spent hours at the library trying to find something that could work. Something to keep you from drowning to death!' Draco shouted back. Harry climbed out of the Lake, face still furious. It made Draco sigh. 'You know what? Forget about it! Find something yourself!'

Draco stormed away from the Lake, and heard his name getting called by Harry's voice, still slightly mad. He ignored it, but a moment latee the same voice called his name once again, this time in an apologetic kind of way.

Draco still tried to block it, and ignore Harry wasn’t there anymore, but tears were already welling up in his eyes again, for he felt a kind of frustration he’d never felt before.
His vision became blurry, and made him stumble over something on his way. He hit the ground face first, and head quickened footsteps hurry themselves over grass behind his back. Harry's footsteps neared as he crawled to his feet again as fast as he could, unwilling to let the boy see him cry. But the boy was faster and took ahold of his arm. 'Draco,' he started, but Draco roughly pulled his arm away.

'Laissez-moi tranquille! Leave me alone!' he shouted in Harry's face. A moment of silence followed, a moment of rest. A kind of pause. They looked at each other; Harry’s face calm and confused — Draco’s furious, hot and red. Draco caught the worry in the boy's green eyes as Harry noticed his tears, and it tore their silence apart. 'You don't understand anything,' Draco continued, his voice finding its anger again.

'Then make me understand!' Harry now yelled back. His face became red now too; his cheeks flushing violently and making his green eyes pop. A certain desperation hid itself in those eyes, as if he really didn’t know what was going on. Did he truly not understand anything of it?

Draco didn't know what to say. He was panting because of all the overpowering emotions and couldn't think straight anymore. A single tear slid down his cheek again, but he wiped it away quickly, not wanting to let Harry see that he was actually crying. 'You don't even know my middle name!' Was all he was able to think of. It was such a small detail. Such a stupid detail, yet the fact that someone else had noticed had made Draco wonder wether the boy had faked his interest in Draco all along.

'Your middle name? What does that have to do with anything?' The boy asked, eyebrows frown and a hint of desperation visible in his eyes again.

'Everything,' Draco replied, looring straight into those same eyes.

Knowing that Harry was a bit stunned by the entire situation, Draco turned on his heel and ran away — as fast as his legs could take him. He never ran, he reminded himself once again as he raced across the grass, and finally reached the carriage.

Out of breath, he pushed against the door and stumbled through it, keeping himself up straight just enough not to fall. About a dozen of eyes stared in his direction.

'Draco? Que s'est-il passé?' Marie asked him as she hurriedly got to her feet and wrapped her arms around him. Draco didn't even have the energy to push her away, and quickly felt the arms of all the other girls around him as well. 'Tout ira bien. Nous sommes là pour vous.'

Their words were like a bandage over a sour wound; it helped, but wouldn’t help the wound heal completely. Draco felt pathetic for having ran away from Harry like that. Why hadn’t he just told the boy about his feelings, about what was bothering him?

'Maybe he doesn't deserve it,' a voice in his head said to him. 'Perhaps,' Draco thought to himself. But pathetic it was.

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It was Christmas day and also the evening of the Yule Ball. All young Wizards and Witches around Hogwarts were preparing themselves to look their finest. Sublime. Elegant. Graceful. Draco had been busy all day with braiding the girls their hair, giving last minute dance-lessons and
preparing himself for the ball as well. The day after the argument by the Lake, Draco had said _oui_ to Orlin, but the poor boy had become sick on Christmas morning, leaving Draco to go to the ball on his own. 'Ah, well,' he had said to the girls. 'At least I'll be able to keep a closer watch on all of you.'

Since that dreadful day, Draco hadn't heard from Harry not taken another glance at the boy himself. During meal times in the Great Hall, Draco would seat himself with his back towards the Gryffindor table and throw vile glares at Cho Chang at his own. The girl didn't seem to know what was happening to her nor to why Draco suddenly seemed to hate her so deeply, but she also didn't dare to ask him why. Draco even made her trip in a crowded hallways once, and didn't feel the slightest guilt for it. She had stolen his date and therefore was doomed to be hated until the end of the year.

Draco braided one side of his hair into multiple braids, making an intricate design. The rest of his long, silver locks he tucked away underneath a white hat he had bought especially for formal occasions, and which matched perfectly with his beautiful robes. They were a delicate pale blue with intricate silver and golden accents. The fabric glittered in the right light, and they were simply more mesmerizing than any of the girls' dresses. Draco liked to brag with that fact, quite a lot.

As he left his room, fully dressed and ready to chaperon the girls to their dates, all their mouths fell open in awe.

'Draco!' Some of them called out. '_Vous êtes très beau!_'

All the girls were dressed in shades of blue as well, and as their usual blue group they took a step closer to Draco to inspect every little detail of his robes. His parents knew the finest tailor of France and together with magic his robes had become just how he had envisioned them in his head. He had been inspired by the robes princes wore in fairytales and could happily say that he felt just like one that evening.

'What a shame _monsieur_ Orlin won't be able to join you,' Fleur suddenly said. She was the only one to not look awestruck by Draco's Yule Ball attire. Draco thought that they'd solved their small argument, but apparently that wasn't the case. Or was it? 'But I heard there are _many_ others still willing to be your date, Draco. I'm sure you'll mesmerize them just as you're mesmerizing us,' she then said with a genuine smile on her face, giving Draco a hug.

And Draco hugged her back. 'Merci,' he said as he returned her smile. 'Let's go, shall we?'

Draco handed over the girls to their dates almost as if he was giving them away on their wedding day. He looked every boy so intensely in the eyes that they all winced and couldn't leave his side fast enough, carefully taking one of the _papillon's_ girls with them.

As all the girls were rejoined with their dates, Draco led Fleur towards hers.

The tall doors to the Great Hall were closed off and the Champions were told to wait in front of them, kept ready to parade inside and lead the first dance. Of course Draco knew he would see Harry there, but that didn't keep him from safely bringing Fleur to her date. Who knew what could happen in the hallway between the side and main entrance to the Great Hall?
Draco's eyes immediately found Harry's as he turned a corner and walked towards the group of Champions and their dates. The boy was wearing bottle green robes that matched his eyes perfectly, even Draco could see that from afar. His hair wasn't as messy as usual but he slid a hand through it at the sight of Draco, messing it up to its usual disaster again. His lips were slightly parted and his eyes opened wide; almost as if he was awestruck by the sight of Draco, just as the girls had been. But apparently, everyone seemed to feel the same way, as they looked at him rather than at Fleur.

He smirked of contentment. At least he sparkled brightly enough to cover for the fact that he didn't have a date to accompany him. He gave Fleur's hand a kiss as he handed her over to the Ravenclaw captain, who gave Draco a firm nod and a promising look in his eyes. Draco didn't trust him, but what could he do? Fleur hadn't needed his help with approving her date just as she didn't need his help with the tasks. *Fine,* Draco thought to himself. *Get your heart broken at the end of this evening.*

Draco turned around again to join the others in the Great Hall when he felt the soft touch of a hand upon his elbow. He knew immediately to whom it belonged, and the soft voice that followed as well. 'Draco,' Harry said. It was almost a whisper, so silent the boy had pronounced his name.

Draco's heart stopped beating as he slowly turned around to face the boy. 'What is it, Harry?' he replied, voice tired and eyes not willing to look into the Harry’s.

'I— I don't know what happened by the Lake the other day, but whatever I did, I want to apologize for it,' he told Draco.

Draco just sighed. 'Don't you have a date to worry about instead of me?'

'A date?' Draco heard a certain confusion in Harry’s voice and it confused himself slightly as well. 'I don't have a date. I wanted to ask you!'

'It felt like something exploded in Draco’s brain at that moment. He finally dared to look into the boy's eyes, searching for the lie but they were an open book; reading that he was telling the truth. 'You— you wanted to ask me?' Draco pointed at himself and Harry nodded. 'But... what about Cho Chang? Ron said—'

'I don't know what Ron said to you, but I was never planning on asking Cho. Cedric asked her, not me,' Harry explained, his finger pointing in the direction of the double doors. There Draco found Diggory talking to Cho Chang with a bright smile on his face, arms locked. 'And I wanted to apologize to you earlier and ask you to go with me, but then I heard from Ron that a Durmstrang boy asked you and that you said yes and—'

'T'd love to go with you, Harry,' Draco interrupted him.

Harry seemed frozen for a second. Or shocked. Perhaps both. 'Really?'

'Oui!'

A bright smile appeared on Harry's face and on Draco's as well. The boy reached out his hand to Draco and he took it without a second thought. Harry's palm was sweaty and warm, but firm and reassuring at the same time. 'Aren't you mad at me anymore?' Harry asked.

Draco sighed. '*Un petit peu.* But it's not only your fault; I just assumed something without confirming it. I should've asked you about it.'

Harry gave Draco a smile that colored his cheeks slightly as the doors to the Great Hall opened
up. Professor McGonagall appeared behind them, the tiniest of smiles lingering upon her lips. 'The Yule Ball is of course a chance for us all to — er — let our hair down,' she said. 'Let's show the others what moves the Champions posses, shall we?'

As she stepped aside to let the Champions enter the Great Hall, Harry quickly turned himself towards Draco. 'That gives me an idea,' the boy said, before he snatched Draco's hat off his head and tossed it somewhere down the hallway. Draco's silver locks fell over his robes like water as he gave Harry a shocked expression.

'Harry! Why did you do that for?'

'Because, I want everyone to see how beautiful you are, and with that I mean every inch of you.' The most wonderful smile Draco had ever seen graced the boy's face shortly after, and he wasn't able to say anything more.

Draco got dragged forward by Harry's hand sliding up to his elbow to lock arms with him, before they entered the Great Hall.

Christmas trees from floor to ceiling decorated in white. Sparkling floating candles, red ribbons and enchanted snow everywhere. The decorations for the Yule Ball were the most delightful thing Draco had ever seen.

Some students were seated at round tables, decorated with ice sculptures of snow angels and others were standing upright around a silver glittering dance-floor. The professors were eagerly awaiting the Champions on the other side of the Great Hall and Draco felt his heart skip a beat as all their eyes, including those of all the students fell upon him and Harry. Side by side.

He couldn't suppress a smile any longer as he felt the many butterflies he held captive inside his stomach slowly flutter away. 'Isn't that Malfoy from Beauxbatons? Did you see his hair? It's so beautiful and long! Is Malfoy Harry's date? Look at their robes, they're so gorgeous!' Draco's cheeks were probably turning a violent red by now, but at least they would match with Harry's whom had taken the same tomato color.

McGonagall basically pushed them towards a spot on the dance-floor where they stood frozen opposite each other. 'Well,' Draco then said. He wrapped his left arm around Harry's waist and pulled him closer to his chest. He could feel the rapid pace of Harry's heart as he had never been so close to the blond before. 'I guess I will lead?' His right hand intertwined with Harry's left as the music started and Draco guided him over the dance-floor.

Harry was the most clumsy dance partner he had ever had, but he seemed to enjoy every second of it. Draco knew how to dance both in the role of a boy as that of a girl; and he also knew perfectly how to guide his partner. Therefore they somehow managed to not embarrass themselves too much. Harry loved it when Draco let him spin rounds, and did the same to him even though it was something that normally was not-done to the leading role — but Draco loved it, and therefore didn't care about any rules at all.

Draco had never felt so much like himself before; dressed up to his best, his hair waving behind him in his every move and Harry held close to his chest. It was simply wonderful.

As other students joined the dance-floor as well, they could exchange their failed waltz to a slow dance of turning in small circles across the dance floor. It gave Draco the opportunity to take in Harry's face more, and of course his body, dressed in stunning green robes. They had a velvet collar, silver details that looked like ivy on the sleeves and Harry wore a simple white button-down underneath them. Topped off with an equally green bow-tie, the boy was a mix of a Wizard and a
Suddenly leaning closer to Draco, snapping him out of his observing thoughts, Harry whispered something in his ear. 'Lucius,' he said. 'That's your middle name, and your father's name too.'

As the boy pulled his face away from Draco's ear again, Draco could see the slight smirk he held. 'How did you—'

'Actually, I've always known. It's on your bag, on a few of your books as well. Back at the Lake, I wanted to tell you that I knew what it was, but you never gave me the chance,' Harry told him as he looked up into Draco's eyes. 'Neither did I have a clue it was so important to you that I knew.'

Draco felt his heart melt a little at that soft look Harry was giving him. Harry had observed him just as that Durmstrang boy had done. He had cared; he had cared about the little details that made him him.

Before he knew he had his arms wrapped around Harry, so tight he could hear him gasp for breath. Physical contact, something that Draco had always hated, suddenly felt so right as he loosened his embrace around Harry a little and felt the boy's arms wrap themselves around his waist as well. With his head on Harry's shoulder, he could smell the pine scent that was so distinctive to him even better. The boy's velvet green collar touched Draco's cheek, and he swore they were all alone in the Great Hall when he felt a hand go slowly through his long hair.

'It's so soft,' Harry whispered to him, making Draco grin. 'I've always wanted to touch it.'

'Je sais. I know,' Draco whispered back. He hadn't forgotten about the look of hunger when he had shown Harry his long hair before.

He then could hear Harry take a deep breath. 'They're staring,' he whispered.

'Who?'

'Everyone,' Harry answered with a grin.

Draco tightened his embrace again and lifted his head from Harry's shoulder. The boy gave him a hazy look, as if he had just awoken from a beautiful dream. 'Let them stare. I don't really care about what they think anymore.'

Harry gave him another soft smile and took one of Draco's hands. Draco was sad to end the embrace, but as long as he could be by Harry's side, he realized it was fine too. Harry guided him over to a long table decorated with ice sculptures of different Wizarding creatures. Many drinks in many different colors were placed upon it as well as tiny desserts Draco remembered seeing at the morning of the first task. This time they were all decorated with little chocolate ribbons or the smallest candy canes he had ever seen. As they both took something to drink and Harry filled a whole plate with desserts for them to devour, Madame Maxime appeared by Draco's side.

'Vous vous amusez bien, Draco?' she asked. Her presence towered above the two boys and they both looked up at her, Harry perhaps the slightest bit intimidated. Draco opened his mouth to answer her when Hagrid suddenly appeared by Madame's side. 'I am having great fun,' she said as she glanced over at Hagrid. 'Monsieur Hagrid is an excellent dancer.'

Draco gave Harry a side glance and then looked back at the exceptional duo in front of them. 'I could tell,' he lied. He hadn't seen Hagrid dance at all. 'Must be magnifique to finally dance with someone comfortably.'
Madame gave him a bright smile. She loved to dance but had never found the right partner to do so. Even though Hagrid's head didn't reach further than her bosom, it still was a better match than she'd ever had before. Hagrid took Madam's hand again and guided her back to the dance floor, smiling from ear to ear. Purple and brown moved in small circles and pushed everyone off the floor whom was in their way.

‘So, what’s she like?’ Harry asked. Draco took his eyes off the pair and looked at Harry again.

‘Madame Maxime? Elle est magnifique. At least, I believe she is, as long as you’re on her good side,’ Draco replied. He had always been on Madame's good side, beside from their little argument a month ago when he went out to Hogsmeade with Harry without informing the girls. He had then found out what it was like to be on her bad side; evil glares and tummy aches.

‘Yeah, figured out as much myself.’ Harry took a sip from his drink and pulled a face. The purple looking one was apparently to be avoided.

Draco gave Harry his own drink, a green one that tasted like apples. The boy grinned as he took Draco's glass and tasted the sweet apple flavor. ‘And Hagrid? You told me about him delivering your Hogwarts letter, but you never told me what he was like,’ Draco asked him in return.

Harry shrugged. ‘He’s just — just the friendliest person ever, I guess. And most caring. For creatures that is; always trying to rescue them when others would want to murder them to extinction.’

Draco glanced at the man over his shoulder. He had a content smile on his face as he took over the dance floor with Madame. ‘Well, he seems like un homme bon. I hope he and Madame keep in touch. I think she could use a taller friend, now and then.’

‘Just like I could use one as well,’ Harry then said. The boy had slowly come closer to Draco again and Draco could feel the touch of his fingers against his own. His cheeks felt hot and he looked away, probably blushing, as Harry’s hand slowly found his again.

A fire of ginger hair then appeared in their sight, storming directly at them and Harry pulled his hand away again. Ron Weasley looked furious as he crossed the dance floor, pushing a few couples out of his way to reach Harry and Draco. ‘I can’t believe it!’ he almost yelled at them. His face had gone as red as a tomato and it blended in perfectly with his vintage looking robes.

‘What's wrong?’ Harry asked him.

‘Haven’t you seen? Hermione!’ The fire spit out.

Draco and Harry both glanced over at Hermione at the same time. She was dancing with Krum; smiling brightly and throwing her head back of laughter every few seconds. ‘She looks beautiful tonight. Periwinkle blue suits her well, non?’ Draco said but by Ron's squinting eyes, he knew it wasn't what he had wanted to hear.

‘I’m not talking about her dress! I’m talking about her being Krum’s date!’ he spat out. The boy's hands were balled into fists and it was quite the sight.

‘And?’ Draco and Harry both asked at the same time.

‘You’re not surprised?’ Ron asked them, then turned himself to Harry and took his best friend by the shoulders. ‘She is dancing with your rival, Harry!’ His ocean eyes stared into Harry's with fury and a certain disbelief.
‘Y-yeah, but I danced with Draco as well so—,’ Harry told him, a bit shocked by Ron's tight grip on his shoulders.

Ron let go of him and threw his hands up in the air. ‘It’s not the same!’

Draco gave Harry a side-glance and noticed him doing the same. Maybe they both thought the ginger-haired boy had gone mad. ‘Perhaps you should have asked her to the ball first, Ron,’ Draco said to him but it seemed to hit a nerve.

Ron gave Draco a push against his chest, making him stumble a bit backwards. ‘Shut up you — you Veela!’ he shouted at him. Thankfully the music was too loud for it to reach others; otherwise it would have drawn quite the crowd.

The push seemed to upset Harry more than it had Draco. Draco just found Ron pathetic at that moment; reacting aggressively at people who had nothing to do with his problem in the first place. ‘Hey, don’t get angry at Draco because you can’t handle being jealous!’ Harry shouted back at his friend, giving him a push against his chest as well — but Ron didn't even budge.

‘It’s alright, Harry,’ Draco assured him. He placed a hand on his shoulder and gave him a weak smile. 'Being called a Veela is more of a compliment to me.’

‘Still, he shouldn't have pushed you that way,’ he told Draco. Then he faced his best friend again, fury readable in his eyes. 'That's a disrespecting thing to do, Ron! I can believe why no-one wanted to go to the ball with you!'

If Draco's words had already hit a nerve, Ron's whole nerve-system exploded at Harry’s. ‘Shut up, Harry! At least I’m not the one taking another bloke to the ball!’

For a second Draco was worried Harry would become upset or even hurt by his best friend's words, but he wasn't. His expression stayed the same; blank but with furious eyes. ‘And what’s wrong with that? If I want to go with Draco then that’s my decision, isn’t it? Dean and Seamus also went together.’ The mentioned pair of boys were dancing only a few feet away from them. Their foreheads rested against each other as they held the other in a tight embrace. If that wasn't love, Draco wasn't sure what the limits to a bromance were.

‘Because they’re a couple! They’re dating!' was Ron's reaction. He then looked from Draco to Harry and back. ‘And you two — you two are not! ... Right?’ Ron's eyes had been cleared of all anger in a matter of seconds. A new emotion had come up and showed something that could be described as discovery and a certain worry at the same time. Draco and Harry looked at each other at the boy's words and Draco found Harry looking away, with flushed cheeks.

The ginger-haired boy waved his hands. ‘You know what — don’t even answer! I’ve had enough of this ball. I’m going to bed,’ he declared as he turned on his heel and stomped off to Gryffindor Tower.

‘Ron!’ Harry called behind his friend, but he was already too far away. He let out a sigh and turned himself back to Draco.

‘He’ll be fine, Harry. Everything will be fine,’ Draco told him.

‘I’m not so sure about that. I’ve always known he liked Hermione, but this much? He was kind of overreacting don't you think?’

‘A lot of people do a lot of crazy things when in love,' Draco answered and looked deeply into Harry's emerald eyes. 'And I believe those two belong together.'
‘You think so? But what about Krum? Hermione currently seems to like him way more than Ron.’ Harry teared his look away from Draco's grey eyes to glance over at Hermione and Krum once again.

‘That’s because Ron was being stupid the whole time, and she was probably afraid no-one would ask her if she didn’t accept Krum’s invitation. As soon as he’s gone, both her eyes will be on your ginger-haired friend again,’ Draco assured him.

Harry sighed deeply. ‘I hope so. I hate it when they fight.’

‘I hate it when we fight.’

A smile appeared on Harry's face. ‘No more fighting then.’

‘Non. I’ll try to look beside your stupidity, Harry.’ Draco smirked as he said those words.

‘Hey, I’m not stupid!’ The boy frowned and put on a pout. It only made Draco laugh.

‘You sometimes are. And it makes me unwilling to promise that there will be no more fights; mon lion stupide.’

Harry seemed utterly shocked by Draco's words for a second but as he shook his head, Draco saw the glimpse of a smile again. ‘Well, that’s not only my fault. You always seem to feel better than me.’

‘That’s because I am, Harry. The sooner you realize, the sooner you’ll get over it.’

Harry’s smile grew wider. ‘You’re unbelievable, Draco.’

‘Merci. I find you quite incroyable as well; I’ve told you that before, remember?’

‘But you meant it in a bad way.’

‘Peut être; but not now. Now I mean it in a good way.’

The faint lines of wrinkles appeared around Harry’s eyes again; sign of a truly genuine smile. A smile which Draco thought of as his favorite. It made his heart melt, beat faster and react to every little detail he caught in Harry’s green eyes. The twinkle, the deep stare into his own grey ones.

Draco noticed he still had his hand upon Harry's shoulder and slowly lowered it, only to get taken into Harry's. ‘Want to dance?’ the boy asked as he stared at Draco's pale hand and too long fingers.

‘With your two left feet we will look ridiculous again,’ Draco replied with a sneer.

Harry then pulled Draco closer to him by his waist. Their chests bumped against each other and Draco’s heartbeat raced up to an unseen number. ‘They won’t notice if we stay close enough together.’ Harry’s eyes glittered in anticipation and Draco could feel the warmth radiate through his formal robes.

Everything Draco had even known or learnt, the blond could feel seep away out of his head, through his ears and onto the dance floor. The only thought and knowledge that remained was that of Harry. If Harry would've asked him to go for a dive into the Black Lake that moment; Draco would have said yes. If Harry would've asked him to twirl down the dance floor like a ballerina, even that he would have done. It was them being together so close once again that made him feel like nothing else mattered beside from the boy. ‘Just as I said; incroyable,’ he whispered to Harry
as he got pulled onto the dance floor again.

They had danced terribly the rest of the night as Draco hadn't even bothered to try anymore. His toes had been abused for hours as Harry had stepped upon them too many times. But he had loved every second of them twirling lopsided circles over the dance-floor, staring into each other's eyes. Not many words had been exchanged that night; not about their feelings, about Ron's words, about anything.

They were one of the last ones to leave the Great Hall, still held into an embrace to keep each other from falling out of exhaustion. 'I think we should go to bed,' Harry finally suggested. He had laid his head to rest upon the blond's shoulder, eyes hazy and tired.

'Oui, I think so too,' Draco agreed.

The boy lifted his head and stretched out his arms with a yawn as if he had been sleeping. He then took ahold of Draco's hand again and locked like that, they sauntered out of the Hall.

A silence fell between them as they made their way through hallways and around a few corridors; basically going nowhere, Draco noticed. They weren't on their way to Gryffindor Tower nor to the carriage. It appeared that they were just aimlessly walking circles, as Draco noticed they passed the doors to the Great Hall again. 'Harry?' he asked. 'This is not the way to bed.'

A blush appeared on Harry's face as he remained silent and turned another corner, Draco's hand still in his. Again, it wasn't the right way and Draco started to worry whether Harry had forgotten the way through his own school. But as they once again turned another wrong corner, he felt Harry's grip tighten around his hand and pull him forward. With all the force the boy seemed to possess, Draco got shoved against a wall and held by his wits. He felt Harry's nails dig into his delicate skin as the boy's face leaned closer to Draco's, and his soft lips pressed themselves against his. The kiss was so sudden and happened so fast that Draco didn't know what to do, and just stood frozen against the cold wall.

But as Harry pulled his face away from him and stared at Draco with his beautiful green eyes, it seemed like all life flowed back into Draco's body. He broke free from Harry's grip and placed his cold hands around Harry's neck, his fingers sliding into the boy's hair. He pulled Harry closer to him again, their noses brushing and their lips again as well. As he deepened the kiss, he felt their tongues touch and it sent butterflies right back into his stomach. They fluttered violently at the pace of his heart as he heard the boy gasp for breath. Harry's kisses were so clumsy yet they felt so right. They radiated a warmth that spread throughout Draco's entire body and made it seem like he was floating. Adrenaline flowed through his veins in an amount he had never felt before, and he couldn't help but feel his body react to every time he touched an inch of Harry's skin with his own. Hesitantly, Harry pulled his face away and stared into Draco's eyes. Maybe a little confused but most definitely excited.

'I—' Harry started but Draco hushed him, his index finger pressed against Harry's slightly bruised lips.

'Ne parlez pas,' he whispered back. 'Go to bed.'
One last look into the boy's green eyes and Draco turned to leave him behind — but Harry pulled him back, wanting to press one last kiss against Draco's lips. It was already way too late and who knew who was still hanging around in the hallways. It wasn't as if he didn't want to be seen with Harry, but privacy had always been high on Draco's list. 'Meet me tomorrow by the lake,' he whispered to Harry after finally being released by the boy. 'And bring you invisibility cloak.'

Draco didn't dare to take another glance at the boy as he left the hallway, yet he knew Harry's eyes were following him, staring at him with what was probably unsatisfied hunger mixed with confusion.

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Pink and red spread through black. Draco could try to sleep as much as he wanted but whenever he closed his eyes he saw the colors of flushed cheeks and Harry’s bruised lips doom up in the darkness of his closed eyelids. He had been fighting with his blanket, trying to fall asleep but his mind hadn't let him. _Harry, Harry, Harry_, it had been screaming. And it still was doing so.

Draco placed his pillow on top of his head, tried to bury his thoughts away with it, but of course it didn't work. After another few minutes he finally gave up and jumped out of bed, headed for the door. The common room was deserted and all portraits were asleep, snoring loudly with peaceful expressions on their painted faces. Draco turned himself towards the portrait of Raphael, whom had his face rested upon his single hand.

'Raphael,' he whispered. The portrait blinked his eyes open immediately.

'Draco? Why are you up so late, _mon cher_. Can't sleep?'

Draco shook his head. 'I-I have a lot on my mind.'

'Aha, I see. And you want me to help you clear your thoughts away?' Raphael smirked, as if he already knew Draco wanted to talk about Harry with him.

'Oui. You're the only one I can talk to right now. I don't want to wake any of the girls.'

'I feel like that's not the only reason you're choosing me to talk to, _non_?'

Draco bit his bottom lip and shook his head. He wanted to talk to Raphael because he was a boy as well and — and it was just different than talking to a girl. Besides, if a male portrait depicted with that many flowers wasn't gay then Draco didn't know if _he_ was anymore. 'I think I'm in love. And… I think that he loves me as well,' Draco confessed.

'You think so or you truly know?' Raphael asked, an eyebrow drawn up.

'I feel like that's not the only reason you're choosing me to talk to, _non_?'

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'You think so or you truly know?' Raphael asked, an eyebrow drawn up.

'He kissed me so—'

'He kissed you?!!' Raphael shouted.

'Ssh! You're waking up all the girls!' Draco gave him a vile look. His heart was racing again because of Raphael's loud voice. He didn't want any of the girls to hear their conversation.

'Je suis désolé,' Raphael apologized in a whisper. 'It's just— I wish I could've been the one to kiss
you.' The portrait's cheeks flushed at his words, something Draco thought was impossible for a painting to do — but he had seen more impossible things before, like stained glass singing a song in Mermish to him.

'Perhaps in another life,' Draco told him. 'When you're not a portrait.' Raphael seemed to agree on that as his cheeks turned their pale color again, and he gave Draco a nod. 'But I need a favor.'

'Everything for le papillon,' Raphael answered him with a smile.

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Only a few hours of sleep had done no good to Draco as he woke up close to noon. His eyes were dull and circled in purple and grey. Most girls were still asleep as he left the carriage in a hurry, afraid Harry would've woken earlier and was awaiting him by the Lake in the freezing cold. Draco had hurriedly put on a jumper and hidden all his hair away in the thickest knitted hat he owned. A gift from the twins' their mother; she liked to knit things and gift them for Christmas. He had only unwrapped it the morning before, but it appeared to be extremely helpful in the cold winter weather that haunted Scotland.

He wondered what presents Harry had gotten yesterday; they hadn't talked about it. Beside from the knitted hat, he himself had been given a book on special plants and an elaborate golden hand-mirror from his parents. Celebrating Christmas at home was something Draco had always loved, as the Manor for once wouldn't feel so cold when decorated with Christmas trees and ribbons everywhere. He usually got more presents but his parents liked to hand things over in person, and gave Draco the promise of giving him more once he returned home for the summer. But Draco didn't need more presents; he already had all he wished for.

Half an hour passed by and there still was no sign of Harry. I'm the one that's early, he thought as he kept staring around him at the deserted landscape of Hogwarts. The sky looked whiter than usual; snow would soon start to fall. Draco tucked his hands away in his coat's pockets, a blue one that was a shade darker than his normal blue attire. He had forgotten his wand as he had left the carriage in such a hurry; making him unable to cast a warming charm. He could cast a wandless one but it had to be refreshed every few minutes in order to keep it working. Just thinking about all the effort made Draco already wince.

About an hour after his arrival by the Lake, just at the moment when Draco thought he might freeze into an ice sculpture if he had to wait any longer, he saw footsteps appear in the muddy ground in front of him. An invisible person was making his way towards him, step by step. Draco smiled brightly as Harry appeared only a few seconds later, invisibility cloak clutched in his hands and himself wrapped in the thickest jacket Draco had ever seen. Apparently the boy from the tales wasn't made for cold weather either.

'You look awful,' was the first thing he said to Draco.

But Draco couldn't help but laugh, as the boy himself was quite the mess as well. 'Merci. You certainly know how to compliment your boyfriend, don't you?'

'So, I'm you’re boyfriend now?' Harry asked, eyes glittering and with a grin on his face.

It had slipped off Draco's tongue and hearing it out of the boy's mouth suddenly made him realize
he had actually said it. ‘Er — I — shall we just go? I'm really cold,’ he said, avoiding the subject.

Harry grinned and nodded. 'Where to? And why did I have to bring this?' He held up the invisibility cloak to Draco.

'Just put it on and follow me. Vous comprenez?' he replied. With a frown Harry threw the invisibility cloak over himself again, disappearing in front of Draco's eyes. 'And don't make too much noise!'

With an invisible Harry trailing behind him, Draco made his way back to the carriage. Sometimes, when he listened really carefully, he could hear Harry's breathing rhythm behind his back. Slow puffs as they walked over muddy grass and watched the first few snowflakes wander down from the sky. 'It's snowing,' he heard Harry say to him. Draco ssh-him and kept walking.

As they reached the carriage, he threw a meaningful glance in what he thought was Harry's direction and opened the door. The common room was packed compared to its deserted state it had been an hour ago. Girls were lounging everywhere; in front of the fireplace, on sofas and against portrait doors. 'Draco! What were you doing outside in that terrible cold?' One of them asked in French.

Draco gave her a smile. 'A morning walk to clear my head.'

'I see... You might've needed that after last night, didn't you?' A few other girls joined her in her grinning and Draco felt his cheeks flush slightly. 'Now, close that door will you, before we all catch a cold.'

Normally Draco would always close the door immediately behind him, but this time he had left it open on purpose, giving Harry some time to enter as well. Hoping that the boy had been smart enough to actually enter, Draco closed the door and made his way to Raphael's portrait.

'Bonjour, mon amour,' the portrait called out and Draco heard Harry chuckle behind him. He hoped with his dear heart that non of the girls had heard it as well.

'Bonjour, Raphael. Can I go in?' The portrait gave him a wink before he swung aside. Draco himself waited a few seconds, allowing Harry to go in first, before casually following him as if he hadn’t just sneaked in another boy into his room.

It had been a deal he had made with Raphael; to let no-one else enter his room once he would return from his so-called morning walk, and pretend that Draco was in there alone. Raphael had found the whole secret mission rather exciting, but had been disappointed to hear that the smuggled person would be hidden underneath an invisibility cloak. 'A shame,' the portrait had said. 'Would've loved to see my competition.'

With the portrait door shut again, he let out a deep breath he didn't knew he had been holding in. He reached forward with his hands and felt the smooth fabric of the invisibility cloak beneath his fingers. He clutched his hand around it and pulled it off Harry's body. The boot stood with his back towards Draco, head turned the other way to look around his room. 'So, this is where you sleep? It's quite nice,' he commented.

'Merci, but all the rooms look the same. At least we have a separate room like at Beauxbatons. You share rooms, non?'

Harry turned around to face Draco and nodded. 'I share a room with the other Gryffindor boys from my year, but I'm quite used to it by now.'
Draco imagined what it would be like to share a room with the other boys from his year. The constant babbling of the twins, the other boys whom were always talking about girls. *Non, merci beaucoup,* Draco thought to himself. Imagining Harry sleeping in the same room as his fiery best friend and the gay couple he had seen earlier wasn't really the ideal situation to him either.

'Don't you sometimes want privacy then?' Draco asked as he took a step closer to Harry, invading his personal space just the tiniest bit.

It seemed enough to make the boy swallow. 'I-I guess. Never really… thought about it,' he mumbled, taking in Draco's face.

Draco stared deeply into his eyes and leaned in a tiny bit closer to Harry's face before pulling away again. 'Make yourself comfortable,' he said as he walked over to his wardrobe and took off his hat and coat. Harry watched him for a few seconds before taking off his own coat as well, handing it over to Draco who hung it away in his wardrobe neatly. He didn't like having clothes cluttered around his room. As he turned himself back towards Harry, he couldn't help but laugh. The boy was wearing a bright red jumper with a golden H on it. Handmade, it seemed, and it made the boy look too cute for Draco to handle. *Vous êtes mignon!* he said to the boy, still laughing and pointing at his jumper.

'What — what does that mean?' Harry stammered, glancing at his own jumper before giving Draco a look of worry.

'That you look adorable, Harry,' Draco translated for the boy, closing the space between them.

Harry wiped a strand of hair out of Draco's face and placed both of his hands on the blond's shoulders. The boy had to raise himself on the tips of his toes to be able to reach Draco's lips and kiss him once again in his distinct clumsy way. Draco kissed him back as he wrapped his arms around Harry and pulled him even closer than he thought was possible. He placed his hands to rest on the small of Harry's back and felt the boy's hands entangle themselves in his long platinum hair.

'It was a Christmas gift,' the boy mumbled between kisses. 'From Ron's mother.'

Draco stopped kissing him to look into his hazy eyes. 'That's really nice of her, reminds me of someone I know. Got any more presents?'

'A few chocolate frogs and other candy from friends; nothing special actually.' The boy shrugged and then gave Draco a cheeky smile as he seemed to remember something. 'Or maybe… there is this one present that I got that is my absolute favorite.'

Draco's eyes grew wider with curiosity. 'And that is?'

'You,' Harry said with still that cheeky smile upon his lips. It was the most cheesy thing the boy could've said, yet it was enough for Draco to turn a violent red and bury his face in Harry's neck to hide it.

*Vous êtes aussi mon cadeau favori,* Draco mumbled against the soft wool of Harry's jumper.

He felt Harry chuckle by his body's movement. 'I have no idea what you just said, but whatever it was, it always sounds so damn good when said in French.'

Draco lifted his head again to kiss Harry and slowly slid his hands underneath the boy's jumper. The cold touch of his fingertips against Harry's skin made the boy shiver and Draco smiled, biting Harry's bottom lip by doing so. The boy didn't even seem to notice he got bitten as he deepened his kiss even further, his tongue doing the same clumsy dance they had done with their feet the night
before. But Draco didn't mind, it was part of whom Harry was; a clumsy little lion. And a hungry one it seemed so as well, as the boy pushed Draco forward and made them stumble upon Draco's bed. Draco opened his eyes again and gave Harry a wide-eyed stare as he felt the boy's weight and more than that pressed against his body.

'Too — too much?' Harry asked, panting from excitement. The boy looked like a mess; dark circles around his hungry eyes and his messy hair messier than it had ever been before; it spiked in all directions but the right one.

'Peut être,' Draco answered, swallowing, and even though he knew Harry's French was terrible, he knew the boy could at least understand those words.

Harry blinked a few times with his eyes and pushed up his spectacles again that were starting to slide down his nose. 'I-I'm sorry,' he said as he wanted to climb off of Draco. But Draco wrapped his arms around the boy again and held him down, Harry's head falling upon Draco's chest.

'Non, don't be. I'm just... not that physical yet,' he told Harry with a grin, quickly flushing a bright red again. The boy looked up into his eyes and smiled hesitantly.

'I'm sorry,' he said once again and Draco rolled his eyes.

'Didn't I just tell you not to be sorry?'

'I know but I shouldn't be acting like this. I—'

'You're just the typical garçon, Harry. Beside from being attracted to men, I suppose,' he assured him, giving Harry a little smile. 'And you shouldn't feel sorry about that either.'

Harry pressed his lips against Draco's again and brushed softly through his long hair with his fingers. Draco himself let his hands go through the boy's messy hair as well. He had always wanted to touch it; mess it up even more. *If that was even possible*, Draco thought to himself. *It already looks like such a bird's nest today.* Harry then pulled his hand away from Draco's hair, made it find its way underneath Draco's jumper and the warm touch of Harry's hand on his cold chest made electricity flow through his veins like he had just been electrocuted. Heat rose to his face like he knew only happened when he thought about *indecent* things, and he felt his own hardness grow with every stroke of fingertips that Harry sent over his body.

A natural reaction would have been to just devour the boy and let him do whatever he wanted, but Draco panicked slightly, at least that's what he thought, and threw the boy off him with all the strength he had. Harry hit the ground next to his bed with a loud bang and the sound made Draco realize what he had done. *Mon dieu! Harry, je suis très désolé!* he panted as he climbed out of bed and kneeled down beside a bewildered pile named Harry.

'It's — it's okay, Draco,' the boy told him, green eyes blinking a few times before he sat up straight again. 'You told me to stop and yet I- I touched you like that. I'm the one that should be sorry because of it.'

Draco's nostrils flared as he let out a deep sigh. He took ahold of Harry's face with both his hands and stared into the boy's emerald eyes. 'Stop saying you're sorry, Harry. There's nothing you should feel sorry for. I'm the one who threw you onto the ground.'

'And I deserved it.'

'You kind of did, oui,' Draco replied with a smile.
'I just have never loved anyone before the way I love you and... and I guess I just don't know how things work when you have a boyfriend,' Harry mumbled, maybe more to himself than to Draco.

Draco's heart skipped a beat at Harry's genuine words. Hearing that the boy loved him was enough to slowly melt him away into nothingness, become one with the floor of his small compartment room.

'So, I'm your boyfriend now?' Draco repeated Harry's earlier words. It made a smile appear on the boy's face as well as he leaned forward and kissed Draco. Draco pulled his face away after a few touches of their lips and stared into the boy's eyes. 'And I didn't mind you touching me before. It's just that I also have never been in love so don't expect me to be the experienced one here, mon lion.'

Harry nodded with flushed cheeks at his words and stole another kiss from Draco before getting pushed away by the blond yet once again. 'But I can show you how a real French kiss is done,' he said before kissing Harry, lips parted and his tongue drawing perfect circles with Harry's.

It was indeed like how they danced; their kisses. Harry's clumsy and free and Draco's controlled and just perfect.

Chapter End Notes

I really hoped you enjoyed this Yule Ball chapter! It was quite exciting, no? With their first kiss and everything... and them fighting... once again. Please understand I had to make it a bit dramatic otherwise it wouldn't be truly Draco, would it? Also, as I mentioned before in my first chapter's notes I'm really not much of a 'smut' writer but I tried my best. They're also underaged so I feel like going too far is a bit too much for my liking. But I hope you liked the fluffy-ness of it??

The sentence McGonagall says about 'chance to let you hair down' was something I stumbled upon when doing more research into the Yule Ball and I just HAD to put it into this fic as well!

New chapter again soon and there might be slight twist in perspectives *hint hint*
L'eau

Chapter Notes

Perspective change! (At least, for this chapter)
The first part is written in cursive because it briefly describes Harry's feelings for Draco during some of the most important events that I have already written in detail in previous chapters.
The second part I chose to write from Harry's perspective because of the second task.
It was quite impossible to write it from Draco's perspective *hint*...

I really hope you'll like it and I'll probably change back to Draco for chapter 8 again; I just like writing from his point of view a tiny bit more! Enjoy! :)

CHAPTER 07

Harry

Giant wings like that of an angel had doomed up in the sky, carrying something as big as a house. Gold had reflected in the sunlight, blinding Harry and everyone around him. He had almost rejected Ron and Hermione’s offer to go watch the other schools arrive, but he had said yes in the end and it had been the best decision he could've made. A blue violet so pure and so pale Harry’s eyes had been blinded at its sight. The blond boy had strode so elegantly behind the girls, his pointy facial features held up to the sky like only princes did. A thin scarf as light as a feather had blown off his slender neck, landing in front of Harry’s feet as if it was meant to be. Without hesitation Harry had picked it up for the boy, handing it back and getting the most beautiful smile in return.

Merci. A new favorite word had been created.

And he had seen him again, doing wandless magic as if it was the easiest thing in the world.
Butterflies had fluttered everywhere, including his stomach, and as everyone’s eyes were cast upon the girls, Harry couldn’t stop his own from wandering off to the lone boy in blue. And then that magic butterfly. A blue glimpse like that of a patronus, blown into his direction by the boy himself. It had landed on his nose and filled him with feelings he had no way of understanding.

He hadn’t been able to stop thinking about this mysterious boy and somehow seemed to run into him everywhere he went. Like that morning he saw him run through the rain with the girls; soaking wet and not even caring about it. Rain drops had ran down the boy’s pajama trousers. And oh, how silly yet wonderful Harry had found the hat he had been wearing, pulled over his ears as if to hide himself away from all his surroundings. He had gathered all his courage to talk to him, offer him his cloak only to get rejected with another show-off of how amazing the boy actually was. Both in enchanting Harry with magic as in enchanting his heart.

Later a blue light had shone brightly and casted itself upon a new blue element that had entered the Great Hall. The boy, known as Draco Malfoy, had entered with a few of the girls. And then he had walked over to Harry; spoke to him as if they had always been friends. The courage, the beauty of every word he had said. Harry had hung to his lips with each and every French word that slipped from the boy’s tongue; it was always enough to make his heart skip a beat.

Oh, and when he had told him about the dragons even though Harry had already known. The running into each other, how he fell on the ground; a perfect boy on an un-perfect surface. How he had pointed an intricate golden wand at Harry to only lower it almost as fast as it had been drawn. And Harry had hugged him that night; embraced him so tightly the boy had winced. But he had believed him. He had been the only one.

An elephant in the room, so it had seemed when Draco had entered the Three Broomsticks behind him. He had stood out so much, had looked so uncomfortable, but as Harry had rejoined him at their small table, he had seen the blond’s eyes change from cautious to relaxed in a matter of seconds. Book after book after book; the blond’s head was filled with knowledge Harry only dreamt of possessing. And every star in the sky that night he had known. But Harry had been so stupid to say his thoughts out loud; making the French confused of words he couldn’t understand.

And then he had been alone. So alone. It was as if God, or whoever was out there, had retrieved his angel from his world as if his fall had been a mistake. He had felt so lonely without the presence of someone he didn’t even know that well. It was fair to say he had missed Draco more than his friends those last few weeks. No spells, no curses, no potions, no nothing had he found on fighting a dragon, but God’s angel, or perhaps it was Merlin’s angel in Draco’s case, had offered him help in the end; flying. And he had flown; all the way to God to thank him for returning his angel.

Sorry. An apology. Many apologies from many people; but only one had mattered. And the blond hadn’t even needed to apologize to Harry in the first place. Their friendship had never ended, the French boy had never left his mind. An argument, it had been. A love for his school. Harry understood how the boy had felt; betrayal to a school one saw as a home.

The bathroom. The beauty of it was grand but not even alike to the beauty of the boy whom had stood in front of him. Half-naked. Of course he hadn't dared to look at him; it would have confronted him with utter perfection. Of course he did glance over at the blond in the end to notice that his thoughts were granted; he indeed was perfection himself. And his butterfly scar and its story; it made Harry realize how alike they were. A song in Mermish, a promise for more help. Wonderful.
An origami crane bird; it had flown right into his hands. Harry had just been on his way to have tea with Hagrid, when the paper bird had fluttered its wings towards him. French, delicately written in the handwriting a doctor could possess. He had looked up at the window it had flown out of, only to get a faint glimpse of blue.

The 15th of December Harry had been feeling sick of nerves ever since he had woken up. He had decided the day had come in which he would finally ask Draco to the Yule Ball. But the nerves had taken the better of him. He had lied to Ron and Hermione, told them that everything was fine even though he knew it wasn't. He had been too nervous. It was too big of a deal. Not only would he ask for a date, he would also declare the feelings he had for the other boy. Harry knew that it was a big step for him to take as it was an outing to everyone around him; he liked other boys and one in particular.

After lunch he still hadn't been feeling well so Harry had wandered off to do the one thing that always made him feel better; flying. He circled endlessly above the Quidditch pitch and moved on to the Forbidden Forest to fly over the treetops.

Time had flown by, literally, and as the sky had started to darken he had realized that day wouldn't be the day anymore. He had gone to bed, promising himself that he would ask Draco on their next appointment by the Lake.

But he had already seen from afar that something was wrong. The French boy who had always been so glad to see Harry, suddenly didn't even look at him. Perhaps he's having a bad day, Harry had thought at the time. Maybe he's just tired or something. But he had been furious at the blond as he rose back to the water's surface. He knew the boy normally could take his furious behavior quite well, but that time he had stormed off in fury himself. Harry hadn't known what other to do than to follow him, see him fall and make his chest well up with worry as he had seen Draco's teary eyes.

Why had he been so upset? You don't even know my middle name, he had shouted in his face. Lucius, Harry had thought but his anger had taken the better of him; spitting out words he hadn't even planned on saying.

He hadn't understood any of Draco's sudden anger and thought it had all been his fault. I must've done something wrong, he had told himself over and over again. And he really started to believe it was the truth until Ron casually told him Draco had been looking for him the other day.

'Looking for me? Why?' he had asked his friend.

Ron had shrugged. 'Don't know; he didn't tell me.'

'And what did you tell him?' Harry had a feeling that something about Draco's conversation with Ron had caused their little fight by the Lake; it had to be.

'Well, that you were nervous about something. I guessed it was because of Yule Ball and since you mentioned that Cho Chang girl from Ravenclaw before I thought-'

'That I was out to ask her?' Harry's eyes had been wider than they had ever been as he stared at his best friend in disbelief. He had mentioned Cho Chang's name only once; telling his friend that he missed playing Quidditch and that she was always a good rival to play against. It had nothing to do with liking the girl in any other way.
‘Yeah,’ Ron had answered with a nod. He then had pulled up an eyebrow, seeing his friend suddenly upset. ‘She said no?’

Harry had felt his face heat up, probably turn red in seconds. Anger boiled up inside his chest. It had been Ron’s fault. ‘I never planned on asking her in the first place! I wanted to ask Draco!’

‘You wanted to... oooh, now I get why he was so upset,’ Ron had said, nodding to himself as if he finally understood Draco’s emotions.

A sigh had been let out and Harry had felt his anger turn to sadness. Ron’s words had made them fight; had made Draco cry. ‘I must go and find him.’

Already heading for the door, his best friend had stopped him. ‘Well, I heard he’s going with a Durmstrang bloke now. Some rumors about them going to be the most enchanting couple of the Ball. Pathetic, don’t you think?’

If his face could get any more red; it had done just that at that moment. He had turned back around to face his friend, his look probably enough to set the ginger-haired boy on fire. ‘You! You caused this!’ he had taken a few steps towards his friend, his index finger stabbing into Ron’s chest. ‘Now you have to fix it!’

Ron hadn’t known what was overcoming him, nor Harry. ‘Alright, alright, Harry.’ He had put up his hands in surrender. ‘I-I’ll think of something.’

And for once, Ron had actually lived up to his promise. On Christmas morning, he had somehow let Fred and George convince the boy from Durmstrang to try out one of their new candies, which were actually their ever so classic Puking Pastilles. The poor boy had thrown up almost immediately and had to be taken to the Hospital Wing shortly after. Mission complete; Draco had been cleared from his date.

Of course it had been possible that Harry still had to do the opening dance alone or ask someone else last minute; but he knew Draco would bring all the girls to their dates. He just had a feeling; he just knew how much he cared for the girls. And he had been right. But what he hadn’t expected was to see the boy appear in the most beautiful robes he had ever seen. Glitter, gold, silver, blue, white and the grey of his eyes had all mesmerized him at the same time. He had stood frozen, suddenly had been too afraid to ask him to the Ball. He had been too afraid he would be no match for an angel like Draco; for beauty itself. But as Draco had turned away, his feet had dragged him behind the boy and touched his elbow softly. The pain he had seen in Draco’s eyes as he turned around was as if someone had just cut off his angel’s wings, his butterfly’s wings. Yet the boy had said yes. He had said yes to someone he had hated for days. Harry had been forgiven for his stupidity; for his friend’s mistake. And all was well.

They had danced. At least, Draco had. Harry’s clumsy feet hadn’t known how to dance properly at all. But as long as he had felt Draco’s hand around his waist, it hadn’t mattered. Staring up into the tall boy’s eyes was Harry’s favorite thing to do; exploring all the grey with the tiniest specks of blue. Time had passed by without neither of them realizing and as they had circled their last dance upon the dance-floor, Harry had known what it felt like to be completely in love with someone. To be completely in love with Draco.
He had been nervous, leaving the Great Hall and having to say goodbye to the blond. Even though Harry knew he would see Draco probably already the day after; still he hadn't wanted to let go so easily. His mind had told him to wait; just give yourself a few more minutes. And so he had wandered around the Great Hall in circles, turning corners and sauntering through hallways he knew would lead him right back to the start. And Draco, as clever as the boy was, had obviously noticed. Knowing that his time had ran out and that it was either then or never, he had dragged the boy around another corner and shoved him against the wall with too much lust inside his body… and kissed him. Draco had been surprised by it, Harry knew, and that's why his lips hadn't reacted to his kiss. But as Harry had drawn back, he had seen the kiss being answered in the boy's eyes. It had surprised him how warm Draco's lips were compared to his cold hands. And he hadn't wanted to let go of that discovery. But he had to; it had been too late an hour.

Even though they had decided to go to bed and get some much needed sleep, Harry hadn't closed his eyes for even a second. All his mind had been able to think about were Draco's lips against his, the soft look in his eyes. He had to cast a silencing charm upon himself to not wake any of the other boys as he had twisted and turned in his bed; not knowing what to do with his feelings.

The eyes that hadn't wanted to close during the night, had closed themselves for an hour around noon. A dream of Draco had appeared behind them but had shortly awoken him after, way too late for a very important date. They hadn't discussed a certain hour but Harry knew Draco wouldn't sleep longer than noon; it seemed to be something he could just tell about the blond. And he had been right as he had approached the slender blue figure that was his angel. His butterfly. His boyfriend.

That word had made his heart stop beating as if only for a second. But that single second had been enough for him to fall head over heels for the French; if he hadn't already.

The small common room that the giant carriage held was more beautiful than any other room Harry had ever seen. The golden detailing, the blue sofas, all the Rococo portraits upon the walls. The girls had looked so casual as well, lounging everywhere in their pajamas with their hair loose over their shoulders. Other boys would have melted at their sight but Harry's eyes were only casted upon the blond in front of him, leading him to a talking portrait surrounded by flowers.

A chuckle. He hadn't been able to suppress it. Draco had given him a glare because of it but it only had made Harry want to laugh more. And the boy's room had been as beautiful as the carriage's common room; the same gold and blue everywhere. Draco had told him that every compartment was the same, but Harry had been able to identify the little details that made this one truly Draco's; the golden comb and hand-mirror upon his desk, the many books piled up beside it, his golden wand on the little nightstand.

Draco had laughed at his jumper; but it had been a good laugh. A beautiful laugh. Harry loved hearing Draco laugh out loud; it made the strictness and perfection leave his face for a few seconds and made him realize that even perfection wasn't always entirely perfect. He noticed that Draco's mouth would always draw more upwards in it's left corner, he had only one dimple instead of two and how it almost seemed as if his right eye was slightly more blue than grey.

And they had kissed again. A lot. And Harry hadn't been able to hide his lust away; his hunger he had no idea of having. It had ended him on the floor, Draco beside him with worried and apologizing eyes. But it all hadn't been awkward at all; it was as if their clumsiness at intimacy was exactly how they were. Draco always wanting to be in control, and Harry just going along as he thought was right.

☾ ∗ ;*:“ ♦
As they both had moved onto Draco's bed again, keeping each other tightly in an embrace, they had slowly drifted off into a wonderful sleep.

When Harry woke up, Draco was still asleep in his arms. Harry watched how his close to white eyelashes were closed against his pearl skin, his breathing steady and lips more pink than ever because of all the kisses he had stolen from the boy. Harry pressed his lips against the boy's forehead and took in the strong lemony scent that always lingered around him. Draco slowly opened his eyes, awoken by Harry's soft kiss. He looked up into Harry's eyes and he realized that it was the first time he saw Draco look up instead of looking down; the tall blond that he was. *I could get used to this*, he thought to himself as a smile appeared on Draco's face.

Draco's hand found Harry's cheek and he pulled him closer to kiss him again, a lazy one. *Je suis fatigué, mon lion. Let me sleep a little longer,* Draco whispered to him as he buried his face in Harry's jumper again.

'What does that even mean?' Harry whispered back, his hand drawing circles on Draco's back.

He heard the blond sigh. A sigh of tiredness. 'That I'm tired,' he answered with a yawn.

'No, I mean the other thing. About the lion?'

Draco lifted up his head again to look into Harry's eyes. 'It's means you're my lion. *Mon lion.* The Gryffindor that you are,' Draco explained to him with a smile.

A warm feeling welled up inside Harry's chest. Draco had basically given him a nickname and they weren't even together for what… a day? 'Then what are you? My angel?' Harry replied with a grin.

'*Je suis un papillon,* remember? Not an angel.'

'Well, you look like one to me,' Harry told him.

Draco let out a chuckle. 'You're so cheesy. Cheesy Harry; that should be your true name.'

Harry grinned at Draco's sleepy talking. 'Alright. I'll be Harry Cheesy Potter and you can be Draco Angel Malfoy. Deal? Draco just grinned as well. 'What was it again that your portrait called you? Amor something?''

'*Mon amour,*' Draco answered. The sleep was slowly drifting away from the blond's eyes and he started to look more alert, more like himself again.

'*Mon amour,*' Harry echoed with a terrible accent. 'It has something to do with love, right?'

'It means *my love,*' Draco explained. 'But don't go shouting it at me everywhere; your French is terrible.' Harry laughed at his words and tightened his embrace around Draco a little. The blond sighed of contentment. 'You should go. Before they report their fourth Champion missing or something.'

Harry sighed deeply. 'I don't want to. They won't miss me; it's basically Christmas holidays,' he mumbled to Draco.

'Then stay.'

And Harry stayed.
Ron and Hermione were furious when Harry appeared at breakfast the next day. They hadn't seen him at all the day before nor had Ron seen him in his bed at night. Apparently they had been worrying sick about him. They were seated far away from each other, Ron still sulking about Hermione being Krum's date, but both wore the same look of irritation upon their faces. 'You didn't have to worry, guys. I was with Draco,' he told them. He filled the large gap between Ron and Hermione and started loading food onto his plate; he couldn't remember the last time he'd been so hungry.

'With Draco?' Hermione asked skeptically.

Harry nodded. 'Yeah, we — er — went for a long walk by the Lake,' he lied. He didn't dare to glance over at Hermione nor Ron, just scooped more scrambled eggs onto his plate.

'So, you walked all day and night?' Hermione then asked, leaning close to Harry to be able to look into his eyes but Harry didn't let her. He nodded, even though he knew it was totally impossible he and Draco had been casually walking for hours on end. 'You're such a liar, Harry. Why don't you just tell us where you really were? Is it that big of a secret?'

Hermione had always hated it when Harry or Ron didn't tell her the truth; it was as if she could hear every lie within a sentence and stare the truth out of their eyes. 'I was with Draco,' he repeated. 'But — we didn't go for a walk.'

'Then where were you guys all day?' Hermione had her arms crossed and still tried desperately to make eye-contact with Harry.

Harry swallowed and glanced at Ron, whom was also awaiting his answer with a frown. His brains were working on full speed, trying to make up a more suitable lie; one they would more easily believe — but he just couldn't think of anything. His eyes then found Draco who was seated at the Ravenclaw table as usual. He was for once wearing a color different than blue; a jumper in a golden tone. The little fibers of it seemed to glitter in the Great Hall's light and it enchanted Harry's eyes in an instant. With the blond's hair tucked away underneath one of his many berets Harry couldn't wait to just toss it away again and feel the soft, silkiness of his beautiful locks slide through his fingers.

As he dreamt away at Draco's sight, he totally forgot about the impatient stares of his best friends that were still cast upon him. After a minute of complete silence, Hermione cleared her throat and snapped Harry out of his daydream. 'Harry!' she shouted. It drew the attention of a few other Gryffindors and even Draco seemed to have heard it as Harry saw him glance over at his table.

'Why don't you give the boy some privacy, Hermione,' Seamus then interrupted. Harry could almost hear an angel sing in his ears at his words. 'He's also not asking you about your love life with that Krum fellow.'

It seemed to shut Hermione's mouth but open Ron's instead. 'What love life? She doesn't have a love life with him!' Ron then turned himself to Hermione. 'Right?'

Hermione's cheeks were flushed as she turned her head away out of embarrassment. 'Why would you care, Ron?' Harry heard her mumble softly. It was probably too silent for Ron to hear as he
stormed out of the Great Hall, his jealousy too much to handle. Hermione let out a deep sigh and rose from her seat as well. 'I'll go talk to him,' she said to no-one in particular and followed Ron's footsteps.

'So,' Dean then started. Harry noticed that both him and Seamus had moved closer to him, taking Hermione and Ron's place. 'You and that Beauxbatons fellow, right?' A smirk appeared on his face, one that got answered by Seamus, and they even winked at each other. 'Didn't know you fancied blokes, Harry.'

Harry swallowed once again. The immense hunger he had felt before slowly left his stomach. Why was everyone questioning him all of the sudden? 'Well, I—,' he started, but got interrupted by Draco who had appeared on the other side of the table.

His hands were behind his back and a small smile lingered upon his lips. 'Bonjour, les garçons,' he greeted them. 'Mind if I join you?' Without waiting for an answer, Draco took place opposite the three boys and gave them all a long stare. A silence fell as Harry nor Dean nor Seamus knew what to say. 'Why so silent?'

There was something about Draco that felt so intimidating at that moment; perhaps the way he could basically murder someone with the stare he was giving, his handsome facial features or just his overall presence that just screamed that he felt and just was better than the Wizards he was facing. Harry didn't feel intimidated at all but could definitely feel what it was like to the boys next to him. He, on the other hand, just found it extremely attractive. And it most definitely was turning him on.

'Well, if neither of you is going to say anything.' Draco picked up one of the shiny apples that were displayed in front of them. 'Then shall we go for a walk through the snowy landscapes of Scotland, Harry?' A single bite out of the apple caused the three boys to wince. The way his teeth bit into the apple, his lips enclosing it so slowly afterwards. And as he chewed, he let out a moan as if it was the best thing he had ever eaten in his entire life. Yeah, definitely enough to make Harry's blood stream to the wrong places again.

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'You're going to tell your friends about us, non?'

Wrapped up in thick coats, Harry and Draco were making their way through the snow side by side. The Lake was slowly starting to freeze and they both stopped to watch the snowflakes fall and melt away on the remaining watery surface. 'Soon, I guess,' Harry answered him. Of course he wanted to tell his friends about them; he didn't want to keep it a secret. But on the other hand he was afraid that people would laugh at him or at Draco; he had seen it happen to Dean and Seamus before. No matter what, some people just would forever remain small-minded.

Draco let out a sigh and his warm breath caught Harry's face before it faded away. 'At least you should tell Ron and Hermione; they're your best friends. I'm sure they won't hate you or laugh at you,' Draco said to him, almost as if reading his thoughts.

'I will. They just asked where I was yesterday and I didn't want to get you into trouble,' he explained. If they had asked him why he had been with Draco and not where; he had answered because they were together together — but it had been that little difference in their question that
had made him unable to tell them.

'C'est gentil. That's very kind of you, Harry,' Draco said to him with a smile. He reached out his gloved hand for Harry to take. It was funny how he had hated any physical contact with Harry before and now couldn't seem to get enough of it.

'Do — do your friends know?' Harry asked. 'The girls and the twins you mentioned before?'

Draco nodded. 'Remember what I told you back in the bathroom? Why do you think Madame trusts me so much with the girls? She, and everyone at Beauxbatons actually, knows that I don't like girls that way,' he explained.

'And your parents?'

Draco looked away at the mention of his parents. He had told Harry stories about them before; their names were Narcissa and Lucius Malfoy and they both had the same platinum blond hair as Draco, owned the same pearl complexion and lived at a manor somewhere near Paris. Draco loved spending time with them during Christmas holidays but during the summer he had to attend parties and gatherings for Purebloods only which he hated. Draco had been hesitant to tell Harry that he was a Pureblood; his parents were apparently very strict about it. They even expected him to marry a Pureblood girl in the future and provide the Malfoy-line with a heir, Draco had told him.

Suddenly remembering that conversation, Harry knew why Draco had looked away. 'They don't approve of it?'

Draco shook his head. 'They know I'm different, but they still wish the opposite was true and perhaps will become true in the future.'

'Do you think you'll ever be able to grant that wish?' Harry asked.

Once again, Draco shook his head. 'Ils peuvent rêver. But it will never happen.' He then looked at Harry, grey eyes only a shade darker than the snow around them. 'Especially now that I have you.'

Harry could see Draco's cheeks blush slightly at his own words, and it was definitely not because of the cold. An arm found its way around the boy's waist and Harry pulled him closer. He laid his head down on Draco's shoulder and could feel the soft lips of the blond's kiss upon his head. A perfect silence fell between them as they watched more snowflakes wandered down.

It was Harry who broke the silence after a few minutes. 'Can I ask you something?'

Harry lifted his head and Draco gave him a look. 'Oui?'

'Can you cast a patronus? I know it's a difficult spell but—'

'Oui, I can. Madame Maxime herself taught me how to cast it. Something about being able to protect the girls,' Draco answered. A proud smile lingered upon his lips.

'Well, I can cast one as well. A few Dementors, as I have told you before, were haunting me last year so an old friend of my father taught me the patronus spell. He was our Defense Against the Dark Arts teacher,' Harry explained. Draco listened to his words and gave him a nod. 'But he was a werewolf so he couldn't stay.'

'That's too bad,' Draco told him. 'I would have loved to meet a werewolf. Very interesting creatures, non?'
Harry gave him a weak smile. He missed Remus greatly but knew that a life as a teacher at Hogwarts wasn't ideal for him. 'The reason why I asked is, well, you told me before that butterflies are a returning theme in your life. So, I was wondering if—'

'If my patronus is a butterfly?' Draco finished his sentence.

Harry nodded. 'Yes. But wouldn't it be too small to protect you?'

Draco shook his head. 'I don't think it would, seen that a patronus casts the same amount of energy whether they're small or large.' Why did he always have to be so damn clever? Knowing everything like Hermione, sentences and definitions saved somewhere in his brain. Knowing things Harry could only wish of remembering before an exam. 'My patronus isn't a butterfly, though,' Draco then said with a tiny smirk.

'Then what is it?'

He leaned a bit closer to Harry's face. 'Take a guess, as you are so good at guessing.'

Harry let out a chuckle as he shook his head. 'Unbelievable, the French. 'I don't know… a cat, perhaps?' he guessed.

Draco raised an eyebrow. 'Do I look like a cat person to you?'

'A dog then?' Harry said with a growing grin upon his face.

'Are you just choosing every boring animal on purpose, Harry? Allons, you can do better than that.'

'Alright,' Harry said as he took a deep breath. 'A dragon then?'

A laugh escaped Draco's pink lips. 'Because of my name? Vous êtes incroyable, Harry!'

Harry lifted his hands in surrender. Ok, maybe that one had been on purpose. 'I don't know, alright?' he said with a shrug. 'Probably an elegant animal or something; maybe some kind of bird?'

Draco eyes widened. 'You're getting closer,' he told Harry. 'But, let me just show you.' The blond boy turned himself towards the lake and drew his intricate golden wand from his coat's pocket. Harry noticed for the first time that at the end of its handle, a blue sapphire was shining brightly. 'Expecto Patronum,' Draco shouted and out of his wand came a blinding silver animal. Harry screwed up his eyes to see what creature had escaped from Draco's soul.

'A swan,' he said as he took in the beauty of the elegant bird in front of him. It had found its way to the water and was swimming in tiny circles, trying to draw their attention.

'Oui; a beautiful animal on the outside but very stressed on the inside. Just like me,' Draco explained with a sigh.

'You're a stressed person?' Harry asked out of disbelief. 'Wouldn't say.'

'That's because I hide well,' Draco said with a grin. 'Now, what is your patronus?'

'It's a—‘

'Non, wait,' Draco interrupted him. 'Let me guess first…the animal that lives in the forest?’
Shocked because of his answer, Harry's mouth fell open and his eyes grew wider. 'How did you—'

'You kept glancing over at the Forbidden Forest, Harry,' Draco admitted with a smile. Not only clever anymore; also extremely observant.

'It's a stag. Like my father's,' Harry explained.

'You seem to be a lot like your father; inheriting his invisibility cloak and his patronus,' Draco told him.

Harry nodded but shrugged afterwards. 'If you put it like that, then yes. But we are very different in many ways.'

A sigh escaped from Draco's mouth. 'I think you could say the same about my father and I. We look alike but Papa isn't really a man I aspire to be.' Draco casted his eyes to the snow beneath his feet.

'Why is that?' Harry asked hesitantly. He knew Draco didn't like to talk about certain aspects of his family and Harry most definitely didn't want to push him.

'It's… complicated,' he replied in the end with a weak smile that was more like a grimace. To cast away the heavy atmosphere that had suddenly fallen around them, Harry silently casted a patronus charm of his own and sent his stag over the lake. Draco lifted his head again to look at how the stag took place beside the swan and how they seemed to communicate without any words. It felt the same to Harry as Draco's hand intertwined with his again, no words needed to know the boy was thankful.

February the 24th; the day of the second task. Red and gold ran through hallways, over fields and made an appearance even between bookshelves. Harry had been looking for Draco all morning, but still hadn't found him yet. The blond had disappeared after dinner the previous day, missing their planned meeting at the library afterwards. Harry had waiting for hours but Draco hadn't shown up. A bit disappointed Harry had gone to bed, thinking that the French had simply forgotten.

As he had lain down in bed, the other boys already filling their dorm with loud snores, his mind couldn't stop thinking about the next day. They had kept on practicing the Bubble-Head charm but the result still weren't where they had wanted them to be. With the Lake fully frozen for a few weeks since Christmas, they also had had to move to the Prefect's/Beauxbatons' bathroom to continue their try-outs. Beside from the Bubble-Head charm they had also tried out a few other things that they had found in books. But non of them had worked.

Their second option had been a potion that would make one able to breathe underwater, but gave you the mind of a fish as a side-effect. Harry had tried it out, though; desperate to find something that would be better than a snapping bubble. As he had swallowed the vile potion down his throat, he had felt his normal thoughts slowly drift away. It had been as if he was dreaming; dreaming that he was a fish. All he had been able to think about was water, water and more water. Harry had launched himself into the bathtub and had apparently been swimming in circles for more than an hour; perfectly able to stay underwater without oxygen — but with the mind of a fish he wouldn't be able to succeed in his second task.
Their third option had been a suggestion of Hermione; transfiguring into a water-creature. It was a transfiguration charm that required a lot of strength but Harry had been sure he could pull it off. But he had, of course, been wrong. He had been able to only partly transform himself into a salmon, for Merlin's sake, looking like an ugly mermaid as he flipped his fin in the bathtub's water. Draco hadn't been able to stop laughing and had to cast a counter spell to not choke on his own tongue. Un échec, to say it in the blond's words. A complete fail.

And so it was that Harry still had no plan B beside from the Bubble-Head charm. It was only a few more hours until he had to go to the Lake's pier now. The dark void that was the Lake's water had become liquid again a week ago; but Harry knew it was still extremely cold. Draco had advised him to cast a warming charm before casting the Bubble-Head charm; it would save him from freezing to death. But the blond was nowhere to be seen, and it made Harry panic that everything they had planned would go wrong.

Draco had been by his side almost every day since the Yule Ball. Even if they had classes all day, they would still try to find each other in hallways and exchange looks while brushing hands as they passed by. Or when they stumbled upon each other alone, they would hide in a dark alcove and kiss each other until one of them ran out of breath. Harry had been late for many classes during those weeks, but had all waved it away with a smile. Of course he also hadn't been able to hide it away from his best friends any longer. Hermione grew more suspicious by the day and Ron just seemed utterly confused. He had told them in the first week of January, declaring his love for Draco and that he was still the same Harry as he had always been. Hermione had just sighed out of relief; she apparently had already known about their relationship and had been suspicious because she thought Harry was hiding something else. Ron hadn't known what to say at first but also kind of had felt it coming. In the end he just shrugged and said it didn't matter as long Harry was happy.

Only a quarter before the start of the second task, Harry finally gave up his search and moved over to the pier. On his way there he ran into Ron who seemed to have been waiting for him. 'There you are!' he called out. Harry glanced over at a bundle of slimy, grey-green something that Ron was holding in his hands. It reminded him of rat tails. 'Thought you'd never come!'

'Was thinking about it,' Harry mumbled as a reply. They continued their walk to the pier, Harry's stomach growling with nerves. 'What's that in your hands?'

'This,' Ron said, moving it closer to Harry's face to see. 'Is gillyweed, apparently.'

'This,' Ron said, moving it closer to Harry's face to see. 'Is gillyweed, apparently.'

'And what does it do?'

'No idea. Ran into Draco yesterday evening and he basically shoved me a piece of parchment in my hands and took off without a single word.'

Harry stopped in his pace to look at Ron. 'You saw Darco?'

'Er, yes? Why is that so weird?'

'Because we were supposed to meet at the library after dinner but he never showed up.'

'Well, he seemed kind of in a hurry. Also quite anxious about something, not sure.' Ron then glanced over at the pier and took a look on his watch. 'But we really have to go now, Harry.'

They both hurried themselves to the pier and made it five minutes prior to the start. Bartemius Crouch Sr. was present again and seemed seconds away from having a heart attack. But at the sight of Harry, all nerves seemed to clear from his face; he had probably been worried the youngest Champion wouldn't show up. Professor Dumbledore had also been awaiting Harry and gave him
the smallest of smiles as he pushed him to the edge of the pier. Ron followed and pushed the gillyweed in his hands. 'Draco's note said its better than the Bubble-Head charm. Also something about not having to cast a warming charm? Couldn't really read his handwriting', Ron explained to Harry before giving him a thumbs-up and moving over to the others.

Harry could feel his heart beat in his throat as he stared into the darkness beneath him. The Black Lake had never looked so frightening before. The slimy substance in his hands also didn't really make him feel any better. If only Draco was here right now, Harry thought. He glanced over at the other Champions that were lined up next to him. Cedric and Krum both had determined looks on their faces and Fleur seemed to be worried by something as well. He vaguely heard her pronounce Draco's name and that of a girl Harry didn't know. Perhaps it was the little girl that always followed her around.

But he had no time to go and ask her wether she had seen Draco or not; Crouch had put his wand against his throat and announced that it was time for the second task to begin. 'An hour the Champions will have to retrieve an item that has been stolen from them.' Harry's heart skipped a beat at his words. What was it that they had stolen from him? His invisibility cloak? His broom? He had no idea. 'If they fail to do so; they won't be granted with any points, which will be a disadvantage in the third and final task.'

Harry glanced over his shoulder at the man. He stood in front of a giant round clock; almost Draco's timepiece enlarged. Everyone their eyes were casted upon it, ready for it to start ticking. And then the shot was given, followed by three splashes and the swallowing of gillyweed. It had a fool taste and the slimy texture made Harry want to spit it out again. He dove into the lake while awaiting it's effect, a bit nervous wether it would work or not.

It felt like his insides were burning; his throat was on fire and his hands and feet were tingling. Suffocating. That was how he felt. As if he was drowning in complete darkness with people cheering above his head; encouraging to suffocate for a few seconds longer. But then he suddenly could breathe again and warmth started to flow through his veins. He looked at his fingers and noticed webbing had grown between each of the five. Same went for his toes and when he lifted a hand to his neck, he felt the texture of gills and small scales.

He moved his feet and was launched faster through the water than ever before. It made him want to smile but knowing that he only had an hour for the task, he put his happy feelings away for later and moved his feet as fast as he could, further into the darkness of the lake. How had Draco been able to find something like this, he wondered as he swam through seaweed and various other water plants he didn't know by name.

Harry found the Merpeople's village quite fast; almost as if he could feel which way he had to go. Perhaps it was a side-effect to the gillyweed. Large arches doomed up in front of him. He saw a few small hills covered with a kind of green moss, but as he neared them, he could see it weren't just hills; it were the Merpeople's houses. Everything was draped in a green light; casted upon the evil faces of a few of its inhabitants. Gold and silver, jewels and shiny stones; he saw them all on the bottom of the lake — but even when he just took a quick glance at them, he could already feel the presence of one of the village's Merpeople getting nearer. Focus on the task, he told himself. Just like Draco said.

He made his way through what seemed to be streets with the hill-houses on either side and stumbled upon something that humans would call a square. A circle of green and blue, light shining down like a spotlight. Pointy tridents and weapons; pointed at the boy by the square's guardians. And in the middle; four sleeping figures bound to stone statues of mermaids. Only one of them caught Harry's attention; a pale boy, taller than the other three, hulled in blue robes and his
long hair floating around his head. *Draco.*

Harry didn't know how fast to swim over to him, and as he reached the blond, he wrapped his arms around him immediately. But Draco didn't react at all. His body felt more cold than it ever had and it made him panic; what if he was dead? The boy's eyes were closed in a peaceful way, his white eyelashes touching his cheeks ever so delicately. He realized that he was probably in an enchanted sleep; maybe not even aware that he was bound to a rock at the bottom of a lake. *If only he knew,* Harry thought to himself with a grin.

Reassured that there was nothing wrong with Draco beside from being asleep, he glanced over at the other three that were tied up as well. He felt his chest tighten from the inside out at the sight of Hermione; asleep as well. Cho Chang was also there and what seemed to be a little girl, probably Fleur's sister.

Harry kept staring from Draco to Hermione and back. What if Krum wouldn't be able to save Hermione within the hour? Hadn't the clue said that if one didn't succeed; it wouldn't come back? *I have to save them both,* Harry then decided. He reached for his wand and casted a spell to free Draco from his statue. With one arm wrapped around the boy's slender waist, he then pointed his wand at Hermione. But as he was about to cast the spell again, he felt something sharp stab in his back. As he turned around he looked into the huge, yellow eyes of one of the Merpeople. 'Only one,' she warned him in a hissing voice.

'But she's my friend as well!' Harry shouted back, hearing his voice muffled by bubbles. The creature shook her head and pointed at Draco as if to make her point clear once again; Harry had freed him first and therefore could only save *him,* not Hermione.

He felt the water shift slightly and turned to see Cedric free Cho Chang from her ropes. He caught Harry's eyes and ticked on his wrist as if to say he was wasting time. Cedric seemed to have pulled off the Bubble-Head charm perfectly compared to the failed attempts of Harry himself. He looked a bit nervous around him, probably afraid of the Merpeople. With Cho Chang in his arms, he swam away from the square again.

Uncertain of what to do, Harry looked at Draco's face. He still held the same peaceful expression upon his handsome face and it reassured Harry somehow that everything would be fine; something the boy had said to him so often. He then caught the movement of something dark in the corner of his left eye and shortly after saw a human body with the head of a shark appear; Krum. His failed transfiguration was quite gruesome to look at but at least he had reached the village; ready to save Hermione. He freed her in a matter of seconds and raced away through the water as if it was all he ever did.

Harry stayed behind with his lover in his arms and a little girl in front of him, still tied up and unsaved. Maybe he didn't have to save Hermione anymore; but he also just couldn't leave the girl behind. A feeling in his heart told him Fleur wasn't coming to get her; he just somehow knew. Declaring himself as a complete idiot, he looked around to see if the Merpeople that were guarding the square were paying attention or not. To his relief, he didn't see any of them anymore and saw it as his chance. He shot a spell at the girl's ropes and saw her slowly drift upwards to the beam of light. As soon as Harry started to move as well, he could feel the water shift around him more stronger than before. They were nearing. He had upset them.

He clutched Draco to his body with dear life and moved his feet faster than he had ever done before. He could hear the Merpeople scream at him from behind as he grabbed ahold of the girl's wrist and pulled her with him as well. It was utterly exhausting and his leg muscles were burning after seconds already. He was nearing the surface, getting closer to daylight again, when a slimy
hand slid itself around his ankle. He looked down to stare into the furious face of one of the Merpeople. Without hesitation he let go of the girl's wrist after giving her a bit of launch upwards; making her move through the water a bit faster. He then grabbed his wand again and blasted hexes towards the Merpeople that had gathered around him. It was an intense battle and he got stabbed by their pointy tridents multiple times. But eventually he won by casting a bright lumos, blinding the Merpeople for just long enough to get the hell away from them.

When he reached the surface, applause broke free around him and he felt the gills and webbing between his fingers and toes slowly fade away. He smiled brightly because of the cheers and looked over at Draco whom had awoken from his sleep. He was splashing into the water with his arms as if he couldn't swim; making a fool out of himself. An irritated expression graced his face and long strands of hair were sticking to his forehead and cheeks. 'Tâche stupide... Noyant des étudiants... Regarde moi; je suis tout mouillé!' he muttered to no-one in particular.

Harry swam a bit closer to him and wrapped his arms around the blond again. 'You're awake,' he shouted at him, placing his hands on his cheeks. 'You're safe.' Wet lips pressed against another set of wet ones and Harry could hear the cheers fade away the tiniest bit before they broke free again, even louder.

Draco pushed him away and splashed water in Harry's face. 'I'm going to make you pay for this,' he said to him, still irritated but with a smile in his eyes. Harry grinned at his words and Draco couldn't hold in his smile any longer either. He then was the one to reach for Harry and kiss him; a decent kiss if to say the least.

They got interrupted by someone clearing their throat. As heads both lifted up to see to whom it belonged to, they stared into the friendly face of professor Dumbledore. 'If you are quite finished, my boys, we would like to announce the scores of each Champion.'

Harry could feel his face heat up and his cheeks flush as he glanced at Draco's equally red face. He climbed up onto the pier and reached out his hand to help Draco get on it as well; the gesture made the blond's face even redder. As they shook off some of the water from their clothes, Harry basically got attacked by a blue appearance similar to Draco. Fleur had wrapped her arms around Harry and was panting for whatever reason. 'You saved ma petit soeur,' she called out to Harry. 'Merci!' she kissed him on the cheek twice and gave him a bright smile. He felt his cheeks flush even more and looked shyly away. He wanted to tell her that it was nothing; that it had been his pleasure but he could already sense an aura of fury well up next to him.

Long fingers wrapped themselves around his wrist and pulled him away from Fleur. 'C'est mon copain, Fleur! Go kiss that Ravenclaw captain of yours,' Draco said to her, arms crossed and eyebrows frown. But Fleur ignored his words, wrapped her arms around him as well. She said something to Draco in French, making the boy smile and then took off to join her little sister again.

With the female version of Draco out of sight, Harry turned himself towards the blond again. 'Jealous?' he asked with a smirk. Draco just huffed and lifted his chin.

Ron and Hermione joined their side only moments later; Hermione completely soaked like Draco and Ron a bit shocked by it all. 'Still can't believe they tied up four students to the bottom of a bloody lake,' he said. 'I'm glad it wasn't me.' Ron looked away for a few seconds, eyes a bit glassy as he probably thought about himself surrounded by scary Merpeople. He shivered and Hermione rolled her eyes because of it. 'Anyway, I brought your jumper so you can warm up a bit.'

His freckled hand held up Harry's Christmas jumper. With a thankful smile Harry took it from him but passed it on to Draco. 'I'm not that cold, actually. Are you?' Draco gave him a look as if he had
gone mad but accepted the jumper anyway. The left corner of the blond's mouth was lifted a bit, as if he had been flattered by the gesture of a madman.

'Thought you could dry yourself up with that wandless magic of yours,' Ron then said. 'At least, Harry told us you could.'

Offended, Draco pulled Harry's red jumper over his head and gave Ron a vile look. 'Not feeling like casting one today. But alright, if you insist.' With a flick of his hand, he didn't dry his own hair and clothes but Hermione's instead. A smile out of surprise graced Hermione's face as she thanked Draco. Harry knew what Draco was playing at and it humored him greatly; he knew how Ron hated it when other guys were being friendly to Hermione. And it was visible on Ron's face.

Draco spelled his own hair dry as well and Harry could feel an invisible wind pass by as the spell hit him too. 'Guess you won't be needing that jumper anymore,' Harry said to him but Draco shook his head, clutched his arms to his chest.

'I think I'll keep it; it's warm and smells like pine needles.' Harry couldn't help but smile as he knew he himself smelled like pine needles. It looked quite funny on Draco, though; the bright red wool. It was a color Harry had never seen him wear before and it contrasted greatly against his pale skin. But whatever the blond wears, Harry thought, he will always look too fine in it.
They had literally abducted him! No warning had been given when they had snatched Draco by his arm out of the hallway, on his way to the library. He hadn't panicked at first because of the sudden abduction, but he had panicked because he would miss his meeting with Harry. Dragged to headmaster Dumbledore's office, Draco had thought he had done something wrong, but there he had seen the faces of others he recognized; Gabrielle, Hermione and Cho. He had stood beside the equally confused girls and waited for what the professors in front of him had to say.

They were going to drown him! What an awful plan it had sounded in Draco's ears. Enchanted in a deep sleep but completely safe… as if Draco had been able to believe that. He had sulked while throwing vile glares at each of the irresponsible adults in front of him before demanding five minutes to at least go to the bathroom before they would unwillingly put him asleep. Of course Draco hadn't needed to go to the bathroom; he saw it as his opportunity to tell Harry about the gillyweed. He had only found out about it the night before while reading in his new plant book. Already on one of the first pages he had stumbled upon it and while reading its description, had known it was what they had been looking for all along.

Scribbling down a note, he had ran towards the library as fast as he could. Halfway he had seen Ron appear out of nowhere, shoved the note into the ginger's hands instead. Ron had given him a weird look before Draco had taken off again, hurrying back to the Headmaster's office.

The note had simply read;

*Use gillyweed for second task. Find: Potions class? No warming charm.*

He could only have hoped that Ron would've been smart enough to give the note to Harry or somehow obtain the gillyweed himself. But all his thoughts had faded away as the professors
casted the special sleeping charm upon him right at the moment he entered the office again.

Nothing had Draco remembered from his trip to the bottom of the Lake. Rien. It had frustrated him even more when he had awoken, almost drowning by the surprise of finding himself in ice cold water. He had splashed his arms and legs in fury while getting cheered on by the surrounding crowd. Cursing all the professors and inventor of the tasks, he hadn't even thought about weather Harry had succeeded or not. But as the boy had grabbed ahold of his face, mumbling words Draco couldn't even hear, he knew by his clumsy kiss that he had succeeded. And succeeded greatly, apparently, as he got second place for arriving at the Merpeople's village first and saving two candidates instead of one. Fleur had been under the attack of grindylows and had to pull back before finishing her task, which made her score no points at all. But it hadn't mattered to the French girl anyway; the safety of her little sister had always been more important and worrying than her score.

Draco was still surrounded by the smell of pine, his skin in touch with the softest wool he had ever felt. The red and gold jumper, which he had made fun of at first, appeared to be one of the better things in life. And of course, that had nothing to with the fact that it was Harry's jumper or anything. It had been quite a surprise to Draco that Harry had dared to kiss him when everyone had been watching; he had thought the boy didn't want anyone to know about them. But it wasn't just something Harry should've worried about, by the public kiss their love had also been declared to all the girls and Madame Maxime herself. Draco didn't even dare to look at her; afraid she would judge him for betrayal to Beauxbatons. Already thinking about it made Draco's stomach turn upside down. He knew Fleur apparently didn't care but how would the others react? He had no idea.

He soon found out as he got back to the carriage's common room after the second task. Harry had been dragged along by a bunch of Gryffindors with the promise of a party at their common room. Draco had stayed behind with Hermione by his side, inviting him to come as well and Draco had accepted the offer before even realizing it. Curiosity of knowing what the Gryffindor common room and dormitory looked like had taken over. But he had demanded that he first wanted to change into something else; the jumper could stay but his slightly damp school robes had to come off. Not to mention that his hair desperately needed to be combed after its adventure down the Lake.

So as he got back to the carriage, he found all the girls had returned already as well. With the door swung open, he immediately heard a silence fall. All their eyes were pointed in his direction, blank expressions on their faces. Draco stood frozen in the door, unsure of what to do or how to react. Madame sat on her purple sofa by the fire, her eyes fixed upon him as well.

'Well well,' she then said. 'Vous et le garçon de Hogwarts?' Draco swallowed and felt his cheeks burn. He couldn't manage to say a single word; his throat felt dry and it was as if a little goblin was playing the drums in his chest. He nodded to her words instead. 'You know that he is Fleur's rival, oui?'

Draco nodded again. 'But I don't really mind, Madame,' he heard Fleur's voice call out. A weak smile graced her face as she looked from Madame back to Draco. 'Draco's happiness is just as important as the Tournament, non?' Fleur's words were a relief but the tension between Madame and him still hung above their heads. He felt her eyes shift from his face to his jumper and back,
judging without truly doing so. Unreadable, the woman was.

Madame Maxime then let out a deep sigh, making Draco's heart jump. Was it a good sigh or a bad one? *Peut-être,* she mumbled as she rose from her sofa. As she walked towards the portrait of her room, she threw the smallest of smiles in Draco's direction before disappearing, leaving Draco with a warm feeling in his chest.

He sighed out of relief and placed a hand upon his heart; its loud pace still resounding in his ears. At least he didn't have to worry about telling her anymore, and she didn't even seem that upset or surprised. She probably knew all along, the smart Witch that she was; probably already at the night of the Yule Ball. 'We don't mind it either, Draco,' Marie then said. Seated upon one of the blue sofas with her long brown hair let down, she gave him a sparkle of a smile. 'You and Harry are too cute together!' The girls followed her giggling and Draco blushed to scarlet red.

What seemed like an eternity of questions about Harry then followed; *Is he kind to you? What does he smell like? Had you kissed before? What's his favorite food? Do you already have a nickname for him? Is that his jumper?* Draco answered them all after getting pulled onto one of the sofas as well, surrounded by each and every girl including Fleur. Fleur even seemed to be the most curious and Draco wasn't really sure if she was trying to get some information she could use for the final task at the same time. But he didn't care; Harry was an open book anyway. When they were finally satisfied with their six-hundred-and-one love-related questions answered, Draco changed into a pair of fitted trousers and tied up his hair again. The girls waved him off with the cheekiest of smiles and in the twilight he wandered back to the castle, a grin wider than the Cheshire's cat upon his face.

A battle of moving stairs later Draco arrived at the portrait Hermione had told him about. *The Fat Lady,* she was apparently called, but Draco found it a rather rude name. Whoever had given it to the depicted lady hadn't been much of a gentleman. *Bonsoir, demoiselle,* he said to her.

The Fat Lady gave him a little smile, apparently pleased by his addressing. 'How can I help you, young man? You do not look like a Gryffindor to me, am I right?'

Draco nodded. 'I indeed am not a Gryffindor, but I do have Gryffindor friends. They are having a party right now, *non?* I was invited by Hermione Granger,' he told her.

'Ah, yes. They are having quite the feast indeed. Asked them if I maybe could sing a song for our Champion but they didn't really seem in the mood for my angelic voice.' The Fat Lady dramatically placed a hand upon her head and looked away in the distance. 'Miss Granger told me about a blond boy coming to the party as well, though. So I shall grant you access, mister…?' she said, giving him a side-glance from her dramatic position.

'Monsieur Malfoy,' Draco said with a little smile.

The Fat Lady turned herself fully towards Draco again, frowning at his name. 'I believe I've heard that name before. Are there any Gryffindors in your family?'

Confused, Draco shook his head. '*Non; Papa* went to Hogwarts but he remained under the House of Slytherin,' he told her. His father had never really spoken of his time at Hogwarts, but he knew he belonged to the House of snakes. Green, views upon the Lake from the dungeon and a cunning way of handling everything.

Perhaps I've heard the name from a Gryffindor from his year then,' she decided as she swung her portrait aside. Loud music from the wireless was blasted in Draco's direction, making him blink a few times.
He hadn't even stepped through the portrait hole or someone already pulled him into the crowd by his wrist. It appeared to be one of the boys he had 'talked' to before at the Gryffindor table, but he couldn't remember his name. He did however remember him as the single other boy that had asked another boy to the Yule Ball — of the pair that had danced closer to each other than any other couple. 'You're here,' the boy called out. Draco could hear the slightest Irish accent in his words and it seemed to suit the boy's appearance and actions even more. 'Harry will be stoked! Hey, Harry!'

With his free hand the boy snatched Harry by the back of his collar and pulled the boy towards him and Draco. Harry gave his friend a scowl before noticing Draco, his green eyes finding grey lighting up immediately. It looked like they had borrowed each other's clothes; him wearing a pale blue jumper and Draco still dressed in Harry's red one. 'Seamus,' Harry said to his friend. So that's his name. 'You can let go of Draco now.'

Draco looked down at his wrist, noticing that Seamus had never let go of it. 'Oh, sorry,' the boy mumbled and let go, smiling a bit awkwardly. 'I'm sorry about the other day as well — you know, when we didn't say anything to you. You were—'

'Intimidating?' Draco finished his sentence.

'Quite,' Seamus admitted with a smile. 'But now you look like one of us, to be honest. I mean— look at you! Red and gold jumper and everything!'

'It's Harry's jumper.'

'So what? Every person that wears the Gryffindor colors is a friend of mine.'

Harry sneered at his words. 'So you're saying that if that blond git from Slytherin wears red or gold that he's your friend as well?'

Seamus seemed to think about that before squinting his eyes and lifting his index finger. 'He — He's definitely an exception!'

'What about his friends? Or those boys from Ravenclaw that made fun of you and Dean, they wear red quite often. Or—'

'Alright, alright!' Seamus crossed his arms with a roll of his eyes. 'Let's just say that anyone from the other schools that wear red or gold can be my friend.'

'That includes all the students from Durmstrang as their uniforms are burgundy,' Draco added to that, making Harry laugh and Seamus slowly die away on the spot.

'Fine! Only Beauxbatons students then,' the boy called out, starting to get a bit hysterical.

Harry opened his mouth to make another comment on that but Seamus hushed him and walked away, done with the conversation. One glance in Draco's direction and the boys both lost it as they laughed at their friend. Harry then closed the space between them and kissed Draco on the cheek. 'I'm glad you're here,' he said to him.

Draco gave him a smile. 'Moi aussi; I've always wanted to see what your common room looked like.' Finally able to take a look around, he took a peek through the crowd at the roaring fireplace, at the red walls and ceiling and at the many portraits decorating the room. Two flights of stairs indicated the way to the dorms and velvet sofas in blood red were pushed against the walls to make space for the lions their party. Accents and details in gold were everywhere and the only ugly thing Draco's eye could spot was a board against the wall that held pieces of parchments with school
announcements and exam dates. A few photographs were spread in between the portraits, showing off graduates and current students of the House flying on brooms, swimming in the Lake or showing off various of golden medals in other sports. His eye fell upon one picture in particular; a close up of a boy, his hair blown out of his face and a scar criss-crossing from forehead to eye; a picture of Harry flying.

'And, what do you think?' Harry asked him as he followed Draco's eyes. He chuckled at the sight of his own moving photograph but didn't mention it.

'Cozy,' Draco answered in a simple word.

Harry's arm slipped around Draco's waist and on the tips of his toes, he bend a forward a little to whisper something in his ear. 'Would you like to see where I sleep?'

A grin escaped Draco's mouth as he looked into the boy's cheeky eyes; they were gleaming guiltily as he took a step back and guided Draco over to one of the stairs. He didn't even think about wether anyone would see them; just followed Harry's quick moves from step to step. The dormitory where Harry took him to was just as crimson and gold as the common room had been. Four-poster beds were shoved against the walls with windows in between, giving views over the Hogwarts' grounds. A golden chandelier hung above their heads and Harry pulled him over to one of the messiest beds in the room. 'This is mine,' he pointed out, and Draco couldn't believe his words more.

'You won't say,' he replied with a smirk. If there was one thing he knew Harry was known for beside from being the boy from the tales or the brave Gryffindor, it was probably him being one of the messiest persons of whole Hogwarts. Dirty socks hung on his headboard, his trunk opened wide with a rumpled pile of clothes within, books scattered everywhere and his wand deserted on a bedside table next to a picture of him and his best friends. 'Let me tidy it up a bit,' Draco said to him before drawing his wand, giving it a flick and making the socks fold themselves together with the clothes, the books pile themselves. Draco clapped his hands and glanced at Harry whom looked at him, utterly shocked.

'You have to teach me that spell,' he told him with a grin.

'I believe all you roommates could use it,' Draco replied as he took another look around. The beds of the other boys were unmade as well and clutter was everywhere. But he didn't care about them nor there untidiness; he only cared about the green-eyed boy in front of him. 'So, should we go back to your party?' He took a step closer and placed his arms around Harry's neck. 'Or should we create our own?'

He could feel Harry's heartbeat raise at his words, the cheeky gleam he had seen earlier returning to his green eyes. The boy smirked before pressing his lips against Draco's, deepening the kiss with a clumsy move of his tongue. 'You look too good in that jumper of mine,' the boy mumbled in between kisses, already out of breath.

'I do? Then perhaps I should take it off, non?' Harry's eyes just widened as a response, kept themselves locked on Draco as he pulled the red jumper over his head and tossed it somewhere on the floor. Of course Harry had seen his bare chest before, had seen his scar, had seen him at his most vulnerable self; but this time it was different. Even though Draco had already felt a certain attraction to the boy back then, it couldn't compare to where they were now. It made him feel a bit more insecure about himself, a feeling he hadn't really felt before; the vain blond he was. But it had appeared to Draco before that Harry could make certain feelings well up that he hadn't experienced before; hadn't known existed inside him at all.

There was apparently nothing to be insecure about, as the boy devoured Draco's chest with his eyes
alone already. His warm hands found their way on Draco's hips and he pulled him closer, kissed his neck and made Draco's knees tremble slightly. Draco didn't know where this was going but he didn't care anymore, could only think about Harry and his hands and— All caught up in their intimate moment, they both hadn't heard the upcoming footsteps upon the stairs until someone cleared his throat. 'Er — Harry?'

Harry turned his back to Draco immediately, facing the owner of the voice. He held his hands on Draco's hips in a protective way while the tall blond tried to hide himself behind his smaller lover the best he could. A speck of orange in the corner of his eye was enough for Draco to know that Harry's best friend Ron had entered the room. 'Y-yeah?' Harry finally answered.

Ron didn't know where to look and decided the red carpet underneath his feet was the best choice at that moment. 'W-we were wondering where you were. Thought you'd gone to bed or something.' He scratched his head, messing up his ginger hair in a nervous manner.

Draco hid himself a bit more behind Harry's back but somehow could still feel Ron's eyes cast upon him, even though they were still inspecting the carpet in great detail. 'I— We will be down again soon,' Harry told his friend. Ron nodded and almost ran down the stairs, away from the awkward situation.

Harry let out a deep sigh as he turned around to face Draco again. The boy's hair peaked in every direction, his spectacles crooked upon his nose. The lust in his eyes had faded away as if Ron had thrown a bucket of ice cold water over him. Draco also felt a bite awkward and tried to cover his bare chest with his arms and hands, suddenly feeling that insecurity again. With flushed cheeks Harry picked up the jumper Draco had taken off only minutes ago and handed it back, perhaps in a disappointed way. 'I'm sorry,' he sighed, but Draco waved his words away. It didn't matter; of course there had been a possibility of it happening. They both had just been too stupid leave the door unlocked or choose a different moment.

"Une autre fois, un autre endroit," Draco said to Harry with a sigh.

'I have no idea what you just said but sounds good to me,' Harry replied with another sigh and Draco gave him a last kiss before descending down the stairs, joining the partying crowd again.

_There was always another time_, he told himself. _It would probably have been too soon anyway._ And the insecurity he had felt, his beauty suddenly depending on Harry's words or reactions or the _look_ in his eyes. How the boy had changed so much in such little time; changing what no-one else had ever changed before. No other boy had ever made Draco feel insecure or wanting confirmation that he was beautiful and good enough. It made him shiver, really, that someone could influence him so much. He had always been so strong, so self-centered and perhaps it was a good thing that Harry made him a little weak.

It was already after midnight when the last Gryffindors wandered off to bed, leaving a drunk on Butterbeer Dean and Ron behind upon one of the sofas. They were still chatting about Quidditch and that they missed it so much this year. Harry had joined their conversation at first but as Hermione had drooped away to bed as well, he had preferred Draco's company over that of his friends. They were laying on the rug in front of the fireplace, talking about nothing in particular. 'Do you know what you want to be after seventh-year?' Harry suddenly asked.

Draco sighed. Of course he had thought about it before, but he knew it was still a few years away and that he would have time enough to think about it. Yet, he couldn't help but always answer the same thing whenever someone asked. 'A professor, _peut-être_. Beauxbatons is like a second home to me so I wouldn't mind spending the rest of my life there.'
'What would you want to teach?' A genuine curious look, a hand upon Draco's. The contrast between Harry's tanned skin and Draco's pure white couldn't be greater.

'Charms; I've always been obsessed with learning new spells and different techniques to cast one. That's why I also learn a lot of spells without a wand, you know. *Mais ce n'est pas tout*; being a part of someone casting their first real spell is just wonderful. I remember how proud I was to produce the brightest lumos out of everyone on my first day,' he told Harry. A warmth spread through his chest, one he knew wasn't caused by the fire.

'I must admit I can believe that; you seem so much brighter a Wizard than any other fourth-year. Bet you'll do great as a charms professor,' Harry said to him. His words fed the warmth even more.

'Et vous? What do you want to be, Harry Potter?' Draco asked him.

Harry shrugged. 'I'm not sure yet, really. Maybe an auror, maybe a professional Quidditch player — I don't know. Being a professor here at Hogwarts sounds appealing too after hearing you talk.'

'You still have years to think about it, Harry. I'm sure you'll figure it out when the time's there. And whatever it will be, I'm sure you'll be *formidable*! Draco gave him a bright smile, one that Harry returned before yawning.

'Maybe I'll become a professor at Beauxbatons as well so I can be by your side the entire time,' the boy then said. Visions of Harry teaching classes in terrible French flashed in front of Draco's eyes and he couldn't help but laugh. It would be a terrible idea. 'But let's go to bed shall we? Do you want me to walk you back to the carriage?'

Harry rose and reached out his hand to pull Draco up to his feet as well. 'Non, merci. I'll be fine.'

'I was also wondering if we could meet up again tomorrow? Been wanting to surprise you with something for quite a while now,' the boy then said.

Draco shrugged. 'Bien sûr. Let's meet tomorrow morning at our usual spot by the Lake?'

With a kiss as an answer, Draco almost couldn't let go of Harry anymore. He wished every Gryffindor would just disappear so he could spend the night in Harry's warm four-poster bed, wrapped up in sheets of red with his lover dreaming by his side.

☽ *・゚✧

A surprise. Draco hated surprises. He loved surprising others but getting surprised himself, *oh Merlin no*. He wasn't only bad at waiting, he also always worried wether he would like the surprise or not. And it was just that that happened.

Draco hadn't been able to sleep all night, Harry's surprise haunting him and keeping him from his sleep. His mind kept trying to figure out what it could possibly be, running down a list of possibilities as Draco fought with his blanket and punched his pillow. Feeling extremely exhausted by the complete lack of sleep, Draco got out of bed around eight; an hour he thought Harry would be awake at. He dressed himself in some casual clothes as it was Saturday anyway, a simple jumper and trousers would do for the day. The weather was finally starting to get better again and an early spring breeze blew a few strands of hair out of his face. He almost never wore hats anymore when seeing Harry, knowing that the boy loved his long hair so much.
As he made his way towards the Lake he could already spot Harry from afar; a red colored blur in the distance. *More red than usual,* Draco thought to himself as he neared the boy. Harry was dressed from head to toe in red robes combined with brown around the arms and legs, his House's crest on his chest. Draco stopped immediately, only a few feet away from the crimson boy. But it was too late to turn around again and make a run for it; Harry had already seen him. 'Draco' the boy called out as he waved his arm cheerfully. As he came closer, wanting to meet Draco halfway, Draco himself took a few steps back. *Perhaps if I'm fast enough I can still run away from it,* he thought to himself. But Harry was faster once again. 'Where are you going?'

Harry's hand had found its way upon Draco's arm, a firm grip that Draco knew wouldn't let him go so easily. He shook his head and buried his face in his hands. 'I can't, Harry,' he said to the boy. 'You can't what?' Green eyes tried to look in his but Draco just sighed and buried his face even deeper.

'Don't act like you don't know; I can't fly!' he answered Harry, finally also answering the look of green. He had seen it from far away already; the boy's red Quidditch uniform. It had always stung him to see others in Quidditch robes he knew he would never wear. At Beauxbatons they wore ones in blue, gold, silver and white silk, and even though he had heard that the games were quite the sight, he never had gone to look at one. The girls had tried to convince him many times by many different ways, but Draco had always declined their invitations.

Harry smiled at him. 'I know. That's why I want to teach it to you.'

Draco shook his head again. He didn't want to go through the embarrassment once more. What if he would fall again? Maybe he would truly die this time. *Non, it's not a good idea,* he said to the boy. 'Can't we do something else?' He took a step closer and placed his hands on Harry's chest. A cheeky look into the boy's eyes and Draco was convinced he could make Harry forget all about Quidditch; but he was wrong.

Harry just let out a deep sigh and closed his eyes, as if to ban Draco out of his view. His determination was reaching a whole new level, apparently, as he clenched his hands around Draco's wrists. 'You always tell me you're like a butterfly, Draco. Well, butterflies should be able to fly, don't you think? Come on!' He dragged the French with him towards the pitch, dooming up in the distance. Draco swallowed at the sight of the three goal posts, high in the air like moons of steel. House colored towers surrounded it and even though Draco had always been interested in getting to know every little detail about Hogwarts and its Houses, he would skip the Quidditch pitch easily if he could. At least, if it involved any flying. But Harry's grip was tight and as much as Draco tried to pull himself away; Harry just wouldn’t let go.

The centre of the field of grass was marked with a white circle and the place where Draco was finally released. After being told to stay there, Harry ran to the side where two brooms were neatly waiting to be picked up, ready to fly. Draco's stomach turned around at the sight of the brooms; two sticks of death with a few branches. As Harry neared with them, he even felt slightly dizzy and took a step back. Draco could hear his heart beat in his ears as he remembered his fall again. 'I really can't, Harry,' he said once more to the boy. The Quidditch pitch was spinning in front of his eyes as if he was on a rocky boat, trying to keep it steady.

Harry let out a deep sigh and dropped the brooms, took Draco's face in his hands. Harry's hands felt soft yet rough at the same time; soft fingertips but with rough spots from all the flying the boy did. 'Yes, you can. And I'm here for you; I won't let you fall again,' he soothed him. Draco still could feel the world spin but nodded. Where that nod came form, he had no idea though. 'Now,' Harry
said as he picked up the brooms again and handed one to Draco. The wood felt cold in his sweaty hands. 'Just follow what I do, alright?'

Draco gave Harry another nod and a weak smile as he swung his leg over the broom, just as Harry had done. The boy then explained to him how he should hold his hands, place his feet and bend his body according to the direction of the wind. But even though Harry was trying so hard, Draco's courage was slowly fading away with every word the boy said. His hands were sweating even more, the wood sliding underneath his palms. He remembered the first and last time he had been standing in that position; listening to the words his flying instructor had to say. It was as if Draco's magic had exploded from his hands, making the broom go up against his will. Reliving that memory and suddenly afraid it would happen again, Draco dropped the broom and shook his head as he took a few steps away from it. 'Je ne peux pas le faire,' he said to Harry even though he knew the boy wouldn't understand a word of it.

But Draco's panicked reaction was enough for Harry to understand. 'Draco, listen to me! It'll be alright!'

'Non! It will not! I'll fall again and — and break something or die!' He could feel his eyes sting a little; tears not so far away anymore. Merlin, why did he have to be so weak? Eyes casted away from Harry he stared up to the Quidditch posts. They towered above his head like giant monsters and it frightened him even more.

A hand was placed upon his shoulder and shortly after soft lips were pressed against his cheek. 'Come on now. I even dressed up in my full uniform especially for you,' Harry said to him, smiling a bit. Draco couldn't help himself but smile weakly as well. 'We could also fly together, if you want? On the same broom, that is.'

Draco turned himself towards the boy. 'On the same broom?' Harry nodded. 'Is that even possible?'

The boy shrugged and picked up his broom again. 'Want to try?' Harry swung his leg over the wood as if it was the most normal thing in the world and reached out his hand. Draco hesitantly took it and stood behind Harry. 'Hold on tight!' The boy said to him and before Draco could even react or tell him to wait, Harry took off with great speed.

Arms wrapped around Harry's waist with dear life, Draco closed his eyes and buried his face in the boy's Quidditch uniform. He didn't want to open them and see just how high they were already. Butterflies he could normally only feel when his eyes were cast upon Harry now fluttered inside his stomach and Draco tightened his grip around the boy even more. Harry winced because of it but chuckled as well. The feeling of the wind as it blew through his hair felt quite pleasant but still Draco could hear a little voice say that he would fall, fall, fall.

'You're not looking, are you?' Harry then shouted at him. The boy sounded far away even though Draco knew he couldn't be closer. 'Open you eyes! Look at the beautiful scenery of Hogwarts!'

'I can't,' Draco shouted back. He could almost taste the wind, smell the trees but still his eyes refused to open themselves.

'Have it your way!' Before Draco could figure out what those words meant, Harry took a leap downwards. Panic welled up in Draco's chest, the butterflies wanting to escape by the overly amount of adrenaline. And he had to open his eyes; he had to witness his second fall. But he didn't fall, nor did Harry. They were flying only inches above the Lake, the tips of Harry's shoes touching the water and making small waves. Draco could see his own reflection, paler than ever and clamped around his lover's body. He took a peak over Harry's shoulder as Harry went higher again, flew over trees and even through one of the goal posts.
It felt amazing to fly, Draco then realized. And even more amazing to do so with Harry. The view on the water and mountains around Hogwarts was absolutely stunning from above. Mesmerizing. The trees were coloring again, the sun sneaking between the clouds. He felt free and alive. As if he hadn't lived before. Harry didn't say another word to him nor did Draco; they both somehow knew that it was alright and that they were both enjoying it greatly.

They stayed up in the sky for about an hour, landing with aching muscles. As their feet touched the grassy ground of the Quidditch pitch again, Draco threw himself in Harry's arms and made the boy stumble. Together they fell upon the soft grass, eyes locked and smiles both wide and bright. He pressed his lips against Harry's and felt the warmth he had lost in the cold air slowly return to his body again. 'I want to try it by myself now,' he then said to the boy. Harry frowned first before smiling and nodding his head.

Enthusiasm flowing through his body, Draco got back up to his feet and ran over to the other broom they had deserted earlier. Leg swung over he tightened his hands around the wood a little more. 'You sure about this?' Harry asked, getting into the right position for take-off as well. The boy looked a little worried but Draco could feel his shared enthusiasm radiate from his presence.

'Oui.' He could feel his magic rush through his body as he launched himself in the air, higher and higher. The same feeling of freedom he had felt before filled his heart and lungs, maybe even greater. The wind blew through his hair and he felt it sting against his porcelain cheeks. Clouds in the shape of every creature imaginable hung above his head, encouraging him as they silently passed by. Draco then looked over his shoulder to smile at Harry, smile at the boy that gave him the confidence and the bravery to fly again. Harry looked proud, smiling as well -- but that same smile suddenly faded away, followed by a finger pointing in Draco's direction. Grey eyes returned to see where he was going, spotting one of the the giant goal posts doom up only a few feet away. Draco's heart jumped as he neared the steel structure with a speed too high and his own frozen body clamped to that speed. As he panicked, he tried to do at least something, tried to go through the goal post instead of bumping against the thick steel ring. To his surprise he managed to avoid most of it but felt the end of his broom, just a few bristles, hit the steel. It was enough to throw him off again, off the thing he hated and feared the most.

It all went so fast, the fall, just like it had done the first time. As he fell he looked up into the terrified eyes of Harry, already diving down his way to catch up with the blond. But Draco fell so fast and all the brave Gryffindor boy could think of was to just jump the last few feet as well, throw his arms around the boy and break his fall. And then everything suddenly went black. Draco could still hear the sound of rustling leafs but he couldn't see the trees anymore. At least, for a few minutes. His vision came back sooner than he had thought it would, leaving a terrible headache behind. He noticed he was panting, exhaustion kicking in again and spreading through his body like wildfire. Draco lifted his head a little and saw that Harry's arm was still tightly wrapped around his chest, still protecting him from getting hurt. 

Harry sighed deeply and gave Draco a nod, one that caused him to squint his eyes. Probably also
has a headache. 'I'm fine — at least I think I am. My head hurts a little,' he replied.

'That seems normal as you fell quite high to safe an idiot like me, non?' Draco said to him, scowling at himself being so stupid.

'You're not an idiot.' Harry's voice was just as hoarse as Draco's and together they sounded like an old couple. And old, tired couple that had just survived a fall from Merlin knows how high. A strand of hair got pushed out of his eyes as a weak smile on Harry's lips became more visible. 'You should just stop looking at me all the time; it makes you miss certain things easily.' Draco grinned as he knew the boy's words were true; he had experienced it many times before that he had missed out on a lot of small details he would normally always notice. Whenever Harry was around, it seemed as if his mind only wanted to be occupied with the boy and with no-one or nothing else beside him.

'But I love looking at you, mon lion.' With closed eyes Harry chuckled of embarrassment. He lifted his head to lay it down on Draco's chest, ignoring the headache that was probably beating its way out of his skull. Normally Draco would have made a comment on getting blood on his cashmere jumper but it didn't matter at that moment; Harry had just saved his life in some way and it made him feel like the boy could do or ask him anything and Draco would grant his wishes without hesitation.

'The final task is nearing,' Harry then said. Nervosity was hearable in his voice. Fear. But a certain determination as well. 'And this time there's no clue.'

Draco sighed at his words. He had also thought about the final task many times but had no idea what it could be. Not even Fleur or Madame Maxime seemed to know what it was the Champions had to face last. They all knew it would be something grand; something that would challenge them one last time. A great challenge that would only be succeeded by a true Champion. Why Harry had suddenly decided to talk about it, right after their accident, Draco didn't know. But he knew that if he didn't answer, Harry would lift up his head and stare an answer out of Draco’s tired eyes. 'It'll be fine. You don't have to win, just — survive,' Draco told him.

'Wouldn't you want me to win?'

'Of course I want you to win, Harry! But I rather love a loser than un sorcier mort.'

'And what does that mean?'

'A dead wizard.'

A nudge in his side followed. 'Don't say that; no-one will die.'

'Bien, if you say so. Still, I want you to be careful.'

'I will, my angel butterfly love.'

Draco grinned at his words and stroke Harry's hair. 'Let's go back inside; get someone to look at that head of yours.'

'Why? You dislike my face that much?'

'Croyez-moi, something to fix your face still has to be invented.'

Harry nudged him in his side again and lifted himself off the blond, squinting his eyes out of pain once again but not letting it get in the way of hitting Draco fully on his stomach as if the pain was
his fault as well. Maybe it kind of was. 'You're unbelievable.'

The hit was hard enough to make Draco grab ahold of his middle with both arms, throwing Harry a glare. 'Tourmenteur!' Harry just smirked at the word he couldn't understand and got up to his feet, wobbling as he tried to steady himself.

Together they walked back to the castle, Harry slightly limping and Draco supporting him with the zero muscles he possessed. It took them three times longer than normal and Draco could feel every second creep away, every eye of every passing student casted in their direction. Upon arriving at the infirmary, they nearly ran into Harry's friends. Ron and Hermione were just leaving the room, Ron with a bandage stuck to his cheek. 'What happened to you?' they called out in unison at the sight of their friend.

Harry glanced over at Draco before answering them. 'Well, we went flying and Draco fell so I—'

'You had to save him again?' Ron interrupted him.

Hermione pushed him against his shoulder. 'What else should he have done? Let him die? You're unbelievable, Ron!' she said to the sulking fire next to her. It made Draco grin, realizing that the word unbelievable seemed to be a much better word to describe the house of Gryffindor with than brave or daring. Or perhaps it was just a nice addition to those words.

'What happened to you, actually?' Harry asked his friend, tone a little vile because of his earlier words.

Ron opened his mouth but Hermione shut him with a single glare. 'Viktor and I were taking a walk, just chatting about school. And then suddenly Ronald Weasley over here fell down from a tree!' Hermione crossed her arms while keeping a glare of death casted upon the ginger-haired boy.

'You were spying on her?' Draco asked Ron but he looked away, arms crossed as well.

Hermione answered his question with a nod. 'And it wasn't even the first time,' she turned herself to Ron again. 'Do you really think I won't notice you when I can see a speck of orange in the corner of my eye everywhere I go? You, hiding in the bushes. You, climbing up trees. You—'

'You dating Viktor Krum! Harry's rival!' Ron suddenly shouted at her. Draco and Harry both took a step back, surprised by his loud voice but Hermione didn't even flinch.

'We are not dating, Ron. Viktor is just a good friend of mine; one with a brain, at least.' With those words said she stormed away, chin held up high like Draco knew he would do in a similar situation as well. He admired her for handling arguments so perfectly, with the right words said before elegantly storming off. She was a fierce girl that would've definitely been an amazing Beauxbatons student.

Ron had left a few seconds later as well, still angry at Hermione or himself; whoever he felt was the problem of it all. And Harry had finally received the help that he had needed. Madame Pomfrey, the nurse, had taken care of the wound on his head and had told him his ankle was fractured. 'Rest a lot, my boy and everything will be alright again,' she had advised him before they had left.

*Another cut beside his famous scar makes Harry look a little different than himself,* Draco thought as he observed the boy's face. He was walking the boy back to the Gryffindor common room, allowing him the rest the nurse had demanded him to take. A simple spell had fixed his glasses again, his green eyes shining brightly behind them. Harry still limped with every step he took but
he didn't need Draco's support anymore, holding his hand seemed to be enough. It wasn't as if Draco had been *that* great of a support in the first place; he simply wasn't strong enough to help the boy. A few kisses were shared before Draco helped him crawl through the portrait hole, into the equally loving arms of his friends. He could see Seamus and Dean hurrying themselves over to Harry to help him, as well as a boy he had never seen before. A funny looking plant he held in his hands with great care but was put aside immediately as he noticed his hurt friend. How wonderful they were, Harry's friends; caring for him like Draco knew the girls cared for him as well. He waved at them and they waved back before guiding Harry to one of the sofas, pushing a first year off of it to make room. Yes, Draco could definitely be friends with those Gryffindors.

Chapter End Notes

This was quite a hard chapter to write as it's an -- in between -- chapter before the final task! I just wanted to write something a bit cute and light-hearted but still interesting enough! Hope you enjoy it and get ready for the next chapter because it's going to be quite the thing *hint* prepare yourselves.

Thanks for all the kudos and always be free to comment! :)
Every passing day had seemed like a dream to Harry. A dream he had been able to live with Draco by his side. They had done almost everything together in need to feed a hunger for each other that didn't seem to get lessened by anything but each other's presence.

Draco had introduced him to his friends, the girls from Beauxbatons, and they had been the sweetest angels he had ever met. They had embraced Harry into their little blue family as soon as he had entered the carriage, expecting an awkward atmosphere but getting pulled onto one of the sofas right away. Of course they had asked him a million questions and Harry had replied with a million of stuttering answers, but they approved of him almost immediately and seemed to be just as caring for Draco as Draco was for them. Blue had mixed with red as Draco had joined Harry at the Gryffindor table; now also calling Harry's friends his. They all seemed to love him and enjoy his snide remarks and eye-rolls the most of all. Even some of the Beauxbatons girls had wandered off to the Gryffindor after a while, leaving the Ravenclaws in a fool mood because of the change. But everyone had loved having the French girls at their table; especially the boys.

Harry had never known he needed someone like Draco in his life, someone to truly love. Even though he had always loved Ron and Hermione, the way he loved Draco was a whole different thing. He could tell the boy everything about his life, about his feelings, about his fears. He had told him everything about Voldemort and his past experiences; about how he was afraid the monster would return. Draco hadn't really commented on any of it, seeming to be afraid of the Dark Wizard without telling Harry why. And Harry hadn't dared to push the subject further.

They had gone flying a few more times after the almost-accident; Draco not wanting to give up his newly found passion after the almost-fall. One of his rules however was that Harry had to fly with him every single time, to keep an eye on him and catch him must he fall again. But Draco hadn't
fallen anymore, his imaginary butterfly wings finally working to perfection. The second scar from the *almost*-accident had faded away quite fast, leaving the thinnest red line that was almost invisible if not studied from up close. Draco loved it and often traced it with the tip of his long, pale fingers and told Harry what a savior he was. It had done nothing more but make Harry blush.

A strange thing had happened in March when they had wanted to go flying again; the Quidditch pitch had suddenly become 'unreachable'. They had marched towards it with their brooms at hand but had found their own feet turning around again as soon as they had crossed an invisible line. A kind of *urge* it had been to go fly somewhere else, leave the Quidditch pitch alone. Harry hadn't thought much of it; perhaps they had become bored of flying above the pitch without even realizing it. Draco on the other hand had a suspicion of his own that there was something wrong, that there was a certain spell that was keeping them away. In April the smart Wizard had finally presented a theory to Harry that it might have something to do with the final task.

But as the final task was nearing, the end of the school year therefore as well. Both boys had become nervous when the first of May had arrived; only two more months were left in each other's company. They had started to make plans, exchanged addresses with the promise of a letter every single week -- but Harry knew it wouldn't be the same as having Draco physically by his side. Not to mention that the Dursleys probably weren't going to be very keen on receiving an owl at their nephew's bedroom window every week; Hedwig was already an eyesore to them and a disgrace to their neighborhood. As they had laid under a tree together, enjoying the warm breezes of May, Draco had invited Harry to come over to his house in France during the summer. Getting his hands on an international Portkey was apparently something Draco could arrange easily; he was wealthy enough and had the right connections to obtain one. Harry had accepted the offer without hesitation and asked Draco detailed descriptions of what France was like almost daily. He knew Draco once mentioned that he lived in a cold and quite scary Manor, somewhere he hated to be — but Draco had assured him they weren't staying at the Manor during the summer holidays but would exchange the macabre structure for a cozy house in France. Knowing those facts, Harry had dreamt of spending his summer with Draco at the French countryside almost every single night.

There had been nightmares as well though; terrible ones. Harry would wake up, sweating and panting as he reached for his scar and placed cool fingers upon the burning flesh. The few times he had woken that way with Draco by his side, he had been helped back into a peaceful sleep by the French' soothing words — but times when he had woken up alone, he hadn't dared to go back to sleep; afraid he would face the darkness of a place that looked like a graveyard again. The nightmares had started the summer before, but hadn't occurred a lot in the first half of the school year. With the final task nearing however, the nightmares seemed to near as well, occur more often and haunt him with visions of snakes, green light and an increasing fear of Voldemort.

It was evening and time for the final task. The 24th of June it was precisely and Harry had sneaked Draco into the Gryffindor common room to help him prepare. Dressed in red and black, Harry turned himself every possible way in front of his mirror. 'How do I look,' he asked Draco whom was standing beside him. His long hair was tied up in a low ponytail, draping over his right shoulder. The French himself was dressed in what could be the perfect outfit to go horseback-
riding; creme colored trousers tucked in boots and a blue vest with six shiny silver buttons. As Harry took a glance at himself again, he noticed how clumsy and disheveled he looked compared to his boyfriend.

‘Like a nervous fourth-year that was forced into a Tournament of Death,’ was Draco’s reply. The boy sighed deeply and kept glancing at his time-piece, afraid they would run late even though they still had more than an hour left.

Harry sighed as well as he turned himself around again, staring at the single star and his last name upon his back. He glanced back at Draco, still trying to get a decent opinion but the boy seemed lost in his thoughts. ‘Come on, Draco. Please tell me how I look, will you? You’re the fashion king after all.’

A grin from the blond followed. ‘Perhaps the shirt is a bit—’

‘A bit what?’

‘Gryffindor-ish?’

‘But that’s good, isn’t it?’ Harry gave himself another head-to-toe look, unsure. It looked as if the designer hadn’t been able to decide whether to color the shirt red or black and had ended up with going for both.

‘Harry, please. You’re supposed to wear your House’s colors and the outfit was especially designed for you. You look totally fine,’ Draco soothed him.

But Harry didn’t give up. ‘Just fine or like a good fine?’

Draco rolled his eyes and snuck his arms around Harry’s middle, his tall figure towering behind him as Harry glanced at their reflection in the mirror. ‘A fine that makes me want to take it off again?’ A kiss got pressed in the crook of his neck while Draco’s arms wrapped around him even tighter.

‘Sounds like I look good,’ Harry said with a content smile.

Draco snorted and let go. ‘Now don’t start exaggerating, mon amour.’ A bit disappointed Harry watched how he left the dormitory, descending the stairs to join his friends with getting all excited about the final task.

Harry felt more nervous than before now that Draco was gone, and stared into the mirror again. He could’ve looked worse, that’s true; and since when did he care about what he looked like anyway? Probably when you started dating Draco and you had to live up to his perfect self, a voice in his head told him. Harry nodded as he kept his eyes locked on his reflection. How much he wished at that moment that is wasn’t just a normal mirror but that of Erised; showing him his parents one more time to encourage him. If only their hands could be put upon his shoulder again, whispering loving words into his ears — but the mirror stayed the same, only showing the reflection of a lost boy.

A side-glance of silver eyes, a grin upon his lips. They were indeed walking towards the Quidditch
pitch, and that meant that Draco’s theory had been right all along. A crescent-shaped tribune was positioned in front of hedges as tall as a house, hiding something behind it. House flags colored the different sections and Gryffindors cheered the loudest of all when Harry arrived. A few students from each school had gathered around at the front of the tribune and were banging drums, blowing trumpets and just enjoying themselves. Professors were chatting while waiting for the task to begin, expressions more serious than usual upon their faces; it was and always had been a Tournament between schools in the first place.

The blond beside him stopped in his pace and faced Harry. 'Bonne chance, mon lion,' he said and kissed him on his forehead. He stroked a few stands of hair out of Harry's eyes and gave him a beautiful smile; one that made Harry's knees go weak. Draco walked away as if fluttering, throwing another encouraging glance over his shoulder and hurrying himself to a nervous looking Fleur. She was dressed in blue, of course, and seemed to sigh out of relief at the sight of Draco. Her thin arms wrapped themselves around the tall blond and a feeling of jealousy hit Harry hard even though he knew there was nothing to worry about — just the sight of someone else hugging his Draco was enough to make him go green.

A speck of orange and brown came into view as his best friends made their way to him; both hugging him as well. See, nothing weird about hugging someone else than one’s lover. 'Good luck, Harry,' Hermione told him with a nervous smile. Of course she was worried about him, she always was.

'Yeah mate, good luck. I'm sure you'll win,' Ron then said. Two lines of red were painted upon his cheeks and he had his Gryffindor scarf wrapped around his neck, even though it wasn't really the right weather anymore.

They discussed what the final task could be for a moment while studying the tall hedges; something was hiding behind them and Harry had a feeling in his stomach that he already knew what exactly. Hermione gave him a glance with her eyes that seemed to hold a theory of her own as well, but Ron's eyes were just blank and full of excitement; ready to know whether his best friend would become the winning Champion or not. It was funny how things had turned around so greatly after the first task, the pain of having no-one as a friend still stinging his heart.

Throwing a glance at his watch, Harry noticed it was almost time and waved off his friends, watched them sit in between the other cheering Gryffindors. Yellow banners with Cedric's name were covering most part of the Hufflepuff section and they seemed to have had the same idea with the paint, all their faces yellow as they cheered for their own House's Champion. Cedric himself was talking to Cho, a smile upon his face as if he wasn't nervous at all. His father was also by his side, a hand on his shoulder as he looked at his son with loving eyes. And for the second time that evening, Harry was hit with a feeling of jealousy.

The students from Durmstrang were one big group of burgundy and were more modest in their cheering, just like the girls from Beauxbatons. They seemed a bit more reserved as they awaited the task's start, looking around with a hawk's eyes and giving Harry glares as if to eliminate him already.

It was a maze, exactly what Harry had thought it would be. He had entered it at the same time as Cedric, ran as fast as he could while hearing the rustling of the hedges as the walls of green
enclosed behind his back. He had run because he knew it would only take a few minutes for Krum and Fleur to join the adventure as well and he wanted to use his extra time to its full advantage. *Lost*, he had been at first but his determination to win had been stronger; a determination he hadn't felt before. He had kept himself to surviving only, to what Draco had wished he would do. But as he ran through the maze, turned corners and felt the magic and tension of the Tournament surround him, he had felt as if winning was only enough.

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As more walls of green had followed, so did creatures that he feared and tested him. He had beat them all in their own game of spells and quizzes, had kept on running and running. Running so fast that after a while he hadn't even looked at his feet anymore, which eventually had caused him to trip over something. That something had been Fleur getting strangled by the evil roots of the hedges, slowly taking her away into their green. Her body had been as stiff as if someone had casted a stunning spell upon her, but there had been no-one in sight to hold responsible. He knew he had to help her as she was Draco's friend and if he wouldn't; Draco would never forgive him. Without hesitation Harry had cast the red emergency sparks to the sky, watched them explode above the maze like firework.

And so he ran on again, faced more fears, faced more obstacles. And saved more Champions. Cedric Diggory had been the strangled one that time, but not by evil roots; by the strong hands of Viktor Krum. The Durmstrang boy's eyes had been as white as porcelain, clearly possessed, as he had made Cedric's face turn an unusual color by his strong grip. There also hadn't been any hesitation from Harry to help Cedric and he casted a stunning curse on Krum which saved the Hufflepuff's life; saved his opportunity to win the Tournament.

A bright blue light had shone their way as he and Cedric faced a dead end of the maze; the Triwizard Cup at its end. And they had played it fair by taking off, reaching out their hands and taking ahold of the Cup at the same time. *Winning* at the same time. At least, so they thought. It had sent them spinning, flying, moving to another place like Harry knew only a Portkey could do.

Scared. Frightened. All emotions of that range surrounded Harry's heart as he and Cedric landed upon the grounds of the most macabre graveyard he had ever seen. Tombstones with demonic statues were spread across the land, crows gathering around and flapping their wings in the moonlight. The ground seemed pitch black like the sky above his head and in the midst of it all a large, black cauldron was boiling on a roaring fire. And it was then that Harry realized he had seen that very graveyard before; it was the one from his nightmares.

He heard voices whispering and footsteps nearing and turned himself to Cedric. 'We have to go,' he shouted at him, crawling up to his feet again as he searched for the Cup. 'Where is the cup?'

Cedric seemed frozen to the ground as his eyes weren't searching like Harry's but staring at something behind the boy's back. Hesitant and even afraid, Harry turned around to stare into the rat-like face of Peter Pettigrew; a man he knew all too well. Anger boiled up inside of him as Pettigrew dared to smirk, drew his wand and pointed it in Cedric's direction. And Harry wasn't able to save Cedric again; the spare got killed by Voldemort's orders. A single flash of green and he was gone, his soul leaving his body and his eyes turning the same porcelain haze he had seen on Krum before. The only difference was that Cedric wasn't possessed; he was *dead*.

Harry's mind exploded as another casted spell held him hostage against one of the statues; the
statue of Voldemort's father. His scar was burning as if on fire as Pettigrew performed the rituals of Voldemort's rebirth. Bone, flesh and blood.

The snake-like Wizard had doomed up in front of his eyes, pale as the moonlight and as monstrous as Harry had imagined him to be. Harry hadn't been able to do anything but try to remain calm; something he had never been very good at. He tried to figure out a plan, tried to figure out a way to escape from Voldemort and the graveyard all together; but fear and panic were taking over his brain and made him unable to think.

Voldemort's followers got summoned, his precious Death Eaters, and Harry watched how they arrived like smoke, clouds of black drifting in every direction. As they stood in a perfect circle around their returned master, Harry noticed the empty gaps between a few of them; not everyone had shown up apparently. It was a small victory in his head but a great disappointment in that of Voldemort. Furious he pulled off the masks of his followers and revealed their faces one by one, calling out their names in fury. Harry heard names he recognized and names he had never heard of before; noting them down in his mind just like their faces.

Voldemort's long fingers then reached out to pull the mask off his last follower; a man with long platinum hair, locks with the same silvery shine as those of a boy he knew very well. Harry's heart stopped beating as the name Malfoy left Voldemort's lips in a snake-like hissing, and it didn't resume its pace as the exact resemblance of Draco's face doomed up behind the man's mask. It could have been Draco but the age lines on the man's face betrayed him for being older, leaving only one conclusion; it had to be Draco's father, Lucius Malfoy.

A battle won. He had escaped from Voldemort with a dead body in his arms. Cheers were surrounding him as he returned to the grassy field in front of the maze. His knees hit the ground as he fell on top of Cedric’s body, clamped himself to it with dear life. Music burst around him and overpowered his own screaming and sobbing. His face felt wet and sticky as he pulled Cedric even closer to him, unwilling to let go.

No-one seemed to be noticing that something was wrong. The seconds of cheers felt like minutes; painful stabs into Harry's heart as he felt like they were cheering for the poor Hufflepuff's dead. Someone then finally noticed, a voice he recognized brought the crowd to a halt. He knew it had been Draco's voice as well as he knew it were his hurrying feet that were making a way towards him. But it wasn't Draco he saw appear in the corner of his eye; it was Cedric's father that collapsed at the sight of his dead son.

Harry then felt Draco's long fingers clench themselves around his jumper as he tried to drag him away, soothing him with words in a language Harry simply couldn't understand. Let me go, he shouted but nothing but sobs left his mouth. He pushed the blond away from him, suddenly more angry than sad because of what he had discovered. Draco's voice as well as he knew it were his hurrying feet that were making a way towards him. But it wasn't Draco he saw appear in the corner of his eye; it was Cedric's father that collapsed at the sight of his dead son.

He then got dragged away. Away from Cedric. Away from Draco. Away from everyone and
everything. And he finally found his voice again, shouted as loudly as he could; 'Voldemort is back!' The person who was dragging him away stopped and all the eyes of the crowd were pointed at him, gone quiet in disbelief. 'He's alive!'

Chapter End Notes

Alright, so this chapter is a little bit shorter because I just really wanted to write it from Harry's perspective but the following events should be written from Draco's (in my opinion). And we all know what happens during the final task and at the graveyard and what not so I mainly focused on Cedric's death and Draco's father.

Hope you liked it, though, and get ready for some angst *hint*. 
Draco

There had to be something wrong. Something very wrong. Draco had known it from the moment Harry had appeared in front of them, the Triwizard cup deserted next to him and arms wrapped around Cedric's body. It hadn't been normal, the way Cedric's body hung in Harry's arms like a puppet. The music and the cheering had been loud but still Draco had heard Harry crying, spotted his tears from afar. And he had jumped off his seat, gathered all the energy he had left inside his body. 'Stop!' he had shouted, and it had been louder a sound than he had ever thought of being able to produce. Tears had welled up in his eyes as he had ran towards Harry, others following now that they had realized what had been going on.

Draco had almost tripped over Cedric's father's collapsed body on his way to Harry, a knife going through his heart at the sight. He had never seen Harry like that before; so sad, so angrily sad. As Draco had fallen to his knees next to the boy, he had tried to pull him away from Cedric — but he had kept shaking his head, kept telling him no. Draco had tried to soothe him, had tried to convince him to let go and that everything would be alright; but little had he known that all his words had been in French, that he had forgotten their English translations by the panicking of his soul.

And then he had tried to wrap his arms around Harry instead, hold him close to try and calm him down, but it had made the boy angry. Harry had pushed him away, made him stumble into the arms of his friends. A glance at Hermione and Ron and they had seemed to be equally confused. Harry didn't only seem sad anymore; he had become enraged. And Draco couldn't help but feel that it was because of him.

Dumbledore had been the only one able to pull him away, drag him back towards the castle and help him to calm down, professors by his side helping to control the grieving boy. And Draco's feet had followed them without hesitation, ran behind his sorrowful lover to protect him. But the vile look in Harry's green eyes that the boy had thrown in his direction, had been a look Draco had
never received from him before. It had stopped his feet immediately, froze him to the spot and had made him unable to move any further. It had been a look of pure **hate**, a look cast upon **him** and not on anyone else. Draco's heart had filled with fear as he stood there, all alone. Not only for the fear of losing Harry but also for the fear of Voldemort's return.


Three days after the Tournament, everything was still a chaotic mess; no lessons were given, students locked themselves up in their common rooms and Hogwarts seemed close to deserted. One of the only students still running around was Draco, hurrying himself through hallways to try and find Harry. He hadn't seen him ever since the night of the last task, the night Cedric had died, the night Voldemort had returned. Draco had tried many options like asking the Fat Lady for entry to the Gryffindor common room or even waiting in front of Dumbledore's office for hours on end. The Headmaster had offered him a cup of tea out of pity but hadn't known where Harry had been either. Harry was nowhere and everywhere at the same time. Draco could see glimpses of red or the reflection of spectacles' glasses but there was no Harry; there was no lover anymore.

Draco couldn't help but think that Harry was mad at him for **some** reason and was avoiding him because of it. The way Hermione and Ron seemed to avoid him as well made it even more suspicious. But Draco eventually got ahold of the pair leaving the Great Hall after dinner, a dinner they hadn't attended the nights before. Draco himself hadn't had any meal in the Great Hall himself either, spent all his time searching for Harry instead. He stopped the curly girl and ginger boy in their pace, catching glimpses of surprise in their eyes. 'Where's Harry?' Draco asked straight away.

'Harry's busy,' Hermione answered him, not daring to look him in the eyes anymore.

They both knew it was an excuse, a lie; nobody was busy the last week of school. Especially not when all exams and lessons had been canceled. But Ron quickly waved the lie away and replaced it with the truth. 'He doesn't want to see nor talk to you anymore, Draco! Neither do we!'

The duo had left right that moment, leaving Draco behind in even more confusion than before. At least he now knew his suspicions had been right; Harry didn't want to be found. But **why**? The fact that he didn't know the reason **why** Harry was so angry at him hurt him more than anything else. It wasn't as if Draco had killed Cedric or brought Voldemort back to life himself — right?

Non of the girls seemed to understand either, but they didn't like talking about the Tournament anymore. Cedric's death had shocked them all, especially Fleur. Beside from mourning her fellow Champion's death, she also remained in shock from being close to getting murdered by an evil plant.

Therefore it was the third day in a row that Draco roamed the hallways of Hogwarts in search of Harry. *The boy can't hide forever*, Draco kept reminding himself. And he was right as he saw a raven haired boy walk away from him a bit further down the hallway, clearly in a hurry and trying to avoid someone. Draco sprinted his way towards him, his heart beating fast in his chest as he grabbed Harry by his shoulder and turned him around. Emeralds of confusion and hate looked straight into his eyes. 'Leave me alone, Draco,' Harry told him, ready to turn around again.

'Just tell me **why**, Harry! Tell me why you don't talk to me anymore,' Draco demanded. 'You're just ignoring me like you don't know me!' Draco was getting more furious by the second, and perhaps more sad at the same time as well.
'Well, maybe because that's true; I don't know you,' Harry replied.

'What do you mean? Of course you know me, we have been together for months now!'

'Then why are you keeping secrets from me?' Harry's face had taken a crimson color, as if he was on the verge of bursting.

'Secrets? What secrets?' Draco asked, genuinely confused.

Harry took a step forward, throwing his hands up in the air as if it was obvious. 'Oh, I don't know — maybe the fact that your father is a Death Eater,' he shouted.

A stab went right through Draco's heart, through every part of his body, really. He could feel how his knees wanted to give in as all pieces suddenly fell into place. A well-kept secret, it indeed had been. So well-kept he had even forgotten about it himself. 'How do you—'

'How I know?' Harry interrupted. 'While I was held hostage by a fucking statue next to the dead body of Cedric, I heard something very clearly. I heard Voldemort say your father's name, your name; Malfoy. How do you think it made me feel to hear it out of that monster's mouth?'

Draco had never seen Harry so furious before and it made him tremble slightly, suddenly feeling scared of the boy.

'Harry, I—' he began, but Harry didn't even give him time to explain a thing.

'And that's not all — no, it was not only the name that shocked me but also that it was said to the perfect resemblance of you!' Harry had taken a step closer to Draco, his index finger poking into his chest. With each word followed a painful poke full of hate. 'You're just like your father, Draco; the same pale face, the same long hair, the same—'

'I'm nothing like my father!' Draco interrupted him, now shouting as well. He slammed Harry's hand away from his chest as he looked into his enraged green eyes. 'No? It otherwise looks a lot like you're trying to be him!'

Harry's words hit Draco hard. He had always hated his father's dark past. How his mother had tried to hide it, how they had to flee to a whole different country to hide from it. But there was no hiding; and it had all been his father's fault. How would he ever idolize a man that had doomed his own family's future? 'I would never want to be him,' he said to Harry, tears suddenly welling up in his eyes. 'I want to be on the good side. On your side, Harry!'

But there was no pity in the boy's emerald eyes, only more fury. 'You can't, Draco! Your father is a Death Eater so it'll only be natural for you to become one as well!'

Draco felt like a child as he stamped with one of his feet, his anger trying to burst out of his body as well as his tears. 'I am not my father! And I'll never, ever would want to be him!' Draco's voice was starting to tremble and he could feel the salt of his unshed tears sting behind his eyes.

'Then why do you look so much like him, why do you hide his secrets?' Harry's poking finger had returned and this time Draco didn't push his hand away but took it in his. If anger wasn't helping, then maybe love could. If only Harry would be able to feel the truth, he thought as he held onto Harry's rough hands with all the power he had left.

'Because I-I didn't dare to tell them to you, Harry. I knew you would react like t-this,' Draco stammered and felt the first tear run down his cheek — but Harry didn't want any of it, pulled his
hands easily out of Draco's as he had always been way stronger. To Draco it felt like he pulled away his love from him, declared that he could never love a boy that held on to such dark secrets. It also hurt him that Harry didn't believe his words because, hadn't Draco believed his when everyone had told him he had put his own name in the Goblet of Fire?

'Of course I would react this way! Voldemort killed my parents, Draco. And you're defending a man that was part of it.' Harry looked away for just a second but it was enough for Draco to know he didn't even dare to look at him anymore — because he had become disgusted of him. Disgusted because he resembled the man that had killed his parents and therefore had killed his future.

The level of desperation in Draco's body reached new heights; he couldn't have Harry feel that way about him. He couldn't have him feel angry or disgusted of him. An idea then struck his mind, one that he, if he could, would want to bury away deeply in his soul and never have to bring out to the surface. But he knew that it was the only way he would shock Harry enough to make him realize that he was nothing like his father; that he was nothing like the man Harry was so disgusted of. 'You want me to prove I'm not like him?' Draco asked. 'Do you really want me do that?'

His grey eyes had become thunderstorms caught in a heavy rain and Harry's answered with a green look of despise. 'Come on then! I would love to see you try!' The boy shouted at him. He crossed his arms and awaited Draco's next move, one he wouldn't expect. One he would have never wanted.

It had taken every bit of courage for Draco to do it, to set his mind to do it. But he knew there was nothing else that would convince Harry that he was still the boy he used to love so much; that he should still love. A voice in his head kept telling him it was a bad idea, an idea he would regret — but Draco waved his thoughts away and grabbed his wand. He untied his hair and pulled the locks into a horizontal line. He felt his hands as well as his lips tremble terribly as he placed the tip of his wand against the point where one would make a ponytail. He paused to take a look in Harry's eyes and then whispered diffindo; the cutting spell. He lowered his hand, long locks of silver now clutched in his fist and he stared at them with eyes as large as fish bowls, in disbelief of what he had done.

The tears then finally ran down his cheeks as if a dam had burst. In his trembling hands he held the remainder of what he once used to love so much, now sacrificed to prove his love to a boy who didn't even love him anymore. 'D-Draco—' he heard the boy stammer but it welled up the anger inside his chest again.

'Ta gueule, Harry! Shut up!' He shouted, screamed at the boy. His voice was hoarse as if he had screamed all day, Harry's face a blur of tears.

'Draco I never wanted you to—' Harry took a step closer but Draco took a step back in response. The boy seemed genuinely shocked, guilty of what he had made Draco do. At least he did seem to realize that fact; it was him that had made Draco cut off his hair. It might as well have been Harry's hand that held a wand to his locks.

'Non? Then what did you want me to do, Harry? You told me I look like the man I hate the most in the entire world! Well, not anymore,' he told him. His voice cracked up more with each word and he could hear his French accent draw through it more than usual. Losing his voice, losing his vocabulary, losing his hair, losing his lover.

Harry seemed to be lost for words as he kept his eyes on Draco, eyes that Draco didn't want to see anymore. He had to leave, had to get away and turned around, ready to run away from the boy. But he got snatched by his arm, pulled back by Harry's immense force. 'Please, Draco! I'm sorry, I—'
'Laissez-moi! It's too late to be sorry.' Draco swallowed, tasting the salt of his tears. 'Just — leave me alone from now on. That's also what you wanted, wasn't it; to be left alone. Well, your wish is granted!' He looked into the boy's eyes one last time, into the beautiful green emeralds he had adored so much. The look of green that had started it all. Then the eyes the color of grass were covered in morning dew; the first time Draco had ever made Harry cry. And it broke his heart more than anything he had ever done before.

Harry's grip loosened around his arm as he started to tremble slightly, his muscles losing their strength. Before Draco turned around again, he let his eyes glance at what used to be his hair one last time. Without hesitation he then threw it at the boy in front of him and ran away, leaving Harry behind in a waterfall of silver locks.

A haze in front of his eyes, an impressionist his paintings doomimg up around him. Landscapes blurred together and made him stumble over things that weren't there. Draco hurried himself back to the carriage, as far away from Harry as he could. There was no-one to stop him in his way, not one living soul asking what happened to him. Until he finally arrived to the only thing he still loved; his school, the girls, a beautiful life in blue.

He opened the door panting loudly, catching for breath he wasn't able to inhale anymore. He heard the girls jump off the sofas, hurrying themselves towards him and wrapping their arms around him like they so often did. 'What happened to you? Draco, your hair…'

'Who did this to you, Draco?' Fleur then demanded. In her anger she sounded like a younger version of Madame Maxime, which drew Draco out of his haze and made her figure become more clear. She looked utterly shocked.

'I-I did it,' Draco admitted.

'Why? You would never do such a thing. You love your hair!'

Draco shrugged weakly, still crying with the girl's their hands on his shoulders. 'You wouldn't understand—,' he began but Fleur shook her head.

'I actually do. At least, I think so,' she said. 'Draco, is it — is it because of your father?'

All the girls their eyes looked from Fleur to Draco, awaiting an answer. Of course she understood; the smart Witch she was and always had been. Hadn't Draco told her about it? He didn't remember but he probably did. And so he nodded. It was indeed because of his father. 'But because of Harry as well,' he added to it.

The girls protested at his words, calling Harry fool names in French that the boy didn't deserve. They were angry that Harry hadn't lived up to their expectations, had violated their trust. And Draco couldn't even stop them from doing so, didn't even want to stop them. Perhaps the boy did deserve at least some name-calling for what he had made him do.

They told him to rest and basically pushed him into his room, ignoring Raphael's questions, and promised to inform Madame Maxime as soon as she would return from her meeting with the other Headmasters. Draco had just nodded at their words, suddenly too tired to talk. Fleur had given him glances of pity, alternately with vile glares that were mentally meant for Harry, Draco knew. And
as he stumbled upon his bed, seated on its edge like a sack of salt, he didn't dare to glance up; knowing that there was a mirror on the other side. But of course he did so in the end, sneaked a peek at a boy he had never seen before. Someone had stolen his face, so it seemed. His pointy features were the same, his eyes just a little tired but the fact that his hair was so short changed his entire face. It spiked in various directions and some strands hung down as straight as straight could be. Weird, it was, and terrifying. He looked much older, much more strict. And he didn't like the look of it at all. To him it felt as if the butterfly he had once been had transformed into a moth; still in the same category but totally different. One got loved while the other one got avoided.

Madame Maxime had visited him later that night and had been as furious as the girls; but had understood the reason even better than any of them. Draco had already trusted her with his father's secret, his past, in his first year. It had actually been his mother's idea to tell her, to trust her. And it had been a good idea, it now appeared. Madame had told him not to worry, that she would protect him if things would become different now. But Draco had declined her help, knowing that there was no escape to facing his father this summer again; he knew he had to face him in order to protect his mother. She also had offered to fix his hair, bring it back to it's original length. But that had been another offer Draco had declined; he never wanted to resemble his father again. Jamais.

That was, as he had thought of it with a mind more clear, because his father had made him grow his hair long like his in the first place. The man had said that sons of the Malfoy line had always had long hair; that it defined their prestige and elegance. His mother had only said he should keep it long because it softened his pointy features, ones he got from her. But Draco wasn't like any of the previous Malfoys in his blood-line. He may have inherited the looks and the vain aspect of their lives, but he was so different in many other ways. So why couldn't he be different in the way he looked as well, then?

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There were three more days left until they were leaving Hogwarts, saying good-bye to the memories that hurt him so greatly. Draco didn't dare to face Harry anymore and had spent the entire previous day in his room, thinking about nothing else but the consequences of everything that had happened; losing Harry, Cedric's death and of course Voldemort's rebirth. It was something Draco had never really thought about; about the Dark Lord's return. Of course he had heard his father musing about it a lot of times, but never had he fully thought the day of his return would follow. The future he had always seen for the Wizarding World had been bright as if casted upon by orange-gleaming sunlight. But now it was quite the opposite, really. Dark days would follow, Draco knew. Days where Wizards and Witches wouldn't believe that he was back. Days where they would be confronted with the truth in the most gruesome ways. Days where they would lose their loved ones like Cedric's father had lost his son. Pain, terror, screaming and the poisonous green light of the Killing Curse; would it all be awaiting him once he returned home?

Still thinking about all those things, Draco had decided to stay in his room until they would go back to Beauxbatons. But the good-hearted girls were worried about his health, about his hunger and Draco couldn't deny the rumbling feeling in his stomach whenever someone mentioned the word 'food'. And so he got dragged to dinner that night, dragged to a place he would be surrounded by people whom despised him. At least, if Harry told them the truth about his father.

As they walked through the giant doors to the Great Hall, Draco couldn't help but take a glance at the Gryffindor table. And of course Harry's friends had thought the same as the girls; they wanted
to take care of their friend as well. Draco froze to the spot, ready to turn around again but his hunger convinced him to risk the chance of getting noticed by the boy. With his feet working again, he followed the girls further down the Great Hall while keeping his eyes on the raven-haired boy, just to see how he was feeling. And it seemed as if he was feeling terrible. Harry's eyes were red as well as his nose, his hair a chaotic mess and he held an expression on his face as if he had made a terrible mistake; which he indeed had. Of course he noticed Draco's curious eyes and it made him rise from his seat, jump up and surprise his friends around him. 'D-Draco,' he could already hear him stammer from afar.

As the boy made his way around the Gryffindor table, Draco felt Marie's hand on his back pushing him forward, ushering him away from the nearing boy. They had taken their places at the Ravenclaw table again after all the Gryffindors had stopped talking to them, had been on Harry's side. Draco got pushed down on one of the seats as Marie, Fleur and another girl named Penny crossed their arms and made a human wall to protect Draco from the nearing lion. It would've humored Draco greatly if the situation had been different, now it just made him glad they were keeping the boy away.

'Draco, please. I'm sorry, I-I assumed things and—' Harry began, his voice sounding as if he was crying again. Draco bit his lip, wanting to turn around and face Harry, tell him that it was alright but — but it wasn't. It can't always be alright, a little voice told him. Even though you repeat those words to yourself and others around you so many times; it can't always be.

'Just leave him alone, Harry. You've done enough,' he heard Fleur tell him. The other girls agreed with her and by the slight sound of squeaking shoes on polished floor it almost seemed as if one of them had pushed Harry away.

And that seemed to bring more Gryffindors into the game as well. 'Hey, leave Harry alone!' It was Ron's voice, Draco noticed. Furious footsteps neared and he knew if was about to get ugly.

'We would if he would leave Draco alone!' Marie then said. 'It is him who did something to our Draco, non?'

'Harry didn't do anything!' Ron defended.

'Oui, he did!'

More girls from Beauxbatons rose from their seats, the ever so quiet ones now making a fuss of their own as well, defending the one that always defended them. Gryffindors backed Harry up as well, started shouting things they didn't mean which resulted in the girls shouting things as well. A mix of French and English yelling filled the Great Hall in less than a minute. A voice, sounding like that of Ron, then declared to everyone that Draco's father was a Death Eater. The crowd went silent for just a second before continuing their verbal attack, louder and more vile this time around.

Draco placed his hands upon his ears, tried to block off all the noise around him as he bit back the tears, not wanting to cry once again. He still had his back turned to the chaos behind him but he knew it didn't look pretty as students from other houses now rose from their seats as well, even a few Durmstrang boys joining in with Orlin at the front; ready to defend Draco's honor like only a real gentleman would do. It would've flattered Draco greatly but he couldn't think of anything else than the fact that everyone now knew what kind of man his father was; what kind of man Draco maybe was as well.

How terribly funny it all seemed that three schools were making a fuss over two students who loved each other greatly but were so incredibly mad at each other at the same time. But Draco couldn't laugh. He could only cry once again.
'Silence!' A voice then demanded, louder than any voice Draco had ever heard before. He had heard Madame's shout but even she couldn't compete with what appeared to be Dumbledore's voice. Everyone in the Great Hall had immediately gone silent and looked up at the Headmaster with huge eyes. He had risen from his seat, an expression as calm as could be. In the heat of everything, everyone had seemed to forget that there were also professors in the Great Hall. It was a miracle, really that they had been able to shout at each other for more than five minutes without getting interrupted by them. 'Can't you see that you are hurting the poor boy,' Dumbledore sympathized, a hand gesturing slightly in Draco's direction. All eyes were now casted on Draco and he felt like disappearing right on the spot. 'Harry, mister Malfoy—,' Draco finally looked up at the Headmaster and noticed in the corner of his eye that Harry did the same. He had totally forgotten about the boy. Had he been shouting things as well? 'Could I perhaps have a word with the two of you in my office?'

Draco nodded as a response to Dumbledore's offer. He hadn't even needed to think about it; it was as if his voice could enchant one to agree to everything he said; what a great power to have, Draco thought. But didn't you once have that power of enchantment over Harry as well, a voice in his head added to it.

Following Dumbledore out of the Great Hall, he felt all students' eyes on him and Harry whom was trailing behind them. What were they thinking? Were they thinking about his father being a Death Eater? About their failed love? About the boy from the tales being crazy? It could be anything and it probably also was. He heard a muted chatter start again once they passed through the doors, one that got silenced only a second later by a professor's voice.

It would be the third time for Draco to visit the Headmaster's office; the first time had been unwillingly, the second one out of desperation and now he was finally invited properly. And yet he was still amazed by how interesting the room was compared to the other rooms he had seen at Hogwarts. It's circular shape, the many portraits of previous Headmasters and the funny little sounds you could hear if you listened carefully; as if little creatures were hiding beneath every piece of furniture.

'Take a seat, take a seat,' Dumbledore said, pointing at two comfortable looking chairs that were set just far enough apart for them to accept the offer. Draco didn't dare to look at Harry and kept his eyes on the old Headmaster, whom held the slightest grin on his face. Why the man was smiling, Draco had no idea. 'You two caused quite the fuss in the Great Hall, didn't you?'

'Draco didn't do anything, sir!' Harry replied, defending Draco without hesitation. 'It's all my fault.'

Dumbledore didn't react to Harry's words — beside from his widening grin at least. 'Why is it exactly that you are so angry with mister Malfoy, Harry?' Dumbledore asked instead.

Harry fidgeted on his seat a little, eyes pointed at an intricate silver object on Dumbledore's desk. 'I'm not angry with him, sir. At least — not anymore,' he admitted. Draco could just feel Harry's green eyes glance over to him but he didn't dare to answer the look, kept his eyes locked on Dumbledore's extremely long beard instead.

'Then let me rephrase it, my boy; why were you angry with mister Malfoy? ' Harry opened his mouth to answer but Dumbledore interrupted him with a lift of his finger. 'No, wait. Let me guess why you were so angry with him. Is it perhaps because his father, Lucius Malfoy, is a Death Eater?'

'Yes, sir.'

'And because mister Malfoy hadn't told you anything about that fact?'
'Yes, but —'

'Have you asked him *why* he didn't tell you?'

'He didn't tell me because he knew I would react the way I did and—'

'Then haven't you wondered why he didn't want you to react that way?'

'N-no,' Harry stammered.

'Aha,' Dumbledore concluded. 'That explains everything.'

Draco frowned his eyebrows. 'How does that explain everything, *monsieur* Dumbledore?' he asked. His voice sounded weird in the room, almost out of place as if he was interrupting a conversation he wasn't a part of.

'I believe you should ask Harry that question, my boy. He seems to have finally figured it out himself, haven't you?'

Draco turned himself towards Harry, a bit hesitant. He had become scared of having to look into the boy's green eyes; not knowing what emotion he would stumble upon. But the boy had his eyes cast upon the silver instrument again. 'I have indeed,' he told his Headmaster before he finally answered Draco's searching eyes. 'It's — it's because you were afraid I wouldn't love you anymore. Afraid I would compare you to your father and—,' Harry's hand trembled as he wiped a strand of hair out of his eye, a tear leaving the same one. 'And that's just what I did, didn't I?'

Tears stung behind his eyes again as he listened to the boy's words. 'Oui, you did. You reacted just the way I thought you would. I wasn't able to protect you from seeing my family's monstrous side, from protecting our love,' he answered him. 'I know I should've told you earlier—'

'It wouldn't have changed anything,' Harry interrupted him. 'I realize that now.'

'Perhaps not… but it all doesn't matter anymore, does it?'

'It does, Draco,' Harry declared as he rose from his seat only to fall down to his knees again in front of Draco. 'Because I still love you.' His eyes were filled with tears as he cleared the pockets of his robes, took out locks of silver hair and held them in his trembling hands for Draco to retrieve.

And he was telling the truth; Draco could see that in the boy's ever so green eyes. They had always been like a book, allowing everyone to read any emotion they wanted. Draco pushed Harry's reaching hands away, the silver locks of his hair once again falling beside the boy like a waterfall, and grabbed the boy by his robes. Pulling him forward, closer to him again like he had missed doing so much, he pressed his lips against his and tasted Harry's salty tears mixed with his own. 'I know you still do, Harry,' he said, and Harry smiled hesitantly.

'Now that's solved, anyone a Licorice Snap? But be careful; they're a bit sharp.' Dumbledore then said as he reached out a bowl with shiny little candies. Draco had forgotten for only a moment that Dumbledore was still there, had heard every word they had said and had seen every look they had shared. A content smile now graced the old man's face. Draco declined the offer as he knew the candy all too well but Harry seemed to be naive enough to let himself get bit by a few. And Draco couldn't help but laugh at Harry's stupidity, at his *Harry-ness* and the boy smiled as well. 'I'll be out for a few minutes, but be free to use my office in my absence to — redress a few things,' Dumbledore declared before leaving his office in the hands of two boys, laughing over biting candy.
Harry sat back down on his chair, moved it a bit closer to Draco's and took one of his pale hands in his. 'I'm sorry for assuming things — I should've known you are different than him. It's kind of the same situation as with the Yule Ball, isn't it? When you also assumed I liked girls and—'

'It's nothing like the Yule Ball,' Draco interrupted him, rolling his eyes. 'And you couldn't have known I was different, Harry. Unless you heard l'histoire of my past, that is,'

'That means story, right?' Draco gave him a confirming nod. 'Hermione has this French book and I've been trying to learn a few French words ever since April, but — but that doesn't matter right now, does it?'

Draco shook his head, smiling. 'Non, you can tell me all about those French words you have learned another time; in the most terrible accent, s'il vous plaît.' Harry grinned at his words and slid a hand through his messy hair. 'I would like to tell you that story now, if you would like? Je pense que c'est important."

A deep breath was taken before Draco started his story, ready to tell Harry everything about his father that he knew; ready to reveal secrets he had hidden away for him for too long already. 'Papa has always been an ambitious man; taking opportunities whenever and wherever he can. He was the perfect student at Hogwarts, even became Prefect and joined this professor’s potions club. And when he left this school, he could do or become anything he wanted; being the rich Malfoy heir all of our ancestors have been. The first thing that he did was marry maman; a beautiful French, and most importantly, Pureblood girl that he was introduced to on a holiday to Languedoc-Roussillon. Mes grand-parents had always had good connections with the French Wizarding community so they saw their marriage as a way of confirming their relationship.

'Papa never had a real job, you know, but he always did have many dreams. Des rêves. One of them was becoming the Minister of Magic; just to show everyone that Purebloods should rule the Wizarding World and would be the most capable of doing so. There once was a man who thought the same thing, remember — and it didn't end well with him neither.

'And then he met this man, a certain Tom Riddle. Everything went downhill from there but in his eyes he was a God; he had ideas he could only dream of having. Papa used to torture Muggles during the first war, did everything to help taking down the Ministry he had always despised the rulers of. He did everything to help this Riddle clear the name of the Purebloods and help to restore a world that should've always been a Wizard-only one in the first place.

'But Riddle got defeated, and we all know by who,' Draco stopped for a second to glance at Harry's scar, the boy's finger tracing over it's shape as well. 'And papa wasn't really looking forward to a trip to Azkaban. So he lied; he lied to everyone. He told them that he had been under the Imperius Curse and together with generous donations and the fact that he had a newborn in his family to look after convinced everyone you were a single soul that heard his speech. But of course he and maman were afraid that the trust wouldn’t last; that there would be no other solution than to leave England.

'And so we did; we fled away to France. It was only natural for my parents to choose France over another country; they both are fluent in the language and maman was even raised there. But papa never fully let go of England; he left his heart there and had a need to return at least once a year. Les souvenirs. Les rêves. Tout. And so we only stayed in France during summer holidays and went back to the cold Manor in England for papa to relive memories and forgotten dreams, and for me to attend Pureblood soirées.

'Papa never expected that Riddle would return. He always told me not to fear the man; that he wouldn’t come back and if he would, and there was always a big emphasis on the if, that we would have to live under his orders wether we liked it or not. Pourquoi? I have asked him a thousand
times, asked maman as well but she only dared to tell that papa was bound to the man by the mark on his arm. Une cicatrice sombre. A dark, ugly scar on our future.

'And now he's back; the man that he thought of as a God has returned. Maman and I had always hoped that if he would return, papa wouldn't obey him anymore, would stand up against him. But he did obey him again; I don't need a letter from maman to tell me that as I believe what you saw. The man that I should call my father has obeyed the monster without a second thought and forced his family into something they don't want — something I don't want.'

'C'est l'histoire, Harry,' Draco concluded. He wiped a single tear off his cheek he didn't know he had shed, and took another deep breath. He felt relieved to have shared his secret with someone else, someone who could maybe do something about it.

Harry squeezed his hand, hadn't let go of it ever since he had taken it in his and gave Draco the weakest of smiles. 'I'm very proud of you for sharing that story with me. It must've been difficult for you growing up around a man that idolized such a monster.'

'It actually wasn't, how surprising that may sound. Papa has always hidden his dark past away from me but maman couldn't keep the secret; knew that one day her husband would want me to become just like him. She was afraid that if she wouldn't tell me in time, I would blindly follow his orders and become just like him. And I now realize how close I actually was to becoming him without noticing, even though I knew of his past.'

'Just because you resembled him on the outside doesn't mean you're the same as him on the inside, Draco. I should've known that from the start.'

'Well, now I don't resemble him in any way anymore. C'est très court, non?' Draco slid a hand through his short platinum hair. He still hadn't get used to it and probably never would, but it was better than to be compared to his father ever again.

Harry gave him a smile. 'I don't care what your hair looks like, Draco. What only matters is you as a person; your soul of gold and blue,' he told him. 'And if you really want to know what I think about it — I find it truly adorable.' Harry's hand messed up Draco's with a single movement of his hand, making it a resemblance of his own.

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Every second of their last two days together they had spent in each other's company. They had left Dumbledore's office smiling, fingers tangled in each other as they had walked back to the Great Hall to face all of their friends who had fought a battle for them they couldn't fight themselves. It had been funny to see their faces as they had entered the Hall again, acting as if nothing had happened in the first place. Professor McGonagall had demanded everyone to sit down again and eat; something none of them had done before or after their yelling battle. Draco and Harry had taken a seat by the girls, who had still given Harry vile glares at first but resolved everything after Draco's explanation to them in French. Harry's friends seemed to take longer to be convinced that everything was fine again, that it was a good idea for Harry to date the son of a Death Eater. Especially Ron, who already held many grudges against Draco, had been hard to convince but had stopped sulking in the end anyway.

Draco had sneaked Harry back into his room so they could spend their last nights together, just
sleeping side by side and feeling each other's warmth and comfort. They talked about the future, about what it would be like now that Voldemort had returned. Now that Harry couldn't come to France anymore during the summer. Draco's father was too much of a risk; if Draco would bring home Harry Potter, archenemy of the Dark Lord himself, he wouldn't even think twice before handing him over to the monster himself.

It now was the day of Draco's departure, the day he would return to Beauxbatons and then to his family. They had had their last meal, had heard Dumbledore's warning speech and had said their good-byes. But they just couldn't let go. The carriage was to depart within an hour, and Draco and Harry had decided to take one last walk by the Lake, the place where they had spent a lot of time together over the year. 'Promise to write me letters, at least,' Draco told him as they sauntered past the spot where they used to practice the Bubble-Head Charm.

'I will. Every day, if you want me to,' Harry replied with a smile. The boy's smile was something Draco would miss the most of all. Beside his mesmerizing green eyes, of course.

'You should use a different name to sign them, though. I don't want papa to accidentally open a letter written by Harry Potter. Quelle horreur.'

Harry grinned. 'Then what name do you want me to use? 'Sincerely, your lion' will be too obvious as well, won't it?''

'Oui, and too much of a laugh.'

'Can't I write under my father's name; James?' Harry proposed.

Draco shrugged as a reply. 'If you don't use your last name, I'm sure it'll be fine. But how will my owl find you then?'

'I'll use the Dursleys' their last name as mine; I'm sure your owl will find me that way.' Draco spotted a little grin on the boy's lips that faded away at the thought of his Muggle family. He had heard awful stories about them from Harry and knew the boy had to return to their home in Little Whinging this summer again.

Draco stopped in his pace and took ahold of Harry's hand. A warm breeze declaring summer passed by as he faced the boy again. 'I-I wish I could protect you from them,' Draco stammered. 'It must be horrible how they treat you.'

'It is, but — there are other, more important things to worry about right now. And I think you too have greater worries than me being underfed,' he replied.

'Oui… Everything will be different once I return home. Papa will have to live up to the Dark Lord's wishes and I know that won't be easy. I don't even know if we'll stay in France during the summer.'

Harry smiled weakly again. 'At least Hedwig won't have to fly such long distances to deliver a letter to you then.' Draco grinned at his words and kissed the boy on his cheek.

'And-,' Draco began. 'If we stay in England this summer, I might be able to sneak away by floo-network if I'm very careful. Might come visit a sad and underfed boy in Little Whinging one summery day.' Harry's smile brightened at his words and he pulled Draco closer by his robes, kissed him while lifting himself up to the tips of his toes.

'Just — be safe, alright? Tell me when things go wrong.'
Draco nodded. 'I will if you do the same, Harry.'

Harry just smiled and took Draco's hand in his again. 'Come, I'll walk you back to the carriage.'

Hands locked they walked their way back to the grassy fields next to Hogwarts castle, back to the giant carriage that was surrounded by students from both Hogwarts and Durmstrang. The Northern beasts were to sail away an hour after Beauxbatons had taken off and were saying their good-byes as well, kissing some of the girls with a passion only they could possess. Madame Maxime was talking to Headmaster Dumbledore and Hagrid by the horses, Hagrid himself looking a tiny bit sad. Even Harry's friends had shown up to wave Draco off, Ron seemingly pleased with having his best friend for himself again.

Draco turned himself to Harry one last time, kissed him as if he would never kiss him again and took out his timepiece from his robes' pocket. 'Take this, mon lion. As a reminder of everything.'

The gold of the timepiece shone brightly in June's sun and Harry accepted it with a smile. 'I'll cherish it greatly.'

As all the girls hopped into the carriage one after the other, there was only one blue violet left, a little different than when he had arrived. But was it so bad to be different? Draco thought not as he waved at Harry and all the new people he had met that year, waved them away into future meetings and future adventures. Because of that, many would follow. The door closed behind him and Draco hurried over to his room, opening his window to wave at Harry again. To wave at the smiling boy with his red and gold tie, his messy raven-colored hair and green eyes gleaming of tears. He would miss Draco and Draco would miss him. But it wasn't a good-bye, they both knew that, as their adventure had only just begun.

Chapter End Notes

A little angst and shouting at each other never hurt anyone, did it? And it wasn't for long because they love each other too much (obviously).

ABOUT THE HAIR – I decided to let Draco 'sacrifice' his hair for Harry's love, trust and for him to believe his words because it's his dearest possession. I just thought it was perfect for him to sacrifice the thing he loves the most for Harry. Some will hate it and others will love it and I tried to please you all by changing it like 3 times but THIS is the original way I wanted it to be so it will stay still way. :)

Narcissa in this story also isn't a 'Black' or related to Sirius; I just really wanted to make her a Beauxbatons woman. And I know the moth in the picture isn't a 'butterfly', it's a reference to how Draco describes his 'change' (which is also the title of this chapter).

I also can't believe we're already at chapter 10! And at 70k+ words which kind of makes this a novel, so hooray!

Also know that this ISN'T THE ENDING, there will be more chapters all the way to the War and probably an Epilogue one beyond, so please keep checking for more updates! Thank you as well for all the loving comments and kudos!
Papillon - Part II

https://archiveofourown.org/works/17496011/chapters/41209373

Link to part II

lumoxy

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!