Summary

The new world order hasn't been kind to Draco and his family, and he wishes it could all be different. So does Harry, although not for the same reasons. But as Draco works to fix the mistakes he made in the past, he finds his reasons for doing so changing in a way he never expected.

Notes

This submission is part of HD Smoochfest on Livejournal. The theme this year is Media Remix, which invited participants to "remix" the story from a Book, Movie, or Television Show. The author/artist will be revealed at the end of the fest.

This was created for Prompt Number: M31
Original Work Name: The Butterfly Effect

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Author's Notes: This was written as a pinch hit, and as such I was not as familiar with the original work as I could have been, so I hope I did okay. I changed some of the canon from the movie, so as to include the prompter's additional requests, and I hope this was the kind of thing you were looking for. A big thank you to my beta, Indy, for still agreeing to read over this even after all the grief I gave her with my last story. Title is taken from the poem Hélas, by Oscar Wilde.
It felt surreal, to Draco, sitting there in the Great Hall, surrounded by Gryffindors and Order members, adults and children sprinkled across the tables with no thought to house separation. His mother and father had migrated towards what had once been the Slytherin table, a subconscious need for the familiar in this sudden new world order that they had not planned for. Draco sat on the bench between them, numb, feeling their bodies twitch slightly whenever someone came too close. Nobody seemed to be paying any attention to them, but Draco knew it was only a matter of time before they were outed as the uninvited party crashers they knew themselves to be.

The moment came far too quickly, and Draco cursed under his breath. He wished he had thought to grab his parents by the arms and make their escape while people were too busy celebrating, but he had been scared of attracting attention, and now they had sat still for too long. Draco watched as the team of six Aurors stood by the doors to the Great Hall, their sharp eyes scanning the revel makers and the mourners until one of them spotted his little group. The woman elbowed the one standing next to her, and then they strode across the flagstones as one entity, and Draco knew his life was over. He would be taken to Azkaban along with his parents, tried and found guilty, and then administered the Kiss. He knew this as clearly as he knew that he would give anything to have it all different.

His mother clutched at his sleeve as she noticed where the group of Aurors were heading, and Draco placed his hand over hers, trying to comfort her. Narcissa rose from the bench, and took a careful step in front of him, shielding her son from their stern gazes. Draco knew it wouldn’t do any good, but he appreciated her trying.

“Not my son,” she said, her voice quiet but steady. “Please, my husband and I will do whatever you ask, but not my son.”

The man at the head of the small formation paid her no attention, one large hand reaching out to push her aside. Lucius stood up, his mouth opening in outrage, and was immediately grabbed and restrained by two of the group. Draco felt hands pulling at him roughly, and he closed his eyes.

“Wait, wait!”

Draco opened his eyes to a flash of straggly black hair and watched in astonishment as Potter appeared before them. He’d just walked away from a second killing curse and then stood in the centre of the Great Hall, circling a madman and talking about wands and riddles before killing the Dark Lord with nothing but *Expelliarmus*, and Draco thought that he should by now resemble the Boy Wonder that everyone revered.

Except he didn’t. His hair was long enough that it curled over his collar and down over his eyes, the
unwashed state of it making it dull and lifeless. His dark blue knitted jumper was riddled with holes, the grimy t shirt beneath peeking out. He held his dirt and blood streaked hand to his ribs, as though fighting a stitch, and his glasses had a crack across one of the lenses.

But for all that his presence indicated nothing so much as scruffy teenage boy, the six Aurors surrounding Draco’s family still drew themselves up to their full height and turned deferentially towards Potter, waiting to hear what he had to say. If Draco hadn’t witnessed what Potter had managed to accomplish with his own eyes, he knew he wouldn’t be able to understand it. But he had, and now he could see that Potter was a speccy little git no more. Perhaps he never had been.

“Not Malfoy,” Potter gasped out, and then winced. “I mean, not Draco,” he amended, and Draco thought his given name sounded strange falling from Potter’s tongue. “Not Mrs Malfoy either,” Potter continued, and Draco watched his eyes flick to his mother’s.

The six Aurors stood gaping for a moment, before one of them cleared her throat. “What about Malfoy senior?” she asked, and Draco was momentarily stunned at the fact they seemed to be listening to Potter without question.

Potter kept his eyes on Narcissa, however, and then shook his head slightly. Narcissa gasped in a small breath and then nodded once, her jaw clenched slightly together.

“Not Draco or Mrs Malfoy,” Potter repeated, now staring at the floor.

The Aurors moved again as one, releasing the bonds on Draco and his mother at the same time as they began to pull his father away. Lucius said nothing, just kept his eyes on Narcissa until he was pulled roughly from the room. Narcissa sank back down on the bench, her eyes on the last place his father had been visible, a blank look on her face.

Draco turned to look at Potter, and took a deep breath. “I would say something that was an apology or some form of thanks, but I’m not used to finding the right words for those sorts of conversations,” he said finally. He frowned. “I’m not sure I could find the right words even if I was.”

“No thanks necessary, Malfoy,” Potter replied, and his eyes skittered over Draco to land on his mother. “She saved my life, and she did it to save yours. I figure that’s my debt repaid.”

Draco wanted to ask about his own debt to Potter, for pulling him out of the fire, both literally and figuratively speaking, but instead what came out was “Are you okay?”
Potter’s breathy laugh told Draco just how stupid a question that was. “Honestly, Malfoy, I don’t think I’ll ever be okay again.” He frowned and looked down. “If I ever was,” he said quietly. He looked around the Hall quickly, then his eyes came back to rest on Draco. “I just wish,” he sighed and moved his hand in front of him in a confusing little gesture. Draco’s chest felt hot as he noticed Potter was still gripping the Dark Lord’s wand. “I just wish that none of this had ever happened.” Potter sighed again and gave another breathy laugh. “Right now though, I am just really bloody tired.” He took a step back. “Maybe we’ll see each other around, Malfoy,” he said, and then he melted back into the crowd behind him.

Draco sat down next to his mother and watched the rest of the Great Hall celebrate the end of the Dark Lord. He watched as people threw food into Grawp’s mouth, watched as an owl delivered the news that Kingsley was the new Minister for Magic, watched as Luna Lovegood shouted something about a Blibbering Humdinger, and he watched as Potter took the opportunity to disappear under his cloak. A few moments later, and Granger and Weasley were heading out of the Hall together, a suspicious amount of space between them, just right for the size of the Boy Wonder.

_I just wish that none of this had ever happened._

_Me too, Potter,_ Draco thought. _Me too._

Life for the Malfoys was pretty much as Draco had expected it, after the war. The summer after his failed seventh year was filled with funerals and parties, Ministry overhauls and Death Eater trials. Lucius Malfoy had received a sentence of ten years in Azkaban, a far more lenient punishment compared to some others, in light of the fact that he had not participated in the Battle of Hogwarts, save to look for his son. Narcissa Malfoy had had her wand taken away and broken, with strict instructions that she not buy a new one for another year. Draco was to have been given the same sentence, until his trial heard testimony from the Boy Wonder, stating that he would need a wand if Draco was to return to Hogwarts and achieve his NEWTs. Really, Draco knew he was lucky just to have evaded sharing a cell with his father, but he couldn’t deny being pleased that he was allowed to keep the wand that Potter had stolen and then returned to him. After using it to vanquish the Dark Lord, of course.

Malfoy Manor had been removed from the family’s estate and sold, the proceeds going to the Ministry as war reparations. Despite Lucius lamenting the loss of his home, Draco himself found he didn’t care. He never wanted to step foot back inside that place ever again. No matter how many childhood memories those rooms and halls held for him, the sounds of tortured screams and slithering
snakes would always drown them out.

He and his mother moved to a modest house close to London, and were allowed to keep two of their house elves, so that they could attend to the things his mother could no longer do magically. They attended Crabbe’s funeral, and Severus Snape’s, and Draco leaned down and whispered his thanks to the headstone, as well as his wish that things had turned out differently for them all. He secretly attended the funeral of Charity Burbage (he didn’t think his mother would have wanted him to go) and he found himself wishing he had attended her classes, if only so that he might have known her better.

Other than those few outings, Draco rarely left the house, the whispers of Death Eater scum and should be rotting in Azkaban with your father following him whenever he made an appearance in wizarding populations. He had known it would happen, that people wouldn’t be able to easily forgive the things his family were responsible for. But he hadn’t realised fully what it meant to be an outcast in society. In a place where he was once a prince among men, where people scurried out of his way in deference to the name Malfoy, now they sneered and bumped his shoulder and knocked things out of his hands, just for the amusement it gave them to see him on his hands and knees before them. And Draco wanted to blame them, wanted to shout to the rooftops how dare you? Do you know who I am? Except, they knew exactly who he was; he was the son of the family who chose the wrong side in the war, the son who blindly followed in his father’s footsteps and was too cowardly to turn back once he realised what he’d done. He couldn’t blame them, because he’d been them, and although their anger and disgust came from a legitimate place, his had only come from prejudice and hate. The anger at his treatment was all tangled up in his guilt and humiliation, all twisted up into a knot in his throat that threatened to cut off his breathing whenever he stepped outside.

So he stayed in his small house and watched his mother slowly break down without his father there to keep her together, watched as she tried to keep her cool facade whenever she noticed him looking, and watched as the world slowly began to recuperate itself. He did a lot of watching, all from the comfort of his chair in front of the parlour fire.

An owl from Hogwarts came in mid-August, and he was genuinely surprised to find himself offered a place amongst the Eighth years returning to school. But it seemed as though McGonagall’s capacity for forgiveness was like that of all great Gryffindors, and so he replied in the affirmative. Before the war, Draco had had prospects no matter the state of his education. Now, only an exemplary educational record would afford him any kind of stable future.

The journey on board the Hogwarts Express was the strangest he had ever experienced, and that included third year with the Dementors. This time there was no Pansy to stroke his hair; her family had found her an advantageous marriage somewhere in Europe and had not bothered to come back home after the war. They had known they would not be welcome. Crabbe was dead, and Goyle had decided not to return to school. The few other Slytherins returning were those that had distanced themselves from Draco over the past two years - Zabini, Nott, the Greengrass sisters among them. They had known what Draco had refused to see, and were afforded a better place amongst their peers because of it.
The strangest part of the journey had been who he’d ended up sharing a compartment with. Weasley had looked down on him with an inelegant snort, before sitting down and ignoring Draco’s presence for the entire ride. Draco was glad for the inattention; he had no idea how to say thanks for saving me from my father’s friend and then smacking me in the mouth. Granger had sat down next to her boyfriend, her lips pinched and her fingers wrapped around where his Aunt Bellatrix had carved Mudblood into her skin. But she made eye contact with Draco and nodded once, and Draco knew that her cordiality was more than he deserved.

But Potter sat down opposite him and offered a tired smile, before leaning his head against the window for most of the journey. Draco tried to do the same, but found his eyes lingering on the Boy Who Lived Twice for much longer periods than they did the scenery racing past outside. Potter looked just as tired as he had the last time Draco had seen him, covered in dirt and blood and in mourning for the people he had lost. His hair was shorter than it had been at the end of the Battle, back to just the messy strands he usually sported. He was clean shaven, and his clothes, although still raggedy, were free of dirt. His glasses were whole once more, hiding green eyes that were dulled and unfocused. Draco wondered where Potter was, because he didn’t seem to be on the train with the rest of them.

Near the end of the journey, Weasley and Granger left the compartment under the guise of going to see who else had returned to repeat seventh year. Draco suspected they just wanted some time alone before the confines of school drew them apart, but he didn’t blame them for wanting it. At one point, Draco might have been insulted at the way they left without even a glance between he and Potter, as though he was no threat to the Boy Wonder. Now, he was simply grateful that they didn’t seem to think he had a nefarious plan in motion.

They still hadn’t returned when the train made its lurching way into Hogsmeade Station, and Draco stood up to collect his things. Potter stood too, and after a moment of awkward maneuvering between them, he let out a huffed laugh.

“Are we going to tiptoe around each other all year, Malfoy?”

Draco looked up, surprised. “What else do you suggest?”

Potter shrugged, picked up his rucksack. “I don’t know,” he said simply. “I just know that I’m tired, and I don’t want to fight any more. So how about we just agree to be civil with each other, yeah?”

He stuck his hand out, and Draco stared at it. He remembered the last time they were on the train with a handshake offered between them. Part of him wanted to give into his childhood pettiness and sneer at the gesture, but the bigger part of him was feeling the same as Potter, just so very tired of it
He gripped Potter’s calloused hand and shook it firmly. “Agreed, Potter,” he said, a small smile pulling at his lips. It felt strange, alien. He hadn’t come close to a smile in years.

“See you around, Malfoy,” Potter said, and walked out of the compartment to find his friends.

Draco stared after him, wondering what might have happened if their first interaction had gone the same way. Maybe then their lives might not be as fucked up as they were now.

School was the same as the train ride, strange even in its familiarity. Draco no longer lived down in the dungeons but instead in a tower opened especially for the returning seventh years. He ate with the Slytherins and watched Quidditch matches from the Slytherin stands and wore his green striped tie, but at the end of every day he retired to a circular room with a view over the courtyard instead of into the lake. The common room was filled with furniture in creams and browns instead of silver and green, and instead of being afforded the prime spot in front of the fire, he was given mistrustful looks and disgusted sneers. He spent most of his private time on his bed instead, the brown curtains wrapped around him to keep everyone else out. Perhaps the strangest part of all of this was that Potter did the same thing in the bed opposite his.

Teachers no longer called on him in class, and he was ignored at best in the common room. Even meals spent with his fellow Slytherins were a quiet affair; nobody wanted to be seen aligning themselves with a former Death Eater in the new world order. Silence surrounded Draco, and he found himself unable to sleep at night, looking up at the canopy of his bed as the words he wanted to say tumbled and tripped over themselves in his head. He found himself going over his time spent there at Hogwarts, trying to work out just where his life went so wrong. It was too difficult a task; there were too many mistakes he had made. And so he found himself sitting up until late into the night, writing down in his new diary all the things he had nobody to tell any more.

It was Lovegood who played on his mind the most. He’d helped drag her off the train, escorted her down to the dungeons in his Manor, gave her dry bread and water and then left her in the dark and the cold, all because he was told to do so. And yet, she smiled brightly at him when she saw him in the corridors, helped him pick up his things after a too hard shove by someone objecting to his presence, sat next to him in the courtyard during break time and offered him her notes from Defence classes. Thomas could barely stomach Draco being in the same room as him, his fingers always clutching onto Finnigan as he worked his jaw. Draco understood this reaction, understood the look
of pure loathing that came across Finnigan’s face as he steered Thomas off to someplace that Draco wasn’t. He understood the way Granger’s mouth thinned into a line whenever she saw him, the way her eyes skittered away even as she tried to nod politely at him. He understood the way Weasley always tightened his arm around her shoulders and looked at him with a barely contained sneer.

He didn’t understand Lovegood tapping him gently on the arm and asking how he was.

So he wrote about it in his diary, tried to parse out the reality of what he did and compared it to Lovegood’s treatment of him now. If he could just write down what actually happened, maybe he would be able to make sense of it.

The Manor kitchen was cold and dank. Draco had never had cause to go down there before this, had never wondered what the conditions were like for the house elves they owned. He was a Malfoy, and these were workers’ areas; the two things did not go together. Unless they were playing host to a madman, it seemed.

He looked for plates, wondered briefly if they even had any down here. All the good china was kept in dressers in the dining room, magicked out by unseen elves for meals. He found a pile of small metal plates and bowls, realised that these were probably what the house elves used to feed themselves, but decided they would have to do.

The bread was dry and hard, pale green mould on the very edges. He filled three cups with tepid water, tried to cast a cooling charm, but his hands were shaking and the charm failed. This would just have to do for now. He piled the plates on a tray - too nervous to attempt a levitating charm - and turned back towards the doorway to the dungeons. He took a step, two, and his eyes landed on a shiny red apple, sitting on top of the fruit bowl. He grabbed it without thinking about it, knowing that it was meant for their ‘guests’ upstairs, knowing what would happen to him if he were found out.

The kitchen felt like paradise compared to the conditions of the dungeons. The flagstones were cold beneath his feet, seeping up through his shoes and making his feet ache with it. His breath came out in puffs of white in front of him, and the cups and plates rattled on the tray as his freezing fingers shook. He didn’t want to be here.

Chains rattled against the floor, and Draco almost jumped at the sound. But then he realised it was
just their ‘guests’, as his mother liked to think of them. But guests weren’t chained to the floor in almost impenetrable darkness for weeks on end. These people were prisoners, and Draco’s family their jailers.

He lit the end of his wand wordlessly, and the ends of straggly blonde hair came into focus a few feet to his left. He bit back against a sigh of relief; sometimes it was Ollivander whom he came upon first, his silvery eyes and paper thin skin haunting him back up the stairs and into the light. It was even worse when it was the Goblin, or Thomas; the hate he could see glistening in their eyes even as they descended upon the meager amounts of food was enough to turn Draco’s stomach.

But Lovegood was different, as she had always been different to the people around her. She would smile at Draco and smooth her fingers along his arm as she took the tray from him gently, and her sad eyes always seemed to be directed towards him, rather than herself and her predicament. Draco couldn’t understand it, but he appreciated it even as it made him feel uncomfortable in his own skin.

His hand shaking, he picked up the shiny red apple balanced on the tray, and held it out to her. It was the same colour as her radish earrings, the same colour as the marks around her wrists. Lovegood took the apple at the same time as the tray, her fingers sliding against his skin as she withdrew.

“I’ll hide the core,” she whispered simply, and Draco nodded, grateful, even though he could barely see her in the gloom and knew that she likely couldn’t see him.

As soon as the tray was gone from his hands he turned and fled, back up the cold staircase and into the dreary kitchen, his heart beating in his chest with painful thumps. If the Dark Lord found out he had done even something as small as given an apple away, he would be in trouble. But the memory of Lovegood’s soft skin against his own gave him the strength to want to do it again.

Draco woke from his dream with a gasp, his heart pounding in his chest. His diary lay open on the bed beside him, where it had fallen as he’d slipped into sleep. His fingers were clenched into tight fists over his stomach, and they ached with a bone deep chill. A strange whimpering noise echoed around the curtained bed, and he realised with horror that the sound was coming from him. He rolled over and pressed his face into his pillow, trying to control his breathing. The dream had felt so real, as though he was once again standing in his own cold, dark basement.
Eventually, his pulse began to calm down and his fists slowly uncurled themselves. Draco flexed his fingers, willing the blood to start circulating again and warm them up. He sat up in bed and twitched aside one of the curtains; the sun was streaming onto the floor between the beds, and the room outside his little cave was silent. He cast a quick Tempus charm and started as he realised he’d missed breakfast. If he hurried he might just make it to Charms on time for his first lesson.

He was starving by the time Charms was finished, and he debated with himself whether or not he should go down into the kitchens and ask the house elves for some food before Transfiguration began. But the dream still lingered with him, and he didn’t think he could face another kitchen so soon after it, no matter how clean and bright the Hogwarts kitchen was kept compared to his own. So instead, he walked out into the stone courtyard and sat down on a bench, hoping the fresh air would blow the trapped feelings away.

“You should eat it this time. You weren’t at breakfast.”

Draco opened his eyes and looked up to see Lovegood standing over him, holding out an apple in one fist. He took the fruit from her, his fingers stroking the bright red flesh as she sat down next to me.

“Why are you giving me this?” he asked, and she turned her wide blue eyes onto him.

“You know why, Draco.”

And suddenly, he did. He could remember going down into the dungeons day after day, nothing but stale bread and tepid water on the tray. He could remember Lovegood helping him pick up his books in the corridors, smiling at him and asking him how he was. But he could also remember picking up that apple, and then another one every day afterwards. He could also remember Lovegood coming to him on the first day back at school, a red apple in her hands and words of thanks on her lips, and then coming to find him every day afterwards, a piece of fruit held out in front of her every time.

“I have to go,” he said suddenly, but Lovegood didn’t look shocked, just continued to smile placidly at him.

“Just remember to eat something, Draco,” was all she said, and he left her on the bench and ran back up to his dormitory.

He was out of breath by the time he reached his bed, but he didn’t slow down, not until he’d crawled
on top of the covers and pulled the curtains closed around him. Only then did he slow his movements, pulling his diary out from under his pillow and turning the pages. He’d only written a few entries so far, so last night’s wasn’t hard to find. He took a deep breath, and read over what he’d written.

It was all the same as the dream he had had during the night. All except for one small detail: the apple. He hadn’t picked up the apple; he’d been too concerned with his own welfare to even take notice of the fruit bowl. But he’d dreamed that he had, that he’d had the courage to pick up the shiny red apple and give it to Lovegood, wanting her stay in the dungeons to be just a little bit better, and he’d dreamed that he would do it again the next time, and the next, for as long as he could get away with it.

And now Lovegood was returning the favour.

Draco’s mind raced. Had he somehow changed the past? Had his dreaming the events differently changed what had happened? What he had done? He shook his head sharply, a hysterical laugh ready on his lips, because the idea was ludicrous. The only way to go back in time was with a Time Turner, and they had all been destroyed years ago, everyone knew that.

And yet. And yet.

He could still see the two different timelines in his memories, one with the apple and one without.

What if he had? What if he had managed to change the past? Could he do it again? And if he could, what should he change? Could he change the outcome of the war?

*I wish that none of this had ever happened.*

The words were so clear that Draco jumped, pulling aside his curtains to check that Potter hadn’t come back into the room while he wasn’t looking. But he was alone, with nothing but dust motes circling through the sunbeams to keep him company.

He wasn’t so concerned with *everything* as he was with the fate of his family. Could he change the Malfoy destinies?
It was ready. Finally, after months of working at it, spending days at a time locked up in this room of endless aisles, amongst piles and piles of broken and rusted things that people had forgotten had existed, he had finally finished what he had set out to do.

The apple stood before him, its green skin shining in the dull light cast by his wand, sitting innocuously on the plank of dark wood at the bottom of the wardrobe. It was perfect, as smooth and whole as it had been when he’d placed it inside moments before. It looked as though it hadn’t so much as moved, and if Draco hadn’t opened the door to an empty space a mere second ago, he might have thought it was nothing more than an ordinary wardrobe, with an apple sitting inside.

But he knew differently. He’d worked for months on this damned cabinet, firing wave after wave of spells at it, feeling the magic crackling and creaking, resistant to every attempt to fix whatever was broken. His fingers were cracked and calloused from taking the entire thing apart nail by nail, splinters digging into his skin as he traced the magical signature hidden in its walls and tried to mend the fissures inside. He sent fruit through to the other side piece by piece, piece by piece, holding his breath each time he opened the door and letting out a trembling whimper each time it came back bruised, broken, sewn together in ways that made it look like an escapee from a rorschach painting. And after each failure, he pictured his mother, trembling on the floor on her knees before the Dark Lord, waiting for Draco to do what he had been charged with and release her from her fate. And then he would pick up his wand again, and begin his work from the beginning. He had to, there was no other choice.

And now he was ready. It was the perfect evening for it too; Madam Rosmerta had informed him through the coin that Professor Dumbledore had made his weekly trip into Hogsmeade. The castle would be unprotected tonight.

He put his hand inside the pocket of his robes, feeling the cold round edges of the coin, not taking his eyes from the perfect apple in front of him. To his left, on a spindly table with only three legs, stood a pot of glittering dark powder; the Peruvian Darkness Powder. Next to it lay the Hand of Glory, ready and waiting for Draco to lead the Dark Lord’s followers into the castle and on to victory. He knew what he had to do, knew they were all waiting on him. All he had to do now was send the message that it was done, and Borgin would send them all through. He was so close now, just one last step away from completing the task he was given and saving his family. He was so close.

He closed the door on the apple and took a step back. He glanced down at the table, his hand still fingering the coin in his pocket. He could do it. He could call them all here and follow through with the plan, find Dumbledore and finish what he had started so many months ago. No one had thought he could do it. The Death Eaters had laughed, loudly and raucously as they heard the task that had been awarded to the youngest Malfoy, Greyback in particular narrowing his eyes thoughtfully in his
mother’s direction. No doubt he hoped to be a part of their family’s punishment if Draco was to fail. His own father had whispered into his ear how he doubted his son would be clever enough to fix a vanishing cabinet that had been broken for so many centuries, that his idea was foolish and would get them all killed. Aunt Bellatrix had pleaded with the Dark Lord, insisting that such an important job should be given to someone more worthy, someone like herself. Both Crabbe and Goyle had complained vociferously over the tasks Draco had set them, their doubts getting louder and louder as time wore on with no results. Even his mother had flicked her eyes fearfully at him, before settling on Severus across the table.

They had all thought he would fail. But he hadn’t. He’d prevailed, and once this last step was completed, he would be held in the highest esteem by the Dark Lord himself.

Or would you? His subconscious whispered to him, and an image of the Dark Lord came to him, his snake-like face pulled back in a grin as he towered over Draco, pressing the tip of his wand into Draco’s left forearm and laughing maniacally as he screamed and writhed from the pain of his new tattoo. What would the Dark Lord really do to someone who could manage what he could not?

Draco took another step back from the cabinet, then another, his hand slipping from his pocket. Maybe there was another way...

He turned away from the project that had held his thoughts for so many months, leaving the powder and the Hand in their places on the table. He walked away, his heart pounding harder and harder against his ribs with each step he took.

The castle was quiet when he opened the door and slipped out into the seventh floor corridor. There was no sign of Crabbe, and Draco wasn’t surprised. Too many times he had noticed either him or Goyle abandoning their posts long before he told them otherwise, but he had been too tired to fight with them over it, and had done nothing more than replenish their supply of polyjuice potion and tell them the next time they would be needed. He was glad of Crabbe’s disloyalty tonight; if he was going to do what he planned to do, then the fewer witnesses the better.

He wondered as he walked, how to get Dumbledore’s attention. It would need to be big, something that Dumbledore would be able to easily see. The perfect thing occurred to him as he began descending the stairs, and he turned around immediately and ran towards the Astronomy Tower. It was the corner of the castle that looked out towards the village; it would be the first thing Dumbledore would see upon his return to the school.

The air was cool on his overheated skin as he stepped up to the parapet. The wind pulled at his hair and his robes, the coin clinking softly against his thigh in his pocket. Slowly, he lifted his wand, his hand shaking. He had never cast this particular spell before, but he had paid attention when his father had taught him. He knew the correct inflections, and the wand movements needed. He licked
his lips once, and cast.

“Morsmordre!”

Dark grey smoke erupted from his wand, wending its way up into the night sky, blocking out the stars as it coalesced into the Dark Mark, the snake opening its yaw and swirling through the skull with a sinuous grace. Now all he had to do was wait.

It took longer than he thought it would. The Mark hung right above him, and he wondered why he couldn’t hear screaming the instant it had appeared. It took him a moment to realise that the entire school was asleep, and that it would take time for the Mark to be noticed, and even longer for someone to think of sending a message to Dumbledore. Unable to take his eyes from the slithering smoke above him, Draco settled himself behind a statue to shelter him from the wind.

He heard footsteps on the stairs behind him before he heard voices, and then the door was slamming open next to him. A man with red hair pulled into a ponytail stepped up to the parapet, moonlight glinting off the small hooped earring dangling against his neck as he stared up at the sky.

“Something’s happened,” he said hoarsely, and Draco jumped, wondering if he was talking to him.

“Blimey, where’s Dumbledore?” A female voice answered from the doorway.

The man turned around, and if Draco couldn’t have told he was a Weasley by the colour of his hair, then the freckles scattered across his face would have clued him in. “Tonks, send a Patronus to Madam Rosmerta, see if he’s in the Three Broomsticks. I’ll find everyone else.”

“I think some of Harry’s friends are out of bed, I saw that Longbottom boy earlier,” his companion replied.

Weasley winced and moved back to the door, and Draco had to strain his ears to hear what he was saying, “See if you can herd them all back to bed. The last thing we need is a bunch of kids roaming the halls while the Dark Mark is hanging out there.”

“Bill,” Tonks said quietly, “who do you suppose is dead?”
“I don’t know,” Weasley replied tersely, and then their footsteps faded away.

Draco hadn’t thought of that, had forgotten that the Mark was used by the Death Eaters to announce a kill. He looked up at the product of his spell, wondering if this had been a bad idea. If Dumbledore thought he had killed someone, maybe he wouldn’t listen to anything Draco had to say, and this risk would have been all for nothing. His hands shook harder than ever, the instinct to run becoming impossible to resist. He took one last glance up at the Mark, and his eyes fell upon a black smudge in the distance, rapidly getting closer and larger.

_Dumbledore was coming._

Draco let his body obey its flight instinct, his feet slipping on the flagstones as he ran through the door and onto the steps leading back down into the castle. His hand reached out to grab the door handle, but he heard voices on the other side. He was trapped. Whoever was on the other side of that door would hex first and ask questions later, Draco was sure. He had waited too long; he had given himself no choice.

_His feet felt heavy as he moved back up the stairs; his chest was tight. He paused at the top, trying to listen for the moment Dumbledore alighted onto the tower, but he could hear nothing through the thick wood. He closed his eyes. Was it bravery, for him to walk through this door and face whatever lay on the other side? Or was it simply cowardice, walking towards the softer option and away from the more likely danger? He blew out a breath and opened his eyes. Did it matter either way?_ 

_He placed his hand on the door and pushed it open, stepping out onto the parapet once more. There Dumbledore leaned, as casual as if he had just taken a stroll to look up at the stars._

_“Ah, Mr Malfoy,” Dumbledore said, looking over at Draco and then up to the Dark Mark, still moving above them both. “I take it this was your handiwork?”_

_Draco took a deep breath, and then another. He still held his wand in his hand, but it was pointed at the floor, his grip loose. He felt like he was standing on the edge of the tower, about to take a step out onto thin air. He looked at Dumbledore, and jumped._

_“Professor, I need your help.”_
The sunlight woke him, bright and hard against his eyes, and Draco squinted in annoyance. He still wasn’t used to sleeping above ground, despite the wide windows in his own suite in Malfoy Manor. His mother had instructed the elves to place full length curtains in his rooms his first summer home from school, after Draco had complained about the sunlight waking him up at ungodly hours of the morning. He frowned against the light, certain that he had closed the curtains around his bed before he fell asleep the night before. Perhaps he hadn’t shut them tight enough; he had been fairly preoccupied.

Draco lifted a hand to cover his eyes as he turned away from the offending window, and he winced as his face came into contact with a scratchy pillow case. He blinked an eye open and stared down in revulsion at the plain white polyester case. He only ever used one hundred percent cotton; he brought them from home to use wherever he slept.

And that’s when he saw the hand in front of his eyes, its back resting against the sheet next to him. He jumped back in horror, not understanding whose hand it was, staring hard at the withered flesh, the fingers curled into claws, the wrist attached pulled taut and twisted. But the hand moved with him, following his movements as he backed away across the bed. He sat up, his legs scrambling to get away, getting himself tangled in the scratchy sheets wrapped around him.

And then he realised; it was his hand, and the other one, that he had raised to try and bat the offending appendage away, looked just the same; the fingers curled into each other, the flesh and skin pulled tight and dessicated from disuse.

He couldn’t help it; he started to scream.

“Draco? Draco!”

He was dimly aware of a door banging open, of the bed dipping down and someone grabbing his shoulder. He didn’t look up, couldn’t look away from the gnarled lumps that used to be his hands sitting lifeless in his lap.

“Shit. Hermione! We need some more Calming Draught up here!” the voice yelled in the direction of the door, and then hands were running up and down his bare back, and someone was making shushing noises in his ear.
“It’s okay, Draco, it was just a bad dream, you’re safe here, it’s okay.”

Draco managed to tear his eyes away from his useless hands and look up at the person trying to comfort him. For a moment he was disoriented; this wasn’t his dormitory in the new Eighth Year tower, nor was it his old Slytherin dorm. It wasn’t even his rooms in the Manor. It was a room he had never seen before, the walls covered in dark wood panelling that looked as though a house elf hadn’t been near them in years, thick dust on the dark wood furniture. But even more surprising was the person sitting on the bed next to him, their arms wrapped around his shoulders as they made noises of comfort and gently rubbed his back.

“Potter? What are you doing here? Where am I?”

Potter sat back slightly, a confused frown pulling at his eyebrows above his round glasses, but before he could say anything in reply, the door thumped open again and Granger’s frizzy mop of hair appeared.

“Another bad dream?” she asked as she sat on the edge of the bed, looking at Draco with something that looked almost like pity. She held out a gently smoking goblet before her. Draco stared at it, but Potter reached out and took it from her.

“Drink this, Draco, you’ll feel better in a moment.”

Potter held the cup to Draco’s lips, and he tipped his head up to accept it, but as he did, he caught a glimpse of himself in the cracked and faded mirror on the dresser opposite him and he gasped.

He thought he might be in a very bad nightmare. He thought he might puke and drown in his own vomit from what his subconscious was showing his sleeping mind. Because that couldn’t be him, it had to be a nightmare, one from which he would wake up, because that thing couldn’t be him...

And then the memories hit, so fast and so hard that he doubled over from the pain in his head. Potter revealing himself from under his cloak on the tower; Severus arriving, Dumbledore telling him to help Draco and his family stay safe; Severus performing the killing curse on Dumbledore after the professor telling him he had to; being whisked away by the female Auror Tonks to a rundown shack, his parents arriving soon after, sent by Severus; Death Eaters showing up, his father falling to a killing curse; his mother, trying to protect Draco, pushing him aside and telling him to run even as her wand was ripped away from her; Dolohov and Yaxley catching up with him in the back garden, and then pain, pain, pain as they took turns with Crucio, laughing as he screamed himself hoarse, his hands tightening into fists as he convulsed on the ground; Potter arriving, the red light of his stunning spells flickering behind Draco’s closed eyelids as he battled the Death Eaters, Weasley and Granger...
helping Draco up off the ground; Potter’s scream as Dolohov turned his wand once more on Draco, the *sectumsempra* curse on his lips, and then more *pain, pain, pain* as Draco felt the skin of his face splitting open, so much worse than that day in the bathroom; the room, always in the room, refusing to come out, only letting Potter and occasionally Granger in to tend to him, the rest of the world pointless to him now.

Draco opened his eyes and almost cried aloud in his disgust at having his own gnarled hands pressed against his face. Potter was kneeling up in front of him, hiding his reflection in the mirror behind him, his fingers wrapped gently around Draco’s wrists, his thumbs rubbing soothing circles across his pulse. His green eyes were wide with concern, and as Draco slowly lowered his hands Potter let go of one of his wrists and reached up, carefully smoothing Draco’s hair back behind his ear.

“It’s okay,” he said quietly. “I’m here.”

“But they’re not,” Draco whispered, and Potter didn’t have to ask to know who he meant.

He bit his lip and shook his head. “I’m so sorry,” he whispered back, and smoothed his fingers through Draco’s hair again, his fingertips a warm pressure against his scalp.

It took less than a day for Draco to make the decision to try again. He had no choice really; he couldn’t take back the change he made, and he couldn’t live like he was. He had wanted to make sure that his parents were safe, that they were on the right side of the war by the time it ended and could have their lives back the way that the Malfoy family should be. But here, the war was still raging, his parents were dead, and Draco was a disfigured shut in, stuck in a room in the house of his mother’s ancestors that Potter now owned, reliant upon a bunch of Gryffindors for his every need.

Potter had left him after about an hour of holding him, and Draco almost found himself missing him. He supposed it was all the new memories he now had, of Potter nursing him back to health, waking him up from his nightmares in the middle of the night, sitting quietly with him in the dark, helping to feed him because he could no longer hold utensils in his useless hands, putting up with Draco’s tantrums and getting that pinched look on his face, that Draco now knew was guilt, whenever Draco railed against him for not getting there in time, for not saving him, for not saving his parents.

But now he was alone in his room, Potter and his friends having left a while ago, on another of their secret ‘searches’. Draco neither knew nor cared what they were searching for, he just wanted to
work out a way to fix what had gone wrong. Dumbledore had agreed to help him, had tasked Potter with getting him to safety while Severus went to collect his parents. But then Dumbledore had died and Draco’s family had been found.

Maybe that was it, maybe the fact that Dumbledore had died too soon after offering Draco sanctuary was the reason why all of this had happened. Maybe, if Draco could stop that from happening, things would go back to how they should be, how he had wanted it to be.

He heard movement from somewhere deep in the house, and then footsteps on the stairs beyond his bedroom door. A moment later, Potter opened the door and stepped inside, and Draco realised what he had to do.

“Hey, how are you feeling?”

Draco shrugged, pulled at the sheet covering his legs with his wrists. “Did you find anything?” He always asked, and Potter was always evasive in his answers, but they both knew that Draco didn’t really care either way.

“We’re getting closer,” Potter replied ambiguously, and sat down beside Draco on the bed. “Can I get you anything?” He reached a hand out and smoothed his fingers over the back of one of Draco’s wrists, and Draco felt his arm relax at the touch.

“Actually, yes.”

The Dark Lord and his followers had had to remove themselves from Malfoy Manor once Draco’s father had been killed; the wards on the Manor had reacted unfavourably towards their presence in the absence of a Malfoy heir. As soon as Draco had turned eighteen, Potter had gone there with a few of his Order members and retrieved everything that Draco had asked for. Including a box of old diaries that Draco had kept under his bed.

“Could you bring me the box that you brought back from my bedroom? The one with the books.”

Potter smiled slightly. “Fancy doing a bit of reading?”

“Something like that.” Draco tried to smile back, and felt the contorted side of his mouth pull uncomfortably. He winced and shut his eyes briefly.
“Sure. I’ll go and get them now.”

Potter left, and Draco sat back on the bed, carefully avoiding looking across the room in case he caught a glimpse of himself in the mirror. He could still remember in the old timeline, how Dumbledore’s hand had been black and dead-looking all through sixth year. But now he also knew what had happened to that hand and, more importantly, he knew when it had happened. If he could just get to Dumbledore before he left to find the ring, maybe he could change Dumbledore’s fate and in turn, that of his own, and his family.

But for that, he needed his diary from that moment, so that he could remember and then dream a different outcome. Draco leaned back against the scratchy pillows and waited for Potter to return.

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**His rooms were cold and dim, as they had been since he had returned from school. The house elves no longer came up to light his fires and tend to his needs, their presence needed elsewhere in the Manor, since their new guest had arrived. Draco could go downstairs, could join his family in the warmth of the parlour, but he was too terrified to move. He would rather sit in his freezing rooms alone than face what was waiting for him downstairs.**

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**It had been a week since his return from Hogwarts, his father still locked in Azkaban after the his failure at the Ministry. His mother had whispered words of comfort upon his arrival at the Manor, had whispered news of an impending breakout at the prison that would bring her husband back to them. But Draco had heard other whispers, rumours of what was to befall him in punishment for his father’s failure.**

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**Tomorrow, he was to receive the Dark Mark, and be given an impossible task in order to save his family.**

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**The Dark Lord and his followers were meeting in the dining room tonight, and Draco was expected to attend, to sit next to his mother and stare calmly as their family was ridiculed for their failures, for the unseemly parts of their lineage. It was a regular occurrence among their group of people.**

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**If he was to do anything else, now would be the time.**
His hands shaking, Draco conjured a piece of parchment and opened his desk drawer. He pulled out a Bloodline Quill, so that only someone sharing his blood would be able to read what he wrote. It was a risk, he knew; if Aunt Bellatrix was to come across the letter before his mother, all would be lost, but it was a risk he had to take.

He read over the contents once he was done. It wasn’t perfect, there were too many things his mother could question, but he hoped against hope that her self preservation would keep her from voicing her thoughts. He sealed it shut and placed the parchment beneath his pillow, casting a hiding charm that would reveal its contents upon his mother’s arrival. It wouldn’t keep Bella out indefinitely, but it would give his mother a fighting chance to get to it first. Then he grabbed his broom and opened his bedroom window.

He couldn’t fly all the way to Hogwarts, and he didn’t yet know how to Apparate. His only chance was to get beyond the wards of his home and then call for the Knight Bus and hope it would arrive before his absence was discovered. He nearly knocked the conductor over in his haste to board the bus, and he spent the entire ride sitting upright in his seat, constantly looking over his shoulder. The flight from Hogsmeade to the school gates made him feel sick with fear; there were still so many things that could go wrong. He was a Slytherin; he should have thought this through more, planned it better. But he’d had no time.

The wards at the entrance to the school were closed, and Draco felt a moment of real fear. If he couldn’t get in, then all of this was for nothing. But then he spotted movement across the grounds before him, and before long a long silvery beard and a kind face with eyes hidden behind half moon glasses came into view.

“Mr Malfoy?” Dumbledore looked at him from across the small space where the wards separated them. “You’re lucky I was just on my way out, the wards are closed to all but the teachers during the summer holidays.”

He raised his hand, and Draco breathed a sigh of relief when he saw that it was still pale and whole. The wards before him fell, and Draco stumbled over the line.

“May I ask the meaning of this visit? Shouldn’t you be at home with your family, enjoying your freedom?”

Draco almost laughed out loud at that; there was no freedom for him within the walls of his own home, not any more.
“Professor,” he said instead of answering, and his voice came out high and strained. “We need to talk.”

Movement in the room beyond his tightly closed curtains woke Draco, and the first thing he did was look down at his hands. He almost laughed out loud as he flexed them in front of him, the skin pale and smooth, the muscles beneath strong and whole. He scrambled out of bed, nearly falling through the curtains as he raced towards the dormitory bathrooms. His face was how it had always been, his right eye whole and sparkling grey in the light of the bathroom. He ran his fingers over his once more perfect face, the tips tracing the lines where scars had once been, from his eyebrow to his lips. He remembered the way the entire right side of his face had sagged and contorted, pulling his mouth up in a permanent grimace and his eye sitting loose against his damaged socket. He let out a sob of relief and his whole body relaxed against the sink as he let himself rejoice in the wholeness of himself.

“I know you’re ugly, Malfoy, but there’s no need to cry about it.”

A light shove against his shoulder and a soft laugh in his ear made Draco look up. Finnigan smiled widely at him before disappearing into a shower cubicle, and Draco blinked in surprise at the familiar gesture.

“You might want to stop staring at yourself and get dressed before breakfast is over,” Finnigan shouted through the cubicle door, and then the shower started up and Draco could hear him singing in his off-tune Irish lilt.

Draco walked back into the dormitory and saw that everyone else was also up, in various stages of undress. Zabini tossed him a wink as he walked out into the corridor, his tie loose around his neck. Boot was busy throwing schoolbooks and swearing under his breath as he looked for a matching pair of socks. And Ron gave him a tired smile, his face pale and solemn, before he followed Zabini through the door. Draco stood by his bed as one by one his fellow dorm mates finished getting dressed and left to go down to the hall for breakfast, until he was alone in the room. The beds all around him were in various states of disarray, books and parchment and clothes strewn about their occupants’ spaces. All with the exception of the bed opposite him. It was bare, the curtains pulled back to the corners as they only ever were when they first arrived, before a student came to take over and charm them to how they liked. Not a single sock or scrap of parchment littered the area. It was as though the empty space was being held as a shrine. Then Draco saw in his mind’s eye the wistful look Ron had cast in the bed’s direction before he left the room, and then the memories hit him, so hard it knocked him off his feet.
Sitting in Dumbledore’s office, begging him not to try on the ring before he destroyed it; being sent to number 12, Grimmauld Place for the remainder of his summer holiday; finding out Severus was a member of the Order; furtive meetings with Potter, who was now Harry, throughout the school year; summer again spent at Grimmauld Place, but this time with Harry and Ron and Hermione; going back to Hogwarts alone as his new friends went into hiding; Harry’s arrival followed by the Dark Lord and the Battle beginning, people dying right in front of him as he dueled with people his father called his friends; his mother refusing to fight and dying at the hands of her own sister; his father falling to the ground in despair, unable to defend the killing curse sent his way by the Dark Lord himself; Hagrid carrying a lifeless Harry out of the woods; Dumbledore killing Voldemort in the middle of the Great Hall as Ron and Hermione held each other and sobbed.

Draco cried out as he came back to himself, sprawled across the end of his bed. No, this couldn’t have happened, this was supposed to save his parents...

He rolled over on the bed, pulling his knees up to his chest and letting the tears soak through his pyjama bottoms. It didn’t matter what he did, his family always ended up dying. Draco screwed his eyes shut and wished with everything he had that he’d never tried to change anything. His father locked up in Azkaban and his mother wandless was a far better fate than death, which was all his changes seemed to bring about. And this time Harry...

The memories overlapped each other in his mind. Draco could see the tired smile on the bloodied and bedraggled Potter who wished the war hadn’t happened, he could feel Potter’s hands on his bare back, calming him down after yet another nightmare, could remember the soft smiles they had shared and the whisper of touches as they passed each other in the hallways of Grimmauld Place. And now the bed opposite his was empty, forever awaiting a hero who had never stepped back out of the Forbidden Forest, because he’d had no vision of Dumbledore to give him the option of coming back. In this new world that Draco had created, Harry was dead, just like Draco’s parents.

Draco sat up, wiped his eyes and stared at the empty bed across from him. Maybe the original Potter had it right, and Draco should try to stop the war from ever happening in the first place. Except Draco didn’t know how to do that, didn’t know how to concentrate on anything except finding a way to keep his family alive. He leaned over his bed and pulled his box of diaries out from under it. He would just have to try again.

The small room was crowded, and Draco could feel Crabbe and Goyle pressing against his back as they waited for the professor to come back to collect them. Whispers came from all directions, and
Draco could tell the Muggleborns from the ones who had been raised in the wizarding world from the things they were saying. He looked over his shoulder and saw him, his messy black hair and his round glasses hiding wide green eyes as he stared at the space where the resident Hogwarts ghosts had just disappeared. He was still standing next to the Weasley boy that he had spent the train ride with, when Draco had been thinking of going up to introduce himself. But he’d held himself back; hopefully they would be able to get to know each other once their first evening was over.

The door opened and Professor McGonagall stepped through, her face severe as she looked down at them all. She directed them through into the Great Hall, and what seemed like hundreds of heads turned in their direction. The three legged stool sat in front of the teachers’ table, the innocuous and ragged looking hat resting atop it. This was it, the Sorting Ceremony that set in stone the fate of everyone who placed the hat upon their head.

Draco watched as, one by one, the new students around him went up to the stool and put on the hat. A girl called Hannah Abbott went to Hufflepuff, Terry Boot went to Ravenclaw. Crabbe was the first to be sorted into Slytherin, and Draco watched as he went and sat at the end of the long table, the stripes of his tie already turned green. He was so busy staring at the table that had held so many of his ancestors that he almost missed it when his own name was called.

“Draco Malfoy.”

He stepped forward and sat down on the stool, made sure to keep one hand on the edge of the hat as he placed it on his head. He wanted to make sure the hat gave him a chance to think before placing him where it assumed he would want to go.

“Well, this is an easy one,” the hat whispered insidiously into his ear.

“Gryffindor,” Draco thought clearly, cutting off the hat’s mumblings about his thirst to prove himself and his sense of self preservation.

“You... what?” The hat asked, sounding unsure for the first time in Draco’s memory.

“Gryffindor. I want to be put in Gryffindor,” Draco thought hard, and he could hear a faint buzzing in his ear that indicated the hat was doing some deep thinking.

“Hmm,” it said eventually. “It’s not unheard of, I suppose. After all, there was another Black whom was sorted into Gryffindor not too long ago. It is unusual, but, if you’re sure, Gryffindor!”
The last word was shouted out in front of the whole school, and Draco could hear the gasps of everyone around him. Everyone who had grown up in the wizarding world would know just by looking at him who he was, would know where he was supposed to go. As he pulled off the hat and stood up, his eyes caught the stunned gazes of Crabbe and Goyle. He flicked his eyes away quickly, and instead they landed on a pair of vivid green eyes, staring at him from behind a pair of round glasses.

His face felt warm as he slowly woke up from his dream, and Draco turned instinctively away from the source. He burrowed his nose deeper into the shoulder laying next to him, trying to block out the sunlight. But it was too late, he was already awake and his eyes opened against his will, messy black hair coming into his vision as he blinked sleepily. Draco sighed out a breath and rolled carefully onto his back, waiting. He knew how this happened now.

The new memories still hit him hard, still made his head ache with the intensity of it, but this time he was ready for it. He and Potter shaking hands in the Gryffindor common room; standing in the girls’ bathroom and helping stop a rampaging troll from flattening Hermione; vying with Harry good naturedly for the position of Gryffindor seeker; Ron groaning loudly as Draco beat him at chess over Christmas; following Harry past the three headed dog to stop Quirrell; his aunt Andromeda taking him in over the summer, after his father refused to acknowledge having a son in Gryffindor; the flying car; Lockhart and his backfiring memory charm; Sirius Black and Scabbers the rat; supporting Harry through the Tri Wizard Tournament, his heart in his throat as the time clicked by and Harry still had not returned from the bottom of the lake; Dumbledore’s Army and the fight against his own father in the Department of Mysteries; stolen kisses with Harry in corridors during their sixth year; camping in a smelly tent as they searched for horcruxes, Harry’s arms wrapped tight around him in the bunk bed as they slept; the house in Godric’s Hollow, the Dark Lord’s snake coming after them, the light dying in Hermione’s eyes the last thing they saw before Harry Apparated Draco away; hearing of Ron’s capture and subsequent death on the wireless; the battle of Hogwarts, seeing Harry supposedly dead and lifeless in Hagrid’s arms, only to get back up and fight the Dark Lord and somehow win against all the odds.

Draco raised a hand to his head and winced as the new memories settled themselves over the old ones. He’d done it, he’d managed to change the fate of himself and his family after the war. After the fight at the Ministry, Lucius had left Azkaban and grabbed up his wife, whisking them out of the country and away from the reaches of the Dark Lord. Seeing his own son willing to fight him to do what was right had forced a change upon the elder Malfoy, and once the war was over, Draco had been accepted back into the family with open arms and profuse apologies. His parents were safe from harm and the stigma of being on the Dark Lord’s side had vanished, and Draco himself was held as a hero in the eyes of the rest of the wizarding world, along with Harry himself. And somehow, amongst everything else that had happened, Draco had also found himself head over heels
in love with the boy laying next to him.

It wasn’t as though he hadn’t noticed the attraction that had been there, at least on his part. Back in Draco’s original timeline, he’d realised he fancied Potter at roughly the same time he realised he liked boys more than girls, on the night Pansy had accompanied him to the Yule Ball in Fourth Year. She’d had him pinned up against the wall, kissing him like she was a Dementor trying to suck out his soul, and all Draco could think was that he’d rather be here doing this with Potter, in those bottle green robes that made his eyes so very bright. Since then, green eyes and messy black hair had been the cue for most of his late night fantasies, and even later on when he’d started a sexual relationship with Zabini, every now and then Potter would be the name on his lips as he came. But that had all been an abstract, a physical attraction that Draco had acknowledged and then ignored, because the possibility of him and Potter ever being anything to each other was so preposterous it had never even entered his head. And yet now, in this timeline, the idea wasn’t so impossible any more, and Draco found he had never wanted anything more.

He turned his head and studied the person sleeping beside him. Mussed black hair lay against the white pillow like streaks of ink on a blank canvas, eyelashes a dark sweep against a sunblushed cheekbone, red lips parted slightly in sleep. His face was turned towards Draco, a hand stretching out over the sheets as though reaching for him even as he slept. And Draco could feel it, could track through his new memories how his feelings for Harry had changed from friendship to something new and strange, to finally something more, something that had turned into love in those long endless nights hiding in a tent. He could still remember the animosity he had felt for this boy, back when his tie had been striped silver and green and he hung on every word his father spoke. He could remember the blame he directed towards him for his scarred face and hands, and he could remember the fleeting touches in the hallways of Grimmauld Place. But all of those old memories meant nothing in the face of what he was feeling now, and his fingers itched to slide over that expanse of sunkissed skin, to pull Harry closer and wake him with a kiss.

So he did.

It was new and old all at once, both the first time and just one in a long line of kisses that had Draco’s chest aching with the comfortable familiarity of it. Harry made a happy noise in the back of his throat as he slowly woke up, following Draco across the bed as he tried to sit back. He covered Draco’s body with his own, the warmth of his bare chest in contact with Draco’s making Draco gasp into his mouth and his heart skip a beat. He pressed Draco firmly into the mattress and Draco let him, content to be pulled and pushed around as long as he could continue to run his hands all over Harry’s body, could continue to slide his tongue languidly against Harry’s.

Finally, Harry pulled back, leaning up on his elbows as he opened his eyes for the first time that morning, the brilliant green dazzling Draco as he looked up into them. “Hi,” he whispered, leaning down again to leave a trail of nibbling kisses along Draco’s collarbone.
Morning.” Draco ran his hands up Harry’s back and over his shoulders, until he could sink his fingers into the soft hair at the back of his head. “Double Charms this morning, I think,” he said softly, trying to keep his voice even, not wanting to give away what the feel of Harry’s tongue on his skin did to him.

“Right.” Harry pulled up and away, his body slipping out of Draco’s hands as he sat up on the edge of the bed. He ran his fingers through his messy hair, then got up, giving Draco a small smile that didn’t reach his eyes before disappearing into the bathroom.

And then Draco remembered. He remembered how the light seemed to disappear from Harry’s eyes upon their return to the tent, still without the Sword and now without Hermione. He remembered how Harry had crumpled when they’d heard the news of Ron’s death, the way he’d withdrawn into himself ever since. The only time Draco caught a glimpse of the Harry he had fallen in love with was when his guard was down, after he’d been drinking or before he remembered that two of his best friends were dead. But then he would remember, and the light would die in his eyes all over again and the smile would slip from his face, and this new Harry would come back, a Harry who could barely muster the energy to eat and go to classes, let alone grin and laugh and have any fun.

Draco had changed the past and he’d gotten what he wanted; his family whole and safe, their reputation untarnished. But in the process he’d changed what it was he wanted, and now he wanted Harry. Only he didn’t want Harry like this.

“Harry, I want to ask you something.”

It had taken most of the day, but somewhere between Potions class after lunch and dinner at the Gryffindor table with a quiet Harry, Draco had come up with an idea. Harry, the Potter who had stood between Draco and the Aurors, had wished that the war had never happened. Draco had agreed with him, because if there was no war then it meant that his family would be safe. He had tried to change what he could, but each time the war still happened, and his efforts had caused him to lose something he found he couldn’t live without. He had to find a way to stop the war from beginning, and he could think of only one way to do that. The only problem was, he didn’t have any memories that went back far enough.

So he was going to have to use someone else’s.
Harry looked up from where he was sprawled across the bed they shared, his potions homework lying untouched across his lap. “Okay.”

“What happened the night your parents died?”

As expected, Harry’s reaction wasn’t favourable. His brow drew down into a frown, his shoulders tightening. “Why would you ask me that?”

Draco took a deep breath. He’d known Harry wouldn’t want to talk about it. “Would you tell me? It’s important.”

Harry let out a snort and looked away, back to the blank stretch of wall that had been taking up all his attention for the past half hour. “You sound like that mind-healer Andromeda forced me to go and see.” He slammed his potions book shut and dropped it onto the bed with a thud. “Talking about all this shit won’t help me, Draco.”

He moved to get off the bed, but Draco reached out and wrapped his fingers around his wrist. “I know that. But I think,” he paused, unsure of what to say. “I think if I knew exactly what happened, I might be able to make it better.”

Harry turned hard green eyes onto him, and Draco almost flinched. It was rare for Harry to look at him like that, but Draco could remember another time, when that was the only look he received from him. “How could you knowing something that I barely know make anything better?”

“I’m not sure,” Draco said honestly. “You’ll just have to trust me.”

Harry’s look turned from wary to suspicious. “You’re being very cryptic. Are you trying to make me curious enough to answer your question?”

Draco tipped his head to the side. “Is it working?”

Harry let out a short laugh and flopped back down onto the bed, threading his fingers through Draco’s. “I’ve always said you were more Slytherin than Gryffindor.” He leaned back against the pillows, hooking a foot around Draco’s ankle. “If I talk, will you tell me why you need to know?”
Draco pursed his lips in thought. “If it doesn’t work, I will. If it does work, I won’t need to.”

“Very cryptic,” Harry repeated, then pulled on Draco’s hand until they were pushed close together, their heads resting on the same pillow, sharing each other’s breath. “Fine, I’ll tell you what I know. It’s not everything though, just what I remembered when the Dementors came near me, plus Snape’s memories, and that moment when I was in Voldemort’s head. Now that was a fantastic moment in my life.” He laughed without humour, one hand coming up to smooth Draco’s hair behind his ear.

“It was Halloween, in 1981. Snape had told the Order that Voldemort was going to try and kill me, so they were in hiding. Wormtail told Voldemort where they were, and he decided to do it that night. My dad was in the living room, my mum was on the stairs, just about to put me to bed. He got my dad, and then followed my mum up the stairs and into my room. He told her to move out of the way, but she refused, so he killed her, and then tried to kill me.” He raised his eyebrows. “And the rest is history.”

He said it all perfunctorily, and Draco noticed how he tried to distance himself from it as much as he was able, as though he was only telling the story, and not actually a part of it. His gaze was steady, but Draco was close enough to feel his heart pounding in his chest, feel the short puffs of breath on his face as Harry came close to panicking.

“Now you know as much as I do,” he said. “So, has it made everything better? Are you going to tell me why you wanted to know?”

“Not yet,” Draco replied, and pulled himself up and away from Harry. “I’ve got to go to the library, I need to research the effects of mixing Jobberknoll feathers with aconite for this essay.”

He stood up from the bed, but he grabbed his diary instead of his potions book. Harry didn’t notice; he was too busy gaping up at Draco.

“Are you serious? You ask me a question like that and then just run off to do homework?”

“I’ll be back soon, I promise.” Draco turned around and knelt up on the bed, leaning over and placing a deep kiss into Harry’s lips. “I love you,” he breathed out silently, his forehead pressed to Harry’s, just in case he changed things so much that he never got another chance.

He really hoped that that wouldn’t be the case.
The night air was cool against his skin, the wind pulling at his clothes as he stood on the shadowed pavement. He shivered, and looked down at himself in surprise; he’d always been properly dressed for the occasion when he’d tried this before. But then he remembered. This was different, he wasn’t just going back into his own memories. This time he was creating a memory from other people’s recollections. Somewhere, on the other side of the country, his mother would be wrestling with a seventeen month old Draco, before getting the house elves to take him to bed. And yet, here stood the eighteen year old Draco, asleep and dreaming what he hoped would be the solution to everything. He brushed his hands over the thin material covering him and sighed. He supposed he should have accounted for the fact that his sleeping self would be wearing only pyjama bottoms and a thin t shirt.

He looked up at the house across the street, and a part of him marvelled at the magic surrounding it. He had never been this close to a working Fidelius charm before. If he faced the house straight on, he could see nothing but an empty lot, rubble from an old house demolished long ago strewn across the gravel and weeds that stretched across the space. But if he turned his head to the side and looked out of his peripheral vision, the air shimmered and a small house came into view, complete with roses climbing the doorframe and firelight flickering behind mullioned windows. It was a beautiful little cottage, and Draco felt a pang of loss at the realisation that Harry hadn’t spent more than a few months here in Godric’s Hollow.

From the other side of the square, Draco could hear young children shrieking and laughing as they made their way from home to home, dressed in costumes and begging their neighbours for treats. It was dark already due to the time of year, but it seemed darker to Draco, as though the world knew that something terrible would be happening in this little village just a few hours from now.

He didn’t have long, and he suspected the Potters wouldn’t be all that receptive to an unknown young man arriving on their doorstep, especially one dressed as though ready for bed. It would take a while to convince them. He took a breath and stepped out from the shadows, into the middle of the quiet street. He could feel the energy of the charm slide over him, as it tried to work out how he could see beyond its barriers. Draco could only half see it, if he concentrated on looking elsewhere. Because he had been told exactly where to go and what he would find, but not by the Secret Keeper, the charm didn’t quite know what to do with him, and how much of what it kept hidden it was allowed to show him. The air shimmered and sparkled in front of him in a state of constant flux, and the house kept appearing whole and solid, only to fall away into nothing but rubble and weeds. Draco kept walking forwards, through the gate that was solid in his hand one moment only to curl into a wisp of smoke the next, up the garden path, his bare feet tripping in weeds that disappeared a second later, until he was standing in front of the door that glittered and wavered in front of him. Draco raised his hand and knocked twice. The charm seemed to decide at that moment that he was meant to be here, for the air stopped crackling around him and the house came fully into view for the first time.
Draco didn’t have time to fully appreciate the sight before him, because all too soon a dark head of hair blotted out the light shining out through the door windows. The handle turned in front of him, and Draco took a deep breath as the door cracked open and a wand was thrust into his neck.

For the first time since he had started this, Draco didn’t wake up disoriented, and he thought it probably had something to do with the dim green light that he could feel rippling gently across his body. Without even opening his eyes, he knew that he was in his bed in the Slytherin dorm. He could feel the soft pure cotton of the sheets against his bare skin, imagined he could hear the soft movements of the water outside his window. He felt at home here like he never had in his rooms at the Manor; there were many expectations and assumed failures for him to ever feel truly comfortable within the walls of his ancestral home.

He stretched, luxuriating in the feeling of the familiar, a smile pulling at his lips as his skin slid against the cool sheets. Something tickled his cheek, and he tried to lift a hand to swipe at it, but he couldn’t move it. Images of fingers knotted and broken flooded his mind and his eyes flew open to stare up at his hands where they were raised above his head. But his hands were fine, whole and healthy and exactly as they should be, with the exception of the two Slytherin ties wrapped around his wrists and binding them to the headboard.

“What the fuck?” He said to no one in particular, and jumped when he got a response.

“Oh good, you’re awake,” a voice came from next to him, and Draco rolled his head to find Harry lying next to him, his bare hipbone only partially covered by the sheet. “I was beginning to think I’d have to see to myself this morning.” He rolled over to lay on top of Draco, one thigh pushing slowly but insistently between Draco’s.

The new memories slammed into him then, and Draco was too busy dealing with being tied to his bed and ravished to properly prepare himself for their onslaught. James Potter holding him at wandpoint, demanding that he tell him who he was; Lily Potter standing behind her husband, a baby Harry held tightly in her arms; James telling him he was crazy, while Lily grabbing the man’s arm and whispering but what if? Draco telling them that they didn’t have much time, and James panicking because it didn’t matter where they went, Voldemort would find them; Lily suddenly Apparating away and coming back moments later, her now empty arms wrapped around her chest and tears pouring down her face; Lily assuring her husband that their son would be safe, and then everything going dark.
The rest of the dream hit Draco first, the part that he usually never remembered but contained the moment that changed everything. And all through it, he could feel Harry pressing kisses into his skin, biting down on his collarbone and then soothing the sting with his tongue. Draco moaned and lifted his hips, seeking friction against his aching cock, but then more memories hit him and he was swept away.

The news of Lily and James Potter’s death on the wizarding news even years later; Severus coming to the Manor for tea, a small boy in tow; playing in the Manor gardens with a young Harry; arriving at platform nine and three quarters together; both of them being sorted into Slytherin; Harry calling Severus ‘Father’ and spending school holidays split between Malfoy Manor and Spinner’s End; the Dark Lord becoming Minister for Magic and all the Muggleborns being kicked out of school, their wands snapped in half. And Harry, the Dark Lord’s favourite, groomed by Severus to sit at the right hand of Voldemort himself.

“Is it just me, or am I the only one really in the moment right now?”

Harry’s voice stopped the flow of memories, and Draco blinked his eyes open. He realised that he wasn’t actually in the Slytherin dormitory, it was just the windows that had been charmed to reflect the same image that the two boys had spent seven years looking at while in school together. It was the room he had once occupied in Grimmauld Place, now decorated in the Slytherin colours that made up who they both were.

“I’m here,” he whispered back, and was rewarded with a deep kiss.

“Good,” Harry murmured against his lips, his own curving up in a smile. “Because I want this morning to be perfect. Today is a special day, remember?”

Draco didn’t yet, but he nodded anyway, his arms straining against the ties that still bound him to the bed. “Untie me,” he whispered, and then gasped as Harry chuckled and closed his lips over one of Draco’s nipples. “Let me touch you.”

“After,” Harry said back with meaning, and then pushed Draco’s legs apart. He mumbled the lubrication charm and then Draco felt a finger pressing against his entrance and he relaxed into it with a groan. Harry continued licking and sucking and biting his way down Draco’s chest as his finger moved in and out. He removed it completely and then closed his lips around the tip of Draco’s cock as he came back with a second finger, and Draco writhed from the dual sensations.
It seemed to go on forever, Harry’s fingers preparing him while sucking Draco’s cock, backing off and kissing just the head whenever it seemed like Draco was nearing the edge. Three times he almost came in Harry’s perfect mouth, and each time he was denied, until he finally gave up and did what he knew Harry was waiting for him to do.

“I’m ready, I’m so ready, oh God, please,” he whimpered, and then growled as he saw the smirk on Harry’s face, looking down at the now three fingers disappearing into him. Harry knew how much he hated being made to beg, and he loved it when he got him to do it anyway, the need for Harry overtaking any sense of pride.

Harry pulled his fingers almost all the way out and then back in again hard, pressing against just the right spot to make Draco see stars. Draco swore loudly over the sound of Harry’s chuckling, and then swore again when he felt suddenly empty. “Harry, if you don’t fuck me right now I swear to Salazar...”

“Pushy, pushy,” Harry said, laughter in his voice. “Don’t forget you’re the one tied up this morning.” But he muttered the lubrication charm again and used it to slick himself up. “I’d hate to have to punish you.” He grinned down at Draco as he pressed just the head of his cock against his entrance and then stilled.

“You’re an evil bastard,” Draco moaned, wrapping his legs around Harry’s hips in an effort to pull him closer, even as he pulled harder at his Slytherin restraints.

“You love it,” Harry returned, and then pushed in with one swift movement of his hips. Draco’s back arched off the bed, bringing Harry impossibly closer.

They hung there like that for a long moment, Harry leaning over Draco with his hands wrapped tight around his hips, pressing finger shaped bruises into his pale skin, until Draco shifted. “Move, Harry, fucking move, please.”

“As you wish,” Harry replied, his voice strained from holding still for so long. He pulled out and then slammed back in, hitting that spot all over again and Draco had to bite his lip against a scream as his vision went white.

“Harry, please,” Draco pleaded, his skin hot all over and his wrists chafing against the ties as he yanked uselessly at them. “Please, let me touch you.”
“Not yet,” Harry said breathlessly, as he continued to pound into him. “Consider this payback for last week,” he went on, every other word punctuated with a hard thrust of his hips, “when you held me down and fucked me for hours without letting me come.” He slowed his movements to change position, sliding his knees under Draco’s arse so he could lean down over him and give him a biting kiss. “You’re going to come untouched, and I’m not going to stop until you do, because it’s my turn to torment you.” He kissed him again, and Draco whimpered into Harry’s mouth as his hips picked up their rhythm once more.

Draco didn’t know which sensation to concentrate on more; the bruising kiss that Harry was using to muffle both their cries and moans, the feel of Harry moving inside him, or the deliciously barely there friction from where his cock was trapped between their stomachs. All of his senses were consumed by Harry, and everything was heightened by the fact that this was at once familiar and new. They had done this so many times, and Draco could remember every single one of them, from frenzied handjobs in the unused corridors of Hogwarts, to lazy Sunday blowjobs while they holed themselves up in the Slytherin dormitory. Each experience was etched clearly into Draco’s mind, and not just the memories but the emotions that came with them, and it felt as though he was reliving each and every one of them right now as Harry moved within him.

Harry shifted again, and Draco gave up on pulling at the ties around his wrists and wrapped his legs around Harry’s hips, using them to pull him impossibly closer. On his next thrust, Harry hit that spot again, and Draco came so hard he thought he might black out, spilling warmth between them. He clenched hard around Harry, and he moaned out Draco’s name as he thrust once, twice, before following Draco over the edge.

Harry collapsed down on top of him, smearing Draco’s come across both their stomachs, as he rested his head against Draco’s collarbone, breathing hard into Draco’s neck. Oceans rose and fell and mountains were created as they lay together, breathing each other in. Eventually, Harry slid his hands up Draco’s chest, following the line of his shoulders up to his arms, where he slowly removed the bindings around his wrists, one at a time. Draco took advantage of Harry’s relaxed state to tackle him onto his back, pushing his tingling fingers into Harry’s hair as he kissed him deeply and thoroughly.

“Don’t think I’m not going to come up with at least a hundred ways to pay you back for that,” he mumbled between kisses, trailing his lips over Harry’s chin and down to the hollow of his throat. “And next time you tie me up, use something a little softer. Look at what you did to me.”

He held one of his wrists in front of Harry, but instead of apologising Harry just leaned up and kissed the reddened skin, stroking his tongue over his pulse point before moving up and wrapping it around his thumb. Draco moaned as Harry pulled his thumb into his mouth and sucked lightly, the tip of his tongue tracing along the edge of his nail. “In fact, I’m thinking of at least one way right now.”

Harry laughed and dug his fingers into Draco’s ribs, rolling him off and then sitting up. “No time right now, Father’s probably pacing the kitchen already.”
Draco flopped back onto the bed. “Please tell me you remembered to cast a silencing charm before waking me up this time?”

“Er. Oops?”

“Oh God.” Draco covered his eyes in horror at the thought of what Severus might have heard again. The bed jostled beneath him and he moved his hand to watch Harry move around the room, watching the play of muscle down Harry’s back, the Quidditch toned arse and legs, catching a glimpse of the trail of dark hair leading down his stomach as he pulled up his pants.

Within moments Harry was dressed in a set of plain wizarding robes - never one for pomp and style, no matter what timeline they were in, it seemed - and striding back over to the bed to put on his glasses. Then he crawled back up until he was kneeling over Draco, and his gaze had gone from teasing to intense.

He kissed Draco, hard, burying his fingers in his hair to pull him as close as possible. Then he pressed their foreheads together, and looked down at Draco’s lips. “Listen,” he said, his voice low and urgent. “I need you to know, no matter what happens today. I need you to know that I love you.” He kissed him again, quickly. “Alway have, always will, in this world and the next, and all the ones in between. Okay?”

Draco opened his mouth to reply, but Harry cut him off with another deep and almost desperate kiss. Then he was off the bed and striding towards the door. He looked back with his hand resting on the handle, and smiled. “I’ll see you.” And then he was gone, the door closing behind him.

Draco lay back on the bed with a smile, his fingers running absently across the slight redness on his wrists. He could feel bruises blooming on his hips where Harry had held him, and he pressed his fingers into them one by one, cataloguing them. Each mark meant that he belonged to Harry, and Harry to him, and his mind was already running through scenarios in which he could repay the favour later. The table in the kitchen was rather sturdy...

The kitchen, where Harry was meeting his foster father, who was about to take him to the Ministry...

The memories that had been interrupted by Harry suddenly came flooding in, and Draco gasped at the force of them. Lily Potter, Apparating her son to the one place she knew would be safe, the only friend not involved in her family’s hiding place; Severus bringing up the child of the girl he had once been in love with after the deaths of Harry’s parents; Harry and Draco playing in the grounds of the
Manor while their parents talked in hushed tones in the parlour; Harry coming to Draco once their friendship had turned into something a lot closer to love, telling him he had a secret he needed to tell him; Severus and Harry telling him of their plan, that Harry had been groomed to get close to the Dark Lord, so that they could strike when the moment was right...

*Today is a special day, remember?*

Yes, Draco remembered; today was the day Severus had deemed Harry ready, seventeen years to the day since the death of his parents; the day that the Dark Lord would officially welcome Harry into his top tier of supporters; the day that Harry would look the Dark Lord in the eye and do what he had been preparing for his entire life.

Today, Harry would try to kill Voldemort.

Draco leapt off the bed and grabbed the nearest set of robes, yanking them over his head as he ripped the door open and ran full tilt down the hallway. They were too short in the leg and too wide across the shoulder because they were Harry’s, but Draco didn’t care, he *had* to get down to the kitchen, he had to stop them before they leave, because they didn’t *know*.

They couldn’t know, because in this timeline the Dark Lord had killed Dumbledore after he’d killed the Potters, and the old man hadn’t had time to tell anybody what he’d suspected the Dark Lord of doing, the way he had protected himself with the horcruxes. And now Harry was going to try to kill the Dark Lord and it wouldn’t work. Any spell he cast upon him would rebound back against Harry, the same way it had happened with Voldemort when he’d killed Lily Potter the first time around.

Draco ran down the stairs and skidded into the kitchen on his bare feet, and looked on in horror as the green flames of the floo died down to nothing. He’d been too late.

Draco was glad he had spent so much time at the elbow of his father in the past, watching as Lucius Malfoy smoothly lied his way into places and meetings that he had no business being in, easing the way with the occasional strategically handed out galleon or two when it was needed. It gave Draco the skills he needed now to sneak into the Ministry.
He slipped past the welcome wizard with a quick question about his family followed rapidly by an offhand comment about being sent on errands by his father. The man nodded his understanding and let Draco pass by him into the Atrium. Draco had been here on many occasions in this timeline, but this was the first time he felt something like revulsion at what he saw. The Fountain, which in other memories he had depicted a wizard and witch, together with a centaur and a house elf in gold, had been replaced with the Magic is Might statue that had been put there during the war. The statue in this timeline was slightly different; this time there was only one chair, upon which a wizard sat, his face remarkably snake-like. Apparently the message here wasn’t Magic, but Voldemort is Might.

Draco entered one of the lifts, accompanied by a half dozen purple memos, all fluttering serenely above his head. He knew where to go; the Dark Lord inducted all of his new followers deep in the Department of Mysteries, in a room with a circular dais and a stone arch. Draco remembered going there only once; when his mother and father were rewarded for their efforts during the war. Draco had only been five years old at the time, and he had sat on the stone benches and watched as his parents bowed before the new Minister for Magic.

The memos fluttered out at level five, and Draco spent the rest of the descent down to level nine trying to control his heartbeat, remembering the lessons Severus had given him to Occlude his mind, both in this timeline and in others. By the time the doors slid open to reveal the dark corridor, Draco thought he was as ready as he would ever be.

It was ironic really, Draco thought as he walked down the deserted corridor. He had created this world, and it had given him everything he had ever dreamed of. His parents were not only safe, but two of the most respected and feared members of the wizarding world. The Malfoy name still commanded the respect it had always been accustomed to, and they had been on the winning side of the war, such as it was. Draco should want for nothing in this world order, and yet the one thing he wanted above all else was about to be stripped away from him, and all because of a vital piece of information that had been lost in the shift. Draco should have been able to be happy here, with Harry as his friend and fellow Slytherin and the piece that made him whole. It seemed as though this timeline had been designed just to show him the things he would never be able to have.

He walked through the door to the Department of Mysteries, letting it fall shut behind him. As soon as it did, the walls began to move, circling around him until the doors became a blur in front of him. Draco waited until the spinning came to a stop, and then he calmly lifted his left arm. The tattoo on his forearm tingled and he pulled the sleeve of his robe up. The snake writhed on his skin, moving until its tail pointed in a definite direction, indicating one of the doors. Draco had received his tattoo on the same day that Harry had received his, a graduation present for all those who had attended Hogwarts and agreed to support the Dark Lord. The tattoo could be used to call them to his side, but it could also be used to find him when necessary. Draco felt it was more than necessary right now. He strode towards the door and pushed it open, and he almost collapsed at the sight that greeted him.

He’d hoped he could get there in time, that he would be able to pull Severus aside and convince him to pull Harry back from the plan. But Draco was too late. Harry stood on the circular dais, his back to the stone arch and his wand pointed at the Dark Lord’s chest. In his other hand he held
Voldemort’s wand; his Expelliarmus charm had always been a speciality of his. Severus stood to one side, his dark eyes glittering with barely suppressed anger as he stared at his former master. The Dark Lord himself held a hand out to the rest of his followers, telling them all to stay where they were, while he looked upon Harry with little more than vague interest on his face.

“Getting tired of your position among us, were you Severus?” The Dark Lord said conversationally, his eyes never straying from Harry.

Severus spat on the floor between them. “This has nothing to do with me. This is for her.”

“Her? Ah yes,” the Dark Lord mused, tapping his finger against his chin. “The Mudblood you once found yourself so taken with.”

Draco could have cried in frustration; he knew what Harry’s reaction to that would be. The word had been banned in the Slytherin common room only weeks into their first year at school, unless someone fancied being on the end of one of Harry’s curses. Sure enough Harry drew himself up to his full height and pointed his wand even more firmly in the Dark Lord’s direction.

“That Mudblood was my mother,” Harry spat angrily. “And now I’m going to kill you like you killed her.”

“Harry, no!”

Draco’s shout echoed through the room and clashed with Harry’s voice as he raised his wand and shouted the killing curse. The stone steps rumbled and surged beneath Draco’s feet as the bright green light hit the magical barrier around the Dark Lord and sent a shockwave across the room. Draco lost his footing, and he fell down the steps, his shoulder slamming against the stone floor as he collapsed into a heap at the bottom. Everyone in the room had fallen to their knees, swept off their feet by the concussive wave of the failed spell, all except for the Dark Lord, who calmly leaned down and picked up his wand from where it had fallen to the floor. But Draco only had eyes for Harry.

Harry, whom the spell had rebounded against, hitting him square in the chest. Harry, whose eyes had widened in surprise as he fell back towards the stone arch as though in slow motion, before disappearing behind the veil that hung there, fluttering innocuously.

Draco wrenched himself up from the floor, barely aware of the pain in his shoulder as he ran towards
the dais. Arms grabbed him around the waist before he could reach the archway, and he struggled against them as he screamed Harry’s name. He’d almost made it, he’d almost had everything he wanted, and the thought that he’d been too late was too much to comprehend. He fell back to the floor, dragging Severus with him, and cradled his head in his hands.

“I should have known you wouldn’t be far away,” a cold, high voice said. “Where Harry Potter is, one is sure to find Draco Malfoy. Tell me, did you know what Harry was planning?”

Draco looked over at the gently fluttering veil. He wanted to be strong like Harry, he wanted to be able to look Voldemort in the face and tell him the truth and dare him to do something about it. But Harry had Gryffindor blood running through his veins, whereas Draco had only ever been a Slytherin.

“No,” he whispered, his voice hoarse. “No, I didn’t know.”

A long pale finger forced his chin up, and Draco found himself looking into slitted red eyes. “Hmm,” the Dark Lord said after a moment. “I would say I believe you, but it seems as though Severus has become quite adept at hiding his secrets from me. I think it’s safe to assume he would have taught you to do the same.” He let Draco’s chin go and stood up. “Take them down to the dungeons, until I think of a suitable punishment for them. It will have to be public, of course,” he continued in a quieter tone, as both Draco and Severus were dragged from the floor. “One has to set an example, you understand, Severus.”

The Death Eaters wrenched both Draco and Severus up the stairs and out of the room, all the way down to the dungeons on the bottom floor. There they were thrown into separate cells, and the doors slammed behind them. Draco landed on his already painful shoulder, and his vision blurred. Then he realised it wasn’t pain; it was tears.

He sat up and wiped his eyes, before pushing his good arm into his robes. “You know, there are times when being a Slytherin really does pay off,” he said conversationally, his voice strained from the pain in his shoulder. He pulled out the parchment and self inking quill he had stuffed in his pocket, just in case.

“Severus, I need you to tell me how the Dark Lord found out about the prophecy.”

He’d thought about it, earlier when he was hurriedly getting dressed and Apparating to the Ministry. If he could stop the Dark Lord from ever hearing about the prophecy, then the Potters would never be targeted, and Harry would be safe. That was his goal now. His parents had made their choices, and both they and their son had suffered for them. But Harry had never had any choices to make;
everything had been thrust upon him by other people thinking they were doing the right thing.


His voice broke on the last word, and Draco felt a moment of true understanding for his godfather. He too had failed the person he loved. But he had a chance to fix it all.

“It matters because I say it does!” Draco replied harshly, his lips turning up in a frustrated sneer as he realised he couldn’t move his injured arm well enough to write anything. He crawled closer to the bars separating them, and shoved the parchment and quill underneath them. “Write down everything you know about how he found out. You were his most trusted once, he must have told you.”

“I was his most trusted because I was the one who told him about the prophecy,” Severus replied, but he took the items and began to write.

“You told him?” Draco stared over at Severus, but got no answer. “You never told Harry,” he surmised.

“No,” Severus said shortly, and Draco could hear the scratching of the quill as he wrote. “But like I said, none of it matters now.”

“Just hurry up.” Draco slid down against the bars of his cell and settled in to wait. “I’d like to get some sleep before they come to get us.”

The entrance to the Hogs Head was as dark and grimy as Draco remembered it being in his own timeline. The sky above him was dark, but the night air was warm. Draco was glad of it; the last time he had dreamed of standing outside he’d nearly had his fingers frozen off.

He stood in the shadows beside the door, waiting for the moment when Aberforth would throw a customer out on his heels. He’d already watched from the corner of the road as Dumbledore arrived.
for his meeting with the Seer. The door opened and Draco ducked further into the shadows as the barman dragged a young man out by his ear, letting go as soon as they cleared the threshold and giving the man a hard shove in the back.

“Snivelling little bastard, creeping round where he ain’t got no business being! You’d best make sure I don’t see your face around here again, boy, or I’ll do more than just toss you on your arse!”

The door slammed shut again, and the man pulled himself up off the floor, pushing his greasy long hair out of his face. He brushed off his robes and stepped out past the low wall, his wand in his hand as he prepared to Apparate.

“Severus,” Draco said, and the man spun on his heel, his black eyes searching the darkness for the speaker.

“Lucius?” Severus asked uncertainly, squinting as Draco stepped into the light from the mullioned windows.

“No,” Draco replied. “But you’re right about the family resemblance.” He held his empty hands up between them as Severus pointed his wand at him. “Relax. I’m not here to hurt you. I’m here to warn you.”

“Warn me? About what?” Severus’s eyes flickered dangerously, and Draco knew he was rapidly thinking up and discarding curses. It wouldn’t be long until he settled on the right one to use.

“You’re about to make a big mistake, Severus.” Draco said, hoping he would have time to say what he needed to say before he was blasted with a curse and all was lost. “The prophecy you just overheard. Do you know whose child it means?”

“That’s not for me to decide,” Severus said, slowly angling his body to the side. He was getting ready to duel.”

“It means the Potters’ child. It’s Lily’s son.”

Severus’s eyes widened and his wand shook slightly in his hand. “So what?” He said eventually. “Once I bring him this news, I’ll be counted among his favourites. He’ll-”
“He won’t, Severus,” Draco interrupted. “He might give her the option, but he’ll kill her when she doesn’t give up her son. She’ll die, and you’ll spend the rest of your life devoted to getting revenge for her.”

Severus stared hard at him. “Who are you?” He asked. “How do you even know all of this?”

“Oh I know a lot more than that.” Draco moved closer, sensing that Severus was really listening now, had been since the moment he mentioned Lily’s name. “I know that the Dark Lord will try to kill the boy, but he’ll fail because of Lily’s sacrifice. But he won’t die, because he’s already taken steps to protect himself. He’ll disappear, and then he’ll come back and a war will break out, and you will die trying to fight him.”

Severus, ever the Slytherin, picked up on the salient point and discarded the rest. “How has he protected himself?”

“Have you ever heard of horcruxes?”

Severus gasped, and his wand hand finally dropped. “He’s created one?”

Draco shook his head. “He’s created several. Luckily for you, I know what they are. And I know where he’s hidden them.”

Draco didn’t open his eyes right away this time, he couldn’t find the courage. He didn’t want to look at where his last attempt had brought him, what horrors had befallen him this time. He knew he was lying in a comfortable bed, could feel the warmth of another body lying next to him. He rolled onto his back and kept his eyes tightly closed, waiting for the new memories to hit.

At first he didn’t think that anything was different, for the images that came to him were those of his childhood: growing up in the Manor, his father introducing him to dark arts books and staring at them wistfully; dinner parties when he was young, his mother instructing him on how to make proper acquaintances; ordering Crabbe and Goyle around the gardens while their parents talked in the
Draco had originally grown up with the stories of Harry Potter, all twisted, of course, to suit his father’s ideals. But Draco had arrived on platform nine and three quarters for the first time knowing just as much as everyone else with connections in the wizarding world, and more than most. He had boarded the train with strict instructions from his father; to try and befriend The Boy Who Lived. There were some in his father’s inner circle who had wondered if this young child would grow to become their new master, and Lucius had pressed upon Draco the advantages of being a friend to someone with power such as that. While Lucius himself believed the boy to be nothing more than a half breed with little to no great power, he wanted Draco to be prepared for all eventualities. Even if the boy did turn out to be nothing more than average, simply being Harry Potter would be enough, and so Draco should try to gain his confidence. Of course, it hadn’t worked out as Lucius had hoped, but he had eventually come around to the idea that if Draco couldn’t be his best friend, then being his arch enemy was most assuredly the next best thing.

But these new memories held no mention of Harry as the Boy Who Lived, nor any other such child for that matter. However, the name Potter came up with alarming frequency, as the memories sped towards the time Draco would begin at Hogwarts: his father complaining about Potter’s new Muggle Studies Law; his mother being scandalised at the appearance of Mrs Potter at the Ministry charity ball; both of his parents forbidding Draco to have anything to do with the Potter boy once he arrived at school.

And then the school memories hit, and Draco almost laughed out loud in surprise: fighting with Potter over a stupid remembrall; inviting him to a duel to get him caught out of bed after curfew; detention in the Forbidden Forest, Potter laughing at him for screaming when he encountered a centaur; Slytherin winning the House Cup, Potter swearing at him from across the tables; Second Year, Draco laughing at the girl Weasley fan club that followed Potter around; playing seeker in the Slytherin team and losing to Potter; Third Year, telling Crabbe and Goyle to lock Potter in the Shrieking Shack and laughing all the way back to school, only to find Potter already sitting down to dinner at the Gryffindor table; Fourth Year, kissing Pansy while thinking of Potter in his bottle green robes; getting into a fistfight with Potter instead of watching Diggory win the Tri Wizard tournament; Fifth Year, following Potter around the school, hoping to spy on his stupid defence group; Sixth Year, in the showers after Quidditch, Potter’s eyes trailing over Draco’s naked body before turning red and running out of the room; coming across Potter in an abandoned corridor and a fight that somehow turned into a desperate kiss up against the cold stone wall; Seventh Year, Draco and Potter down by the lake, fingers linked as they enjoyed the sunlight together; Potter sneaking into the Slytherin dormitory as they discovered each other’s bodies, Potter laughing at the look of horror on Goyle’s face when they forgot the silencing charm; Draco making snide remarks while Potter cheered as Weasley finally made his move on Granger; graduating with Potter at his side, going out to celebrate before falling into bed with each other; his father’s apoplectic fit when Draco informed him he would be moving in with Potter; James Potter going out into his garden to break things while his wife laughed as Potter introduced Draco as his boyfriend. So many memories, and all of them good.
The onslaught ended and Draco slowly opened his eyes. He wasn’t in the Eighth Year dormitory, nor was he in his old Slytherin bed. The room looked nothing like Grimmauld Place either. Instead it was the room he shared with Potter, in the flat near Diagon Alley that they had bought together last month. The door was closed, but he knew that just beyond it lay the spare bedroom, decorated in neutral colours just in case either of their parents came to stay. There was the living room, complete with the tell-e that Potter had insisted they buy. There was the kitchen, with the large fireplace connected to the floo, and the little room that used to be a pantry but had been renovated for their one house elf Plinky, in deference to Granger’s stance on magical creatures.

Their bedroom was the only area where their house colours came into play, cream walls accented with silver and gold, tiny snakes carved into their dark wood furniture, lion heads etched into the skirting board corners. The desk in the corner held a silver framed photo of the two of them. Taken by Creevey as they wrestled together on the grounds of Hogwarts, Potter straddled Draco’s stomach while holding the purloined snitch high above his head, and Draco watched as his photographic self got even by digging his fingers viciously into Potter’s ribs. The two of them rolled onto the grass laughing, and then the scene replayed itself, Potter running into the frame to tackle Draco to the ground. On the dresser was a big gold framed photo of the night of their graduation. Potter sat on Draco’s lap in the middle of the Three Broomsticks, a party hat slung low over one of his eyes. Next to them, Pansy had her arm slung drunkenly over Finnigan’s shoulders, and on their other side Granger weaved into the shot only to collapse over Goyle’s legs and pass out. They were surrounded by their friends, each of them well on the way to passing out, drunk smiles on every face. It had been the best evening of Draco’s life; it was the night Potter had drunkenly told him he loved him.

Draco turned over in the bed to find Potter lying next to him, the golden expanse of his back disappearing beneath the sheet wrapped around his waist. There were marks along the edge of his shoulder, bruises that Draco had sucked into the skin at some point the night before. Draco leaned over and pressed his fingertips to them, running his hand along the sleep warmed skin. He leaned closer and pressed his lips to the nape of Potter’s neck, dark hair tickling his nose as he nuzzled the top of Potter’s spine. He let his hand trail down to slip under the sheet as he continued to press kisses down the dip of muscle in Potter’s back. His fingers slipped further, down to the crease of Potter’s Quidditch toned arse, sliding between his thighs and finding the leftover evidence of their exploits the night before.

“It’s too early for this shit, Malfoy,” Potter mumbled into his pillow, even as he pressed back against Draco and slid his thighs further apart.

“It’s never too early for this,” Draco countered, slipping one finger inside Potter, only to find him still sticky and loose from their previous round.

Potter moaned and spread his legs wider, lifting one hand behind him to search for Draco’s rapidly growing hardness. He wandlessly slicked Draco up and then guided him in between his legs, and Draco removed his fingers so he could help line himself up. They both let out a gasp as Draco...
pushed himself in to the hilt, and Draco took advantage of their stillness to press kisses along the line of Potter’s shoulders, until he began to circle his hips, encouraging Draco to move.

Potter’s hand moved from Draco’s hip to his own cock as Draco began to fuck him slow and deep. There was no rush; it was still early in the morning and they had nowhere to be but right there. Draco reached over and laced his fingers with Potter’s, guiding his movements so that they were in time with the thrusting of his hips. Dawn stole into the room as they moved together, the early morning silence interrupted only by their soft moans and quiet whispers. Draco loved it when they were rough with each other; their adolescent fights taken in a different direction. But he also loved it when they were like this; slow and careful, whispered words that they hardly ever said to each other but both knew that they felt.

All too soon, Draco felt the familiar tightening in his groin. He sped up his hand on Potter’s cock, his teeth biting down into the skin of his shoulder as Potter came over his fingers, his groan of release turning into a whispered “Draco-ohhh.”

“Potter, God, fuck, Harry.” Draco thrust in once, twice more, and then his orgasm hit, long and slow and perfect, and he breathed into Potter’s neck as he slipped out of him.

“Well,” Potter said after a long moment of them both breathing into the quiet of their room. “That was a great start to the day. Even if you did wake me up at fuck o clock in the morning for it.”

“I figured I’d just get an early start,” Draco replied, shuffling back a little as Potter turned over in his arms. “I’m probably going to have to do a lot more than that to keep you occupied until this evening.”

Potter’s eyes widened. “Fuck, the Celebration Ball.” He covered his eyes with his hands. “Do we really have to go?”

“Yes, we really have to.” Draco pulled one of Potter’s hands away from his face, kissing the fingertips one by one. “We’ve been specially invited by Dumbledore himself.”

“Yeah, about that.” Potter shifted around until he was half lying back on the pillows. “I’m still not exactly sure why that is?”

Draco shrugged as elegantly as he could with his head pillowed on Potter’s chest. “Neither am I. Although it might have something to do with Severus being awarded the Order of Merlin tonight.”
“You mean the man who hates me, for reasons none of us have any clue about.”

“Yes well,” Draco mumbled, drawing idle circles into Potter’s skin. “At least you’re no longer one of his students, so you don’t have to take any of his crap any more.”

“There is that,” Potter said brightly.

“However, he is still my godfather, so you can’t be horrible to him either.”

Potter sighed. “And there’s also that. I am just never getting rid of that greasy haired arsehole, am I?”

“Not unless you also get rid of me, which we both know you won’t.”

“I don’t know,” Potter mused. “A Snape-free life, could be worth it. Ouch!” He cried out as Draco viciously pinched his nipple. “You’re not exactly selling yourself here. Now the list includes pain-free nipples too.” He laughed as Draco wrestled him off the pillows, and they kicked and pushed and pulled at each other until they were both lying sideways across the bed.

“But on the pro side, there’s always this,” Potter said, and then lifted his head and pressed his lips to Draco’s, sliding his tongue into Draco’s mouth and kissing him until they were both breathless. “You also make really excellent pancakes,” he said as they broke apart for air.

“Insulting me is no way to get me to make you breakfast, Potter.”

“Really? Hmm,” Potter’s forehead creased as he thought about it, and then he waggled his eyebrows. “How about if I suck you off in the shower?”

Draco swallowed as blood started rushing south all over again. “I could be persuaded.”

Potter pushed at him until Draco rolled off him. “In that case, race you to the bathroom!”

Draco grabbed a pillow and threw it at Potter’s naked arse, laughing as he tripped on the rug.
The Celebration Ball was being held in the biggest room of the Ministry, a huge affair to celebrate the downfall of the Dark Lord, seventeen years ago to the day. After receiving a tip off from one of Voldemort’s Death Eaters, Dumbledore had systematically destroyed the five horcruxes, before facing Voldemort himself on All Hallow’s Eve. Lucius Malfoy had even handed over one of the horcruxes himself (after some pushing from one of his close friends), and had received the Order of Merlin, Third Class for his efforts in defeating the Dark Lord a few years ago. Tonight, it was Severus Snape’s turn to be recognised, as the Death Eater who had come forward with the vital information that had seen Dumbledore to winning the war before it had even begun.

Draco had forced a reluctant Potter into a brand new set of bottle green robes bought especially for the occasion, this time with intricate silver stitching along the lapels, designed to catch the light as he moved. Draco himself was dressed in robes of dark blue, and had had to fend Potter off with threatened hexes before he managed to get Draco out of them again. It had been a very close call.

The ballroom was decorated to almost gaudy levels, and Draco spotted some telltale signs that Filius Flitwick had been involved in most of the designs. People were already milling about as Draco and Potter arrived, and Draco sighed as Potter immediately spotted his friends and dragged him over to them. Weasley was decked out in red robes that clashed horribly with his hair, but Draco was momentarily stunned at Granger’s appearance. It seemed she had learned a thing or two about hair care ever since her date with Viktor Krum back in Fourth Year.

“I am so glad you’re here,” Potter whispered fervently to Weasley. “I think Malfoy’s going to try to make me dance.”

Draco snorted. “Please. I like my feet intact, thank you very much.”

“Excellent. You can give Hermione a twirl, because there’s no way she’s getting me on that dancefloor,” Weasley said to Draco.

“I think I’ll need a few drinks inside me before that’s likely to happen.”

“Ditto, Malfoy,” Granger shot back. Then she looked both him and Potter up and down. “You both
look absolutely gorgeous.”

Draco smiled genuinely at her. “Ditto, Granger.”

He liked the changes in their relationship; just as Potter could rarely stomach his friends for more than a few hours - unless copious amounts of alcohol was within grabbing distance - the animosity between Draco and Potter’s two best friends was still there on the surface, only now it hid a grudging but mutual respect.

“So,” Potter said. “I still have no real idea of why me and Malfoy are here, but I’m even less sure about why you two are here, to be honest.” He took a quick look around the rapidly filling ballroom. “I mean, isn’t this for the people who remember the War That Never Was? We were all just kids.”

“Mum and Dad decided not to come this year,” Weasley replied, flagging down a waiter and grabbing flutes of champagne for him and his girlfriend. Draco picked up a pair of glasses and handed one to Potter. “They’ve gone to Shell Cottage; apparently Fleur is about to drop any day now.”

“Ron! Don’t be crass.”

Weasley smiled guiltily at Granger. “Anyway, they gave the tickets to us, and we figured that since you two were gonna be here, why not?”

“So romantic,” Granger sighed, shooting a filthy look at the redhead. Then she nodded at a spot behind Draco. “Looks like the guest of honour has arrived.” Draco turned and saw Severus entering the ballroom, Dumbledore at his side.

Weasley snorted. “Slimy git.”

“Hey, that’s Malfoy’s godfather, have some respect,” Potter said, and then turned to Draco. “How was that?”

“Not even remotely believable,” Draco replied in a drawl, as Weasley guffawed beside them. “Come on, let’s go and say hello. I would suggest keeping your mouth shut if that’s really the best you can do.”
Potter waved to his friends forlornly as Draco dragged him unwillingly across the room to meet his godfather. He was nervous; had Severus gotten a good enough look at him on that dark night outside the Hogs Head? Had he ever said anything to Dumbledore, as Draco had grown older in front of the both of them during his time at Hogwarts, slowly growing into the young man who had set them on their path to victory, only to disappear back into the shadows?

“Ah, Mr Malfoy,” Dumbledore greeted him jovially as Draco pulled Potter so that they were standing before the two professors. “And Harry! How are you my dear boy?”

“Good thanks, Professor,” Potter replied with a smile. “Getting ready to start Auror training in a few weeks.”

“Draco,” Severus said, inclining his head slightly, and Draco wondered if he was imagining that strange glint in his black eyes. “Potter,” he added reluctantly, his lips turning up in a sneer at the name.

“Severus,” Draco nodded back, trying to keep his amusement off his face as Potter smiled far too brightly at his godfather but didn’t say a word.

“You look about as uncomfortable as I feel, dear boy,” Dumbledore said to Potter.

“I’ve never really been comfortable with these things,” Potter admitted. “High society’s much more Draco’s thing, I’d be a lot happier with a night out at the pub, to be honest. Plus,” he added, “I’m still not exactly sure why we in particular were invited.”

“Why, because it’s a celebration for you, of course,” Dumbledore said, placing his hand on Draco’s shoulder. His blue eyes twinkled behind his half moon glasses and he gave Draco a wink, so quick Draco wondered if he’d imagined it. “The younger generation,” Dumbledore went on. “All those future young men and women being born, forcing the adults in their lives to reevaluate their choices.”

Draco didn’t think he imagined the slight squeeze of his shoulder at the word future.

“I don’t usually come to these things,” Dumbledore said to Potter as they walked further into the room together. “But I felt it right to come and pay my respects to the man who brought all of this about.” Draco definitely didn’t imagine the way Dumbledore’s eyes slid over to him before looking
at Severus. “After all, none of what happened would have been possible without him.”

Dumbledore pulled out his wand and looked at it thoughtfully. Draco tried to hold back a gasp as he realised it was the same wand that Potter had been holding, back in the Great Hall after the battle. It seemed like several lifetimes ago. Draco guessed it sort of was.

“I think it’s probably time to retire this old thing, too,” Dumbledore mused. “It’s brought about the destruction of two dark wizards in its time.” He looked up at Draco. “I would say that’s enough change, wouldn’t you, Mr Malfoy?”

He knew.

Draco swallowed and tried to keep his voice even as he replied. “I agree, Professor.”

“Excellent, excellent,” Dumbledore muttered, and twirled his wand hand almost absently.

Draco felt his chest grow warm for a moment and then settle, and somehow he knew. Whatever magic Potter had unwittingly conjured back in the Great Hall had now been undone. Draco shook Severus’s hand in congratulations, and then pulled Potter out onto the dancefloor.

“You know, Ron’s always said the old man was as nutty as a jar full of cockroach clusters,” Potter said as they twirled in a clumsy circle. “I’m beginning to think he’s right. What was all that stuff about change he was going on about?”

“I have no idea,” Draco said, and pulled Potter closer, pressing their bodies together from chest to hip. “Even if I did, there’s nothing I would want to change.” He leaned in and kissed Potter, smiling as he heard his father’s distinctive groan from across the room.

“Everything is exactly as it should be.”

The End.
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