**Summary**

Harry and Draco need each other to survive just another day with demons that haunt them constantly. So, when a stoic Harry walks into Draco’s Azkaban cell and gives him two choices and one minute to decide, Draco knows what to choose. Just another long fic which started out as a one-shot but turned out to be humungous.

This story heavily includes themes of abuse, blood, violence, anger, smoking, trauma, depression, and self-harm. Please, if you are underage or fainthearted or suffering from depression or suicidal thoughts, DO NOT READ THIS FIC. If you find yourself depressed or alone, always remember that there are people willing to help you. Reach out to them and if they reach out to you, do not hesitate to take that hand. Help will always be given to those who need it.

**Notes**

Heya! Wheezy here.
Disclaimer - No copyright infringement intended. I claim no money by writing this. Since there are thousands of HP fanfics out there, my fic might or might not be similar to some of those but I have not intentionally copied any author's hard work. This is my own sweat and if it resembles any other fic, please feel free to let me know. But, I won't change my storyline or stop posting chapters because of such an issue as I have completed the fic already. Thank you for understanding.
It began here and now, you will be mine should you choose it

Chapter Summary

What will your answer be?

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

APRIL, 2006

"I'll give you two choices and one minute, Malfoy. Choose well," Harry's voice echoed in the confines of Malfoy's Azkaban cell.

He stood in the center with arms crossed across his chest, staring down at an emaciated Malfoy, who was clad in a tattered dusty damp one-piece and was resting on the equally dirty ground; his eyes on Harry.

Malfoy sneered. Harry smiled in amusement.

From the pocket of his Auror uniform, Harry took out a small red ring box and placed it on the ground within Malfoy's reach before assuming his former posture.

"Marry me, Malfoy," he announced and saw Draco's now wiry blonde eyebrows shoot upwards, his sneer momentarily forgotten by Harry's rather ridiculous, if not funny, proposal. "Or, get The Kiss. Like your parents did just last week. I suppose you know they've passed away."

Of course, if the entire world knew of the death of Malfoys, why would Draco, who STAYED with his parents in that very cell, NOT know that his parents were killed effectively by The Kiss?! And, his sneer was back again upon remembering how he begged and disgraced himself in front of the Azkaban guards to spare his Mother, at the very least.

"Sneer all you want, Malfoy. But decide. You haven't got long. I'd say forty seconds more before I leave for good," Harry's voice was stern and stoic.

The war had done something to all of them and now, seven years later, they still are haunted by the war and the dead Satan, Lord Voldemort. One cannot imagine the horrors Harry faced in the months after. And he never spoke to anyone about the fears that gripped him tight during the dark nights that followed. He remembered sitting up alone in his bed and crying like a baby, screaming for peace. Ginny couldn't offer him what he wanted. Yes, they loved each other but it wasn't enough to cure him of his spiral into nothingness.

He crystal clearly remembered the days he gave up on food and sleep altogether and waited for someone to come and save him, hold him as he voluntarily fell down from the tower of sanity. Yet no one came because the others were busy trying to mend their own broken minds, to move on from all the destruction and debris. And one day, something in him finally snapped - as Ron and Hermione later called it - but for him, it felt like a second chance; like he was finally put together somehow but only a little differently this time.

This new feeling of emptiness was liberating to him. A year after walking out, Ginny came back but
by then Harry was so far off the reservation that they couldn’t stay in each other’s presence for more than a few minutes. Harry’s silence and dispassion for basically everything built a permanent wall between them and long before Harry realized, he was once again left alone in his flat which was devoid of all the things Ginny once owned. They never spoke of it and remained on good terms since.

"Sod off, Potter," Malfoy rasped and broke into a coughing fit for speaking those two words.

"I see that your stay in Azkaban has not affected your attitude in any way, Malfoy. Twenty-five seconds," Harry commented and counted.

Harry could see it in Malfoy's eyes, the need for escape. The unbridled want. The dead eyes he saw when he entered Malfoy’s cell were sparkling with a lust for freedom but the only problem is that his freedom lied with Harry-sodding-Potter.

"Why me?" Malfoy was giving in and Harry could sense it.

Harry smirked. "Ten seconds. Don't make me count them down."

"I think I deserve an explanation if I'm going to choose you, Potter," Malfoy snapped, his voice breaking pathetically towards the end.

Carefully, Harry crouched down in front of Malfoy and stroked his dirty pale cheek with his thumb, causing the man to flinch involuntarily and close his eyes tight. Azkaban does that to anyone. Fear; it becomes your blood. Pain; it becomes your sustenance. Until such a time where the prisoners would choose their inevitable death and welcome their end with widespread arms and a smile gracing their filthy faces.

"You deserve NOTHING, Malfoy. Except for this hellhole, of course. But here I am giving you a second chance. A frigging chance at life and you are asking me questions like a rude little prick," his hand skated towards Malfoy's dirty matted mop of hair, his fingers gently feeling the texture of it.

That got Malfoy to open his eyes and stare hard into Potter's green eyes alight with nothing but dark intentions. Anything, anything at all, was better than dying but Draco couldn't fathom whether he could live with marrying Potter just to escape death. And not to mention his absolute loathing for the man. What would his Father say about this union? Imagine the horror of tainting his bloodline with Potter's filthy half-blood lineage!

"Two choices, Malfoy," Harry repeated for the last time, bringing Malfoy out of his thoughts.

“And I truly believe that you have enough brain cells left in here,” Harry tapped Malfoy’s head lightly with his index, “to make the better choice.”

When Malfoy didn't respond, Harry sighed exasperatedly, as if leaving Draco to his death was physically hurting him instead, and got up to leave. He didn't even step a foot away from the blonde when Malfoy’s hand shot forward and gingerly picked up the ring box Harry had placed in front of him earlier. Taking a few steps back, Harry watched as Malfoy sat up with great difficulty and pried open the red box. For a while, he wasn't sure if Malfoy, with an expression of disgust, was just examining the platinum and gold ring he purchased for this occasion or was about to throw it away.

Without looking at Harry, Draco slipped the woven gold and platinum band onto his left ring finger.

"And I make my choice, Potter."
Please do leave a kudos! Or a comment, if you wish.
Bye.
~ Wheezy
Chapter Summary

Draco settles down with his husband, Harry Potter.

Chapter Notes

Thank you for all the kudos!
Thank you Lie17, Ea, and Personwhoneedsalife for your wonderful comments!
P.S. Lie17, I loved your profile pic. Yuri on Ice is one of my favorite animes!

The Wizarding World was not happy with their union. It wasn't surprising to either of them but they didn't care. Draco wanted freedom and Harry wanted Draco's freedom - that was all that mattered to them. Their marriage ceremony was simple. Extremely simple to Draco's utter dislike but he did not comment as it was not his place to do so anymore. Harry Potter pulled the strings. And he had a lifetime of training under Voldemort’s rule to know when to back down and take a hit with a straight face. Yet when the moment came, Draco couldn't suppress the sudden onslaught of anger towards his fiancée for one particular reason.

They were sat in Shacklebolt's office with "Bond in Marriage" papers in front of them on the desk. And Draco had a problem.

"You can't take my name away from me, Potter," he hissed through clenched teeth as his hand gripped Harry's bicep tightly.

"You made your choice, Draco," Harry said his given name and Draco winced at its awkwardness.

"I chose you, yes. That doesn't mean I have to give up on my bloodline," Malfoy countered.

"There isn't a Malfoy bloodline anymore. Your estates are in my name now. They belong to the Potter lineage," Harry smirked.

This was information to Draco and he gasped indignant.

"How? But I'm the Malfoy heir!" he screeched, his hold on Harry's bicep tightening. Harry made no move to remove Malfoy's hand though.

"Ah, correction. You WERE the Malfoy heir. Before Lucius died, I purchased everything. Even the poorest of your estates, your elves, your estates spread in France and America, are now mine," Harry explained.

Malfoy was thrown into silence. Tears threatened to fall from his eyes yet somehow he held them back. Harry Potter was humiliating him in every way possible and he could do nothing about it. It
wasn't enough that his freedom was in Potter's hands; it wasn't enough that he was slaving himself
instead of dying; it wasn't enough that he now had to live with a man he hated the most. The loss of
his estates or their money didn’t bother him more than the fact that he now had to give up the only
thing his parents left for him, the only thing he prided himself about for years. He had to give up
being a Malfoy and become a Potter in order to live.

"It is for your own good, Draco. Trust me." For the first time, Draco saw sympathy and urgency in
Harry's eyes. Sympathy, he could understand, but the latter, he could not surmise why, nor did he
want to.

"Please," he wanted to kill himself for begging Potter, of all people. "It's the only thing I have left
now. You can hyphenate your surname to mine. Would that work?"

"Draco, listen," Harry tried to reason.

"No. I won't listen to anything you say. I don't care that the Malfoy estates are now yours. Don't
make me lose the ONE THING I've been given by my parents. You HAVE to know how I feel,
Potter," Malfoy cut Harry off with his rant.

Malfoy knew that he was behaving like a lowlife by bringing Potter’s dead parents into this but he
couldn’t help it. He was sure that Potter would only understand his pain if he took that dingy road.
Yet, to his dismay, Potter didn’t walk that road.

"I'm sorry, really, but you have no choice in this, Draco. You will only be granted release if you're
not a Malfoy," Harry said ruefully and with such sincerity that Draco momentarily suffered from
emotional whiplash.

"Couldn't you have told me this before?" Draco queried angrily.

"Would it have changed anything?" Harry asked expectantly.

He sniffed indignantly and shook his head in reluctant acceptance before whispering, "No."

Shacklebolt watched them with an expression that was unfathomable and cleared his throat when
their exchange was finished.

"Shall we proceed, Harry?" he asked.

"Yes. We'll sign the papers and please complete our bond," Harry's stoic self was back.

First, Shacklebolt made Draco remove the band he already placed on his finger during his encounter
with Potter in Azkaban and placed it together with Harry’s wedding band on a small velvet cloth.
The ring Harry bought for himself was similar to Draco’s but the gold and platinum weave it sported
was in the opposite direction to that on Draco’s ring. Their rings had three medium-sized platinum
rings held together by gold wires that weaved through them vertically. On Draco’s ring the weave
slanted towards the right while on Harry’s ring, it was to the left. Shacklebolt whispered some
magical incantation on both the rings and they were enveloped in a pale white glow once the spell
was done.

"These rings will recognize you to be bonded in marriage once you finish exchanging them,"
Shacklebolt answered Draco’s confusion. Harry simply nodded in acknowledgment.

They did as told and his ring sat snugly once again against his ring finger. He had officially and
legally chosen to become a Potter. Even his Father’s name was no longer attached to his first name
after the exchange was done.
The rest was a blur to Draco. On the verge of tears of humiliation and contained rage, he signed wherever Harry told him to sign under the name ‘Draco Potter’ and not ‘Draco Lucius Malfoy’, all the while berating himself for choosing life over death. Yet, if given the choice again, he wouldn't have changed anything. That realization hurt him more.

Living with Potter would be the death of himself, anyway.

Situated away from the Wizarding world, close to the muggle country suburbs, Harry’s bungalow stood alone with a small yet spacious lawn that was not taken care of at all. There was a garage attached to the left corner of the bungalow with its shed down and Draco wondered if Harry drove a vehicle, magical or muggle. Harry opened the black gates for him.

“Go on,” he said encouragingly and Draco walked in, taking in the house he would now live in and strive to make it into a home.

There was a wide porch with three steps and a white swing hanging down to the left. Two or three people could sit on it freely. To the right, there was a single rocking chair beside a tea table and they looked so wrongly placed. There was a cream woolen Welcome mat placed on the floor in front of the main door. A plain dark wooden door opened into a flight of stairs a few feet ahead, the living room to their right, and to their left was the kitchen that was as big as the living room. It had a small square dining table to the far corner with four chairs spread haphazardly around it like it’s been used but not set after. He examined the sparsely furnished living room. To one corner, there was something he recognized to be a muggle television and a telephone a few feet away from it on a brown stool stand. A plush blue sofa fit for three people sat facing the telly. Behind the sofa, attached to the wall, was the hearth which also served as the Floo connection, judging by the bottle of Floo powder attached to it.

“Come on, let’s get you settled upstairs in our room,” Harry’s voice blasted through his evaluations and he turned around.

Harry came stumbling in with Draco’s two suitcases and a large duffel bag filled with clothes and other essentials they’ve purchased for Draco now that his possessions had long been gone before coming to this place.


“Thanks, I suppose,” said Harry as he placed the bags on the floor. Draco smirked at the realization that the Chosen One was lifting his bags for him.

“Well, well, let’s go upstairs then, Potter,” said Draco, making sure to snigger at Harry before suavely walking up the staircase.

It opened into two wings which had two rooms on each side. In the center, connecting the two wings was a floor to ceiling window. Entranced, Draco approached it and peered outside. His eyes found an expanse of fields growing on one side of the road and on the other side were tiny shops. People were walking about, laughing and conversing with each other and Draco realized how much he missed life. He’d even tolerate the shit Potter would put him through just to feel this electric air of life. Azkaban was dark and lonely would just be an understatement to the horrors he faced for seven, almost eight, years in there. To date, he could not understand why his mind hadn’t cracked like his Aunt’s did, or why he held onto sanity for so long. Did his magical soul know that someday he’d be saved? Was that why he held onto the wisps of sanity and not fall off the wagon as his parents did.
towards the end? For a moment, he looked up at the sky through the tinted glass of the window and wished his parents a better afterlife.

“Be a man and carry your own bags, Draco,” Harry chided as he stopped behind Draco.

“And waste all that bulk of yours? Do me a favor and shut up for a minute,” answered Draco without taking his eyes off the sky.

Harry dropped the bags unceremoniously and stood behind Draco so that their bodies were touching; his chest to Draco’s back, and looped his hands around Draco’s waist. Draco’s hand twitched at the windowpane as if he wanted to place it on Harry’s hands but decided against it in the last second.

“Beautiful, isn’t it? I purchased this house for the view I get from this window and from my bedroom,” Harry said, resting his chin on Draco’s right shoulder. “Our bedroom now,” he corrected.

“Seriously, Potter? Just for the view?” Draco chuckled.

“What else do I need?” he countered.

“Sod off, you git,” Draco said without any bite or malice.

“Let’s go to our room? And, have some celebratory drinks later? I have the finest wine sitting inside my kitchen cupboard,” Harry asked, his breath fanning hotly across Draco’s face. He smelled like butter, which he had along with his lunch as if the butter on the bread wasn’t already enough. Draco couldn’t comprehend the man’s love for it. Potter did not spread butter over his food but dipped his food in it. At this rate, he’d die of a heart attack instead of going down by fighting the bad guys, like everyone thought he would.

“Sure,” Draco tilted his head towards Harry’s and smiled genuinely.

Maybe, living with Potter wouldn’t be that bad after all.

Chapter End Notes

Please do leave a kudos! Or a comment, if you wish.
Bye.
~ Wheezy
The time when Harry's demons decided to show up

Chapter Summary

Draco can only face them with all he's got.

**Chapter warnings** - Abuse of power, Attempted sexual assault (both physical and verbal)

Chapter Notes

Thank you for leaving Kudos!

Thank you Eraramech, CherylMercury, Im_a_bird, Lie17 for your support through comments!

Eraramech - I'm really so sorry to disappoint you but this is a dark fic and not a fluffy one. If it's any consolation, it will get better as I mentioned in the tags.

Lie17 - Thanks! I will check it out.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

**MAY, 2006**

Draco could classify Harry’s moods into two specific categories – Balanced and Demented.

After a month of living with his HUSBAND, Draco came to a conclusion that he could not predict in which category the day fell for Harry and he remained constantly on edge trying to decipher Harry’s mood for the day. Somedays, he’d find Harry up and about, whistling a tune while getting ready for his day at the Ministry. And on the other days, he’d look at Draco like he were nothing consequential but a pest to be exterminated immediately.

Today, as he found himself plastered to the rough wall of their kitchen with Harry’s arm digging into his back, his entirety looming over Draco angrily, he reckoned, was Harry’s day of dementia. Draco grunted in pain at the impact and was sure that the wall left a few scratches on his right cheek.

“Rough day, Potter? Oh, wait! The day hasn’t even started yet!” Draco said mockingly, his sneer ever-present on his face. The butter knife he had in his hands before Harry attacked him clattered onto the floor loudly, much to Draco’s dislike. He would’ve liked it in his hands as a weapon if Potter got more violent.

“How dare you,” Harry whispered hotly in his ear, his breath full of anger and malice.

“What is it this time?” Draco rolled his eyes.

The first time Harry hit him, Draco was more than just surprised. He was utterly humiliated that he let the man get a jump on him. Yet, he very well knew that he couldn’t fight him off. Not magically
and certainly, not physically. Draco never had enough physical strength to fight off his attackers. His entire strength was his magic, which he had no possession of currently. His not so welcome stay at Azkaban depleted his magical reserves completely, he believed, for even when he tried using Harry’s wand secretly for a lame cleaning spell, it didn’t work. A week after him settling down in Potter’s cozy countryside bungalow, he got punched in his gut by a very angry Harry Potter after he came back from his work at the Ministry. Draco hadn’t been trying anything except figuring out how to work the idiot box sitting on its throne, a simple wooden stool. He had been patting it not so gently on the head when Harry’s arm fell on his shoulder, turned him around, and rammed his fist into Draco’s stomach. Draco had protested but his efforts were futile for they only gifted him an extra black eye but left nothing but a few scratches on Potter’s face. Though he must admit, his ego swelled magnificently when he saw later that he broke Potter’s awful round glasses but deflated soon when Potter repaired it in a jiffy. Seemed like he learned something from that know-it-all Granger after all. Of course, later that night, Potter had come to him with tears shining in his eyes and a Healing Salve cuddled in his palm, looking at him like a hungry puppy. “I’m sorry. So sorry,” was all he said before settling down on the bed beside Draco and tending to all the bruises Harry had given him and Draco just let him. It felt good to be taken care of after all those years.

“It’s just you, Malfoy. Sitting there in my kitchen like you own the place,” Harry snarled.

“Remind me who put me here, Potter. Besides, I DO own the place,” Draco shot back, wiggling his ring finger encircled by his wedding band for Harry to look, and howled silently when Harry’s knee kicked him in the small of his lower back.

Physical pain, Draco could take; heck, he was accustomed to it but something was different in the way Harry spoke to him. It wasn’t like the other times when Harry first threw a punch and Draco hit him back with a fist of his own where, in the end, both were bruised.

Harry’s palm traced Draco’s right side slowly, starting from his hip to his underarm as if he was trying to find something hidden. When Draco squirmed, Harry grinned and repeated the motion on the other side, causing the blonde to squirm harder.

“Stop it, Potter,” Draco warned futilely only to earn a low chuckle from his husband.

Trapping Draco between him and the wall, Harry began to nudge Draco’s nape with his nose in an almost loving gesture that only felt disgusting to the blonde, given the situation. He struggled harder and whispered a ‘yes!’ of triumph when one of his flailing arms caught Harry’s ribcage in a painful shove. Draco almost freed himself but Harry was faster. He recovered quickly and with a surge of anger, he held Draco’s wrists in his hands and pressed them into the wall, high above Draco’s head.

“Incarcerous,” Harry purred, nibbling at Draco’s ear.

Thin cords of strong rope coiled around Draco’s wrists and held them in place. Draco’s wriggling like a caught fish only worsened the condition of his bound wrists but did nothing to keep Harry at bay.

“I always wondered if anyone had a taste of this flesh during your days with Voldemort and other Death Eaters,” Harry spoke, his now free hands squeezing Draco’s arse cheeks, causing the blonde to squeal in shock.

“Stop!” Draco’s vocabulary was limited to a couple of words as fear gradually crept into his veins like pumping warm blood.

“Tell me, Draco. Has anyone had a taste of you, hm? Did Voldemort bite into the son of his favorite Death Eater?” Harry pushed into Draco and the blonde felt the outline of Harry’s clothed erection.
The horror of getting raped by the Chosen One almost brought tears to Draco’s eyes. But he wouldn’t cry. He would fight or die trying but he wouldn’t let this deviant take advantage of him.

“No, Potter. I didn’t let them have a piece of me and I won’t let you too,” Draco spat venomously.

“Really? That’s great, then. Besides, don’t tell me you haven’t thought about this, Draco. All those years of hatred was you begging me in your own way to do you; pound you into oblivion; make you mine. So, let me, Draco,” Harry said as he fingered Draco’s wedding ring with his thumb.

“Get your nasty self off me, Potter, now!” Draco was beyond coherent thoughts as his mind and heart raced with similar revolting intensity. For the first time in all the years he’d known Potter, he felt terrified of the man rutting shamelessly against him, spewing obnoxious words that were so not the boy he once used to know.

Draco never understood or questioned Potter’s intentions in releasing him from the Azkaban but if all Potter wanted was sex; he could go and get it from the Weasley girl or any other street whore. He wouldn’t let Potter turn Draco into a slut for his sickening pleasure. Draco didn’t sign up for this. With all his strength and perfect timing but wrong aim, Draco kicked back trying to get Potter in his groin but failing as his foot landed unceremoniously on Potter’s thigh. It was enough though. Harry’s hold on him loosened and he stumbled back, grunting in pain. Taking his chance, Draco made a run for it and was almost out of the Kitchen when he heard Harry yell, “Incarcerous!” once again. This time, the ropes wound around his feet and he fell flat on his stomach, saving the impact to his face by covering it with his bound palms; an action that sent a terrible jolt of pain coursing through his knuckles. His entire body ached due to his unbidden crash to the floor.

Still, Draco didn’t stop trying to get away from his husband. He started crawling away as best as he could but was halted in his motions when Harry’s hands clamped down on his shoulders and the man sat on him, immobilizing him effectively.

“I like it when you play hard to get, Malfoy. Oh, I almost forgot, you’re a Potter now,” Harry smirked and pressed his wand against Draco’s T-shirt. He dragged the wand down, cutting the fabric in the process with his magic. Loosening his grip a little, he pushed Draco onto his back and proceeded to cut the front of his shirt and the rest of his clothes, all the while ignoring Draco’s vehement protests, until the blonde was in nothing but his black boxers.

“Why are you doing this to me?” Draco’s voice finally broke and Harry smiled gently at him.

“Don’t couples have sex, Draco? Or should I give you the talk?" Harry asked.

“This isn’t sex. It is rape," Draco couldn’t hide the quiver in his voice. "As of now, you don't have my consent!"

“You have no instinct to survive,” Harry said rather abruptly and Draco couldn’t understand what Harry’s statement had to do with rape, until moments later when he understood what Harry actually meant. He had to spread his legs for Harry if he wanted to survive; if he wanted to live in peace. Draco couldn’t believe his life had come to this point but his almost naked body shivering under Potter, like a leaf in a storm, shoved him into the reality that screamed he was Harry Potter’s whore.

“Maybe I don’t want to anymore. Better off not surviving than being your pet whore,” Draco let his tears hit the ground. Minutes of holding them back had hurt his head.

“Hm, then you should’ve chosen The Dementor’s Kiss instead of me,” Harry’s fingers dug into Malfoy’s cheekbones; their faces merely inches away.
“I should’ve done that, yeah,” Draco said.

At his admission, something in Harry’s vicious demeanor changed. It was like watching a hurricane die down in an instant without a reason or an explanation. The Chosen One backed away from Draco, studying his own hands as if they were precious relics but were painted in filth, before storming out of the house. Only the echo of the front door banging remained as Draco allowed himself to cry aloud in the lonely confines of his prison that was Harry Potter’s house. He knew that Potter would be back with another apology and the same Healing Salve but until then, Draco decided to let his fears out completely so that when Potter was back, he’d be able to accept the man’s kindness.

Hours later, that was how Harry Potter found Draco upon his return. Still bound but fast asleep where he last left the man after their rather dirty fight with dried and crusty tear tracks on his pale face.

“Finite incantatem,” Harry muttered and the ropes around Draco’s wrists and ankles vanished.

Gently, Harry picked him up in his arms. He could’ve used a levitation spell but at the moment, he wanted to hold the blonde in his arms and whisper how sorry he was. He settled Draco on their mattress and went into the bathroom to wet a hand towel. He cleaned Draco’s face and the chafed skin of his wrists and ankles before draping him under a warming charm.

“Get off,” Draco mumbled sleepily when Harry applied a Healing salve to Draco’s rope burns.

“Draco, it’s me,” Harry answered and Draco jumped awake.

“No, stay away from me!” he croaked out, fear filling him at a rapid rate, as his dazed mind still believed that Potter was back again to hit him into oblivion. And this time, he would be successful as Draco was too out of sorts to protest or fight back. His body felt heavier than ever, like a sunk ship at the bottom of the ocean.

“I’m not here to hurt you, Draco. Please, stop struggling and let me heal you,” Harry’s face contorted painfully, desperately willing Draco to give him a chance to prove himself. His heart was racing wildly and when Draco stopped throwing his limbs around and relaxed into a calm posture, he smiled down at the blonde who was looking at him cautiously.

“Please?” Harry asked again.

And, Draco gave in by lying back and shutting his eyes.

Chapter End Notes

Please do leave Kudos! Or a comment, if you wish.
Bye.
~ Wheezy
JULY, 2006

Their marriage didn't necessarily require them to sleep in the same room, or in the same bed. It was a silent choice made by both of them as they knew that if they slept alone, they would only be haunted by dreams darker than a moonless night. Harry wanted an escape from his past and Draco wanted the same. So they clung onto each other for a modicum of sanity at least while they sleep. Their arms and legs never entangled and they never slept facing each other yet Draco's clothed back remained close enough to Harry's shirtless back under the duvet; just enough to keep their insanity and nightmares away.

After the INCIDENT, Harry, out of guilt, had stopped sleeping beside Draco when the blonde flinched rather violently that night when Harry tried to get under the duvet with him. Silently, he crept out of the room, mumbling a couple of apologies and "I'll stay in the guest bedroom if you need me," to Draco.

Draco hadn't protested Harry's departure. Of course, he felt a bit bitter for driving out the man from his own room but a large part of him didn't want to be anywhere near the man who tried to assault him sexually. He couldn't sleep peacefully with Harry beside him; not after what had happened. That night, his dreams were filled with Harry chasing him with every intention of killing him and Draco woke up every five minutes trying to write off that image from his mind. In his dreams, on the nights after, Harry kept on chasing him with a knife in his hand but not his wand. If the dream Harry had a wand, he could've hit Draco with a Killing curse from any distance.

Draco ran. Harry followed.

Draco ran till his legs gave out. Harry caught up to his trembling weak form.

And, in real life, Draco woke up to the Sun glinting harshly in his eyes, which for a moment, he mistook to be the knife dream Harry held in his hands.
Harry wasn't fairing any better. The resigned and betrayed look in Draco's eyes kept following him wherever he went. With doubts like what would've happened if he hadn't come back to his senses; or what would've Draco done if Harry had carried on with his assault; Harry just went through the motions in his life. Yes, they ate together and Draco made them coffee as usual while Harry read the Daily Prophet. They spoke to each other cordially but both of them could crystal clearly see the line they drew between themselves. Harry's nights were filled with his past fears when he wanted nothing but the war to be over and to come out of hiding. The days he had spent praying precariously for the lives of his friends, Dumbledore's untimely and rather crucifying death, Snape's death, Hermione's screams at the Malfoy Manor, everything came back at once to the front of his mind like a Tsunami and he wished for his eyes to open just so he could escape from all the things he'd locked not long ago.

Yet, they followed him every single night. He screamed in unison with the Hermione in his dreams. He felt all the cuts rip him open and scar him just like it had happened to his friends. He could feel Death holding his soul not so gently and plucking it out of his body and he would open his eyes to a peaceful night, a silent scream gurgling in his throat, begging for all of it to stop. Then, he would sob into his pillow as images of all the dead people he held dear - Sirius, Remus, Fred, Tonks, and many more - flashed in front of his eyes like a movie.

Many times, Draco heard a loud scream coming from the guest bedroom which was situated on the left-wing of that floor, directly opposite to Harry and Draco's bedroom, which was on the right-wing. But for once, still unable to sleep because of his own nightmares, Draco crept out of the room to investigate the loud yell which dangerously sounded like Harry's. Opening the guest bedroom door, Draco watched as Harry's body thrashed on the mattress before settling down and curling into a whimpering ball. He sighed and walked towards Harry and sat down beside him on the bed. As if Harry sensed him, his hand immediately shot out from where it lay on his chest and caught Draco's thigh tightly. Draco winced but it wasn't because of Harry's touch but rather his tight hold. Immediately, Harry's stiff posture and screwed up face relaxed and he started snoring after a couple of minutes. Draco could see the tears that still were seeping out of Harry's closed eyes. Bending forward, he wiped them away with his thumb before trying to get off the bed and get back to his room for a well-needed sleep, which he hadn't got in weeks.

But when Harry's other hand closed around his thigh, a gesture which asked Draco to stay, Draco did just that. He got under the blanket and moved closer to Harry after finally removing his thigh from Harry's punishing grip. As soon as he did that, Harry rolled towards him, his palms fisting Draco's nightshirt as if trying to hold on and save himself from falling off the cliff; his legs nudging themselves between Draco's rather forcefully, and his face resting relaxedly under Draco's chin - an action which caused Harry's long rough hairs to tickle Draco's nose.

That night, Harry didn't open his eyes to the darkness. It defined something in both their lives as they found peace in welding together each other's misery. They realized that they needed each other to stay sane. And for the first time, they weren't afraid of their own selves.

The morning after, as Harry looked up at a peacefully sleeping Draco, his heart swelled in happiness that Draco finally chose to forgive him. The blonde might not have said it out loud but he didn't need to. Draco stayed. And that was all the forgiveness he could offer to Harry, who graciously accepted it.

"Good morning," Harry greeted with a toothy smile when Draco opened his eyes.

Just out of a perfectly dreamless sleep, Draco couldn't decipher where he was or to whom those gorgeous glassy eyes belonged to until he remembered the events of the previous night and stiffened for a moment in Harry's embrace before relaxing.
"You stink, Potter," Draco pointed out harmlessly as a matter-of-fact.

"Well, you do too. Morning breath," Harry said and lay his head back down under Draco's chin and sighed contently. His palms traced Draco's back and his legs hooked around Draco's calves. "I could get used to this," Harry stated, not wanting to look at Draco and find rejection in his eyes.

"Yeah, me too," Draco replied almost immediately and Harry looked up at him in half bliss and half shock as if Draco would deny his statement at any second. When he didn't, Harry found himself tearing up rather childishly and he hid his face once again, dropping it down under Draco's chin.

Draco held Harry close to his heart and let him cry to his heart's content. Maybe that was all they needed. To accept each other as they were - battered and withered. They couldn't ever be fixed but they might not need fixing as long as they understood that they were broken. There wasn't always a need to fix a broken thing. Just couple it with something else that's broken and it might not feel as lonely or worthless anymore.

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**JULY 31, 2006**

"Happy birthday, Harry!" those two voices were too loud for Draco to ignore but Harry slept like a log, his head resting on Draco's chest.

Why he had ever agreed with Harry to let his Floo connection always remain open for Ronald and Hermione, he would never know. He should've said no and this untimely visit wouldn't have happened. He rolled his eyes when Ronald's voice yelled Harry's name again, followed by Hermione saying, "Don't shout, Ron!" Draco supposed those guys were right outside the bedroom door waiting for Harry to open it.

'How typical,' Draco thought.

"Potter, wake up, your friends are here," Draco tried shaking the man awake but he wouldn't budge. Harry caught a summer cold a few days ago and the potion he ingested for it had sleep-inducing herbs in it. That was why the man slept soundly. Draco was about to wake Harry once again but an idea popped into his mind and he smirked before calling out to Ronald and Hermione, "Come in!"

The look on Ronald's face was priceless as it morphed from the utter shock that they slept together to an expression of slight disgust at their homeliness before settling down into stuttering shame. To Draco, however, Hermione's lack of expression as if she knew about them all along, hurt his childish ego and he gave the pair his best sneer.

"I need to cleanse my eyes," Ronald said after a while.

"There's acid in the bathroom, if you wish," Draco shrugged nonchalantly.

"It's good to see that Harry's sleeping well," give it to Hermione to notice everything.

"But Hermione!" Ron started to protest, his giant arms flailing around, but was quietened down instantly when Hermione threw a rather stern look at him. Then, he glared at Draco like a kicked puppy.

"It's Harry's birthday and we brought him a cake," Hermione said, ignoring her husband altogether.

"He's not waking up," Draco said, his hands trying to shake Harry to wakefulness yet again.
"Cold medication does that. If it's okay with you, shall I wake him up with a spell?" Hermione asked and Ron snorted indignantly.

"Why should HE be okay with it?" Ron queried.

"Ron, shut up for a minute," Hermione hissed and his face turned as red as a tomato.

Draco ignored Ronald and glanced at Harry. He didn't want to wake him up but didn't want to spoil Harry's day by not celebrating his birthday. Draco had celebrated his own birthday alone and Harry didn't even know. Nobody knew except him and he stood by the floor to ceiling window, staring down at the fields and up at the sky, replaying his past birthdays when his Mother would bake him a huge Belgian chocolate cake herself and his Father would give him his blessings and an expensive gift. That night, he wanted to tell Harry that it was his birthday as they ate dinner together but held himself back as it was useless anyway, according to him. Hence they had eaten in silence until they retired to their own rooms for the night.

"Yeah, I guess so," Draco replied and Hermione pointed her wand at a sleeping Harry.

"Renervate," she whispered and after a couple of seconds, Harry opened his eyes to blurry figures. Draco instinctively handed Harry glasses to him, which he carefully placed on the bedside table before sleeping.

"Ron? 'Mione?" Harry asked in a daze, sitting up on the bed. Draco sat up too once Harry's weight was off of him.

Ron calmed himself down as soon his friend woke up, not wanting to spoil the day for him by picking a fight with his unexpected husband. He clearly remembered having a mini heart attack when he read the big bold letters printed on the first page of the Daily Prophet - "The Boy Who Lived ties the knot with a Death Eater!" A huge moving picture of Harry and Malfoy, holding hands and walking away towards the nearest apparition point was printed under it. Ronald had to refrain himself from confronting Harry as Hermione told him it wasn't their place to decide who Harry chose for himself in his life. They had to accept Harry's decisions and not question them. If Harry wanted to give an explanation, he would and they had to wait until then. His wife was the only one holding him back from drowning Harry in his sea of questions and doubts. Plastering a genuine smile on his face, Ron nodded at Harry before the pair wished him - "Harry birthday, Harry!" joyously.

It was precisely at that moment, Draco's heart throbbed in something that wasn't pain, something that was clearly happiness and fondness as he watched Harry smile widely before saying, "Thank you, guys!" in a nasal tone. For the first time, he wanted Harry to look at him with the same intensity of affection and love he directed towards his friends and Draco reluctantly realized that he was extremely jealous of Ronald and his wife for making Harry smile like that when he couldn't. It hit him hard as he didn't want to accept his heart pounding for one Harry Potter. So, he decided to ignore the thudding inside his chest and not dwell on it anymore but to his dismay, his eyes already looked at Harry differently. They were irrevocably focused on every inch of Harry's face and his shirtless expanse of chest and slightly swelled stomach that was so unlike an Auror. 

"Happy birthday to you, Potter," Draco somehow managed to wish his husband without stuttering but the blush on his pale cheeks remained as hot as fire.

"Thank you, Draco," Harry's smile wasn't the same for him.

They moved to the living room with a completely clothed Harry. One look at the chocolate cake and Draco knew Hermione baked it. Though he hated to admit it, he really wanted a piece of it as it had been years since he at least sniffed a chocolate cake much less ate a piece of it. It was one of his
favorite desserts and though Hermione did not bake it with authentic chocolate, he'd love to have some and he urged Harry to cut it faster, all the while matching Ronald's glare with one of his own entirely dedicated to the ginger head.

"When is your birthday?" Harry asked Draco as he sat down on the sofa to cut the cake.

"Cut the cake, Potter. Unlike you, some people here want to eat it," Draco replied, twisting his fingers together so as to not grab the cake for himself and Harry laughed.

"Answer me and I'll cut the cake," Harry winked and Draco blushed harder as he was once again reminded of his heart racing for his husband.

"June fifth. Now, go on," Draco waved at the cake.

"I missed it, didn't I?" Harry asked mournfully. "It doesn't matter," Ron said but neither Harry nor Draco focused on his voice but each other's faces. Hermione watched the exchange with a thoughtful face before throwing a warning look at her husband, quieting him down for the umpteenth time.

"Come, let's cut my cake together and celebrate your birthday too," Harry said, extending his hand which didn't hold the knife for Draco.

Draco's hand was sweaty when he placed it in Potter's outstretched hand and sat down on the sofa beside him. It was like only they existed in the world and nobody could enter their bubble as they cut the cake together, occasionally finding each other's eyes and Harry never stopped smiling. Draco wished for time to stop so that he could have more of Harry's smile before having his favorite cake.

"Say ah!" Harry sang and his mind still whirling, Draco complied and savored the burst of the soft juicy chocolate pastry. It took him a while to break out of his stupor and find two entirely befuddled faces of Ron, whose face was flaming red, and Hermione, whose face was equally red too. "Belated happy birthday, Draco darling," Harry wished before kissing him on the cheek lightly, so reminiscent of Draco's Mother who did the same for him. Only gagging sounds from Ronald brought Draco back to reality and when he realized why the ginger head blew a fuse, he smirked at him before planting a loud wet kiss on Harry's cheek and wishing him a Happy birthday once again.

The room burst into laughter once again except for Ronald, who fumed in embarrassment rather than in anger.

MID-SEPTEMBER, 2006

“He doesn’t like taking orders much, does he? Obnoxious prat,” Draco commented as he munched on a big tub of Schezwan cheese popcorn that was settled in his lap.

“If the orders aren’t from his Father, then yes,” Harry remarked, picking up a fistful of popcorn from the tub.

“But he’s hot though. No brains but all brawn. I would like to have a musculature like him someday,” Draco said and Harry laughed.

Four months after the INCIDENT and two months after Draco picked up Harry from his dreadful corner, Draco slowly learned to accept Harry’s eccentric mood swings. The war had impacted something in all their lives and the Chosen One had a broken mind. He could deal with it. Half of his sympathy for Harry stemmed from Harry’s nightmares. On some particular nights, after Draco
brought back Harry into their bedroom, all Harry needed were warm arms to snuggle into and a soothing voice that would assure him that everything would be alright; that the demons that haunted him in his dreams weren’t real although, Draco always remained on edge when Harry’s day of dementia dawned upon their household. He supposed another episode of Harry sexually assaulting him would repeat but it never did. At least NOT YET. Harry threw punches and if Draco was lucky, he got in a few that left bruises on his husband’s skin. Nothing the Healing Salve couldn’t heal.

By evening, when Harry returned from the Ministry, he would be all sunshine and roses, always. That is how they found themselves sporting broken lips from their morning brawl, sitting on the living room’s sofa with a tub of popcorn and a few bottles of firewhiskey and muggle beer, watching the newly released DVD of the first season of the TV show, Supernatural, voicing their opinions on Dean Winchester. Once Draco got acquainted with the Television, he could not be separated from it. As soon as Harry left for the day, he found himself attached to the muggle contraption, watching whatever is displayed on its screen. Then, one day, Harry taught him how to use it and its DVD attachment properly. Since then, they’d have movie nights whenever Harry was home early and Draco gradually adapted to the peace that settled over his life.

“You’ll be having a round stomach instead, Draco, given that you don’t work out,” Harry pointed out.

“Malfoys don’t need to work out, Potter. Besides, look at yourself first,” Draco said without bite, taking a swig from his beer bottle after gesturing at Harry’s slightly round midsection, and the situation was too friendly and calm for Harry to point out that Draco wasn’t a Malfoy anymore.

“Whatever you say, darling,” Harry spoke around the popcorn in his mouth and Draco sneered at Potter’s lack of etiquette.

Draco observed this little change in Harry. It started on Harry’s birthday and since then Harry seemed to frequently address him as darling these days and to Draco’s horror, he liked it. His heart fluttered whenever Harry said that word and he wondered what it all meant. Harry Potter was a choice he made and being married to the man and living with him was bound to develop some feelings, right? Was it the same for Harry too? Because the way Harry looked at him changed as far as Draco could tell. Then again, there was a chance Draco could be wrong as his own unexplainable feelings for the man might be deceiving or tinting the looks he received from Harry.

“Ha, I knew it!” Draco screamed and a few popcorns rolled onto the floor.

“The man of the day,” Harry agreed, settling his glass of firewhiskey on the tea table when Dean torched the Wendigo, saving everyone.

“He definitely is, Potter. I hate myself for admitting that I like this Dean Winchester. I would LOVE to see more of him in the next episode,” Draco said as the credits rolled onto the screen.

Suddenly, Harry’s hands cupped Draco’s face and turned it towards him so that they were facing each other. Draco’s heart pounded, partly in fear of what Harry would do but he willed himself to calm down. This time there was no mistaking the way Harry looked at Draco. He felt relieved that his mind wasn’t playing tricks on him but Draco wasn’t sure that he could go any further with Harry at the moment. It was hard to come to terms with the fact that he might be falling for the boy he hated long ago.

“I would love to see more of you, Draco,” Harry admitted, his forehead resting against Draco’s.

“Potter,” Draco dragged as if to say no but still wanting Harry close to him and the tremble in his voice was evident.
“I’ve always wanted this. I’ve always wanted YOU,” Harry stressed and Draco raised a disbelieving eyebrow. As far as their past was concerned, they hated each other more than the Dark Lord abhorred Harry Potter.

“I must disagree, Potter. We’ve been at each other’s throats since the first year and if I might add, this morning too,” Draco drawled though his eyes said otherwise. If only he had the courage to close the distance between their lips!

Harry just smiled and fit his face in the crook of Draco’s neck, earning a needy gasp from the blonde, whose hands fisted Harry’s shirt on his back as his body arched into Harry’s face involuntarily.

“Besides, I have seen you many times with your tongue in another girl’s throat, Potter. Don’t tell you’ve turned into a poof for me, after all this time,” Draco smirked as Harry drew back, his smirk rivaling Draco’s.

“Yes, I am a poof for you, Draco, and I’m quite certain that deep down, you want this too,” Harry remarked.

“I believe you’re rather drunk tonight, Potter,” Draco asserted as Harry kissed his nose.

It’s been so damn long since Draco had sexual contact with himself, let alone others. Seven years in Azkaban didn’t give him a chance to think about sex, or relieving himself. It was all about surviving another day until the next came. Now, as Harry was touching him with that sensual look in his eyes, so soft and alluring, Draco’s sexual drive was back with full force but it left him confused. He was doubtful that if his consent in this was purely natural or forced upon externally. Draco was certain that his hatred for Harry Potter completely vanished and was now turning into something beautiful. Yet, he couldn't bring himself to accept the tingling sensation in his heart whenever Harry was near. And, somewhere in between, Harry guessed what Draco was thinking and pulled away. Tonight was not the night anymore.

“I will wait. Until the day you come for me of your own accord, I will,” Harry said before walking away to their bedroom.

Chapter End Notes

Please do leave Kudos! Or a comment, if you wish.
Bye.
~ Wheezy
Just because they look strong doesn't actually mean that they are invincible

Chapter Summary

And just because they help the weak doesn't mean they aren't weak themselves.

Chapter Warnings - Physical abuse

Chapter Notes

Thank you for leaving Kudos!

Thank you dracoforever, CherylMercury, and Irisk for commenting your thoughts!

Irisk - Here's the update you've asked for. Thank you for showing your love for my story!

CHAPTER NOTES - Double quotations are dialogues, Single quotations are Harry's insane thoughts and Italics are Harry's sane thoughts. Please keep this in mind as you read or else it might get confusing.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

OCTOBER, 2006

All their happy moments suddenly seemed to wither away into nothingness as October dawned and Draco had no idea why. They hit each other and then cuddled with each other moments later usually but as September progressed into the middle of October, Draco could sense Harry keeping him at bay. He would go to the Ministry early and come back really late and Draco assumed Harry had lots of work, what with being an Auror and hunting the bad guys in hiding. Yet, once again, Draco was proven wrong when Harry stumbled in at midnight into their room reeking of alcohol and stinky perfume. Draco had been wide awake then, waiting for Harry, just to demand an explanation regarding his unusual and new habit. It had been so wrong of him, Draco realized later.

"Where the heck have you been, Potter?" Draco growled.

"Get lost, Malfoy," Harry slurred drowsily as he flopped onto the mattress beside Draco without even bothering to remove his clothes or shoes.

Draco had gotten used to hearing Harry call him by his first name that when his surname slipped out of Harry's mouth, he was momentarily taken aback and his heart stung more than he would've liked. Draco sighed. Something about Harry's demeanor gave off the vibes that he should be left alone and if poked and prodded further, he would rip everyone to shreds in unbridled anger. Still, Draco was angry and that's what mattered to him more than rationality.
"What's wrong with you?!" Draco gritted out. He didn't know why he was angry though. All he wanted was an explanation for the state Harry was in and he certainly didn't like the perfume coming off of Harry's body. It didn't smell like Harry's cologne.

When Harry didn't answer, Draco continued poking his husband. "Who were you with?" Draco asked even before he could contemplate what that question might imply or sound like. Harry reacted then as he turned his head to face Draco before smirking wide.

"Is poor Draco jealous? Does he want some kisses and cuddles?" it would've sounded so cringy if the situation was anything but this. But right then, Harry only mocked whatever Draco was feeling towards him and Draco's cheeks heated up in sheer humiliation. He sneered down at his husband before turning away and laying down on the bed as far as he could from Harry. Draco focused his gaze on the night sky through the window as he tried to lull himself back into a state of deep slumber where no one, not even Harry could enter.

He wondered if he could ever be free. Potter's house was just a homely jail because Draco never went anywhere as he couldn't visit the Wizarding World alone for fear of being attacked and Potter never took him anywhere. He stayed cooped up in this place just like he did in Azkaban. The only difference was that he didn't choose Azkaban but chose Potter yet it didn't change the fact that he had to live with what he had and make the most of it despite his disdain. The one thing the war had taught him was to adjust and compromise. That mighty horse of his had long been dead and it wouldn't come back ever for him to mount. Draco often felt bored staying in Potter's place which was devoid of books. DVDs could only be interesting for a while. So he started cooking and by following the culinary reality shows he found in the idiot box, Draco somehow miraculously cooked a proper meal. He felt so relieved, like all his stress melted away like a glacier under the warm Sun. The upside he didn't ask for was Harry's approval to the food he prepared. He could still remember how his heart filled like a balloon when Harry complimented him for the food. Maybe he was exaggerating what he felt but it had been years since he heard someone praise him and he loved to be pampered. He felt like a boy once again. Smiling and thinking that he could endure living in Potter's jail, after all, Draco's eyelids fell shut like an iron door.

He didn't hear the rustle of sheets, later clothes, and the thud of boots behind him but felt Harry's body stick to his back rather tightly and hands encircling his waist.

"I want cuddles and kisses," Harry mumbled against Draco's neck and it took all the self-control in Draco for keeping his chuckles inside his throat.

When Draco didn't reply or turn towards him, Harry nudged Draco's nape with his nose asking and demanding attention from his husband. On the other side, Draco was smiling so hard that he supposed he could cut diamonds with it but made no move to acknowledge his drunken husband.

"My parents' death anniversary is nearing and I am left alone every year to struggle with it. Maybe it's an after-effect or something from Voldemort's curse on me but my nightmares get worse. More clear. More horrific. More deathly," Harry said in a low tone, just audible enough for both of them. Draco's smile waned with every word leaving Harry's lips until his entire mind seemed to focus and visualize what it must be like in Harry's nightmares.

"Will you laugh at me if I say that I am scared of the Voldemort I see in my dreams, Draco?" Harry asked.

"No," Draco replied but still couldn't gather enough courage to look into Harry's eyes and tell him that he would be alright. That they would be alright and fear is nothing to be ashamed of at all.

"Everyone thinks I'm invincible; even Ron and Hermione!" Harry chuckled humorlessly.
"But you're not," Draco didn't pose it as a question but a mere fact.

"No, I'm not. Did you know that I almost pissed my pants when I faced Voldemort before killing him? I'm not strong. I never was," Draco could feel Harry's tears wetting his nape and the shirt around his shoulders.

If Harry wasn't strong enough, Draco couldn't even come close as he could provide no comfort except hold Harry's hands that were around his stomach and bring them close to his chest in a gesture of accepting his weakness. Draco wanted to tell Harry that his nightmares weren't real and that they would pass over time. The Dark Lord is no more to get either of them but Draco was so lost in battling his own demons that he couldn't manage to soothe Harry's despair. He was partly ashamed and blamed himself for Harry's condition as he too played a major role on the wrong side of the war. He was the imperfection who broke everyone's lives, including Harry's. The big bad man wasn't entirely at fault or wasn't the pinnacle of blame because he was crowned the bad guy, the ultimate villain by the strength of the people that followed him and worshipped the ground he walked on. In this case, Voldemort was only the Dark Lord because his magic consumed and enjoyed the fear yet abundant respect he received from his followers, people like Draco, no matter their choice.

The silence that surrounded them was heavenly to Draco as they lay stuck together, one crying silent tears, the other trying to hold on to both of them.

A WEEK BEFORE CHRISTMAS, DECEMBER, 2006

“Your face is hilarious, Draco,” Harry chuckled as he shrugged out of his Auror robes and placed it on the coat stand before plopping down onto the sofa beside Draco.

“Well, thank you for the obvious interpretation, Potter,” Draco sniggered and thrust two open letters into Harry’s hands.

Frowning, Harry smoothed them and read them. They were invitations from Molly Weasley. And this time, she sent one to Draco too. Suddenly, a twinge of guilt settled heavily in Harry’s heart. Not only did he not let them know of his marriage to Draco but he never contacted them later. Through The Prophet, Harry guessed, was how they knew of his predicament yet they didn't come barging into his house for an explanation. Not even Ron did! Yes, they celebrated his birthday and Ron and Draco had a glaring competition but never once did either Ron or ‘Mione asked him for an explanation. Not once did they verbally abuse Draco for the crimes he committed, no matter how forced or involuntary. It hadn’t even crossed his mind then that he needed to provide a reason. He simply let his friends indulge him in their love and acceptance. None of the Weasleys demanded an explanation from him in their letters which wished him a very happy birthday. Looking back, he really felt bad for declining Molly’s invitation for dinner on his birthday. He smiled wistfully when he remembered the good old days of Christmas dinners at the Weasley’s.

“I suppose she sent something else too?” Harry asked.

“Oh, yes! Hideous, actually!” Draco commented as he produced two knitted sweaters from under the sofa. Only this time, Harry and Draco received Couple sweaters. They were Gryffindor red with their initials ‘HD’ knitted in the center in silver thread. The cuffs were also the same shade of silver and it was amusing to Harry. He often used to wonder what kind of couple sweater Molly would make once he married Ginny. When Ron and Hermione married two years ago, they received orange sweaters, Ron’s favorite color, with their initials knitted in royal blue, Hermione’s favorite color. They looked ghastly once worn. Harry couldn’t stop laughing after Molly left the room and for the
first time in a long time, he felt free as his best friends laughed along with him without any barriers or inhibitions.

“They’ll be great once you wear them,” Harry didn’t look up at Draco when he said that. He was feeling the woolen sweater between his fingers and was awash with a feeling of loneliness. He really missed the Weasleys.

“No chance! I’m not wearing that disgusting thing and you can’t make me,” Draco huffed angrily. “Besides, who said I’m coming to the dinner party?” he mumbled, turning away.

He sounded petty but after not seeing the world and people for a long time, Draco felt apprehensive. And, he couldn't tolerate a herd of Weasleys when he couldn't even deal with one Ronald Weasley alone.

“It is our first Christmas after marriage, Draco. Molly is bound to make something special for us as she did for the previous couples. I don’t want to miss that, not because of your pureblood tantrum,” Harry’s mood riveted towards anger now.

“Oh, please!” Draco rolled his eyes. “Who’s stopping you from going, Potter? You can go and make merry with all those ginger-heads and their… acquaintances,” Draco refrained from saying ‘mudbloods’ when he finally caught Harry’s furious eyes.

“Say the word, Malfoy,” Harry taunted as he turned towards Draco, setting the sweaters carefully on the tea table in front of the sofa. The latter gulped.

“Say it!” Harry yelled and Draco visibly flinched. He shook his head negatively and moments later, found himself flat on his back on the sofa with Harry menacingly towering over his trembling form.

“Say the word, Malfoy,” Harry repeated.

After all this time, after all his dark years, Harry believed that Draco had changed. Even when his friends visited them on his birthday and Draco laughed along with them, Harry really trusted that there was some hope for him. He couldn't understand why Draco was back to being a stubborn pureblood prick again. It was so reminiscent of their school days but Harry only felt so damn angry, triggering the part of him he was trying to lock away and be a better person. Draco always knew how to crack open that lock and in the back of his mind, Harry knew that if Draco didn't listen to him, he would no doubt punch the blonde into oblivion. Harry wanted to stop himself so bad yet he couldn't as he looked down at the man he once hated as a boy in his life. All that animosity came rushing to the forefront and all he wanted was to mess up the infuriating blonde under him.

“No,” Draco murmured and Harry punched him so hard that he saw stars, literally.

Don’t lose control, Harry tried to tell his mind.

’He deserves this,’ he got a response that sounded so like him inside his head.

“Now, I won’t ask again. Say it,” Harry’s knuckles were tainted with Draco’s blood from a split lip.

Just stop, Harry Potter!

’He deserves this’

“No!” Draco uttered with vehemence.

This time, Harry didn’t ask him to say it again but rained down a shower of punches -
You'll kill him!

'Don't you think he deserves death?'

- hitting Draco squarely in the face until the left half of his face was bloody and swollen.

You both made progress. Don't lose it over this. It's Draco's nature to badmouth people.

Harry’s knuckles hurt every time he hit Draco but his pain wasn’t important to him. Right then, he wanted Draco to hurt. The more the better. After what felt like hours, Harry stopped, both of them heaving heavily. The blood from Draco’s lip oozed out and rolled down his cheeks in rivulets and Harry’s eyes followed their trail until he could see no more and found Draco's eyes, which were devoid of any emotion. Not even anger. It was like Draco could see through him and it jerked Harry into a state of half guilt.

“This week, we’re going to the Weasleys’ Christmas dinner. It isn’t up for an argument, Draco. Got it?” Harry asked breathlessly. He wanted to get out of the house immediately as his heart felt laden with suffocation and sadness.

You don't deserve my shit, Draco. I'm sorry.

'Put him in his place, Harry. Tell him how much he deserves pain!'

No, no, he doesn't!

When Draco nodded in acceptance, he said “Good,” and promptly left the house without a destination in mind.

Not until an hour later as he sipped on firewhiskey at the Leaky Cauldron did Harry realize that Draco didn’t put up a fight like usual.

Draco didn’t flinch when Harry crept into the covers beside him and started applying Healing Salve on his bruises. His fists clenched the blanket tighter on his chest and he sighed at the mild relaxing burn as his pain dulled down.

“After all these years of hunting and killing, I still don’t know a simple Healing Charm except ‘Episkey’ and that one won’t heal your mangled face,” Harry said lowly.

“At least you learned to apply a salve, Potter,” Draco retorted dazedly and Harry laughed. His eyes didn’t miss the empty whiskey bottle downstairs which might’ve been why the blonde was currently expressive.

“Why didn’t you hit me back, Draco?” he asked the question he was dying to get an answer for.

“I wouldn’t have stood a chance,” Draco slurred, with his eyes still shut.

“Still, you would’ve gotten a couple of shots like the other times. We fought today in the morning, yes? It hurt like hell when you whacked me in my stomach,” Harry remarked lightly but Draco looked at him with eyes so full of pain that Harry was jostled away from his attempt at mirth.

“Don’t tell me that you didn’t think I deserved it, Potter,” there was no malice in the way Draco said it. He stated it like a fact, through a glass of utter resignation and Harry’s heart withered due to the pain emanating from the blonde beside him.

“I’m sorry, Draco. I’m so goddamn sorry,” Harry hugged the man and Draco let him. For the first
time, Harry felt Draco’s arms wound around him in a gentle but desperate embrace as the blonde cried into Harry’s chest, letting out all his held back anguish until that point in his life. It was so unbecoming of a Malfoy but then again, Harry reminded himself, Draco was no Malfoy anymore and he was allowed to cry like any other normal human being. It had always been the other way round. Draco held him but never held onto him. There would always be times when the ones pretending to be strong would break down. It was Harry's fault that he couldn't control his actions and no amount of apologies could ever make things right or could turn back the time. He could only wish for forgiveness as he said sorry over and over again until Draco found it in him to forgive and maybe, forget too.

“I’m sorry,” Harry whispered, pressing a chaste kiss on Draco’s head, his own tears cascading down and mingling with Draco’s tears.

When exhaustion fell over them eventually, they slept tangled together. Not even in their nightmares did they let go of each other.

Chapter End Notes

Please do leave Kudos! Or a comment, if you wish.
Bye.
~ Wheezy
Afraid of judgment. Afraid of Death. Afraid to live

Chapter Summary

Yet, he would still go on trying to find forgiveness wherever he could. And, he wasn't alone in his quest.

Chapter Warnings - Bloody Graphic sex (No penetration).

NOTE - In a few chapters, Harry will get even darker and some of you may find it triggering. So, this is an advance warning. If you wish to continue, you can but don't if you are not used to reading Dark!Harry fiction. Thank you for understanding.

Chapter Notes

Thank you so much for all the Kudos!

Thank you Nananana_saucy_riceballs, Irisk, CherylMercury for your precious comments! As usual, they made my day.

Irisk - You're not the only one. Even I wanted a Dark!Harry fanfic with a happy ending no matter how absurd it would be. Still, I would love me some happy ending.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"I'll be going with you to the Weasleys this weekend," Draco announced the next morning as Harry was getting ready to go the Ministry, grumbling like an old man about his work hours.

Apparently, all the Ministry employees except a few select Aurors were given holidays until Christmas. And Harry was just one of those SPECIAL Aurors that the Ministry seemed reluctant to let go of.

"You don't need to if you don't want to," Harry snapped, his back to Draco. He was busy trying to tame his nest of a hair with a comb so small that it wouldn't even touch his scalp. He resolved to get a new comb - a bigger one this time; maybe some gel or wax too just so he could push his hair into some direction.

"I want to. I'm sorry about yesterday. I don't know what overcame me," Draco said and Harry could hear the honesty lacing those words.

Giving up on his hair and the comb which now had its teeth broken at a few places, Harry placed a stool beside Draco's side of the bed and sat down on it before taking Draco's left arm in his hands, their rings touching as he laced their fingers together.

"You have NOTHING to be sorry about. I should be doing the apologizing for what I did," Harry said, tracing his eyes over Draco's wounds.
"There is a reason why I refused and I think you know why," Draco said.

Harry knew. It was all about his past and the loss the Weasleys' suffered because of him, no matter how indirectly or how small of a part he played in starting the war from the wrong side. After all these years, there still are people who condemn reformed children of Death Eaters and want them to be eliminated off the face of the Wizarding World. For a while, Harry believed that whoever followed Voldemort or even had such an intention was to be killed without a second thought. His mind then had been clouded with nothing but anger and unbridled hatred for those who hadn't been on Dumbledore's side during the war. It wasn't until much later when he saw the Weasleys helping a few innocent and orphaned children of Death Eaters in the camps the Ministry graciously yet thoughtlessly installed, Harry realized that maybe Death was too big of a punishment for being born into the family of a Death Eater. It wasn't their choice.

"No one will judge you for this, Draco," Harry stated firmly and confidently, tracing Draco's mark with his index.

"You can't be sure of that," Draco said, trying to grab his hand back but Harry didn't loosen his grip.

"I believe you've repented enough, darling. And you still are. It pains me to say this but your lack of magic is punishment enough. Don't you think so?" Harry winced at his own words upon seeing the look of hurt across Draco's face.

Draco nodded in agreement though his anxiety still remained. How could he face the family he once openly humiliated in the public? How could he sit with them and pretend to be making merry when all he would remember upon seeing them was how he played a huge part in them losing their family?

"I'll be there with you. Always," Harry smiled encouragingly while patting Draco's palm in a gesture of comfort, which calmed him down to an extent.

"Then I'll wear that hideous sweater too," Draco snorted indignantly.

Harry's cheeks hurt with the intensity of his smile. Shaking his head in amusement, Harry kissed Draco wetly on the cheek, causing the blonde to gape in embarrassment.

"I'll see you tonight," Harry got up to leave when Draco's voice stopped him.

"I want to buy Christmas presents for everyone," by 'everyone', Draco meant Harry, his friends, and his surrogate family. It was Harry's turn to gape in shock at Draco. The sweater, the gifts would be a silent plea from Draco to the Weasleys, asking them to forgive him for their losses even if they were not inclined to accept him as Harry's husband. It wasn't like he needed them to play a part in his life but a bit of forgiveness never hurt anyone and it would help Draco in believing that he was worth living after all.

"Close your mouth, Potter," Draco chided.

"Sure. I'll be home early and we can go shopping, yes," Harry said more to himself as he moved about the room trying to recollect what he might've forgotten in his haste to leave the room.

"I'll be ready," Draco answered.

"Good. Yes, you be ready and I'll be ready too," Harry nodded, with his hands on his hips, an early Christmas blush decorating his cheeks.

"You should leave now, Potter, if you want to make it on time," Draco remarked. Something seemed strangely off in a good way about the atmosphere between them and Draco could vaguely sense
where it was going. A red hue dusted his pale cheeks upon remembering how his eyes seemed to trail Harry whenever he was around in a good mood; how he liked it when Harry called him darling and how badly he wished for those thin fragile lips to meet his own instead of wetly lingering on various spots on his face. He didn't care that he was fawning over the man who hurt him whenever he was angry; he only wanted Harry to meet him halfway and continue pursuing each other as intimately as possible. In the back of his mind, his Father's voice echoed that he would be a shame to their family if he surrendered himself to a man instead of copulating with a woman but Draco suppressed that part of his mind as he didn't care what his late parents said about his need and want for Harry, to be taken care of by him. Draco was mildly horrified yet at the same time excited that he wanted Harry to stay.

"Yes, I should leave," Harry turned around to go but he didn't want to. Not after Draco was willing to be a part of his life after all this time. It felt like something was starting to shift between them and if he walked out of the moment then, whatever they had would be lost forever.

"Blimey!" Harry exclaimed softly, much like his best friend Ronald, before turning around and walking toward Draco determinedly.

Without another word transpiring between them, Harry got onto the bed, his knees bracketing Draco's sitting form. He caressed Draco's cheeks before placing one of his palms on Draco's nape and leaving the other on his cheek. Time stopped for both of them as their faces tilted slightly before fitting their lips together in a perfect embrace. It was just a touch at first. Then Harry pressed their lips together a tad bit harder and Draco's tongue swiped across Harry's bottom lip, asking for permission. At that point, Harry would give anything to Draco and he parted his lips, allowing Draco inside, letting him explore the deepest parts of his mouth. A shiver ran through their bodies when their tongues touched and Harry moved his body impossibly closer to Draco's, knees lifted to their tallest as he towered over the sitting blonde. His fingers fisted Draco's hair as he pushed the man's neck as far as it would bend back without any strain before plunging his tongue down Draco's throat. Draco's arms slid down his shoulders to rest at his waist and Harry could foresee the bruises his skin at the waist would sport due to Draco's unforgiving grip. The kiss was better than he'd imagined and he supposed that he could die right there while kissing Draco. The wounds on Draco's face hurt as he pressed it impossibly closer to Harry's. So lost in the moment, Draco hadn't even felt the blood run down his cheek from under his left eye where a nasty cut still remained even after the application of Healing Salve. The blood got smeared across his face in a long stroke unintentionally as Harry cupped his cheeks to deepen their kiss and Draco groaned, mostly in ecstasy although the stinging under his eye became prominent as time passed.

"Come closer, you prat," Harry said as they broke the kiss for air but then realized that there was no space in between their bodies except for two layers of clothing.

"Potter," Draco looked up at him with lust-filled eyes and Harry's resolve to be gentle broke upon seeing Draco's blood coated face and his subtle hip moments, asking and begging for contact.

"You're bleeding," Harry pointed out breathily.

Draco pulled Harry close by fisting the collar of his Auror robes before whispering seductively in his ear, "Doesn't that turn you on, Potter? Get on with it." Draco taunted, throwing a lazy yet confident smirk at a befuddled Harry.

Before he lost his senses, Harry sent his Patronus to the Ministry to inform his superiors that he wouldn't be coming to work after all and since it was only desk work, he'd be doing it after the holidays.
He let go.

"Kiss me?" he asked Draco and the man found Harry's lips almost instantly. This time around, it was Draco's split lip from the previous day's beating that broke once again and bled into their kiss. Harry groaned when he tasted Draco's blood in his mouth and slurped at the broken lip for more. The experience was riveting by all means. As he pictured Draco's blood entering his mouth and mixing with his own later, he couldn't help but lust for more of that coppery taste sloshing around on his tongue and Harry began sucking on Draco's broken lip in earnest and pure satisfaction.

Draco let go too as he bled for his husband, and the high of Harry drinking in all his pain yet gifting him with more of the same brought him to an edge of a cliff he wouldn't mind falling off of.

"Clothes. Off. Now," Harry was reduced to single syllables as all he could think of was molding their skins together.

"Use your wand, Potter," Draco whispered while nibbling Potter's collarbone when Harry tried to remove their clothes in the muggle way.

Harry took up Draco's suggestion and their clothes vanished with a wave of his wand. The sudden contact of their skins left them quivering. Harry's arse rested on Draco's thighs, their erections pressed together. The morning light was bright enough for them to take in all the skin and scars their bodies carried. Draco traced a pale white gash that was right above Harry's right nipple before licking it and kissing it. Shuddering, Harry arched his back so as to allow his husband a free reign over his chest. When Draco took his nipple into his mouth and bit it rather harshly, Harry's eyes watered and his head pounded so hard with lust that it took him all he got to stop himself from ejaculating right then and there. It would've been worth the pain but would also have been utterly pathetic. Pulling on Draco's hair so that his nipple would be free, Harry got up and pulled Draco down using his calves and the blond fell on his back on the bed. Harry then lay down atop Draco pressing their fronts together, inch by inch. The feeling of pleasure was physically excruciating as they groaned together in ecstasy, rutting against each other.

"The scars I gave," Harry muttered with dark lustful eyes as they roamed over Draco’s chest. Harry’s non-existent nails bit into the slightly raised skin there, a sensitive touch which caused Draco to arch off the bed. Feeling conscious of his misgivings, Draco's hands tried to cover the scars on his chest but Harry swatted them away gently.

"Don’t," Draco pleaded.

"They’re beautiful, Draco," Harry maintained Draco’s stare. “I love that you’re wearing the scars I gave you. It makes me want to mark you more and more," he continued perversely, not once stopping his hip movements and Draco struggled to match his pace.

"So bite me, Potter, and mark me yours. Please," Draco begged, his hands fisting the pillow under his head tightly to cant his hips upwards properly and match Harry's unforgiving tempo. Harry was more than happy to give his husband a bright red love bite at the juncture where his neck and his shoulder met. Oh, it would be visible to the entire world and Harry gloated in pride at that knowledge.

"Ugh," Draco gasped so loud that had they any neighbors, they'd surely hear it.

Harry laced their fingers together and buried his face in Draco's neck, panting heavily as he felt his release close in on him. By the looks of it, Draco was close too.

"Come for me, Draco. Together?" Harry said incoherently and felt Draco nod his head.
Within seconds, their grunts and breaths mingled as they released together. Not for a second did they let go of each other's hands even as they came down from the high, their hips still thrusting against each other in the afterglow in small jerky motions. Harry felt too weak to even get off of Draco and allowed himself to be pushed to the side.

"Wow," Harry breathed out.

"It wasn't bad," Draco stated and Harry guffawed until his stomach hurt.

He understood that in Draco's dictionary, it meant that it was more than great and about that, he felt utterly relieved. Somewhere in the middle, he thought that he was forcing Draco into this as he didn't even ask for the man's consent before doing whatever they had done but hearing from Draco's mouth that what they did was great, and Draco's body that responded to him sweetly and obligingly swept away his doubts into the gutter, to where they belonged.

He imagined how exhilarating sex would be with Draco but that was a thought for another day. Just not today.

Chapter End Notes

Please do leave Kudos! Or a comment, if you wish.
Bye.
~ Wheezy
Gifts and kisses. Promises and lies

Chapter Summary

Everything seems like a distant dream in the face of a promise which will be broken.

Chapter Warnings - A bit OOC characters

NOTE - In a few chapters, Harry will get even darker and some of you may find it triggering. So, this is an advance warning. If you wish to continue, you can but don't if you are not used to reading Dark!Harry fiction. Thank you for understanding.

Chapter Notes

Thank you so much for all the Kudos!

Thank you Irisk for your precious comments and here's the update!

Sorry, dear readers, for not updating in a while. I was suffering from viral fever and am recovering as we speak. Thank you for your patience and here's the next installment!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

CHRISTMAS DINNER AT THE WEASLEYS

"Oh, dear, what in Merlin's world happened to your face?" Molly asked as soon as she opened her door for the Potters and laid her eyes on Draco.

Draco cleared his throat and glanced briefly at Harry, whose face contorted into a pained grimace. Guilt.

"Good day to you, Mrs. Weasley. I fell down the stairs the other day. Rather disgraceful of me, I must say," Draco gave his best fake smile and willed Molly to believe his stupid but convincing lie.

"Really? It doesn't look like it though," she came closer and Draco could smell a vanilla scent wafting from her. She was probably baking a cake for all of them, he thought inwardly.

"Potter tried healing me but as you might already know, he is not very good at healing charms. Hence the rather jagged output," Draco remarked with a humorous incline of his head and Molly seemed to buy it.

"Yes, yes! You should've brought him to me or Hermione right away, Harry, darling. You know we're the best at healing charms," Molly admonished with hands on her hips.
"Well, I hope you can heal him now?" Harry asked pleasantly, taking Draco's hand in his'.

"Of course, dear!" she said and spelled a Healing charm over Draco's bruises. They closed up neatly and his face was blemish-free once again. "Now, come in and make yourselves at home," she stepped aside to let them in and they graciously walked in together with their hands clasped together.

The entire house fell into a hasty silence upon their entrance. Everyone was present in the hall - Ron, Hermione, George, Mr. Weasley, Ginny, Dean Thomas, Bill and his wife Fleur. Draco's heart palpitated rapidly in anxiety, fearing judgment from the people sitting across him and staring at him. Glaring sharp swords at him. At least he wore the Weasley jumper. That little fact must enlighten them of his changed attitude and friendly nature. It's been so long since he saw anyone else other than Harry that he'd happily welcome anyone into his non-existent circle of friends just to feel alive again.

"Good day to all," Draco wished with a smile and Harry squeezed his hand in encouragement.

"Hello guys!" Harry's greeting was a bit more enthusiastic than Draco's but that was to be expected as he knew the guys in the room, unlike Draco.

Minutes of thick silence filled the room.

"Who would've guessed I'd live to see a Malfoy wear a Weasley sweater for Christmas?" George commented and everyone laughed. They didn't mock him. No, they were trying to be civil with him by making light fun of his predicament.

"Who would've guessed I'd live to see the Weasleys celebrating Christmas with a Malfoy?" Draco questioned back, which earned another bout of laughter from the crowd.

"Besides, Draco, you're not a Malfoy anymore, are you?" Harry nudged him playfully in the side.

Hermione Granger-Weasley didn't miss the flicker of pain that flitted across Draco's face at Harry's question and her smile waned instantly though the others laughed. It was just for a split second but Draco's smile was back again in full force.

"Yeah, who would've guessed, right?" he asked, rejoining the others in merry.

"Who wants chocolate cookies?" Molly burst in with a tray full of chocolate biscuits and with lightning speed, Ron got up and grabbed the tray for himself, stuffing four biscuits into his mouth at once.

"Ronald Weasley! Don't be a vermin. Sit and eat like a human," Hermione scolded her husband and Ronald deflated like a pinched balloon.

"But -"

"No buts, Ronald! For God's sake, you're about to be a Father and is this what you'll teach your kids?!” she bellowed.

The merry bustling stopped and all eyes and ears were fixed on Hermione.

"You're pregnant?" Harry was the first to break the stupor that blanketed them upon Hermione's accidental reveal of her condition.
"Um, yes. This time for sure," she blushed, tucking one of her stray hairs behind her ear. Draco raised a questioning eyebrow.

"But how? I mean, I'm so frigging happy about it but didn't the Healers say... otherwise, 'Mione?" Harry asked.

"Naturally, it's impossible for me, as the Healers said. We asked for an artificial alternative and the Healer prescribed me a Pregnancy Potion. Artificial pregnancy to produce the eggs and reform the uterus so I'll still be able to carry the child as usual but the delivery will not be normal. You need magical means to deliver the baby," she finished.

"Hermione, dear, you should've told me sooner so that I would've arranged a special party for you guys! Nonetheless, I'm very happy for both of you. Congratulations!" Molly clapped her hands together, a wide smile on her chubby face.

Everyone congratulated the couple. Draco did too and he truly felt happy for the couple. They could have something which he couldn't have in his life. Not while married to Potter. There had been a time when all that mattered to him was to marry a pureblood woman and produce a Malfoy heir. Now that his name was just a history to be told during the darkest times, he couldn't care less about an heir. Or a child, for that matter. Maybe, someday, Potter would want one and then, he'd look for a surrogate mother to carry his child. If Potter wanted one, Draco had no right to stop the man but he wasn't so sure that he wanted to raise a child. He would just be forced into parenthood like he had been forced into being Potter's husband.

If he'd chanced a glance at Potter, he would've seen Harry's eyes glued to Hermione's stomach rather darkly. Harry always wanted a child in his life. Now that he's married Draco, he didn't know if he could ever get one. He wasn't even sure if Draco would agree to raise a child with him and he supposed that he'd have to do it alone. Still, he thought, it would be nice to become a family with Draco and their child.

The dinner was the best one Draco had in years and he gulped down more than his stomach could take. Molly was generous in serving food and Draco didn't protest. Even when his stomach screamed at him in pain, he didn't stop stuffing food into it. God knows when he'd be able to eat the good stuff again. Not that his cooking was bad, but Molly's was way better than anything he could ever cook in his lifetime.

"Draco, dear, you're welcome here anytime. You can drop by for lunch or dinner any day, with or without Harry," Molly invited him.

"Thank you, Mrs. Weasley," Draco smiled gratefully.

"Please, call me Molly," she patted him on the back before rushing towards her husband with a big serving of steak.

After dinner and drinks came the time for presents and from his pocket, Harry produced the presents he and Draco bought for the family and enlarged them to their original size. Draco and Harry got Hermione a set of books on the real secrets of the Wizarding World. They were authentic books and were only found if you knew how to look for them. Hermione pressed a kiss on their cheeks for the books as she squealed in delight. They gave Ron a box full of Belgian chocolates and the hungry toad opened the box and savored the sweets right away. For, Ginny they purchased a silk baby pink robe which suited her complexion really well. It was Harry's selection. For George, they purchased a self-writing quill that would help him with his orders around his shop. Knowing Molly's love for
cooking, they bought kitchenware for her and she was beyond excited. Upon Harry's suggestion, they purchased a collection of muggle stamps for Arthur and gave it to him. For the next twenty minutes or so, Harry had to explain to Arthur how they worked and what their purpose was.

Draco got a Remembrall from Ronald as a joke, shoes that changed color according to the dress you wore from George, and a protective charm bracelet from Hermione. Ginny and Thomas gifted the couple a flower vase that always kept the flowers fresh and alive until you took them out. Harry received a musical box from Hermione that would calm him down with its therapeutic music, according to her. Without an ounce of shame, George gave him a carton of various flavored and tingling condoms, complete with a set of flavored and tingling lubes and said, "Give me a detailed review, Harry," and winked at them. Draco never thought he'd be anymore redder than he was then. Neither did Harry. Though he was quite successful in maintaining his composure, Draco couldn't say the same for Harry as he watched the man mince his words in embarrassment.

"George!" Molly glared at her son.

"They're a couple now and I need input for my products so that I can sell them for profit. Two birds with one stone. Right, Harry, Draco?" he winked at them again.

"Right, thanks, George," Harry said, wiping his mouth. Draco chose not to comment.

"Here, this is for you. I knitted it myself," Molly said and placed a huge package in both their laps.

"And I helped!" Arthur chimed in and Molly rolled her eyes.

Together, Harry and Draco opened the package to find a huge soft baby blue blanket that would easily cover the both of them. It was actually beautiful even to Draco. The material was softer than fur and Draco wondered what spells Molly used on it.

"Thank you so much, Molly, Arthur," Harry said gratefully.

"Thank you," Draco echoed Harry's gesture.

All in all, Draco supposed as they bid goodbye to all and left for their home, the day went rather well. The Weasleys were tolerable. Even the foolish Ronald grew on him and he loathed himself partially for admitting the fact. That night, when they returned to their home, a white owl was waiting for them, with a paper in its beak, on the tea table in their living room and Draco looked at Harry dubiously.

"Can you check the mail, Draco? I'll hang up our coats," Harry requested, taking Draco's coat when the blonde nodded his head in affirmation.

Harry watched with interest as his husband read the mail, numerous expressions floating across his face - shock, wonder, reluctance, and finally settling down on happiness.

"For you, darling," Harry spoke aloud the sentence he wrote down in the paper Draco was holding.

"Is it necessary though?" Draco asked distractedly as he petted the bird.

"Caring for a pet would be nice, wouldn't it? Besides, you can send mail too," Harry said, coming to Draco's side and caressing the bird gently and resting his hand upon Draco's which was resting on the bird's head.
"Thank you," Draco smiled at Harry and this time, he remembered that he was the first one to move his head towards his husband and captured his lips in a warm embrace.

"Is this my present?" Harry asked when they parted for air.

"Please, Potter, it would be inglorious of me. I put your gift in your wardrobe. Feel free to dig it out," Draco answered and without further ado, Harry rushed towards their bedroom for his gift like a child, followed by Draco, who nervously wished to see if Harry accepted his gift or not.

Sifting through his cupboard, Harry found a small rectangular package under his Auror uniforms and proceeded to unwrap it. Round black glasses without lens, so similar to the ones he wore but way more sturdy and authentic, sat in a wooden box.

"These frames don't break, unlike the ones you are wearing," Draco said as he sat down on the bed.

"I always thought you hated my glasses," Harry smirked playfully.

"I do. Still, only those would suit your face," Draco shrugged.

Harry leaned down and pressed a wet kiss on Draco's forehead before thanking him for his thoughtful gift. He'd been meaning to change his frames as they were more than two decades old; close to three decades in a couple of years. They had been broken many times and he always got them fixed and sized according to his face instead of purchasing new ones. Now that he got new ones, he wanted to get them fixed with lens soon so that he could flaunt them with pride.

"Let's get these fitted with lens tomorrow," Harry said.

"I'll be going with you?" Draco asked half in apprehension and half in the excitement that he would finally be walking in the streets, taking in their structures and the scenery around them.

"Surely, Draco," Harry replied as if it was obvious.

And for the first time in what felt like a millennium, Draco found peace in his life and it didn't matter to him that the Weasleys and Potter were responsible for that or the crooked circumstances that led to his happiness.

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**NEW YEAR - JANUARY 1, 2007**

Harry had another episode in the morning for no reason and stormed out of the room after barely managing to stop himself from smiting Draco. A few blows were exchanged and Draco was awarded a sore stomach as a result of Harry's foot stomping down on it. Harry wasn't in any better condition either. Draco was sure that he gave Harry a sore jaw with his extremely strong sock on it. As he currently lay on the kitchen floor unable to get up yet, he trembled in fear of what was to become of them. This couldn't go on forever. He couldn't take Harry's surprise attacks on him anymore.

'I might have to talk him into seeing a Healer,' Draco thought as he tried to get up again but failing as a sharp pain flared intensely in his abdomen.

His owl flew into the kitchen and perched on his stomach, pecking at his chest, as if asking if he was alright. Though it was a bit painful, he brought his hand and ruffled the bird's feathers in a gesture of mutual comfort.

"I'm fine, Sebastian," Draco answered the bird's silent question.
By evening, Harry was back with a bouquet of white and red roses and an apologetic look on his face.

“Fifteen for forgiveness. That’s what the florist said when asked,” Harry said.

Draco was tempted to accept the bouquet and move on. It was a daily thing in their household but for how long? If he left it like this, there was no telling when it could be far from okay. If they reached that point, there would be no forgiveness, no turning back. Harry needed some professional help and Draco couldn’t give into him now and let all his misgivings go.

“Have you ever considered seeing a Mind Healer, Potter?” Draco questioned, stubbornly refusing to accept Harry’s flowers.


“What do you mean why? You suffer from nightmares almost every single day and I cannot predict when you will hit me and when you will kiss me. I feel extremely tempted to say that you need help, Potter, and it would be better if you see a professional regarding this instead of holding on to me. You’re only getting worse,” Draco huffed out, crossing his arms across his chest and wincing at the action.

“Draco, I don’t need a Mind Healer. I’m not angry all the time, am I? I changed and you know it. Even ‘Mione said so the other day when I met her at the Ministry,” Harry reasoned.

“It doesn’t change the fact that you are hurting me and hurting yourself too,” Draco remarked.

“I’m trying, okay? You know it,” Harry stressed once again.

Draco sighed and took the bouquet from Harry’s hands. The flowers smelled heavenly and it relaxed him to an extent.

“I promise you, Draco, I will try harder,” Harry repeated and pulled his husband into a hug, which Draco didn’t resist.

“I know you are trying but I can only take so much of you for so long, Potter,” Draco said resignedly in a soft voice as he allowed himself to melt in Harry’s embrace.

“We’ll get better, trust me,” Harry whispered.

Somehow, it sounded like a blatant lie to Draco’s ears.

Chapter End Notes

Please do leave Kudos! Or a comment, if you wish.
Bye.
~ Wheezy
The Darkness within dawns during the brightest of days

Chapter Summary

And you think you do not know when you succumb to the Darkness. But, you do.

Chapter Warnings - Graphic sex with penetration, Twisted Harry Potter, short chapter

NOTE - Please heed the warnings I give. It's going to get depressive and darker from here on. Don't complain later if you're going to read it anyway.

Chapter Notes

Thank you so much for all the Kudos!
Thank you PeoniesandIrises, Double Tree for your comments!

PeoniesandIrises - Welcome! And that moment of realization is yet to come.

Double Tree - OOC Molly, I agree. That is why I mentioned 'OOC characters' as a warning in the chapter. In this universe of mine, let's say, people want to move on positively. Still, taking into account my future chapters (spoiler alert?), I don't think Molly or anyone has completely forgiven Draco and his kind for their loss.

MID-MARCH, 2007

“Smells heavenly, yum!” Harry’s voice floated into the kitchen as he sat down on one of the dining chairs watching Draco cook breakfast.

“Coffee with milk and cream, French toast with extra butter, and a bowl of freshly cut banana for one Harry Potter,” Draco announced as he set the tray in front of Harry.

“I could get used to this,” he smiled lovingly at his husband.

“Me too,” Draco pecked Harry on the lips before fixing himself a cup of Espresso.

Draco brought his own tray of fruit and boiled eggs to the table and carefully sat down on the chair, hissing in pain as he did so.

“How’s your bum, by the way?” Harry asked nonchalantly, eliciting an indignant gasp from the blonde.

“If you’d only taken into consideration that it was my FIRST time and had been a bit gentle AND used a condom from your gift collection, I’d have been okay,” Draco replied, blushing red partly in anger and partly in embarrassment.
Their anniversary in April was almost nearing – three weeks more to go, and Draco thought an early gift was in order for his husband. So did Harry when he brought home a huge pile of DVDs which Draco could watch in his absence. They set up a movie-night, ordered takeaway, and Draco chose to watch what was, according to him, supposed to be a historical movie and not a romantic chick flick - Titanic. Lost somewhere in the throes of the passion of Jack and Rose, Draco sought out Harry’s lips with fervor and so began their passionate night. Movie and food completely forgotten, Harry picked up his husband and all but rushed into their bedroom upstairs, banging and crashing as he kissed Draco while climbing the stairs. He still had a purple bruise on his back where he collided with the steps as they fell.

Instead of spelling their clothes away, Harry took his time removing every bit of clothing that separated their bodies and worshipped his husband’s skin. Draco writhed beneath Harry’s clumsy ministrations but his thirst for proving that he was no lesser than a sex God had Draco flipping his husband onto his back and catching one of Harry's perky nipples between his teeth, earning a moan from the man. They knew that if they rubbed their erections together, they would be coming down from their high pretty soon so despite all the rush, they kept their lower bodies apart. Draco littered Harry's slightly hairy chest with love bites and the Chosen One turned into a boneless puddle underneath him, muttering Draco's given name in enthralled ecstasy, begging for the blonde to kiss him more, wanting to do the same for Draco desperately.

“Draco, let me,” he had asked breathlessly and his husband obliged by lying down on his back on the bed.

"Quick, Potter," Draco urged, lifting up his legs by resting his feet on the bed and letting them fall open loosely for Harry to watch his desire in all its wet glory.

Accioing the lube set George gifted them for Christmas; Harry moved Draco's legs so that they were held high up in the air by Draco's trembling hands before coating his fingers generously with chocolate flavored lube and pressing them into Draco’s inviting crevice. Unable to hold his legs any longer as his desire to be taken amplified, Draco let them fall on Harry’s shoulders. Harry grunted at the sudden weight on his shoulders but didn't complain.

“Potter, you do that again!” Draco begged, his eyes tearing with the intensity of the moment when Harry’s fingers hit something inside him that made him shudder in extreme pleasure. Harry gladly obliged as his fingers caught that pleasure spot again and again and his chest tightened with happiness whenever Draco's face contorted in fulfillment of his need.

"I think I'm going to ejaculate," Draco whispered and immediately, Harry pulled out his fingers.

"Potter!" Draco whined angrily.

“Hold on, Draco,” Harry was trying to have some sense of control over his body as he applied a good quantity of lube on his own member. Looking down at an utterly rumpled Draco was not helping and he closed his eyes just to maintain his erection. Their moment of intimacy finally arrived and Harry didn’t want to spoil it by cutting it short.

“Potter,” Draco whimpered when he felt his husband’s tip position at his ready and inviting aperture.

“I’ll give you two choices and one minute, Draco. Choose well,” Harry used all his self-control to not thrust into his husband.

Draco’s eyes snapped open in sheer surprise. “Are you crazy? Get on with it!” he said, rolling his hips down but Harry only pulled away.
“Say my name or we stop right here. You have one minute,” Harry ignored Draco’s protests.

“Is Potter not your name?” Draco shot back.

Harry only smiled. “You know what I mean, darling. Don’t be coy. Now, forty seconds before I leave for good,” he snogged Draco for a few seconds before pulling away.

"You wouldn't. You can't," Draco smirked as he moved down, causing Harry's tip to slip in a little and his husband groaned mutely above him.

"Don't test me, Draco," Harry warned breathlessly as he pulled back and collected himself enough to rival Draco's waning smirk.

“God! You know what I’ll choose. You know!” Draco stressed and Harry could clearly see Draco’s rapidly reddening face even in their dimly lit room.

“Say my name, Draco,” Harry breathed in Draco’s ear and pushed in a little, teasing the blonde and himself at the very same time.

“Harry… Harry!” Draco all but shouted and not a second later his eyes were almost popping out of his sockets as Harry sheathed himself inside Draco in one majestic and unforgiving stroke. Draco hooked his legs around Harry’s waist as his husband didn’t wait even for a second for him to adjust to the immense pain blanketing the pleasure he should've had felt.

“Damn it! Slow down, Harry,” tears of pain gushed out of Draco’s eyes and Harry lapped at them like a thirsty man.

“You’re so freaking amazing, Draco. So beautiful,” Harry kissed every bit of Draco’s face as he rushed them to a point of pain and pleasure mixed together.

“It hurts; slow down, you prat!” Draco bit Harry’s shoulder for emphasis, and also to curb the soreness he was feeling at his filled rim. Distantly he wondered if the skin THERE had torn due to Harry’s rather careless entry but that was a thought for after.

"Draco, look at me," Harry whispered as he kissed his husband gently and Draco complied. Through his tears, he could see how much Harry wanted this, wanted him. The way Harry smiled down at him was more than he ever deserved and he couldn't help but etch this memory into an unerasable part of his mind. This man gave him a chance no one ever dared to give and for the first time in his life, Draco wanted to rewrite their past. He wanted to go back and make things right. He wished for all his bad deeds to be gone so that this future him would be free of that burden and live his life as Harry's equal instead of depending on him for everything.

"I like you, Draco," Harry confessed before licking Draco's lips, not quite kissing him.

This time, the tears he shed weren't because of physical agony but of extreme joy. He didn't know what he did to deserve Harry's kindness, nonetheless, he was happy to receive Harry's feelings and he’d accept them with all his heart. It was only Harry who knew about him, who watched him during his lowest and was now helping him get back on his feet. He would forgive and forget all the bruises they had given each other if this would become his every day. Draco felt needed for once, after many years, yet he wasn't entirely ready to admit what it was that he felt for Harry. Maybe, he liked the man too. Maybe not. He just wasn't sure.

“Harry, Harry… I…, " Draco muttered unintelligibly as he stared into Harry’s green pools, asking him to understand the silence that followed.
“I know. God, Draco, I know,” Harry whispered against Draco’s wet lips in between hard thrusts. Harry didn’t expect Draco to reciprocate his feelings when he admitted that he liked the man. That would be a long road they needed to travel but if anything would bring them closer than they already were, Harry would choose it. So, he kept on kissing his husband, hoping that Draco would understand how much Harry needed him. Whatever Harry did in the past or would do in the future, he hoped that Draco had in it him to carry all his burdens and mistakes so that they could live a life together, no matter how deviant it would turn out to be. Neither of them was perfect, and Harry needed someone - he needed Draco, to face his imperfections as Harry couldn’t do it alone.

A few minutes later, both of them grunted their release into each other’s mouths, their tongues still dancing together in post haze.

Draco was currently feeling it as he moved about the kitchen and as he sat down to eat breakfast with his husband.

“Forgive me for losing my brain in the heat of the moment and not using a condom. If it’s any consolation, it was my first time too,” Harry stated.

“Really? Not even with a girl?” queried Draco in curiosity with an eyebrow raised.

“No. You’re my first,” Harry replied and Draco sniggered. “Hey! It’s really hard to admit that I lost my virginity after twenty-six years,” Harry continued.

“I’ll make sure you lose your OTHER virginity too, Harry,” Draco bent forward and squeezed Harry’s butt.

“Yeah? I hope so,” Harry winked suggestively. “Hey, I’m sorry but can you get me the Daily Prophet from the living room, please?” Harry asked after a few seconds of looking around for the said paper on the dining table and not finding it.

“You must really enjoy watching me walk bow-legged,” Draco chastised though he stood up to go get the Prophet.

“I like to enjoy the fruits of my labor, darling,” Harry called out as he watched Draco’s form disappear out of the kitchen.

Immediately, Harry pulled out a vial from his pocket and emptied the transparent liquid into Draco’s Espresso.

“And, there goes the last dose,” he said to himself, pocketing the empty vial just as Draco trotted in with The Prophet in his hands.

“Ah, thanks, Draco,” Harry took the paper from his hands and feigned glancing through it as he ate his breakfast.

Out of the corner of his eye, he saw Draco sip his Espresso and smiled to himself in triumph.

Chapter End Notes

Please do leave Kudos! Or a comment, if you wish.
Bye.
~ Wheezy
MAY, 2007

Three weeks after their anniversary, on a rather warm Spring Sunday, Draco and Harry found themselves at the Weasleys for lunch. Draco felt queasy but he wouldn’t give up on Molly’s cooking for anything in the world. He thought that whatever was troubling him would pass once his stomach had its fill of Molly’s delectable food. But, his condition only worsened as his stomach started somersaulting a few minutes after lunch. Abandoning his one-sided conversation with Hermione about the Architectural development of the Wizarding World, he rushed to the nearest bathroom and emptied the contents of his stomach rather violently.

Hermione had the sense to inform Harry before rushing to Draco’s aid and helping him heave out all the food that he ate not long ago.

“Are you all right, Draco?” she asked with concern.

“Water,” he stretched out a hand and Hermione filled a glass of tap water and handed it to him.

He gurgled and spit the foul-smelling water into the toilet bowl before flushing it.

“Draco?” Harry called out as he rushed into the bathroom. Hermione gave them some privacy but not before looking pointedly at Harry, as if she blamed him for Draco’s condition.
“Ah, it hurts!” Draco tried standing up but fell to his knees as the pain in his stomach intensified to unbearable levels. The last thought he had before succumbing to unconsciousness was that maybe, he had eaten too much and that it was killing him.

He didn’t know how much time had passed since the bathroom but Draco felt relatively better as he opened his eyes. Looking around the room, he surmised that they were still at the Weasleys but judging from the darkness, he concluded that it was nightfall. He slept for more than four hours! Sitting up gingerly, the pain in his stomach felt like an illusion of the past for it seemed to be perfectly all right now. Pain no more, his attention found voices outside his door.

Noises filtered in through the closed door but he couldn’t make out what they were speaking.

“We thought you were getting better! What the hell were you thinking, Harry?” he heard Hermione’s shrill voice as soon as he opened the door.

Right outside the door stood Harry, with an angry expression, and Hermione, with an equally furious face. Ron had been leaning on the wall but stood upright when Draco walked out and was now looking at him with concern mixed with what Draco could only point out to be sympathy. Molly was crouched on the sofa with an expression similar to Ron’s and Draco could say that something was definitely wrong.

“Hey,” he greeted them.

“Draco, how are you feeling?” Hermione pushed Harry aside and came to his side.

“I’m fine,” he replied but his concentration remained entirely on his husband.

“What’s happening?” he asked when the dullness that was supposed to leave out the window at his recovery still persisted.

“Mate, I think you need to sit down for this,” Ron said.

In a daze, Draco allowed himself to be led toward the sofa and Hermione sat down beside him instead of Harry. His gaze followed Harry as the man leaned on the wall beside the sofa on Hermione’s side and away from Draco.

“Harry, will you tell him what you did to him?” Hermione asked pointedly and Harry shrugged.

“What did he do?” Draco asked Hermione, and then turned towards his husband, “What does she mean? What did you do?”

Draco’s heart raced rapidly, fear filling him like wildfire as various bad scenarios sprang up in his mind; Harry poisoning him taking the cake above all. But, why would Harry do that, Draco thought, as they had been building their relationship steadily and there was no reason for Harry to do whatever he did.

“This is private. I think we should go home before discussing anything,” Harry answered Hermione instead of Draco.

“No offense, Harry, dear, but I think Draco is safe here,” Molly interjected sharply.

“What does that mean, Molly? Draco isn’t safe with me? With his husband?” Harry bellowed.

“Yes, Harry. It’s barmy but that’s what we all think,” Ron came to his Mom’s support and Harry
clucked his tongue in annoyance before applying new tactics.

“Let’s go home, Draco,” he extended his hand, silently asking for his husband to take it and cut the drama but Draco’s fears came back in full force, remembering all the days Harry hit him for nothing. A few kisses wouldn’t change a man’s existent personality. So, he shook his head, declining Harry’s offer and he heard Hermione sigh in relaxation beside him.

“Until I know what happened to me, I won’t be leaving this place,” Draco announced with a slight quiver to his tone.

“You’re pregnant, Draco. That’s all. Let’s go home and celebrate now,” Harry burst in controlled anger.

Draco’s jaw dropped open in bewilderment and he heard Hermione gasp audibly in anger. After a couple of seconds, Draco laughed, thinking it was all a joke, and looked around the room. But when the serious faces in the room didn’t laugh along with him, he mentally staggered. His chuckles died down as fast as they came into being and his eyes found Harry’s unapologetic face.

“How?” he gritted out in barely contained fury.

“We have sex, don’t we?” Harry shrugged and the motion annoyed Draco to no end. Ron winced as if the words physically hurt him.

“But I’m no woman, Harry! I don’t have the required intricacies, if I might add. So, please, do enlighten me!” he screamed.

“It’s all my fault,” Hermione’s voice broke into his ears.

“What the heck does that mean?!” Draco asked incredulously.

“After the Christmas party, Harry came back to me asking about the Artificial Pregnancy Potion, how it worked, and where it is available, and so on. I shouldn’t have told him anything. If I’d known that he would spike your drinks to get you pregnant without your consent, I would never have told him about the potion,” Hermione started crying and she partly blamed it on her hormones.

All the pieces of the puzzle suddenly fit together and Draco looked at Harry with eyes filled to the brim with betrayal.

“You spiked my drinks?!”

“And didn’t use a condom or a protection spell so that my sperm could impregnate you,” Harry said off-handedly.

Draco couldn’t believe what he was hearing. He believed that something changed between them. Heck, he even started to question his kind-of warm feelings for his husband which were more than just romantic and lustful. He would’ve fallen in love if they walked that road but this incident wiped the slate clean of anything that might subtly even allude to like or love or happiness.

“Draco, look. I wanted a family. And I wanted you to be a part of it. So I did what I did,” Harry explained.

“If all you’ve wanted was a goddamn child, you should’ve ASKED my opinion instead of doing as you please!” Draco yelled back.

“You wouldn’t have agreed,” Harry replied.
“Damn right I would not! Who in their sane mind would ask for that?” Draco barked.

“Do you see my point now?” Harry asked coolly.

“Forgive me, Harry, but I do not. How is getting me pregnant without my knowledge, my consent, supposed to make me feel any better?” Draco started to tear up at this point.

“This isn’t about you, Draco. It’s about US. We can be a family now; one which neither of us had. This is our chance at happiness,” Harry tried to reason positively by Draco only shook his head in disgust.

“It isn’t about us or me; this is your selfishness which you forced unto me. I will not have any part in it,” Draco declared and left no room for a further argument which only angered Harry to no end.

“Why are you making such a big deal out of this, Draco? Don’t tell me you never wanted a child of your own,” Harry reprimanded as if he was the right one all along.

"Not like this, Harry! You didn't ASK me for my consent. If you had, maybe, just maybe, I would've thought about it," Draco's body started to shake and he couldn't control the onslaught of tears anymore.

Tears of anger and betrayal rained down his cheeks like flooded rivers. If looks could kill, Harry would've turned to ashes under the intensity of Draco's stare.

"You would've never consented to it. Think about this, Draco. We have a chance at being parents; one which we previously thought wasn't possible. To be frank, I didn't think the potion would work. Not until today," Harry approached Draco and sat beside him and Hermione moved to accommodate him, though her hand remained squarely on Draco's.

"What's wrong with you?!" Draco's voice broke and Hermione's grip of Draco's hand tightened reflexively at his outburst.

"Draco, this is a chance for both of us at a new life. Why can't you see how wonderful that would be? You, me, and our beautiful child!" Harry encircled a pale and unresponsive Draco with his arms.

Draco only sniffed harder in anger. He couldn't understand what was happening anymore. Just yesterday, they were happy, weren't they? Harry had come home early and they went to a muggle theatre to watch some stupid movie, whose name Draco couldn't recollect because of his current turmoil. They made out in the darkness of the theatre and almost got caught by the people sitting in front of them. Then they went to a French restaurant and had a good amount of sophisticated dinner that satisfied Draco's tastes before retiring to their home. Harry had been so gentle to him yesterday while making love and for the umpteenth time, Draco thought that he might be falling hard for his husband.

In retrospect, he realized that Harry hadn’t used a condom or a protection spell the night before and he wondered if their nightly sessions were all planned out for this very moment. He felt used. And, emotionally battered beyond repair. All that happiness he built inside him till this incident crashed like brittle glass and those broken edges bled him inside out.

"I'll give you two choices and one minute, Harry. Choose well," Draco started.

"No, you can't," Harry shook his head, perfectly aware of what Draco would be asking of him the very next second.

"The child or me," Draco left the choice for Harry now though he was pretty sure Harry would not
choose him. He was never anyone's first choice; not in the past and certainly, it wouldn't be so now or in the future.

"You can't ask me that!" Harry pulled back from Draco as if touching the blonde hurt him.

"Draco, you can't be thinking of aborting the child!" Molly butt in and Hermione nodded in assent.

"However the child had been conceived, Draco, it's not the baby's fault. You can't punish it for something it hasn't done," Hermione reasoned but Draco wasn't listening. He didn't want the baby. Period. Even if Harry chose the baby, he would get it aborted. Harry could go and find someone else to carry his seed. He wasn't a baby-making machine and he wasn't going to give birth to one. At least not without his consent or knowledge.

"Forty seconds, Harry," Draco counted.

Ron couldn't stay in the room any longer for the fear of hitting either Draco or Harry was growing in him steadily. He left the room, leaving the married men to decide whatever. Though he didn't support Harry's actions one bit, he also agreed with his wife's statement. The baby shouldn't be killed for Harry's mistake. It would just be another mistake. Then again, Draco couldn't be forced to feed the result of Harry's foolish and selfish actions.

"Ten seconds, Harry. Don't make me count them down," Draco's voice wouldn't stop quavering.

When Harry sidestepped Draco's gaze and didn't give him an answer even after his time was up, Draco simply nodded his head assuming correctly that Harry wanted the child and got up to leave. Hermione and Molly tried to stop him, tried to coerce an unmoving Harry to stop him but he paid them no heed as he Flooed back to his and Harry's home. Harry only watched warily as his husband's drooping posture was engulfed in green flames. As soon as Draco's stepped into their home, his entire body trembled with equal parts of anger and anguish and his throat itched for something liquid. Something that WASN'T spiked with an Artificial Pregnancy Potion. Something adult and strong that would make his pain bearable. Forgettable. Almost running to the kitchen, he threw the drinks cabinet open and picked up a bottle of alcohol. Without even bothering to pour the drink into a glass, he drank directly from the bottle, emptying more than half of it in one go, and feeling the effects of it lightening his dark mood already. Picking up another bottle, and another just for safety, he locked himself in the guest bedroom and drank like there was no tomorrow.

But tomorrow would come. He would wake up, visit St. Mungo's, and get rid of the mistake growing in his stomach. Yes, he would do that. For now, all he wanted was to forget what his life had become.

Tomorrow would be a new day to live better.

Chapter End Notes

Please do leave Kudos! Or a comment, if you wish.
Bye.
~ Wheezy
"Alohomora!" the guest bedroom door burst open as Harry strode in, followed by Ron and Hermione.

That was how they found Draco the next morning – locked inside the guestroom, surrounded by three whole empty liquor bottles, unconscious, and foam dribbling out of his mouth. Draco’s owl, Sebastian, squeaked in in its cage at the loud noises and hooted angrily at the intruders who swarmed around his owner.

"Draco? Wake up, Draco!" Harry was beyond perturbed as he tried to shake his husband awake.

"God, I'm sorry! Let's talk it out, Draco. Please wake up?" he implored like a pitiful child, all the while rubbing Draco’s face clean with the hem of his robes.

"Harry, you need to take him to a Healer. Ingesting alcohol during pregnancy is bad for the baby, especially during the early weeks," Hermione advised.
"Bad?" Harry asked, looking sideways at Hermione. "How bad?"

"It could cause miscarriage, mate. Judging by the looks of it, Malfoy really needs a Healer," Ron said sympathetically.

"Okay. St Mungo's then," Harry tried to hold onto whatever shred of sanity left in him and carried a senseless Draco to the Floo. The foam which he cleared away not so long ago flowed out of Draco's mouth once again in thick bubbly white rivulets. Hermione put some food and water for Sebastian, calming the scared bird, before following Harry and Ron to the Floo connection.

Within minutes, the group found themselves in St Mungo's and Harry screamed for a Healer to look at his spouse immediately. The lady at the front desk rushed towards them, ordering the Chosen One to remain calm before calling for a Healer, who came along with two helpers.

"Hello, Mr. Potter. I'm Healer Yeager. What seems to be the problem here?" a tall man with cropped hazel hair inquired upon recognizing the trio.

"He is pregnant. And he drank three bottles of alcohol. He’s not waking up," Harry answered to the best of his abilities.

"Let's take him to the private ward for a checkup, shall we?" Yeager suggested coolly and gestured his helpers to take over. They levitated Draco carefully and all of them reached a room at the far end of the corridor.

"I must ask you to remain here," Yeager said to the trio before entering the room with his helpers and Draco.

Ron and Hermione nodded at Harry and squeezed his shoulder in support. Harry was itching to go in and demand the Healer to keep him noted of Draco’s condition but he knew that it was useless. If he made a ruckus, he’d be thrown out of the hospital altogether and that wouldn’t do. He begged for Draco and their baby to be okay and hoped that his good intentions reached into Draco’s unconscious heart.

"He'll be okay, mate," Ron said and Harry nodded his head tightly.

"He must be. And so must the baby. I don't know what I'd do without either of them," Harry paced as he spoke.

"They'll be fine, Harry," Hermione said but she didn't believe her own words. There was a high chance of miscarriage but she prayed for the baby and Draco to be alright. She didn't agree with Harry's methods but if Draco's carelessness murdered the child, she didn't have the heart in her to forgive him. Maybe, he didn’t know that newly conceived babies could die of alcohol ingestion. But Draco was ready to abort the child. Hermione saw it in the man’s eyes yesterday; his need to get rid of the baby. She glanced at her husband and Ron simply nodded at her.

“‘I really wanted to have a family of my own, ‘Mione. Is it wrong of me to have a child with my husband? With Draco?’” he asked, his bright green eyes glassy due to tears.

“‘In this case, you’re wrong, Harry. You should’ve asked Draco, talked to him, and then you get to decide TOGETHER, as a family. You love him, don’t you?’ her voice was motherly as she palmed away Harry’s tears gently.

Harry never addressed what it is that he felt towards Draco. Was it just lust? If it was, he wouldn’t feel like dying at the loss of Draco. It must be affection. It must be the reason why he supposed living with the man till his death wouldn’t be suffocating.
“I don’t know. I’m so used to being around him that I can’t imagine my life without him. He CURES me, ‘Mione. I feel so stable around him. Is it supposed to be love?” Harry asked like a child.

Hermione smiled. “You have to figure it out yourself this time.”

A half-hour passed agonizingly to the trio before the Healer finally stepped out, with a clipboard in his hands, of the ward he’d taken Draco into. Immediately, Harry pounced on him only to be held back by Ron’s strong grip on his bicep, silently demanding control from his best friend.

“Is he safe? What about the baby?” Harry asked hurriedly.

“Draco Malfoy, I suppose, is the patient?” he asked first.

“Draco Potter,” Harry corrected and the Healer cleared his throat before correcting the name on his clipboard.

“Ah, yes, my apologies. Mr. Potter, your husband is physically fine. But we are not sure about the baby. So, we need to monitor him for some time before we can come to a conclusion,” he replied.

“How long is some time?” Harry asked impatiently.

“Depends. Since the patient’s magic is rejecting the foreign object conceived inside the physical being, it might take hours or even days to conclude the condition of your baby,” he said and was immediately faced with three frowned and confused faces.

“Draco has no magic inside him,” Harry corrected and his friends shook their heads in assent.

“Well, the baby was conceived using magical means, I believe?” the Healer queried with a raised eyebrow.

Harry nodded his head.

“Since the other Father, in this case, you, Mr. Potter, is one with a strong magical core, the baby formed inside Draco triggered his dormant and almost non-existent magical core. Where he stayed for the past few years only suppressed his magical abilities because of the mental trauma he was put through. Luckily, your magic and the baby’s magic jerked his unresponsive core into action. Return of magic is quite painful and if coupled with copious amounts of alcohol, it can cause adverse effects. Hence the foam,” Yeager elucidated as if he were teaching a class of students at Hogwarts.

“Does that mean Draco can perform magic now?” Harry asked, his heart fluttering in happiness at the good news.

“Yes. That much I am sure of. But he needs a source to feed off of at least for the first few months just for stability. Else, his magic will act up like that of a child and could harm him and others around him. Currently, his core is feeding on the baby’s undeveloped magic and the protective shell of magic surrounding the baby which was formed by your intervention,” he continued.

“Is it bad?” Harry asked dumbly.

“Yes, Mr. Potter. We are currently trying to dampen the connection Draco’s core has to your magic, as your husband, and to the baby’s magic as its Father. Good news is that we’ve stabilized him but the bad news is, we don’t know when his core will break free and start eating away at your baby’s magic because the protective shell created by your magic is almost gone due to his late admittance here. We will do our best in retrieving both of them,” Yeager said with a hint of sorrow in his voice.
“Thank you, Healer,” Harry tried smiling but it didn’t reach his eyes.

“You can go see him now and come by my office later for signing the obligatory forms. And as a precaution, do not perform magic around him. Do not touch him. Even the physical touch of the bonded can cause magic to misbehave in cases such as this,” Yeager warned before leaving.

"We’ll let you have some privacy, yeah?” Hermione pushed Harry towards Draco’s room.

Inside the room, he saw Draco fast asleep on the hospital cot; his skin deathly white. The Helpers who tagged along with Healer Yeager were moving their wands over Draco in repeating motions which irked Harry more than it should’ve; not knowing what they were doing to his comatose husband.

"Binding his magic temporarily,” one of the guys answered Harry's doubts and he nodded in acknowledgment.

Even now Harry couldn't understand why Draco would be unwilling to create a family with him. If he’d asked Draco to carry his child for them, he wouldn't have. He was pretty sure of it. Biologically, it wasn’t a man's responsibility to carry and care for life. Yet, he wanted to have that happiness together with his husband - the joy Ron had. Harry wanted to watch Draco grow fat to accommodate the growth of their child. He wanted to carry a pregnant Draco in his arms no matter how much it hurt and show the world how beautiful they’d be. How happy they'd be. And how wrong people had been in assuming that Harry sharing his life with Draco was a terrible idea. It might've been selfish of him and he was certain that Draco would throw a raging fit once he was educated about his condition. Never once did Harry imagine that Draco would be capable of murdering an unborn child. He didn't count Draco to be such a barbarian. Yet now, considering Draco's actions, he's being forced to think otherwise.

He whirled around as tears seeped out of his eyes and exited the room. He couldn’t look at the man who put his child on the brink of death. Heck, he couldn’t even breathe the same air as him anymore!

"Harry?” Hermione called and he ran straight into her arms, crying into her shoulder.

She hugged him back and looked sadly over his shoulder at her husband, silently pleading for comfort.

Five days later, Healer Yeager diagnosed Draco Potter to be perfectly sound in health but he couldn't say the same for the baby. Meanwhile, reporters loitered around the hospital, somehow getting wind of Draco and Harry’s predicament, waiting for the said men’s statement. All they knew was the old news of Draco being pregnant. And to this date, even after all these years, Harry couldn't understand how the reporters succeeded in catching him in their nets.

"We lost the baby's magical signature, Mr. Potter. I'm sorry,” he said in the most apologetic tone ever and Hermione gasped. So did Ron, which sounded more like a donkey's bray.

"Lost the signature? What the hell does that mean?” Harry questioned though he could guess what the Healer would say in the coming moments.

"I'm sorry. Draco miscarried,” the Healer replied.

Guessing was different than hearing the same words tumbling out of Healer Yeager's mouth. He kept telling himself that his baby would be fine, that Death wouldn't take them away from him as he'd lost many already; that Death would take pity on him and leave him the happiness of a miracle child. Never once did he prepare himself for an alternative that didn't include his child. Now that Death
laughed at him, mocking him about the child he never had, Harry couldn't accept it. Maybe, it was
the Healer's fault. His child was alive and maybe, the Healer overlooked something in a haste.

"No, no, no, no! It's impossible! Perform the tests again. The baby can't... Do them again," Harry
rambled on in a commanding tone.

The Healer's fault, yes. His baby wasn't dead!

"There is nothing we can do. For now, we can only suggest counseling sessions for you and your
husband, as a couple, Mr. Potter," he said.

For a few minutes, Harry was left speechless as he tried to process the fact that the Healer had been
completely thorough with his tests. It wasn't the Healer's fault. His child was dead. No, it had been
ruthlessly murdered by its own Father who refused to carry it and nurture it. Harry took in a deep
breath, trying to stop the onslaught of tears.

"I don't need a counseling session. Certainly, not that prick who apparently murdered my child in
cold blood," Harry spoke calmly. The air around them shifted dangerously and somewhere, a glass
broke. His magic was going haywire despite his calm appearance.

"Mr. Potter. There are other patients in the hospital. I need you to calm down and rein in your
magic," the Healer warned.

"And I need you to say that my child is okay!" Harry screamed. The bulb overhead the group broke
and instead of shards, pulverized glass rained over them. Vigilantly, Ronald spelled a protective
cover over them as soon as he felt a surge in Harry's magical power, and knowing his best friend,
something was bound to break because of his shooting magic. Healer Yeager looked at Ron and
Hermione to convey that he couldn't do anything else and that Harry needed to be put under control.
Else, he'd be thrown off the property to maintain the safety of other patients.

"I've relayed the information to your husband, Mr. Potter. Feel free to discuss the counseling sessions
with him and let us know. I've prescribed some potions so that the uterus removal from Draco's body
will be a bit less painful. His magic is still unbalanced. I suggest you stay close to him in the next six
to seven weeks so that his magic can regain control using your core, and I suggest you calm down
for that," the Healer said but Harry didn't hear anything. His mind was replaying the death of his
child and his insides were rapidly filling with anger towards his husband, the one who killed his
child; his chance at having a normal family; his chance at happiness.

"You can take your suggestions and shove them up your arse," Harry muttered darkly before
pushing his friends away and bursting into Draco's ward.

"Sorry about that, doc. He's mean when he's angry," Ron said apologetically, trying to justify Harry's
rage and the Healer nodded in understanding.

"We face that all the time, Mr. Weasley. When he calms down, talk him into attending the counseling
sessions, please. I can sense that Harry Potter has anger issues which haven't been dealt with after the
war. It was hard on all of us but we weren't the ones who faced the Dark Lord. Harry did. And, I
strongly believe that his mind is very much unstable at the moment, despite his semblance. If left
alone, he could be lost to all those who care for him," he patted Ron's shoulder and inclined his head
respectfully towards Hermione before leaving them alone to mull over what he said.

Healer Yeager had never given emotional advice to anyone. It wasn't his duty. But, he supposed he
could make an exception for the man that saved them all from a gruesome fate.
"Happy now, are you?" Harry asked mockingly as he stopped beside Draco, who was visibly startled when his husband marched into his room angrily.

"I didn't know," Draco said. His eyes were red and his face was tear-streaked, Harry observed, which did nothing to quell his anger. Upon sensing that a domestic fight was in order, the Helpers left the room silently.

"What? Am I to believe that you didn't know what alcohol would do to the baby?"

"Did you?" Draco retorted and was met with silence.

"Figures. I was upset, Harry. I needed a drink. I was burdened with so much that for once, I wanted to feel nothing anymore. I NEVER intended for the child to go like this. Believe me," Draco elaborated.

"Now you tell me you've wanted it all along?" Harry asked suspiciously.

"No, I'm not saying I wanted the baby. I was talking about alcohol. The Healer said that alcohol ingestion and my newly awakened magical core rejected the baby's addition to me. It is what caused the miscarriage," Draco said, his heart palpitating at a maddening pace in fear of Harry's reaction to their situation. He just wanted Harry to understand that it wasn't Harry's choice alone in creating a new life inside Draco's body and that as the supposed bearer, Draco himself had a large part in making that choice for them. Right now, Draco only wanted Harry to calm down and think with a sane mind. Harry actions in the next minute would decide how their life would turn out to be and Draco didn't want to lose all that they'd built up until that point. Not over a foolish mistake.

Yet, deep down, he somehow knew that Harry would crash that building down until all that would ever be left behind for Draco was debris.

Harry scoffed. He bent close to his husband, his hands gripping tightly the cold white railing of the hospital bed, their faces not more than five inches apart before hardening his face into one filled with such rage that Voldemort would be dying in his grave once again if Harry laid his eyes on him. And, Draco knew what was coming.

"Don't," Draco said, shaking his head, his palms fisting the blanket covering him. Yet, the words he feared were spoken aloud by Harry.

"You're no better than your Death Eater Father, Draco. You're just like him. A filthy murderer," he spat venomously.

"Harry!" Hermione yelled, breaking the silence in the ward, as she rushed to Draco's aid after hearing what Harry uttered.

Fury flitted across Draco's face at Harry's statement before morphing into resignation and finally settling into grief as tears of shame, on putting him at the same level as his Father, filled Draco's eyes. He knew that Harry would be spouting filth to hurt him but he never guessed that it'd hurt that much. Crucio wouldn't even compare to the pain settling down heavily on his heart.

"Dra -," Hermione started to address the blonde. She wanted to tell him that he was nothing like Lucius. Draco was better and he did better than most others. He was reformed and this incident would never define what he once was or wasn’t.

"Shut up, 'Mione, and get the hell out. Both of you. This is between me and my husband," Harry cut her off before she had the chance to say something.
"But - ,” she started to argue, just not knowing when to shut up.

"Out! Now!" he shrieked and Ron, judging that their timing was gravely off, pulled his wife back and out of Draco's room, leaving the couple alone to deal with their misery or anger or whatever. He’s done trying to save both of them from each other.

“You don’t mean that,” Draco hated the way his voice shook. Harry meant what he said. Draco could see it in the man's unforgiving green eyes.

“I don’t?” Harry drew back and paced the room with a prominent frown on his face which looked like he was thinking hard.

“I don’t mean that, huh? Let me show you HOW truly I meant what I said, Draco,” Harry caught Draco’s left wrist in a punishing grip and yanked it towards him from where it lay on Draco’s lap so that Draco’s dark mark was visible to both of them.

Draco wanted to die when his husband spat squarely on the dark mark. It was Harry acknowledging Draco to be an atrocious Death Eater like his Aunt Bellatrix, like his Father, like all the others who proudly wore the Dark Lord’s mark even in his absence. It was his husband screaming silently that Draco didn’t deserve the freedom he’d been so wonderfully given after eight years in Azkaban. It was Harry Potter against Draco Malfoy, not Draco Potter.

“That is who you truly are, Malfoy,” Harry said once again.

Sneering at his husband through tears of shame, Draco snatched his hand back and wiped the vile spit away using the blanket.

“Get out, Harry,” he whispered silently, still rubbing the Mark though the spit was long gone.

“Gladly,” Harry banged the door shut behind his back.

Draco didn’t stop scrubbing.

Chapter End Notes

Please do leave Kudos! Or a comment, if you wish.
Bye.
~ Wheezy
Pain pain go away! Don't come again another day!

Chapter Summary

Yet you visit my doorstep uninvited and scream that I deserve only you.

**Chapter Warnings** - Dark Harry, descriptions of blood and pain, infidelity

*A little treat for you guys as I may update the next chapter a bit late. I will be busy in the coming days; hence the fast update. Thanks for understanding! I will update within 10-15 days.*

**NOTE** - Please heed the warnings I give. Don't complain later if you're going to read it anyway.

Chapter Notes

Thank you so much for all the Kudos!

Thank you Madcheshirefox, Dinkydog, Rose, Babygirl33, Laura, IamMyself, Solitarysoul, Irisk, and MadamePerverell for your comments!

**Answer to comments** - Someone in my previous chapters had commented that Molly would not forgive Draco for all that had happened to her family. And yes, that is true. This incident shows how the Weasleys still hold a grudge against Death Eaters. Draco didn't kill the child knowingly yet his actions did. Also, he was ready to abort the child, which Molly and the other Weasleys didn't support. Hence, he was given the cold shoulder. As for Hermione, being a part of the Weasley family, she would be torn between helping the faultless Draco and attending to her family's wishes. You'll find some development in this chapter though. Harry Potter is broken in the head and yes, he needs help. Draco needs help too. And, I won't be saying anything else about them as this story will be telling you all you need to know.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

**JUNE 5, 2007**

Twenty-seven years old and still alone.

“Happy birthday, Draco,” he wished himself as he still lay on the bed though the clock ticked eleven in the morning.

He was in pain – both physical and emotional. The uterus formed in him due to the Artificial Pregnancy Potion was now gone from his system but the past few weeks hadn’t been that easy. There were days when after taking the Uterus Removal Potion, he screamed himself sore begging for Harry to help him. If not Harry, anyone would do. But no one came. Apparently, he was blamed for killing an unborn child of the Chosen One, the Golden Boy, Harry Potter. Harry Potter. The man
had done so much for him. He saved Draco from Azkaban when he didn’t deserve the freedom, cared for him, nurtured him, fought with him like a child. Harry gave him a purpose to live. As he lay exhausted, Draco felt that he should’ve listened to Harry about his pregnancy. If only he had been patient and accepted whatever that was done to him, they would’ve been sitting together on the sofa, eating some Schezwan popcorn while watching Supernatural or any other stupid flick that Harry purchased for him. His heart throbbed at the realization that he missed those days of happiness.

“Merlin, I think I like the frigging bastard,” Draco’s whisper was loud in the quietude of their room and he hoped that his words would reach Harry, wherever he was, and bring him back to his side.

Yet, looking to his side, there still remained a cold spot where Harry once used to be. “Do I?” he questioned himself contradictorily. Then his eyes found the empty birdcage nestled in a corner beside their wardrobes. “I think not,” he continued, rubbing his sore stomach gently but that didn’t help in curbing the agony in his heart.

When he came back from the hospital, Sebastian was nowhere to be found and he got no explanation except a small note from Hermione in the bird’s cage which read – ‘Until you get better, we’ll look after him. I will visit when I can; IF I can. Take care, Draco. I’m sorry.’ The absence of the owl hurt him more than it should’ve but even he knew that he was in no position to take care of himself, let alone another living being. At least, his owl was in a better place than him. Sebastian had no blame to carry and no pain to feel. He was free where Draco was bound. And Hermione’s half-arsed apology changed nothing at all.

The Daily Prophet wrote in bold the story of how he KILLED the child but forgot to mention the fact that it was Harry who betrayed him first by spiking his drinks. Frigging drinks! Which also caused his miscarriage. He was never going to have another drink. Ever. Harry did nothing to refute the lies Daily Prophet printed and Draco wasn’t in a position to do anything about it. Of course, he didn’t expect any help from St. Mungo’s as the staff there would never side with a Death Eater like him by going against the boy who saved them all. So he simply let the world believe the crap parchment and locked himself in their bedroom, which now was devoid of Harry’s scent and belongings. Neither Harry nor his friends were present when Draco was discharged from St Mungo’s. Not even Molly and he had believed that the lady had forgiven him for the past. Maybe, she didn’t and only played along for Harry’s sake and lucky for her, this incident gave her a chance to cut him off completely. Whatever, he was past caring and somehow, through all the fatigue, when he Flooed back to their home, he found it dark and empty and their guest bedroom was littered randomly with Harry’s belongings, which the man probably shifted in haste before Draco’s arrival.

Draco didn’t say anything to Harry about the change because he couldn’t stay with his husband anymore. Not after the hospital incident. He remembered it took hours for him to finally reach their bedroom and he promptly fell asleep on the bed due to exhaustion. He remembered the pain and all the blood covering the sheets underneath him when he ingested the first dosage of the Uterus Removal Potions. He remembered how he pleaded with an absent Harry to lessen his pain by sharing his magic with him. He remembered lonely days and equally lonely nights. Then one night, Draco guessed through the haze of his pain, Harry walked into their room and Draco’s magical core immediately sought out Harry’s magic.

“Harry?” he’d turned his head to side searching for his husband in the darkness.

“Will you ever stop?” Harry had asked. Stop what, Draco couldn’t understand.

“Stay,” Draco ignored Harry’s question and when his magic didn’t protest in agony, he knew that Harry had stayed.
The next morning, when he woke up, Harry was not in their room anymore but left him Draco’s old wand on the bed beside him with no note. And, Draco understood. He was alone in this and he decided stubbornly that he would live through it without Harry’s help.

Healer Yeager passively informed Draco before his discharge that the process would last for at least two weeks. Yet, now, a week after the said two weeks, Draco was still feeling the pain. The past two weeks tested everything in him. Hunger. Pain. Thirst. Pain. Sleep. Pain. Everything was coupled with immense torment and discomfort. His diet pertained to readily available bread, fruits, milk, and water the past couple weeks because of no help from a one AWOL Harry Potter. He had no idea where the man was anymore.

“I’m sorry, Mother, Father, if you’re watching me from your Afterlife. I think I made the wrong choice after all,” Draco chuckled mirthlessly as he got up for the day. He’s taken to fingering his wedding ring these days which calmed him down whenever thoughts of death threatened to overpower him, such as now.

When one had gotten so used to living alone, imagine the surprise when one sees Hermione Granger lounging about in the Kitchen, cradling a mug of coffee. Draco nearly yelped but caught himself in the last second by clearing his throat and garnering her attention away from her uninteresting mug of Draco’s precious coffee.

“What are you doing here?” he asked, fixing himself a cup of fresh coffee.

“You look like shit,” she pointed out.

“You look like you’re about to shit your baby out now,” Draco snapped. He really didn’t want this.

“How are you, Draco?” she asked.

“When are you going to return Sebastian?” he asked curtly.

“Soon. After you get better. He’s well, by the way. Now, how are you?” she repeated.

“Fine, thanks for asking,” he answered brusquely, his back to her.

"I wanted to visit soon. But there was the issue of Harry and then my appointments. I didn't realize I was too late until today,” said Hermione.

It didn’t matter to him. The Weasleys, Granger, Harry, no one mattered to him. They were all pricks worse than Death Eaters and he didn't want their pity or namesake apologies which brought nothing but anger and agony to him. When he needed them, at least one of them couldn't spare a few minutes for him. Now that he was getting by on his own pretty well, Draco couldn't put the past behind him and move on by accepting the shitty lies spewing out of Granger's mouth.

“I came to apologize for everything,” she said when Draco didn't respond, sipping her drink.

“Save it and get out,” Draco’s tone of disinterest mixed with unbridled anger didn’t falter in the least.

“I’m sorry, Draco, I really am. I knew it wasn’t your fault but – ”

“You couldn’t help but blame the Death Eater who murdered Harry Potter’s unborn child, according to the Prophet, which, I must sincerely add, no one frigging denied!” he whirled around facing her, fuming hotly.

“You are not a Death Eater, Draco. You never were,” she said plainly.
“Don’t sweat it, Granger. I don’t need your pity or your apology. You can leave after finishing your coffee. Good day,” he wished before exiting the room, ignoring Hermione’s protests.

She didn’t follow him. And, he was more than thankful for that.

A loud crash woke him up from his deep slumber and was immediately met with an expanse of darkness.

“Lumos,” he whispered and his bedroom was filled with a faint white light. His magic wasn’t strong yet, he noted, as it didn’t get its share from Harry’s core. Still, his surroundings were visible to him and that was all he needed.

He heard a thud again, followed by a deep groan that didn’t sound like Harry’s voice at all. Alone in the house, Draco feared that someone must’ve broken in. Arming himself with his wand, he silently crept out of their room and towards the staircase. The sounds seemed to be coming from the living room or the kitchen. As stealthily as he could, Draco got down the staircase when he heard a deep moan. That wasn’t a tone take by someone who broke into a house. Rather, it sounded like sex to him. But who in their sane mind would break into Harry Potter’s house to have sex on his sofa?

The realization hit him like whiplash and Draco dropped his wand arm back to his side. Not bothering to be secretive anymore now that he was pretty sure that no one broke into their house, he strode into the living room. There they were on the sofa, his husband rocking his hips with another man, their erections as clear as a summer morning, with only boxers tethering them to whatever meagre modesty they have left. The stranger noticed Draco first and pushed Harry away and his husband, not expecting the shove, fell on the ground. Draco would’ve laughed if only he hadn’t found his husband cheating on him with someone else IN THEIR HOME!

“It’s your husband!” the stranger, who apparently recognized Draco, pointed a finger at him and Harry gaze followed the finger’s motion from where he lay sprawled on the floor.

His gaze was hard and challenging. It was as if he was asking Draco to say something against the deed he’d been doing. And the last vestiges of Draco holding on to their relationship snapped. He never felt that he deserved happiness. After all that he had done to countless muggles, wizards, and witches, no matter how unwillingly, he never thought that his life would gift him with happiness. So, he made peace when he was thrown into Azkaban. The punishment felt liberating to him though he had been scared beyond wits. He couldn’t imagine a pain greater than losing himself in the Azkaban or losing his parents but as his eyes found evidence of Harry rejecting him in the most heinous way possible, Draco let his heart shatter into a million pieces and kept repeating to them that he deserved it for all his crimes of the past. This was the payback he’d been offered. It was his retribution. Maybe, this was why Harry had brought him out of Azkaban. To make him suffer by giving everything and then taking it all away in a jiffy without an ounce of kindness.

‘I deserve this for even considering my feelings for this bastard,’ Draco repeated inside his head.

“Are you going to say anything, Malfoy?” Harry asked, standing up to his full height and preparing himself for a fight.

Draco flinched when Harry used his last name. ‘I deserve it.’

“Have a good time, gentlemen,” Draco forced himself to say as his fingers involuntarily found his wedding ring and started twisting it for comfort, for control that he was gradually losing over his emotions; a gesture Harry did not miss.
And he left the scene but not before he heard the stranger eagerly say, “Your husband’s actually cool about us, Harry”, followed by Harry’s curt “Shut up.”

‘I deserve it.’

Chapter End Notes

Please do leave Kudos! Or a comment, if you wish.
Bye.
~ Wheezy
The pieces you broke me into now lay there burning

Chapter Summary

And I set that fire.

**Chapter Warnings** - Graphic depictions of Smoking, self-harm, short chapter

Thank you for being patient with my irregular posting schedules. I am just too cooped up with work and I have no time to indulge myself or my readers.

**NOTE** - Please heed the warnings I give. Don't complain later if you're going to read it anyway.

Chapter Notes

Thank you so much for all the Kudos!

Thank you Madcheshirefox, Kikukaku, serilla, LapislazuliStern, Wanda, Laura, Babygirl33, Solitarysoul, PeoniesandIrises, Irisk, JordanWithaG, and Papercutter for your precious comments. You always inspire me to do better and write better for my readers. Thank you so much!

Madcheshirefox, Kikukaku - Damn, you guys are really out there to kill Harry, aren't you? I could sense your frustrations and could help but feel happy that I elicited such a response from you. Thank you for staying with me and nudging me forward.

serilla, Laura, Babygirl33 - I'm trying my best to find happiness for Draco. Thanks!

LapislazuliStern - I cannot comment about the ending at this point but I hope my heart writes a better ending.

Wanda - Lipservice, dear. And, Draco recognized that too.

Solitarysoul - That would probably end up with the death of Voldemort and Bellatrix once again given Harry's stronger and they're out of practice. Haha. Thank you for your compliment. I'm still trying to improve and hope you'll all guide me through it.

PeoniesandIrises, Irisk, JordanWithaG - True. We'll be getting there shortly. Thank you too!!

Papercutter - Firstly, I think I need to thank you thrice for taking the time to read and comment on all of the three Harry Potter fanfics I posted on AO3. So, there you go, dear, thank you! I may not have answers to all of your questions but I don't think Draco's holding onto Harry just for survival. When you put two utterly and mentally damaged people together, no matter how intelligent they are or used to be, they seek out comfort in one another. It's damaging to the sane and safe onlookers who watch them from afar. But to those two, they've created a safe bubble around themselves and refuse to acknowledge that their relationship is wrong. They need to be healed and I don't think
even after that, they'll let go of each other, no matter how twistedly they treat each other. Broken minds and hearts are dark, deceptive, and self-destructive. Only in this case, Harry breaks himself by inflicting pain on Draco. That is his kind of coping up with his past just like Draco, who thinks he deserves all the pain given to him because of his past. These are two boys in the bodies of adult men trying to make up for their past in an extremely wrong and dangerous way. This is a serious issue to touch and I've always wanted to write something like this. I don't know why I chose Harry and Draco but I hope to write this to the best of my abilities and in the right way. I really hope that I don't mess this up.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

That is how Draco found himself the next day on his Manor grounds, outside its gate, with a pack of Marlboro coupled with a lighter in the pocket of his trousers. He knew nothing about cigarettes except that smoking them helped with emotions and forgetfulness. That was all he needed. To not feel a damn thing. Hence, soon as he woke up, he put on some clothes and ran a hand through his bed hair, picked up some muggle change he found in Harry's now nearly empty wardrobe and apparated to muggle London, now that he could thankfully without requiring help from one non-existent Harry-sodding-Potter. Taking up the shopkeeper's suggestion that Marlboro leaves a better aftertaste than Camel, he purchased a pack and went home. The one he grew up in and not currently lived in. The Malfoy Manor which now is The Potter Manor.

Harry didn't make any renovations and left it as is. When the winds picked up even slightly, a fair bit of light grey debris flew all around like pollen. The broken parts of his home reminded him of his childhood and all the years he'd spent running around the Manor and the garden. Leaning on the wall next to its magnificent gates, his hands shook as he opened the pack of Marlboro Lights. He put the fag in his mouth, pocketed the pack, and using the newly bought lighter, he lit the tip of the cigarette. It hissed before settling down into a red cherry. He'd seen on TV enough times that he knew how to smoke theoretically. Using the knowledge, he held the fag between his index and middle fingers before pulling the smoke into his mouth, an action that filled his cavern with a tangy ashy taste. He pulled out the fag and concentrated on inhaling the smoke into his lungs. In doing so, his breath hitched and he felt his lungs recoil at the foul smoke entering them. Immediately, he started hacking and coughing, trying to dispel the vile rotten fumes. "God, this tastes awful!" he exclaimed to no one in particular.

Still, he put the tube back in his mouth and tried the same for the second time. His lungs seemed to adjust to the invasion for he didn't break into a coughing fit but did choke once or twice. When he pulled for the third time, the action seemed rather pleasant and his head bobbed back, hitting the Manor's wall in a silent thud. He didn't understand why he felt so open, so good but could feel all the blood rush half to his head and half towards his nether regions. He craved more. Fourth time felt like an orgasm was being ripped out of him and his hips swayed suavely searching for contact as his erection pressed into his trousers. Draco's face was surrounded by thick smoke he blew out and he even wanted to inhale it. The act was heavenly and his body felt so weak and high at the same time. He fell to the gravel road and his hand with the bud lay to his side, completely forgotten. All the thoughts that weighed him down, his parents' death, fearful days in Azkaban, Harry abandoning him, the miscarriage, him being a Death Eater, Harry spitting on him, the Prophet calling him a murderer, Harry calling him a murderer, Harry making love to a stranger on their sofa in their home, his failed attempts at erasing his mark, him pathetically starting to develop feelings for Harry... He simply
forgot them all.

After what felt like hours but only a few minutes, Draco regained control and he blinked furiously to look down at himself. He'd not known that he sat down. Seeing that his lit bud was almost at an end he proceeded to put it out using the road but then stopped abruptly, an idea striking his mind in the eleventh hour.

The Dark Mark on his left arm was coated with red lines, which, of course, Draco did to himself in an attempt to scratch the vile thing away. It still stayed. He now had an idea that he could probably burn it off his skin just like how it was burned into it by the Dark Lord. Maybe then people would look at him differently. Maybe then Harry would see him for the miserable human that he was all along.

"Malfoy?" someone said his maiden name but he was too lost to even recognize a presence other than himself.

Without wasting another second, Draco pushed the cigarette into the Dark Mark's skull and the burn caused him to groan. He was high again. His burning flesh induced the same high nicotine had produced in him a few minutes ago and he plunged the butt in harder, twisting it, till his eyes watered.

"Draco, bloody hell, mate! Are you mental?!" a hand, Draco guessed, slapped his own hands away and the put-out bud rolled on the gravel.

Someone, he couldn't see through the blur, was looking at the burning hole in his left arm. Yes, the mark was supposed to burn away into ashes. Just like it deserved. Just like he deserved the pain of having it on his arm, he also felt it fitting to feel the pain of losing it. But, he would not be able to get rid of it, would he? There is no salvation for him from the mark that tainted his life. Not even death could grant him absolution.

"Draco?" the annoying someone shook his body hard and as high as he was, Draco was jerked into consciousness at once, his vision clearing at a dramatic rate.

Red hair swam in his vision until it gave a clear view of Ronald Weasley in his face, still shaking him ever so eloquently.

"Ronald Weasley?" his throat felt sore as he spoke.

"Thank Merlin! What the hell were you thinking, Malfoy?" Ron yelled again and it was giving Draco a stubborn headache.

"Get off me!" he pushed Ron away and stood up, dusting his backside.

"Does Harry know?" Draco observed that Ron was in his Auror robes. His arrival must've triggered the wards the Ministry placed on the Manor, Draco concluded. But he didn't understand why Harry hadn't removed the Ministry wards after purchasing the Manor legally.

"Doesn't every Auror at the Ministry know that I'm here, Weasley? Where are the rest of you?" he asked, the answer obvious, at least to him.

"The Ministry wards no longer locate this place. Harry made sure that no Ministry wards were in place before buying the Manor and coming to me with the papers and asking me to place new wards on the place. So, I did. Only the Weasleys and the Potters can walk these grounds," Ron said.

"And I'm a Potter now," Draco said in a deriding tone.
"That you are," said Ron, still scrutinizing Draco.

"Then the wards wouldn't be triggered by my arrival here," Draco said and left the 'How did you know I was here then?' unspoken. Still, Ron understood what Draco meant.

"They didn't. Your newly-formed magical core did," Ron replied, clearing away any further questions Draco might've had. Oh, how wrong he was as Draco still had a few more questions for Ronald.

"Does Harry know?" Draco directed Ronald's question back at him.

"That you're here? Yes. I could ask the same of you," Ron spoke sternly, indicating the burn on Draco's left arm.

Conscious, Draco covered the mark with his right palm and blocked it from Ron's sight. "He doesn't need to know. Besides, he doesn't care," Draco replied, itching for a second fag.

"You can't lose what you chose, Draco," Ron stated as a matter of fact.

'Don't I know it," Draco drawled, his fingers and his lips itching for the taste of Nicotine. Unable to hold back any longer, he took out another bud and lighted it. Ron watched him and his actions with darkened eyes, as if he was trying to control his fury at Draco. He looked like he wanted to complain to Harry regarding Draco's new habit of coping up with the misgivings in his life.

"It's not my place to tell Harry. I'm not going to be that bridge for either of you," Ron said and for a moment, Draco wondered if the ginger-head had read his mind after all.

Draco simply shrugged, tired of the conversation. He wanted Ronald to leave and not bother him.

"Can't a bloke get some privacy without ginger-heads like you poking in?" Draco asked, not feeling the rush anymore though he relaxed considerably. He blamed it on Ron's huge unwanted presence.

"For once I really believed you changed, Malfoy. Now I truly think the saying is true. Once a Death Eater, always a Death Eater," Ron apparated with a crack knowing fully well that Draco wouldn't answer him.

Draco blew out a huge cloud of grey smoke which rolled around him, burning his eyes once again.

Pull.

Inhale.

Blow.

And repeat.

Chapter End Notes

Please do leave Kudos! Or a comment, if you wish.

Bye.

~ Wheezy
The final straw you drew from the haystack

Chapter Summary

Was sharper than a sword and left me bleeding on the ground.

**Chapter Warnings** - Dark Harry, Drunk Harry, Smoking, short chapter

**NOTE** - Please heed the warnings I give. Don't complain later if you're going to read it anyway.

**NOTE II** - I think I can safely say that with this chapter, the worst is thankfully at an end. From now on will be the real struggle where Harry and Draco try and heal themselves. Fingers crossed for a better future.

Chapter Notes

Thank you for all the Kudos!

Thank you Madcheshirefox, Irisk, MadamePerverell, Kikukaku, canadianliverfailure for your precious reviews.

Madcheshirefox, Irisk, kikukaku, canadianliverfailure - Ron has always been the least understanding one, especially in the case of Death Eaters and the like. But, yes, you have to wait for a while for everything to get better. Thanks!

MadamePerverell - Haha, dear, that's a nice dream you have there for Draco. I don't think Drasco can clear the required procedures to go to America as he is but nothing in the eyes of London's Wizarding Law. So, he wouldn't get a port key. I would love to write Draco loving himself though. I was aiming for it at the start but somehow, this story turned into a huge mess of domestic violence and self-abuse.

See the end of the chapter for more **notes**.

**JULY, 2007**

"Malfoy, what the hell are you doing here?" Harry asked as he stumbled into the kitchen drunkenly.

Draco was sitting at his dining chair, having his dinner. There was no use in waiting for Harry because the man never seemed to come home after Draco's miscarriage. They never really addressed the issue and Draco very well knew that a discussion was long overdue.

"Eating, Harry. Seeing that you're home now, do come and join me," Draco invited, his voice dripping with sarcasm.

"With a person like you? Never!" Harry slurred, dragging the last word he spoke.
"Suit yourself then," Draco said through clenched teeth and continued eating his rice bowl just for the sake of it though he didn't feel hungry anymore.

When the room fell abnormally silent, Draco looked up to see that Harry was gone. He sighed and let his heart calm down. Facing Harry was such a tedious task these days! Just as he was about to have another spoonful of his flavored rice, out of the corner of his eye, Draco saw an object fly towards him and instinctively, he picked up his wand from where it was placed on the table and yelled, "Protego!"

But he wasn't fast enough. The object didn't hit him, per se, because his half-formed spell deflected its trajectory minutely so that instead of it crashing on his head, the object hit his right upper arm and fell to the ground. Draco clutched his arm and whimpered in pain as he recognized the flying object to be the vase Ginny gifted to them for Christmas. The fear creeping inside him was maniacal once he realized WHY the vase, which was supposed to be in the living room, flew towards his head.

"Are to trying to kill me, Harry? Is that what you've become now? A frigging murderer??" he couldn't remain calm even though he wanted to as his hammered husband was back at the kitchen entryway, blocking it partially with his bulk.

Harry was swaying on his feet, blinded by unadulterated anger towards Draco and the latter found no escape. Draco's fingers clenched his wand so tight that he feared he'd break the wood into two. To quote that he was afraid would just be an understatement as he could literally feel the flames of Harry's fury licking him in entirety.

"Get out of my sight, Malfoy," Harry ordered.

Draco never felt any better as he collected himself into an upright position before walking towards the only exit; towards his horrific drunk of a husband who stood, blocking the doorway. If there had been any other exit, he certainly would've preferred that. If only he could apparate to their bedroom... But he knew he couldn't. Not even Harry could as the man strictly hated apparition from one room to another. Even when he direly needed Draco's body pliantly rocking underneath him, he would make sure they reached their room by means of NO apparition. Gulping, Draco wished for a hole to swallow him and spit him back in their room. As there would be no such luck dawning on him, he resolved himself to stay strong and not be afraid of his husband with every heavy step he took towards Harry, towards the exit. He would then lock himself away in their bedroom and stay there until Harry left for work. Only then would he be safe from his husband's untimely wrath. If by any chance it came down to a duel, Draco was sure that he wouldn't win. He had no advantage over Harry either magically or physically.

"Move, Harry," Draco wanted to say it boldly but it only came out as a whining plea.

Surprisingly, Harry complied and stepped aside for Draco through pass through. Assuming Harry was letting him go without a fight was the first mistake Draco had done that day for as soon as his back was facing his husband, Harry picked the opportunity to grab his wand arm and pull him back into the kitchen with abnormal force.

"Expelliarmus," Harry's whisper was dangerously silent and unnecessary. He could've wrenched Draco's wand out of the man's hand if he wanted to but there was something about using magic that induced an incredible surge of power in him. The feeling only intensified when Draco started thrashing in his hold, frantically ordering Harry to let go of him.

"Do not make a fuss," Harry growled in Draco's face and Draco could smell the insipid smell of alcohol wafting off of Harry strongly.
"Let go of me!" Draco made a move with his free left hand to snatch his wand which lay unmoving on the cold kitchen floor.

"Incarcerous!" Harry whispered the incantation without his wand.

Ropes materialized out of thin air and bound the blonde from the neck down, his hands plastered to his sides with no give. Draco never stopped thrashing, even though he was bound as he tried to push away from Harry however much possible with his bound bare feet, on the kitchen floor like a fish out of water, yelling at Harry to release him all the while promising that he would go to his room and never come out.

Harry tsked, knelt down and caught his husband by one of his feet and harshly dragged Draco towards him, making the blonde squeal in protest.

"Let me go! LET ME GO!" When Draco didn't stop yelling, Harry wandlessly accioed a kitchen knife and pressed it under Draco's chin, in line with his throat. At once, Draco shut his mouth; he didn't even gulp for he feared he'd accidentally cut his Adam's apple on the knife doing so. His body stilled, though his respiration quadrupled in intensity. Draco could feel his heart thudding maddeningly against his ribcage and he couldn't calm down, not with a knife at his throat.

"Please don't," Draco croaked out. He wanted to curl into himself and cry but he couldn't. He was so goddamn terrified that his body stopped functioning. Tears wouldn't even come.

"You WILL stay down," Harry intoned once and for all. Draco shut his eyes and nodded his head a fraction to let Harry know that he would comply. He would lay down and take all of Harry's wrath until he was satisfied or until he killed Draco. Death now seemed so tranquil to Draco.

Yet when the knife vanished from the underside of his chin and his survival instincts kicked in yet again, Draco couldn't help but fight Harry again to the best of his abilities. He prided himself for landing a rather hard kick in Harry's stomach and the man fell over backward. Now, if only Draco could get away from this mad prick... He scrambled a few inches away but once again, when Harry's hands clamped down on his foot and pulled him back to where he was a few minutes ago, Draco somehow knew that he wouldn't get out of his predicament alive. Harry Potter was going to KILL him tonight and there was no one to stop him from doing so.

"Ssh, Malfoy. Struggling won't do you any good. Stay still and I might just take pity on you," Harry smirked as he sat down over Draco, who was on his back on the floor, looking up at Harry with terrified eyes. Only this time, Draco knew that Harry wasn't going to assault him sexually as he did months ago. This was to be Harry's physical wrath thundering down on Draco.

"Just leave me alone, please," Draco begged before the first punch fell hard on his right cheekbone.

"You deserve this and more," Harry said calmly before landing the second punch.

"Please, Harry," Draco cried futilely as another punch kissed his face without any mercy.

'No, I don't deserve this.'

Momentarily, Draco went lax at Harry's cold eyes boring into him, blaming him for all that had gone wrong, and when the third blow fell on the same spot, breaking his lip and maybe his jaw too, his thrashing renewed with full vigor. Harry's blows were unforgiving, relentless, and barbaric as they rained down everywhere over his face. By the time Harry got tired, Draco presumed that his face would be beyond recognition. Unable to fight back due to his current condition, he closed his eyes and let his husband pummel him into unconsciousness and if he was lucky, which he apparently
wasn't, he could die and not be a burden to Harry or his world anymore.

"Say you deserve it and maybe, maybe I'll stop," Harry threatened, his left hand closing around Draco's pale neck.

"No," Draco gritted out as he tried to remove Harry off his body in vain.

"Say it!" Harry howled as he strangled his husband and punched him simultaneously.

"No," this time, Draco wasn't so confident.

"You frigging murderer! First, it was my friends at Hogwarts, Dumbledore, Fred, and now, you killed an innocent little baby. My baby! And, you say no? How dare you! Say you deserve it, you prick! Frigging say it, you Death Eater scum!" Harry squeezed Draco's neck tighter, cutting off whatever minimal supply of air he'd been getting as he willed for the blond to admit that it was his mistake. Everything!

For the fear of his expendable life, Draco finally surrendered.

"I deserve it," Draco repeated Harry’s words breathily, tears flowing out of his eyes and mingling with his blood that was gradually pooling around his head, as he could take no more for he feared that he'd die if he let Harry continue any longer. He was already on the edge of blackness due to the lack of air and loss of blood.

"This is for my baby," Harry announced before landing his fist on Draco's half-broken nose, effectively finishing the task. "Say you deserve it again."

Draco cried out yet again in sheer physical agony. "I deserve it." This time, he not only said it aloud for Harry's ego and rage to be satiated but also thought so in his mind, as he started to believe that maybe Harry became a mess because of him, and the pain ebbed away. If only he could turn back time, he would have acted a bit more differently and saved Harry's child, no matter how grudgingly. Then, it wouldn't have come to this. Harry wouldn't be hurting Draco. They would've been cuddling on the lovely blue sofa, watching some chick-flick and bantering away.

"This is for what we would've become before you spoiled everything," Harry proclaimed before proceeding to give Draco a black eye.

"I deserve it," Draco whispered this time even though Harry didn't ask him to say it. Harry smirked in triumph. Yes, you deserve this!

The final punch cracked Draco's sanity, not his bones.

'I deserve it. Please, stop now.' Draco's eyes rolled back into his head and he surmised that Harry's wrath would be something he took to his grave any moment now.

"Oh my God! Ron, help me here!" Hermione's shrill voice filled the room and seconds later, Ron and Hermione were pulling Harry away from a nearly passed out Draco. Harry was possibly satisfied with the work he did on his passive husband because he didn't protest when Ronald pulled him away and into the living room.

"Draco? Are you okay? Can you hear me?" Hermione kept asked him and wandlessly dissolved the ropes binding him. She looked like a teddy bear with all the pregnancy fat hugging her beautifully. Something liquid, definitely blood according to him, seeped into his eyes, blocking his sight and he squinted to gaze at more of Hermione's plump red cheeks.
He watched her take a small bottle with a squeeze bulb out of a navy blue pouch. Pressing the bulb to gather some liquid in the tube, she poured it drop by drop over Draco's face.

"Granger, do you know what you're doing?" he asked and then chuckled at his stupidity. Of course, the know-it-all knew what to do. How foolish of him!

"Yes, Draco. A bit of Dittany to close your wounds and a vial of Skele-Gro for your broken nose," she placed a hand on Draco's nape and helped him sit up before giving him Skele-Gro. "Drink." And he drank it in one go, shuddering at the nauseating after-burn.

"You need some sleep. Your broken bones will mend overnight and it'll be quite painful," she said as she stood up with great difficulty and for the first time in months, Draco REALLY looked at her full figure. Her stomach was so big that Draco was afraid it would burst open any moment.

"How long before the baby?" he asked as he stood up weakly, holding on to Hermione's hand for support.

"Eight, or nine," she answered.

"Good," he nodded. He needed a smoke. Now. His hands impulsively came together and his right-hand fingers started twisting his wedding ring again, a secondary means of comfort if a cig wasn’t available.

"Are you okay?" she asked, her eyes straying towards his hands.

"I will be once you lot leave or let me leave," his voice sounded so vacated from hope to Hermione’s ears that she frowned in annoyance at the situation. This wasn’t how it’s supposed to be. She never questioned Harry’s decision when he up and resolved to bring Draco Malfoy home by marrying him. Whatever he wanted to do in his life was up to him. Though she had been skeptical, upon watching Harry’s behavior change after Draco entered his life, she felt that for once, her best friend had chosen wisely. Yet, she failed drastically to see that Harry was amiss all the time and he had only gotten worse over time.

"Wear the protective charm bracelet I gifted you, please," said Hermione, taking Draco’s hand in hers.

"I don’t think it’ll be of any help," Draco said monotonously, his eyes fixed somewhere behind Hermione and she nodded her head in acceptance. Her charm bracelet wasn’t powerful. She didn’t even know how to make them and she only bought and gifted one to Draco. Never in her dreams did she feel that there would come a day like this.

"We brought Sebastian back. He’s in the living room," Hermione revealed not so excitedly, nonetheless, trying to cheer Draco up.

"Good. Thank you," Draco only wanted them to leave him alone. He couldn’t maintain his façade anymore.

"We’ll be taking Harry with us so that he can sober up," she said which had a hidden ‘You’re safe tonight’ in the way she spoke.

Draco bit his bottom lip and squeezed his eyes shut before jerking his head affirmatively. That was the cue Hermione needed to leave him alone. Seconds later, he heard the Floo roar and immediately ran upstairs, stumbling on a few steps. Pulling open his wardrobe, he picked up his Lights from under his sock drawer, rushed towards the bedroom window, carelessly opened it with sweaty fingers and lit a stub.
The drag hit his head at once and his shaking stopped almost instantly. Sitting on the window sill with his head lolling on the frame, he watched the clouds of smoke he exhaled with genuine interest when a sharp pain laced through his nose. The Skele-Gro was starting its work on him, he reckoned.

And Draco invited the pain willingly.

Chapter End Notes

Please do leave Kudos! Or a comment, if you wish.
Bye.
~ Wheezy
Change is but a metaphor for how much you want things to remain unchanged

Chapter Summary

Yet, things have changed beyond recognition.

Chapter Warnings - None

NOTE - Please heed the warnings I give. Don't complain later if you're going to read it anyway.

NOTE II - I have made some changes in the previous chapter. Nothing glaring though. Even if you don't re-read it, it's completely fine. But if you want to, you can go ahead!

Chapter Notes

Thank you for all the Kudos!

Thank you Madcheshirefox, Irisk, Kikukaku, Azules, papercutter, diddleymaz, AKZoey, serilla, PeoniesandIrises for taking the time and effort to share your thoughts!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

AUGUST, 2007

It was another month before the money in his reserves was down to the last sickle. Since Harry had stopped coming home after beating him to a pulp, Draco lacked the sickles his husband brought home for him. Previously, he didn’t require them as Harry ordered groceries to be delivered to their doorstep since Draco couldn’t go out alone into the public. Now, as Draco scrutinized the empty refrigerator and his empty wallet, he supposed he should do something about it. He previously attached a letter and sent Sebastian out to deliver it but he didn’t receive any response from Harry even after two days.

“To hell with it!” he exclaimed exasperatedly, plopping down on the sofa and browsing through the channels with a burning fag between his lips. He stopped caring about the smoke filling the room or the ashes littering the carpet. He exhaled fumes through his nostrils and chuckled at the action.

By evening, he realized that he was out of Marlboro Lights too and he needed money to purchase them. If anyone had ever told him as a Malfoy that one day, he’d be completely broke and would beg for money from Harry Potter, he would’ve scoffed indignantly and murdered the guy for even thinking of such blasphemy. Now though, he needed the money, at least to buy a pack of Lights.

So, he Floo-called Hermione’s house, as sending an owl didn’t work.

“Draco? It’s good to hear from you, really!” Hermione’s voice chirped happily.
“Yeah. Is Harry there?” he asked.

“Yes. He just came back from the Ministry,” Hermione replied.

“Well, can you get him for me? Do I have to ask for everything?” he said irritably.

“About that. I think he still needs some time away from you, Draco,” if Hermione was physically present, Draco would’ve hit her, pregnant or not.

“Who are you to keep my husband away from me?” he muttered darkly.

“It’s not me, Draco. It’s what Harry decided. I cannot go against it,” she said apologetically.

“Fine! Tell him that I need to live and in order to do that, I need money, which I do not frigging have!” he screamed at the Floo Hermione and wished his voice was loud enough to reach the ears of his deranged husband on the other side.

Without waiting for Hermione’s reply, he cut the connection and sat back on his heels, staring at the hissing embers.

An hour later, he received an owl, a dark brown one, which dropped a heavy envelope filled with muggle bills, a pouch jingling with galleons, and a letter signed in Harry’s messy handwriting. Gulping, he first unfolded the letter which was tied securely inside the pouch of Galleons.

_Dear Draco,_

_I’m sorry._

- Harry

Stuck to the below Harry’s sign was his wedding ring. Draco plucked it off the parchment and stared at it for a long while. He didn’t understand what it meant. Did Harry want to dissolve their marriage? Is this his way of breaking that ice to Draco? Why not just send him back to Azkaban and be done with all this drama? Did Harry really want to leave him, who he’d known for a lifetime, for a child that wasn’t even a day old when it passed away unexpectedly? Was all Harry wanted a whore to carry his seed? Fine! He could find someone else then. Draco wouldn’t spread his legs just so Harry would come back to him. He was better than that despite all the punishment he surely deserved for his mindless mistakes of youth.

If only he could escape this prison too, just like he did Azkaban. Yet, he was pretty sure that there was no escape. He was terrified to go out into the Wizarding World. Once people knew he was out in the open, not as Harry’s husband but as a free man, an escapee, he would be torn to bits. He was now the branded murderer of Harry Potter’s child. There was no way he could live for a second if he ever went out into the Wizarding suburbs. And, he didn’t even want his thoughts to stray towards making a life for himself in Muggle London. It wouldn’t work. He didn’t know anything there except the one convenience store he visited previously for his Lights, the one Harry had taken him to a long while back. Draco had no idea how to go from there. The realization that he was probably stuck where he was, for the rest of his life, brought hot tears to his eyes which he adamantly refused to shed.

Defeated emotionally, he watched as Sebastian flew towards the brown owl with one of his treats in his beak and fed it to the brown bird, which accepted the treat and afterward, combed Sebastian’s feathers with its beak in a loving gesture. Draco smiled ruefully and slipped Harry’s wedding ring onto his left ring finger, letting it rest against his wedding ring.
The first time Harry took him out into the muggle world was a couple of months after Draco had started living with his husband. He had been skeptical and downright adamant about visiting muggle London for groceries. The only delivery boy worked at Fresh Market had gotten into an accident thus delivery services were halted till the shop owner hired a new boy or the old one was fit enough to work again. For four months after, no groceries were delivered to their doorstep; instead, Harry took Draco along with him twice a month to get all they needed. When Draco followed Harry into the lone garage, he supposed they would be driving there, given Harry’s house was close to the Muggle world. But, no. He learned that Harry’s garage was only for show and that he had not the possession of any vehicle, except a few classy broomsticks which lay haphazardly in one corner, a layer of dust piled on them. The garage was only a ruse for a convenient apparition point, the only spot in Harry’s house which allowed it.

“We can fly, can’t we?” Draco had asked. He wanted to know what it’d be like after all those years of yearning for a chance to fly away. Flying was something he desperately missed and when his eyes found a cluster of them in the garage, Draco couldn’t help the words of interest tumbling out of his lips.

“Draco, you can’t,” Harry had said, a painful reminder of what Draco lacked. Magic.

“I can always be the pillion rider,” Draco smirked though his heart throbbed painfully. He didn’t want to smirk or smile or make a conversation. All he wanted was to be able to do the things he’d done before he lost his magic to Azkaban. He wanted to feel the thrum of it inside his veins, flowing to every nook and corner of his body, consuming it from inside out. He wanted to be whole again.

“Not today,” uncharacteristically, Harry’s face seemed to contort in pain and Draco hadn’t argued anymore. Clenching his mouth as tight as the fists balled at his side, Draco nodded curtly and took Harry’s arm for a Side-Along. At least, the tug of Harry’s magic at his navel felt good and left warm traces on his skin after.

Draco found himself tumbling into a rather clean alley that had dust piled up neatly to one corner in a large rectangular green bin with a lid. Harry caught him before he could fall face-first into the ground.

“Careful,” he whispered.

“I usually am more immaculate than this,” Draco commented, allowing Harry’s hold to linger on him for a bit longer before he set right his clothes.

“I bet you are,” Harry’s eyes crinkled playfully when he smiled at Draco.

There was literally NOTHING fresh about Fresh Market and Draco simply couldn’t understand why Potter ordered groceries from such a ghastly shop. When he heard its name, Draco thought there would be thousands of fruits, vegetables, kinds of seafood, poultry places in hundreds of stalls and people would be flocking everywhere. Yet, Fresh Market was just a small shop that took up rather large floor space. There were no stalls but fruits and vegetables were put in big baskets on one corner of the first floor. In another corner, there was a glass partition that opened into a smelly room, where all kinds of aquatic animals – common and exotic were placed on crushed ice. That room had been chillier than the rest of the shop. There was another partition too in which bottles of whiskey, wine, rum, gin, and tonic took up the shelves in an aesthetic sequence. There were many shelves from one corner of the floor to the other, on which several packed, tinned, and processed foods were placed. There were four to five refrigerators that had frozen items – frozen chicken, fish, peas, corn, tofu, and
many more.

“This is preposterous!” Draco whispered angrily.

“What?” Harry asked.

“This,” Draco waved his hand, indicating the entire shop. “How can you order groceries from a shop such as this? Frozen chicken in a box! I can’t even imagine. It’s simply…”

“What is it, Draco?” Harry smiled even harder as he put a few packs of Lays in the trolley.

“Scandalous!” Draco finished triumphantly.

“Don’t worry, I never order frozen foods. No frozen chicken,” he threw in a large bottle of peanut butter and mixed fruit jam.

“The Blackcurrant jam too,” Draco said.

“Mixed-fruit tastes yummier though. I don’t think there will be much difference in terms of taste,” Harry countered.

“Potter, you imbecile! Blackcurrant jam is more authentic than mixed-fruit and it tastes like Blackcurrant. Not mixed-fruit,” this time, Harry burst out into a fit of laughter as he added the jam Draco liked into their basket.

“Pick whatever you want, my Lord,” Harry teased and Draco huffed indignantly though he felt happy at the normalcy between them. Harry could blow a fuse anytime. Until then, Draco supposed he would bask in the warmth between them.

Harry learned then that Draco liked to eat rice and added an extra bag to their basket. The time where he ordered for one turned into two and he could not explain the warm fuzzy feeling engulfing his heart like a tsunami. Draco scrutinized every shelf for things he might have wanted and whatever caught his interest went into their basket. When they came face to face with condoms, Draco had flushed a light rose color. In the Wizarding world, condoms were only available in the apothecary and they weren’t even that necessary as there were always protection spells. One could say, condoms were only a ‘kink’ for the wizards and not a necessity.

Draco had never tasted soft drinks or any drinks of the Muggle world. He took liberty in adding a two-liter Coke to their basket.

“I am sure that this is alcohol,” he stressed while doing so.

“No, Draco. Even the muggle kids drink it, you know? It does not have alcohol,” Harry clarified but Draco had been inexorable. He believed that the manufacturers only fooled their consumers by leading them to think that Coke was a non-alcoholic drink.

“This is my favorite,” Harry said, pointing at a neon green bottle of Mountain Dew.

“Is the drink green in color?” Draco asked, picking it up and bringing the bottle close to his frowning and curious eyes in an attempt to examine and find out which color the liquid inside was.

“A light neon green,” Harry nodded and the bottle was immediately added in their to-buy list by Draco.

“I’ve never seen ground coffee packed like this,” Draco said, sneering down at the coffee bag in his
hands.

“She’s some muggles prefer instant coffee,” said Harry.

“This is scandalous!” Draco repeated for the second time, placing back the coffee on its shelf and Harry had only laughed. Draco glanced at his husband then and thought that maybe, it wasn’t Harry’s day of dementia and they could enjoy this pleasance that seemed to bring them together unwittingly for a while longer.

They were beyond exhausted when they came back home. What was supposed to be an hour of shopping had dragged on for almost four hours. By then their stomachs growled and complained loudly, hence they had to eat outside at a minor establishment which Draco liked inwardly but never voiced aloud.

That day had been the first and the last time he went to Fresh Mart with Harry.

Everything was still the same. The frozen foods still occupied the same shelves in the refrigerators. The whiskey, wine, and other authentic bottles still stood on their own shelves, the Blackcurrant jam was stood beside the mixed-fruit jam he hated, and the instant coffee sat on its throne, like ever.

The only changes were that Harry wasn’t beside him and he added Marlboro to their grocery list.

The only change he could make but wouldn’t was - shopping for one instead of two.

Chapter End Notes

Please do leave Kudos! Or a comment, if you wish.
Bye.
~ Wheezy
You still wake up even when you don't want to

Chapter Summary

And in doing so, facing your fears becomes a compulsion.

Chapter Warnings - Blood

NOTE - Please heed the warnings I give. Don't complain later if you're going to read it anyway.

Chapter Notes

Thank you for all your warm Kudos!

Thank you diddleymaz (I never had Raspberry. Should try sometime!), Brambles, Madcheshirefox, The_Real_Nymphadora, Kikukaku, Yuizae for sharing your thoughts with me!

Madcheshirefox - When I read the line: Puts shovel on standby, I don't know why but it cracked me up harder than I imagined. I am laughing as I write this one too.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

JULY, 2007

THE DAY AFTER HARRY ALMOST KILLED DRACO

His head throbbed and it was just an understatement. Harry wanted nothing more than to hit his head with a hammer until all the pain coursing through it ebbed away. What had he been doing the previous day? Upon retrospection, he recollected bits and pieces.

Reporters, yes! It started with them.

The Press flocked his office even before he reached there and his colleagues looked at him with sympathy cloaked in apologetic faces because they couldn’t stop the media anymore. After the Prophet printed about the loss of his baby, the media couldn’t seem to calm down. They wanted more and Harry had nothing to give. He remembered acquiescing to the media’s presence as he sat down in his chair, locked the door to his office, cast a silencing charm so that the media’s enthusiastic questions wouldn’t reach the ears of his colleagues, and waved a hand at them to proceed.

Barbarians. They threw questions upon questions at him without mercy or consideration for his feelings. The worst of the lot award still went to Rita Skeeter, the old hag. All the money she earned went for youth potions. If only she utilized that money to mend her brain and her filthy frigging mouth, Harry would be rejoicing!
“Look, first of all, I don’t know how you guys broke into my office –“

“We have our ways, Mr. Potter,” Rita interrupted, looking at Harry from above her horrid red glasses.

“This is an invasion of privacy and I can legally take action,” Harry ignored her and continued.

“Correction. Auror Harry Potter’s office is not private. Any Ministry building is not private. Also, I shall take the liberty to remind you of freedom of speech and freedom to write, if you’ve forgotten the commandments, Mr. Potter. You can’t legally charge us, not when you’re a public figure. Your everything belongs to us,” Rita piped up again and deep down, Harry knew that.

“Yet you do not have the freedom to break in,” he countered futilely and before Rita could smart-mouth him, he asked the reporters, “What do you want to know?’

The old hag had the audacity to smirk widely before she tore his senses to bits, like ever. No one showed any mercy and they started from the very beginning.

“Why did you marry Malfoy?”

“What are your intentions behind releasing him from Azkaban, a place which he certainly deserves to be for the rest of his life?”

“Was it pity because his parents died just like yours?” This one hit close to home yet Harry gritted his teeth and listened to all of their questions which pierced every inch of his skin and soul like a thousand needles.

“Your take on Malfoy’s intentions behind killing your child?”

“Aren’t you going to file charges against your husband” – those two words were pronounced so disparagingly that Harry visibly flinched at the venom contained in them – “for killing an innocent life yet again and send him back to Azkaban?”

That was the last needle, the thousandth one, and Harry breathed deeply, taking into account all the inquisitive eyes of the seven reporters sat in front of him in transfigured chairs.

“It wasn’t pity and it wasn’t that I could relate myself to him in any way. If there is one person in this world who I cannot relate myself with, it would be Draco. We fought on opposite sides. He pledged his services to the wrong person despite being given a chance at freedom and safety. It was HIS choice which he hadn’t even thought about for a minute,” Harry’s voice sounded dangerously cold and the reporters could physically feel that icy chill in the air around them.

Harry raised a palm, effectively stopping Rita, who was about to ask something. They had their turn and now, it was Harry’s.

“My parents died protecting me. They were heroes who stood against Voldemort. Draco’s parents can’t even compare. They didn’t die protecting their spawn. Instead, death was their punishment. Liberation from all the crimes they’d committed, all the people they tortured and killed. I believe that they deserved what they got. As far as Draco is concerned, I married him because I wanted to. Really,” he frowned pensively, not believing his own words.

*Why did he marry Draco?*

“Do you love him?” some bloke asked.
“God, no!” his answer was immediate, like the strike of a snake. “I think I married him because I wanted to see how loss looked like. To be given everything and later stripped off of it must be scarring, don’t you think?”

Rita Skeeter had always been known for her indifference and sly nature. For the first time in an eternity, she was truly terrified of the man sitting cozily in his chair, making statements about wanting to OWN someone else’s loss. In no way was she tempted to sympathize with a former Death Eater, but she couldn’t help but feel extremely sorry for Draco for being forced to live with a man such as Harry Potter. He had changed a lot more than she imagined. For only a minute, she let her composure crumble before building it back and screening her face with her usual wall of frigidity. No one, not even the Hero could make her break her character. Ever. Period.

“As far as charges are concerned, there won’t be any. This is a familial issue and I choose to not make it legal or public. As his husband, I will be the one to deal with whatever happened. The End,” Harry concluded. The anger that sparked inside him wouldn’t die down. The reporters’ quills and questions only added fuel to the fire raging inside of him and he craved a strong drink to quell it. It was taking so much effort on his part to reign in his magic which wanted a target to let its wrath out on.

There was a minor uproar amongst the reporters at Harry’s dismissiveness but they got what they came for.

“May we speak with Draco Malfoy, Mr. Potter?” a black-haired, pointy faced reporter queried.

Harry cleared his throat before responding. “First of all, he’s Draco Potter, not Malfoy. And no, you may not.”

“You cannot refuse! He has the right to choose, Mr. Potter,” the guy argued.

“And I have the right to choose for him. You will not speak to him. If I find ANY of you flocking near me or my house in an attempt to speak to MY husband,” Harry left the threat hanging. The reporters were intelligent enough to understand as they moved out of his office in a straight line. The last one to leave was Rita Skeeter.

Before she closed the door shut, she waved a hand to end the transfiguration charm. All the chairs turned back into what they once were and clattered onto the floor.

“Good day, Mr. Potter,” she smiled crookedly and shut the door.

Then, he remembered finishing up some case files and a little after lunch, when his anger still didn’t vanish, he left for the day only to end up at a bar. He supposed he drank the entire store before barging into his own house and finding Draco eating his dinner at the dining table. And the anger which was quenched by liquor came back to the forefront.

“I almost killed him,” Harry whispered to himself.

His palms turned as cold as ice and his body shook in fear. What did he do? How could he almost kill a person, his husband at that? Suddenly, he was overcome with an urge to visit Draco and apologize to him. He remembered Ron dragging him away. Did ‘Mione heal Draco before leaving him to his devices? She would’ve! But what if she didn’t because she was too focused on him and not Draco?

‘Healing Salve, I need to go and apply it on his wounds,’ Harry thought as he looked around for the tub of salve. He fumbled as he tried to get down the bed and fell to the floor. His knuckles hurt like
hell and when he looked down to inspect them, he found blotches of dried blood.


His mind provided him with images of a bloody Draco writhing underneath him, not in pleasure but extreme pain. His ears echoed with Draco’s screams and pleas for Harry to stop beating him to death. His palms burned with the reminder of Draco’s neck clenched between them in a choking grip.

*I killed him. I killed him!*

*Punch.* He hit the wall beside him and invited the pain of impact willingly. This was how he socked his husband yesterday. Draco had felt this pain under his blows.

*Punch.* Then, he screamed gutturally.

Two minutes later, Ron and Hermione rushed towards the source of the scream, abandoning their half-eaten breakfast in their plates and barged into Harry’s room. They found him kneeling on the floor, facing the wall, as he kept on punching it. Harry could feel a few of his fingers broken yet he didn’t stop hitting the wall. He deserved this pain for dealing it out to Draco. No matter how angry or cross he had been with Draco for killing the child he dreamt of and wanted, he should not have tried to kill him. He remembered telling his husband back at the hospital that he was no better than his father, Lucius but now, Harry feared that he turned into someone who he despised from the core of his heart. After yesterday’s incident, Harry wondered if he was any better than his counterpart, Voldemort.

At that dubious realization, Harry only pummeled the wall harder.

“You killed him!” he intoned after every punch.

Immediately, Ron slid his arms under Harry’s shoulders and dragged him away from the wall. The cream wall was now blotted with Harry’s blood on the spot where Harry hit it. Harry struggled in Ron’s grip but he couldn’t shake his friend off of him as he wasn’t as big or strong as Ron, physically.

“Mate, what are you doing?!” Ron exclaimed in concern. Hermione stood near the door with her palms plastered over her mouth, unable to take in the horror she witnessed not only then but the day before. She hadn’t imagined that her best friend, who always smiled and always felt like home, would be reduced to an angry slobbering mess.

“Let go of me!” Harry demanded and tried to squirm out of Ron’s hold. But the man wound his arms around Harry’s flailing arms and chest tightly, locking him in place with no give. “Please, let me go. I killed him. I killed Draco,” Harry’s anger now turned into harsh sobs as he sagged in Ron’s arms.

“Calm down, mate. You didn’t kill him, Harry. He’s all right. ‘Mione healed him, okay?” Ron said soothingly yet his heart pained miserably trying to take in Harry’s grief. Why had they left him alone after the war? If only they didn’t believe when Harry had told he was all sunshine and roses… If only they could’ve gotten him help sooner… His mind was barraged with many such possibilities but he knew that none of them would be of any use now. The time when Harry really needed them in his life was long gone. They weren’t there for him and partly, Ron blamed himself and ‘Mione for ignoring Harry in the name of recovery.

“Please,” Harry focused his teary gaze on Hermione but his words were for both of his best friends.

“Help me,” he beseeched.
I was really nervous while writing this chapter. I still don't know if I managed to capture everything and put it into words correctly. I really hope I did though! *Fingers crossed*

Please do leave Kudos! Or a comment, if you wish.
Bye.
~ Wheezy
It is our choices that show what we truly are

Chapter Summary

Choose well.

Chapter Warnings - implied self-harm

* I should've done this before but better late than never, eh? This story heavily includes themes of abuse, blood, violence, anger, smoking, trauma, depression, and self-harm. Please, if you are underage or fainthearted or suffering from depression or suicidal thoughts, DO NOT READ THIS FIC. If you find yourself depressed or alone, always remember that there are people willing to help you. Reach out to them and if they reach out to you, do not hesitate to take that hand. Help will always be given to those who need it.

NOTE - Please heed the warnings I give. Don't complain later if you're going to read it anyway.

NOTE II - Chapter heading is a quote from Harry Potter books (Chamber of Secrets, I believe. Correct me if I'm wrong.)

NOTE III - I don't have extreme knowledge on how PTSD sessions take place. Whatever I wrote here and will be writing in the future chapters will be partly from my personal experience (I once suffered from mild depression and suicidal thoughts. Sorry if it bothers you!) and information from Google. Help and advice from you always welcome regarding this!

Chapter Notes

Thank you for all your warm Kudos!

Thank you Kikukaku, Madcheshirefox, Irisk, PeoniesandIrises, MadamePerverell for your comments!

Madcheshirefox, Kikukaku - Allow me to *clink* glasses with you. To Draco.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

AUGUST, 2007

FIRST WEEK

“What do you feel, Mr. Potter?” her voice was supposed to be extremely soothing according to Ron and 'Mione but Harry wanted nothing more than to un-hear whatever she was saying and would be saying.
He was sat in the Mind Healer’s office – sparsely furnished, save for a wide desk and a couple of chairs around it. The desk was littered with what he supposed were case files of her patients on one side and on the other side, a quill stand, a couple of ink bottles of distinct inks, a round gold clock that winked at him every minute, and some more files in an orderly way. There were bookshelves on the walls which hadn’t a door. Basically, there were too many books to his utter dislike.

“I’m fine,” he mumbled, stifling a yawn. The room was boring, as was the Healer.

The rather pale face of the Mind Healer sitting across him remained as expressionless as ever. Weren’t Mind Healers supposed to be expressive and fawning over their patients so that they could get well sooner? Harry stared straight into her beady green eyes, so reminiscent of his’, yet a tad bit smaller, nestled inside a layer or two of black mascara. Her lips were thin and when she spoke, they seemed to get thinner. By no means was she petite but had all the curves in all the right places and at forty, she looked a catch, just like Ron had whispered into his ear in the presence of his wife, with her black hair tied into a low ponytail.

“I didn’t ask HOW you felt, Mr. Potter,” she cleared.

Harry sighed. He didn’t want to be there being treated like a person who’s broken in their head. Yet, he was the one who implored his best friends to help him. Even as he sat on a comfortable chair in his Mind Healer’s office, he could see flashes of blood and he could hear howls of pain and terror. He wanted it all gone.

“I feel so angry all the time,” it was the second time in his life he spoke this statement aloud but the one listening to him wasn’t Dumbledore. It was Mind Healer Arya Reynolds. And the one causing the rampant anger inside him wasn’t Voldemort. It was himself and his untreated fears which now manifested as the evil inside his heart.

“Why do you feel angry?” she queried.

“I don’t know,” Harry answered honestly.

“That’s a start,” Harry glimpsed a fraction of a smile on her lips.

“What?”

“People don’t like labeling themselves as mad or broken in the head hence the general consensus is they decline to visit a Mind Healer. When they do, they try to lie their way out of questions. I can tell that you’re not one such person. You want to be healed, don’t you, Mr. Potter?”

“Yes,” his answer was immediate.

“Good. It’ll make your Healing process smooth when you are true to yourself. And to me. You have to be honest and open with everything, Mr. Potter. In a way, I need to see your mind laid out bare for me to heal you. Are you following me?”

“Yes, Mrs. Reynolds.”

“We will only need to talk to each other and I can sense very well that you are uncomfortable here. You can set the place and time and I’ll be there for you. Check?”

“Talk? What will we be talking about?”

“Whatever you want to talk about. I’ll be the ears you’ve always wished for and I’ll be the shoulder you can always lean on. Together, we’ll heal you,” her face broke into a radiant smile.
Her words comforted him and strangely, he wanted the session to prolong. He didn’t want to leave her office as he felt the barrier inside his head crack a tiny bit. He wanted her to poke at it until it crumbled and broke down so that all the grief that he locked up inside him would pour out into the invisible glasses she laid out in front of him. For the first time, Harry felt that he could change and not hurt his loved ones anymore with his irrepessible fury.

“Thank you,” he relaxed into the chair.

“Since this is our first session, let’s talk about something that you like about yourself,” she started.

“Um,” Harry frowned. Was that important? Did he necessarily need to like a part of himself? The Healer’s hard gaze on him only worsened his thinking abilities. “Everyone says my eyes look lovely,” Harry mumbled quite sarcastically.

“I want to know what YOU love about yourself,” the Healer repeated.

“I’ve never thought of it,” Harry said a bit irritably.

“Well, think now. I’ll wait,” she lounged back in her chair as she observed Harry’s body language. Though a hero, she could tell that the man sitting in front of her had low self-esteem. Not as low as the patients she encountered to date, but low nevertheless. He couldn’t even pick out his positive traits. His hunched shoulders meant that he felt helpless all the time – maybe because something in his life was out his control, and she had the faintest idea what it was as soon as the Chosen One walked into her office. Anger without reason.

The first step in rehabilitation was to admit that there’s something wrong with you. Harry had accepted that his anger was causing issues in his life and not many patients of hers do it. Denial. It’s as strong an emotion as it’s a word. It hindered whatever progress that could be made and closed in on its target. When it had been taken care of, then would come the actual problem of finding out which space the person found himself in. Did he love himself extremely or was it the other way round? If they did either one of them, why? Everything would be built around the simplest of questions – Why? How? What? When? Until, such a time when the patient would be ready to face the hardest question of the lot – Who?

“I’m a pretty good Seeker and I love how I fly,” Harry’s voice interrupted her scrutiny.

“How do you fly?” she asked and her question seemed so dense to Harry.

“Yes, I do know that, Mr. Potter. You said you love the way you flew. Explain that to me,” she replied smoothly, unfazed. Harry recollected himself before explaining and he didn’t even need to think about it.

“Look, why are we even talking about this? Aren’t you supposed to heal me of my demons or whatever? What does it matter to you if I fly or don’t? Just do your thing and heal me quickly,” Harry said brusquely. Arya could physically feel the anger coursing through Harry’s demeanor yet she wasn’t afraid of him. The urge to help him only got stronger. After all, she wasn’t the outstanding Mind Healer in the world for nothing.

“We’ll get there eventually. Tell me why you love to fly, Mr. Potter. Paint me a picture through your words,” she encouraged him. It always worked with her patients but not everyone was Harry Potter. Of course, she knew a lot about him yet it doesn’t make him any different or special when seated in the chair across her desk. He was the same as all the others who sat in that very chair seeking
freedom from the chains that bound them to their demons, as Harry had put it earlier.

“I feel free, like all my burdens vanish at once. When I somersault in the sky on my broom, I worry about the sticking charm I usually place on my glasses and not about the responsibilities waiting for me on the ground,” Harry said truthfully though his foul mood at being thwarted ever so gently persisted.

“Have you flown recently?” this time, the Healer wasn’t looking at Harry but was glancing sideways through the notes her quill had been writing down, hovering a few inches away from her head but still in her line of sight.

“No.”

“Why?”

“Haven’t had the opportunity. Working at the Ministry as an Auror takes up a huge chunk of my time,” replied Harry.

“What about your day-offs?”

“I prefer relaxing at home on my off days. Besides, I don’t have many of them. As the Savior, I’m supposed to be fighting all the time.”

“Hmm,” the Healer hummed and asked no more.

“What is it?” Harry asked when he could no longer sit in silence waiting for another intrusive question.

“People lose interest in the things they love when they’re extremely stressed or disturbed in their life, Mr. Potter. It is generally the first sign. When was the last time you flew?” she asked and her twinkling eyes suddenly reminded Harry of his late mentor, Dumbledore. Only, her eyes were green, not blue.

After thinking for a minute, Harry said, “I don’t remember. I think it’s been a couple of years.”

“Okay. If given the chance, would you fly now?” she asked.

“Maybe,” Harry shrugged.

Though he didn’t mention it to Arya Reynolds, Harry knew that it’s been very long – more than a good five years since he’d flown. He was really out of practice and he wasn’t sure that he could do it again.

“Maybe’s good. That means you want to fly,” she answered.

“It can also mean that I don’t want to fly,” Harry retorted.

“Is there a reason you do not want to fly?” she asked.

“Not particularly,” Harry was racking his brains to find an excuse but came up with none. Why had he stopped flying? Was there really a reason for it? He liked it since forever, didn’t he? Then, why?

Arya knew that the wheels in Harry’s mind had turned and it was a good sign. It wasn’t just the Healer who questioned their patients but after every session, there must be something that would provoke questions inside the person’s mind. The very same ones and they always started with why? And when one began to question oneself, the broken pieces of their soul – not just their minds,
would automatically fit in their right places. They only need a push, in some cases, a hard shove.

“Let’s finish up our session for today. At the end of every session, I’ll give you an assignment and I need you to try and do it. It may be difficult in the beginning but you’ll gradually get used to it,” she said, taking her notes into her hands as her quill flew and flopped down onto the table gently.

“What if I can’t complete your assignments or whatever?” Harry asked.

“The intention here is that you TRY, Mr. Potter. That will be your first step. Check?” she smiled.

“Okay,” Harry acknowledged her.

“Before I tell you what it is, let’s talk about our meeting place. Where would you be the most comfortable?”

“Here’s good,” he said sheepishly as he felt bad for feeling uncomfortable in the Healer’s prized office.

“This isn’t about me, Mr. Potter. It doesn’t matter to me if you think my office is foreboding or tasteless. Each has his opinion. The road to recovery will be the path you walk on and I believe it is you who must choose it. It’s difficult to live by someone else’s choices,” her voice was motherly to his ears.

It’s difficult to live by someone else’s choices, his mind repeated and without a second thought, Draco’s face flashed in front of his eyes. You chose for him to be pregnant with your child, Harry. It wasn’t his fault. It was never his fault! His mind screamed at him and he blanked out momentarily. He shook his head in an attempt to clear his thoughts before paying attention to Arya.

“The Weasley Residence. I’ll need to ask Ron and ‘Mione first though. Why don’t I send you an owl after confirming with them?” his voice quivered with every word.

The subtle change in his posture did not go unnoticed by Arya and she noted it in the back of her mind. It started with light topics and heavy issues were to be dealt with later. Step by step, they would be reaching there and picking out all the unnecessary weeds in Harry's garden. Together.

“Sure, Mr. Potter. Now, your assignment,” she started as she took out a thin brown covered book from a drawer in her desk and Harry groaned. “Before you and I meet again the next week, I need you to write down what you love and what you hate about yourself in this journal,” she handed him the book.

“You expect me to fill it?” Harry asked with raised eyebrows, nonetheless, taking it.

“If the list is that long, I would really be very happy and impressed with you. And at our next appointment, we’ll discuss what you’ve written. Check?”

“Okay,” he answered, turning the book over in his hands, thinking of what he could possibly write in it.

“And, I need you to try and fly again,” she spoke.

“What?” Harry’s head snapped up at once.

It’s difficult to live by someone else’s choices, his mind wouldn’t stop repeating that sentence nor would it stop throwing images of Draco, beaten and bloody, to his eyes.
In his mind, it seemed as if the session wasn’t what he expected it to be. He thought they would be talking about the war, his anger, the people he lost, his baby, and the cruel way he hurt his husband, not about why he did or didn’t fly these days. He wasn’t there to learn to fly again but because he pounded his husband into oblivion and he wanted to be able to control his anger. Skeptical about the sessions, Harry decided to speak to Ron and Hermione about it later but for now, he decided to play along with the Healer.

“I want you to rediscover your love for flying. Pick up your old broomstick, or buy the new Nimbus Swift 2007 edition and fly, Mr. Potter. Check?”

Harry wasn’t sure that he could do it. It’s been so long since he held a broom and the broomsticks he owned lay under layers of dust in his garage. He remembered the day when Draco had asked him if they could fly but he turned him down by saying that they couldn’t as Draco had no magic in him to fly one. Instead of him admitting that he hadn’t the courage to fly again after all those years of dormancy, he swerved his reasons towards Draco.

“I don’t think I can,” he said in a pleading tone.

“It is not an order, Mr. Potter. You only need to try. Not for me but for yourself,” she said. Surprisingly, her voice held no pity like Harry thought it would. The Healer was clear with what she wanted from Harry and she wasn’t begging or forcing him to do things. “You need not do it alone. You could ask one of your friends to accompany you,” she tried to reassure him. Flying with friends once again sounded good though he wasn’t sure he would be able to do it.

“Okay. I’ll try,” Harry agreed and stood up to leave once his Healer gave him the okay.

When the Healer smiled encouragingly and followed him to the door, Harry was suddenly overcome with the tiniest bit of hope that he would be cured and he turned around to address her once he was out of her office.

“Thank you, Mrs. Reynolds,” he said from the bottom of his heart.

“Until next time, Mr. Potter.”

"How was your session?" his friends had been sitting by the Floo and waiting for his arrival and when he stumbled in ever so eloquently, they ushered him straight to the dining table, where dinner was spread out for all three of them under a stasis charm.

"It was good. Hey, I was wondering if it would be okay with you if I had my sessions here instead," Harry asked.

"Of course, Harry! You needn't even ask," Hermione replied while Ron nodded.

"Thank you," he sagged in relief as he smiled at them.

"So," Hermione cleared her throat before stealing a glance from her husband. "We think you should go and talk to Draco."

"No," he shook his head adamantly in refusal.

"Mate, you need to talk to him about whatever that's happened. Even I can see that the ferret's not in the right state of mind and I'M supposed to be the thickheaded one of the lot," Ron chuckled humorlessly.
"Ron's right, Harry. It'll only get worse if he's read your interview in The Prophet," Hermione interjected the silence filled by Ron.

Harry gritted his teeth. Yes, he knew that. He said whatever he said because he was angry though he meant bits and pieces of what he uttered like a fool. Rita only made it worse for both him and Draco. He could not imagine how Draco would react if he read it and somehow he knew that despite Draco's hatred for reading the Prophet, he'd surely pick it up someday or the other.

"Do you think he's read it already?" Ron asked.

"Might've. It's been five days since the article's been published, hasn't it?" Hermione conversed with Ron.

"Let's NOT think about it, please?" Harry interrupted them and heard them sigh in dejection.

"He needs you, Harry. Please go and talk to him," Ron advised after a few seconds.

Harry's head hurt with all the counseling he'd been receiving tonight. He was tired and hungry. Most of all, he couldn't face Draco like nothing happened. He hadn't the spine right then. He couldn't look into his husband's eyes and take in all the pain and resentment he caused. At least, not right now.

"I will. Just not now. And I would appreciate it if you guys didn't visit him too," Harry shook his head when he saw that Hermione was about to protest his decision. "I want to be the one to face him and I want to show him that I'm getting better for him. And for myself," he explained, focusing especially on Hermione, who, by her expression, still thought it was a bad idea though Harry knew that she would respect his wishes nonetheless.


"So what's for dinner? I'm starving!"

The one that looked at him through the mirror was altogether a different person. Azkaban peeled layers off him yet he surmised that he looked even worse now. It wasn't that he had gotten any thinner than before but his face - he couldn't recognize it. Its pale and bony features were haunted, and his nose visibly broken though it was mending gradually. Draco put a bud between his lips and using the tip of his wand, he lighted it up into a nice cherry. Ever since he took up smoking, he always wondered how he'd look while doing the act. So, here he was, a week after he was rescued from the death grip of his husband, standing inside the bathroom and lighting up a fresh cig.

A whore. That is who you are. Harry Potter's personal whore. The person in the mirror spoke to him.

"I'm his husband," Draco murmured.

Fancy word for a kept man! mirror-Draco sneered as he puffed out clouds of smoke.

"I am not a whore!" Draco screeched loudly.

If given the opportunity, you'd be ready to spread your legs for that man! You need him. Oh, no, you frigging want him even though he almost killed you! What does that say about you?

"It means I'm willing to give him another chance," Draco's voice was meek and tiny.

Yes. Another chance to copulate with you, and another chance to finally kill you! Let me give you
some free advice. Why don't you kill yourself and save Potter the pain of doing it?

"What? No! Why would I want to kill myself?! You shut your frigging mouth!" Draco sneered at the mirror-Draco, his entire body trembling in sheer anger and revulsion, but the one in the mirror only laughed like Draco's reaction was the funniest thing ever. The bud he held between his fingers fell into the washbasin and Draco held onto the counter's edges tightly so that his body would not crumple to the floor.

*Pick up your wand, Draco. You know you can do it. There won't be pain anymore.* Mirror-Draco cooed.

He was tempted. His wand sat on the counter invitingly and he wanted to do what his counterpart was telling him to do. Yet, deep down, he knew that it was wrong. The person in the mirror is wrong about everything! He wasn't Harry Potter's whore. And Harry never intended to kill him. They just had too much bad blood between them to actually live together, that's all! After all, they hadn't the floweriest of moments in their past. For Merlin's sake, they had always been enemies and were at each other's throats for years! This incident was nothing new, right?

"No, I won't," Draco turned away from the mirror so that the person in it wouldn't taunt him anymore. A few tears threatened to spill from his eyes yet again which he refused to shed at any cost. Picking up his wand and his Marlboro pack, he exited the bathroom.

He would not kill himself. Period.

Chapter End Notes

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Please do leave Kudos! Or a comment, if you wish.

Bye.

~ Wheezy
Imagine his surprise, when for the second time, he found one Hermione Granger lounging about in the Kitchen, cradling a mug of coffee - Draco's precious coffee at that! Only this time, she looked plump and extremely cute wearing her pregnancy fat. Draco was beyond horrified that he put cute and Granger in one sentence but before he could recover from it, she got up and fixed a cuppa for Draco.

"You look like shit," she observed as she handed him the mug and he took it gratefully though he wouldn't be admitting it ever.

"You keep saying that," he snarled after he took a large gulp of his coffee and let the bitter taste wash his mouth and settle down warmly in his stomach.

"How are you, Draco?" she asked.

"Doesn't it feel like deja vu to you?" Draco queried. His head was spinning at the similarities in their meetings.

"How's your nose?"

"Like it's been broken bad and fitted together rather poorly." *Slurp.*
She visibly winced at Draco's harsh statement and her stature showed how sorry she was for leaving Draco to his devices after Harry almost killed him. She should've been there for him despite all the bad blood between them. Besides, it was in the past and as adults, after almost a decade, Hermione wanted to let go. To forgive, if possible, where you could never forget.

"I brought you some breakfast. How do you like your eggs?" she then placed a big picnic box on the table between them, waiting for Draco's answer.

Draco gave her a scrutinizing look. He needn't even ask why she was doing whatever it was for him as he knew. Guilt. It ran through her veins and brought her back to him.

"Boiled with a side of tomatoes, salt, and pepper. Preferably with a couple of slices of toast," he replied, placing his mug of coffee on the table. He had to admit, though grudgingly, Granger's coffee was as good as the one he usually made.

"Perfect," she beamed at him like a child before plating up his breakfast using her wand and settling it down neatly in front of him. "Eat. You look like you haven't eaten in days."

"That's because I didn't."

An ominous silence fell over them as Draco ate his eggs and toast, sipping his coffee after a couple of bites. He finished the rest of his breakfast and coffee in silence but for the first time in a long time, he ate because he was hungry. Probably it was because of Granger's unwanted presence in his line of sight yet he was grateful although he'd die before admitting that.

"What's that?" Granger's high pitched yelp tore through his thoughts and ears. Before he could even ask what's what, he followed her gaze to his Dark Mark and he knew that she knew. The burn marks and faded red cuts on it were as clear as a crystal to any eye in the light of the day.

"You KNOW the Mark," he stressed, hoping that she would unsee his shame he tried to burn but failed every single time.

She looked at him like he grew another head and immediately rushed to his side. He couldn't fight her off for the fear of hitting her belly and harming her and her baby was at the forefront of his mind. And he couldn't let her see what he'd done to his arm. In spite of trying his best to hide his arm away, he knew that he was trapped in Hermione's cagey eyes and let her trace her fingers over his burns and cuts. During her inspection, he adamantly stared at the wall and tuned out her cries of shock mingled with displeasure.

"Why? Why?!!" she kept questioning him with tears running down her cheeks.

"Have you ever had something on you that you desperately wanted to erase but couldn't? Something you're ashamed of because the only person who you thought would treat you as a human chooses to acknowledge that which you could never ever erase in the worst possible way?" Draco's eyes were vacant and distant as he forced his words to penetrate the depths of Granger's understanding.

"This is your past. You can never erase it. But, your past DOES NOT define who you are now," she insisted in her now nasally tone.

"Who AM I now, Granger?" he really was curious.

For that, neither of them had an answer.

--xx0xx--
She was way past the days of morning sickness but that afternoon, after returning from meeting
Draco, Hermione couldn't stomach the lunch she had eaten as images of Draco burning his Mark and
slashing it in hopes of finding freedom from it flashed across her mind. She vomited all that she ate
and felt emptier than ever. More than Harry, it was Draco who needed help or they would lose him.
He was teetering on the edge of self-harm and Hermione only prayed that he wouldn't tip over.

When Harry finally came home that evening, she immediately rounded on him, ignoring Ron, who
tried to give her a welcome kiss.

"What's wrong, 'Mione?" Harry asked worriedly, exchanging a similar glance with Ron.

"You need to see Draco, now!" it was an order and they knew it.

"Have you been to my place?" Harry enquired.

"Yes! I'm sorry for going against your wishes but I was worried about him! He's not well at all. He
needs help, Harry; he's harming himself," she spoke so fast that Harry couldn't understand what she
was saying. Yet, he got the gist of it and tried to calm her down.

_Harming himself?_ the question lodged itself in the back of his mind and his heart raced anxiously.

He seated her on the sofa and sat down next to her.

"Calm down, please? It's not good for your baby," Harry rubbed soothing circles on her back and on
her swollen belly. She nodded her head and took in deep breaths trying to avoid stressing her baby.

When her breathing was back to normal, Ron handed her a glass of water and she drank it
appreciatively.

"Please, you need to talk to him and sort out your issues. Draco needs help too," she repeated,
silently begging Harry to save his husband before he lost him.

"I was already planning to meet him after my next session, 'Mione. I'll take care of everything,
okay?" he cupped her face and smiled at her encouragingly while Ron sat behind her and hugged
her.

"Okay, good," she said as she relaxed into her husband's loving embrace.

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**SEPTEMBER, 2007**

For the third time, Draco began watching the season one of Supernatural, admiring Dean's humor
and stripping Sam of his unnecessary clothes with his eyes. Being married to a bloke surely turned
him gay or he probably had been inclined towards both the genders all along and he simply didn't
recognize it to explore. He took a large gulp of coke before dragging on the cig he held loosely in his
right hand. There was no better place than nicotine and caffeine combined into one, settling warmly
down in his stomach. Strange, but oh so blissful.

"I kinda have this problem with...." Dean said to Sam in a fearful voice, waving his hand back and
forth.

"Flying?" Sam asked.

"It has never been an issue until now!" Dean continued in a heightened tone and tempo.
Draco sniggered. "I'll gift you a broomstick if I ever see you," he said to Dean though he knew that he would remain unheard.

All the loneliness and lack of conversation were taking a toll on him and he wanted to talk to someone though he felt like an idiot talking to himself or inanimate characters on the TV screen. There at least were no books in the damn house to pass the time. Oftentimes, it was just his mind yelling at him incessantly commanding him to end all his suffering. All he had to do was pick up a knife or his wand and slice that thin and pale skin on his wrist, a tad bit deeper than he usually did on his Mark. He was tempted to, as his eyes found the stack of cutting knives in the kitchen every single day, yet somehow, he willed himself to curb that bloody temptation until one day, the voice in his head just got louder by the second and he threw all the knives out of the living room window, uncaring of who they might stab. Luckily, there was only a vast field adjacent to their house and the knives he threw out sank into the wet muds of the field. The act felt liberating and the voice in his mind calmed down.

He then started conversing with his owl, Sebastian, and when his owl was resting, Draco took to a cluster of DVDs that he played on repeat. Mostly, Supernatural. He could even recite the dialogues! Draco doubled over with laughter - the only time he ever laughs these days was during his Supernatural season one marathons - at the exorcism scene because of Dean’s rather comedic expressions. That man could speak volumes with expressions alone and Draco thought that it’d be nice if he could be as expressive as Dean. Then the people could see him for what he was. A weak recreant thirsting for a hand in friendship and a heart in love.

Outside, a storm began, lighting the evening shade with flashes of lightning. A few minutes later, there was a blackout in the house and Draco leaned back on the sofa, looking out the window at the flashes of lightning not coupled with thunder. Not yet. By then, he was down four packs of Lights, a couple of fresh burn marks sizzling on the Mark and was on the first bud of his third, maybe even the fourth – he didn’t count anymore – pack. If he feared that he consumed more smoke than food or water, he never let it cross his mind at all because he liked the escape nicotine gifted him with – light-headedness he wanted amidst all the shit his life had turned out to be.

Pulling on the nearly done stub of cherry, Draco lifted his left hand until the faint light of the stormy twilight sky filtering in through the window glinted off the rings rested snugly on his ring finger and stared at them for a good long while.

"Should never have chosen you," he whispered as silent tears flowed out of his eyes singly, dropping down soundlessly onto the upholstery.

"Want to choose again then?" said an angry voice that sounded a lot like Harry.

Draco didn’t even flinch as he heard the Floo flare and felt the wards shift to oblige their other owner’s presence just after his admittance to seemingly no one but himself. His head drooped towards Harry and his blurry vision took in Harry in all his haggard glory, wearing a creased off-white T-shirt that Draco hated and tracks that hung at his hips with the help of drawstrings, leaning lazily against the sofa, arms folded across his chest, and looking down at Draco with blazing eyes. Oh, how Draco hated those eyes now! Almost two months and all Harry had to say to him were angry words yet again. For a split second, Draco wondered if his existence angered the people around him. Had he that air of antagonizing the ones around him? He supposed so.

"Your call," Draco shrugged, fumes popping out of his mouth and nostrils as he spoke.

Harry whispered a Lumos spell and Draco saw that his husband – wait, should he even call him that anymore? – was frowning at him rather hard.
“You’re smoking,” he stated the obvious.

“As you can see,” Draco drawled and out the cherry out on his makeshift ashtray – a kitchen plate.

_Was this what ‘Mione meant?_ Harry wondered.

“What the hell have you become, Draco?” Harry asked exasperatedly but making no move to close the distance between them despite there only being a foot or two apart from each other.

Draco took a swig of his now lukewarm coke which tasted fairly like piss, maybe worse than piss. “Draco now, is it? I thought we were back to last names. Besides, I could ask you the same,” he couldn’t look at the patronizing glare directed at him anymore. So he found the blank unlit screen of the TV rather interesting at the moment.

“Why are you here, Harry?” Draco asked when the silence separating them, more like joining them together into one, became too heavy to hold.

“I think you know why,” Harry replied as if the answer was obvious and Draco was being stupid.

Draco simply nodded his head. Back to Azkaban now; back to where he belonged. Right now, even it seemed a better option than staying and being judged by Harry, the one person who gave him a second chance which he wasted with impromptu decisions of his own. His life had been a mistake after all. People like him never change. They commit the same mistakes over and over again and reap what they sow until they end up dead. Death is the only respite he and people like him were ever going to get from all the drama.

“I wonder how I’d do without my Lights in Azkaban. Think you could put in a word about that?” Draco didn’t let his voice falter as he lit another cig, not caring when Harry hissed in displeasure at Draco filling his house with nicotine and caffeine. Not that Draco cared.

“What? I’m not sending you back to Azkaban!” Harry exclaimed in a hurry.

“Oh. Then please enlighten me of your reasons for dropping by,” Draco exhaled.

“I will if you quit that,” Harry’s nose twitched due to the stagnant smoke rolling around the room.

“And waste a perfectly sound fag? No, thank you. I suggest you wait,” Draco said though he started inhaling long and fast.

Surprisingly, Harry waited for Draco to finish. When Draco heard Harry cough a couple of times, he sighed, stood up, and opened the window to let all the exquisite smoke out. “Thank you,” he heard Harry murmur and he grunted in acknowledgment.

“Talk,” Draco said, turning around to face Harry with arms folded across his chest, mirroring Harry’s posture, after stubbing the cig on the window sill, leaving behind black soot.

“You didn’t write back to me or contact me after I sent you the letter with my ring,” Harry started and impulsively, Draco hid his left hand under his right elbow so that Harry wouldn’t notice two rings sitting on his finger of promises.

“I didn’t see the necessity in sending one,” Draco retorted weakly.

He wanted to. He wanted to confront Harry and yell at him demanding an explanation for all that had happened. But what was the point? Harry’s reasons for doing what he did were simple enough to understand. They were no puzzles. Harry wanted a child, a family and he knew Draco wouldn’t
ever be ready to carry one. Only Merlin would ever know why Harry turned out to be so twisted that he spiked Draco’s drinks with an Artificial Pregnancy Potion. According to him, he was doing both of them a favor, trying to give themselves a chance at a normal life. Yet, he failed to understand the emotional repercussions his decision would bring about. They used to be something but it all fell apart in just one day and Draco wasn’t sure if they could build that burnt bridge again.

“Does that mean you’re okay with breaking up?” Harry asked as his brows disappeared under his tousled bangs.

“You tell me; since you’re so keen on taking MY decisions too,” Draco snorted.

“I always gave you a choice, Draco. Always,” Harry gritted out, hands now clenched at his sides in controlled anger.

Anger. That was all Harry had in him which rendered him thoughtless, basically, emotionless. Draco didn’t know what happened to the great Harry Potter after the war but something must’ve broken in him, just like Draco himself, whose broken pieces still lay scattered all over the Wizarding World. The pieces that stayed with him, despite everything, only brought his darkest nightmares to life when he slept. The pieces he held now made him nothing but a foolish coward seeking out love and friendship in places where there was nothing or no one but another coward, Harry-sodding-Potter, trying to hold on to his broken pieces without letting them go.

“Yeah. I asked for the Potion, didn’t I?”

“You had the choice to keep it. Yet, look at what you did with it,” Harry debated.

There he went again blaming Draco for something he had no control over. He just frigging needed a damn drink to calm his nerves! Just a blink – and Harry found Draco in his face, fisting his collar with both hands and pushing him back into the hard wall, the intensity of which was so harsh that Harry hit his head and groaned; his glasses askew and their noses almost touching. Harry could smell the nicotine and caffeine on Draco’s lips; he could practically taste it floating on his tongue.

“You bastard!” Draco said dangerously. “If anyone, ANYONE at all is to blame for the death of the baby, it is you. Don’t you go prancing around accusing me of killing it because I never did!”

Draco’s eyes shone silver even in the partially lit room and Harry got lost in their intensity. He missed this closeness with Draco. His hands found Draco’s waist and squeezed hard. Harry knew that a conversation between them was long overdue and that was the reason why he chose to drop by and set things right between them – as right as they would get, given their states of mind. But with Draco so close to him, the lust he subdued came back to the front in full force. No man or woman could replace the way Draco felt in his hands, so supple, so compliant, so fierce, yet at the same time offering his entire being for Harry to take in.

‘Do you ever miss him, Harry?’ Arya queried him about Draco, an uncharacteristic frown marring her chubby face.

It took a lot of effort for him to not collapse in front of Arya but it had sort of been pointless as the sole existence of Mind Healers was to see you fall through trying to keep yourself together, see you cry and let go.

‘I think so,’ Harry replied.

‘Give me an answer this time. No assumptions. Just a yes or a no.’

‘Then, yes.’
His voice never faltered with reluctance.

And for the first time, Arya Reynolds had finally broached the topic of Draco Malfoy on the day before.

Draco shut his eyes when he felt Harry’s hands kneading his hips and in a moment of weakness, let his head fall against Harry’s shoulder, which, he later realized was a mistake. Harry’s scent infiltrated his senses at once and his magic, which was deprived of Harry’s support during its reformation, was thrilled at the closeness and sought out Harry’s core, bringing them impossibly closer. Distantly, he remembered that they must be talking about something but his mind was too fuzzy to recollect what.

“Merlin, help me!” Draco whispered against Harry’s neck, tentatively licking it and savoring the forgotten flavor of his husband. It tasted like Heaven; better even.

“God, Draco, please,” Harry mumbled brokenly.

Nobody would ever know who started it first, or if it was merely a whispered spell instead of manual work, but within minutes, a naked Harry was pushing an equally naked Draco into the wall, their positions now reversed, and his erection was snugly held between Draco’s butt cheeks.

“Anyone give you this, Harry? Hm?” Draco asked breathlessly, grinding back into Harry’s erection, making him groan senselessly.

“No, Draco. You. Only you,” he chanted while placing light kisses on Draco’s nape.

After days of spending time with no one other than himself, though his mind told him to push Harry away and stop their forthcoming sex, warmth filled Draco’s heart and body when Harry finally pushed into him in one big thrust and both of them screamed in ecstasy. There was no preparation, it was raw and painful which served Draco’s want for burning inside out. It’s said that sex was heavenly but to Draco, sex was Hellfire. And they were the ones who set it aflame. Draco’s hands, which were flat against the wall, slipped and he fell forward, causing Harry to pull out a bit. The pleasure was too much to stand properly. And he wanted more.

“Let go,” Harry said and lifted Draco’s left leg so that he could position them better.

And Draco did let go as Harry asked and fell back against his husband’s chest. Harry put an arm around the blonde’s waist before renewing his slow-paced thrusts, eliciting moans of pleasure and tears of pain yet again, after many goddamn months, from Draco’s neat mouth. Suddenly reminded of Draco’s mouth, Harry wanted to claim all those sounds for himself and he captured the man’s lips in a punishing grip, licking and biting them alternatively till the lower one could no longer take it anymore and split and bled red for Harry to consume.

Harry’s legs were about to give out, trying to hold both their weights so, he pulled out rather quickly, much to Draco’s dismay and heard the blond make a protesting sound. He then dragged Draco towards the sofa and bent him over the arm. “Hold on, Draco,” he warned.

And Draco did hold on as Harry asked and fell into the plush blue sofa, raising his arse for Harry as an offering. The thrusts that followed were so ruthless and aggressive that Draco’s skin tore a bit, bleeding into Harry’s motions and lubricating the passage hotly. They were too lost in the passion of feeling each other to recognize the slight damage which could be healed almost immediately.

“Harry, Harry, Harry,” Draco intoned with every thrust.

Draco’s magic was everywhere and the windows rattled intensely. Somewhere in their kitchen, the unwashed utensils started quivering violently and clanging against each other. Sensing it, Harry let
loose his magic more than he ever did and both of them could feel Harry’s magic weaving around
Draco’s, pushing into it and calming it down a notch gradually, until it was cocooned beneath layers
upon layers of Harry’s warm yet controlling magic. The rattling died down and only their moans and
grunts filled the silence that followed.

Everything was too rough, too fast and Draco loved it. He felt needed once again. His depraved
body sought out more of Harry, just like his magic which was now feeding off of Harry’s, and he
unintelligibly found his hand resting on his husband’s thigh and gripping it tight, silently begging for
more magic, more pleasure. Hard pleasure. After this high collapsed, Draco was positive that he
would loathe himself for becoming the whore Harry wanted him to be but right then, he absolutely
wanted nothing else other than the twisted and imaginary love and care his husband offered him in
the name of sex. And Harry obliged Draco’s silent plea by roughing up his hips and tearing out yelps
of pain and moans of gratification from his blonde husband laid out pliant underneath him.

It was then that Harry’s glasses slipped off of his nose due to sweat and clattered silently onto the
carpet floor. Somewhere in the middle of their session, the light came back on and the storm outside
calmed down to a drizzle and still air. And abruptly, Harry stilled, his pants caressing Draco’s nape
warmly, only to be replaced by something tiny and blunt, which upon tilting his head to the side,
Draco recognized to be Harry’s wand and fear immediately filled his veins instead of blood. He was
in a very vulnerable position and his broken-in-the-mind abusive husband could literally do
ANYTHING to him; he could even kill him and Draco had no escape.

“Don’t say no, please. I need it, please, please,” Harry begged, pressing the tip of his wand into
Draco’s nape.

He’s harming himself, Hermione's voice nudged his mind and for a fraction of a second, he wanted
to throw his wand away and ask Draco what she meant. Was it only Smoking or was there
something else he didn't know?

“What do you need?” Draco managed to ask though all he wanted right then was to escape Harry’s
hold. Draco's voice broke the wall Hermione's voice built inside his head and he chose to go with the
flow he and Draco established. Harry desperately wanted Draco. By the looks of it, Draco wanted
him too. Any conversation could be resumed after they had their fill of each other.

“It’s not enough. Let me taste your insides, please, I want… I want to cut you up and taste you,”
Harry’s voice broke.

They were a couple of degenerates. Even though he despised Harry for giving him as much pain as
happiness, Draco’s heart raced wildly at the thought of Harry eating him up, tasting
his blood while

“Do it,” Draco whispered. Harry didn’t waste even a fraction of a second as he dragged his wand
down in a perfect line until his shoulder blades, splitting Draco’s skin lightly but enough to draw out
a modest amount of blood. Like a beast that was left hungry for days, Harry lapped up every single
drop of blood that oozed its way out of the cut, moaning like an animal. “Again,” Draco huffed, his
head dizzy with lust. Harry answered by making a similar cut on Draco’s back, parallel to the
previous one. Both were so light-headed and dripping with nothing more than lust for pain and
blood.

They wanted more.

“Again!” it was an unintelligible scream this time. Instead of giving Draco what he asked for, Harry
pulled out and flipped his husband around, seating him on his arse on the sofa’s arm. No words were
exchanged between them as he pressed his wand into Draco’s palm. Draco understood. Nodding
Once, Draco cut a line sharply in the center of Harry's chest, causing the man to tremble.

Unlike Harry, Draco didn't favor drinking blood so he pressed the pad of his thumb into Harry’s fresh wound and played with it, causing more than required blood to slip out of the folds. Surprisingly, Harry seemed to like it even though tears slipped past his closed eyes. The image he made was utterly debauching and without another prompt, Draco cut a second line on Harry’s waist.

“You like that, huh, Harry?” Draco asked, throwing the wand away and giving his unwavering attention to the wound on Harry’s waist. Using his fingers deftly, he played with the wounds, scratching them, pressing into them, and pinching them – left one on Harry’s chest and his right one on Harry’s waist. More tears escaped his husband’s eyes and Draco wound his legs around Harry’s middle, pulling him close. “Answer me, darling,” he cooed in Harry’s ear seductively.

“Goddammit, yes, yes, yes! I like it! I love it when you do that, baby,” Harry ranted incoherently as he once again pressed into Draco’s crevice, seeking more warmth.

The sounds slipping past Harry’s lewd mouth amplified in their intensity and Draco knew that they were close. Neither of them stopped stroking each other’s cuts. Where Harry’s touches were light and exploring, Draco’s were harsh and probing. Opposites - that was what they always were and would be. One last painful thrust ripped out the most agonizingly pleasurable sounds he’d ever heard in his life from both of them and Harry had to do his best to not let his body fall over and squash Draco’s exhausted one. Instead, he let his trembling legs give out and he sat down on the floor with his head resting on Draco’s legs, allowing his body to regain some strength for their aftercare. On the other hand, Draco lay back on the sofa with an arm over his face to shield his eyes from the light.

'Do you love him?"

'God, no! I think I married him because I wanted to see how loss looked like.'

Draco laughed mirthlessly at the absurdity. Harry KNEW how loss looked like and he didn't particularly need to marry Draco for that. For heck’s sake, he lost many people who were dear to him on the battlefield and no one better than Harry knew about Loss and the gaping black hole it always left behind.

Harry Potter, the boy who lived, admits in an extremely barbaric way that he married the Death Eater, Draco Malfoy, to own his loss. Of what and why - the Chosen One chose not to comment.

"Two choices and one minute," Draco said dreamily and Harry's eyes snapped open at the very familiar statement, though his head remained resting on Draco's shin. "You already owned everything of mine when you said that to me."

Harry gulped back the tears of shame that filled rapidly behind his eyes at Draco's acknowledgment of his interview.

When Draco didn't get any response from his husband, he laughed mirthlessly and despite everything that happened between them, in the heat of the moment, before he slipped into unconsciousness, concluded that Harry was a way better drug than nicotine and he could get addicted to this one instead, if only he stayed after. Maybe, there was a one hundred percent chance that he'd regret ever thinking so, but at the moment, he didn't care for he was lonely and needed Harry in all his glory to satiate his heart and magic.

And loneliness, Draco realized scathingly, turns you into someone you never thought you were.
Please do leave Kudos! Or a comment, if you wish. 
Bye.
~ Wheezy

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