The Courtesan

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The Courtesan

by Drops of Nightshade

Summary

In the prejudiced world where the Dark Lord won, Harry Potter is part of the servile caste, the lowest caste in the new society. Resigned to a life of servitude as a Courtesan, Harry is instead drawn under the wing of the Dark Lord himself. Between the scheming Order and his powerful benefactor, Harry finds himself steadily drawn deeper into the growing conflict. Eventual Lord Voldemort/Harry Potter. Minor Rabastan Lestrange/Harry Potter and OMC/Harry Potter.
Harry James Potter was slowly polishing a table in the Hogwarts kitchen, watching as the newest Menial sat in the corner and cried quietly to herself.

They all did, the new recruits.

The girl was fingering the iron collar around her neck and Harry winced remembering his own early days wearing the symbol of a Menial. He had been four years old and had howled for days until his surrogate mother Molly Weasley had managed to find some soothing cream.

His best friend Ronald Weasley had been collared on the same day, as had the other long-time Menial, Neville Longbottom. The three of them had been born into their station in life, or at least Ron had.

Neville and Harry were both war-orphans with parents whom had been on the wrong side of the battle. When the Dark Lord had won his duel against Albus Dumbledore, the members of the Order of the Phoenix had been hunted down and killed. Some were shown mercy, whilst others like Harry and Neville's parents, fought back and rebelled. They had been killed and their infant children had been given over to the new regime.

Ron’s parents, Molly and Arthur Weasley, had also been a part of the Order, but they had surrendered earlier on because they had seven children, two of them babies. Both were collared as Menials and each of their children after them were also given the same treatment.

The Menials were part of the servile caste, the lowest caste in society. They served the upper three castes and performed servant duties like cooking, cleaning, babysitting and gardening.

When Menials turned thirteen they were inspected by officials and regulated their final class. Some remained in the Menial caste, as Ron’s older brothers had. Some females were chosen to be BIRTHERS, to bear a child for whomever buys their contract. It was all part of the scheme to inflate the Wizarding population. BIRTHERS were the highest position a female servile could hope for, because they were treated fairly and were even paid for their work. But only the strongest magically were picked for this prime position in servile society.

There was one more class in the servile caste, besides BIRTHERS and Menials. The Courtesans. Boys and girls who were attractive enough were chosen to learn how to pleasure their contractor. Whilst not as well-paid as the BIRTHERS, the Courtesans still had a greater income than the Menials, who were paid a pittance.

The Courtesans were much sought-after and treated fairly enough in society, even though they were essentially selling their bodies.

The new girl in the corner sniffled and rubbed her eyes, tears rolling down her cheeks. She was the picture of misery.
Finishing his polishing, Harry tucked the cloth in the belt of his grey tunic, adorned with the Hogwarts crest, and padded over to the girl.

Seeing her close up, Harry decided she was quite pretty with her huge brown eyes and her tumble of hazelnut coloured hair. Probing her magic he deduced that she would be quite powerful in a couple of years.

Harry had been able to sense other witches and wizards magical cores for as long as he could remember. It was a skill Mrs Weasley had told him to keep hidden, worried something would happen to him if the authorities found out a Menial was performing magic, regardless if it was with a wand or not.

Serviles were not permitted to own or use a wand, but Harry had been able to perform wandless magic since he was a young child. He could also see magic, an incredibly rare trait, not to mention handy when wanting a private conversation without listening charms detecting his words.

The girl stiffened when she realised someone was standing right in front of her and slowly lifted her tear-stained face to see who had approached her. She saw a small boy who looked about her age, ten, with tousled silky black hair and high cheekbones. His mouth had a hidden sensuality in it that was tempered by his gorgeous emerald eyes that glittered with childish innocence. His inky black lashes framed the head-turning eyes and his grey tunic showed off his lithe body.

The boy was stunning.

'Hello I'm Harry Potter,' the beautiful boy said softly, holding out his hand.

'Hermione Granger,' the girl replied quietly, taking the proffered hand and shaking it lightly.

Harry took a seat next to Hermione, and thought carefully about what to say. 'I take you are a new Menial and not a transfer from another household?'

Hermione took a deep breath and murmured, 'Yes I'm a new…Menial.' She hesitated before saying the word, as though unwilling to even voice it.

Looking the girl over and seeing her staring wide-eyed at the floating candles in the Hogwarts kitchen, Harry deduced she was a Muggleborn.

Respecting her privacy, Harry let their conversation drop and waited for the girl to pick it up again. He didn't have to wait long.

'How long have you been a Menial?' she asked.

'Since I was one year old. My parents were rebels during the early years of the Dark Lord's reign and when they were killed in a raid I was handed off to Mrs Weasley, whom you will meet soon,' Harry said in a matter-of-fact tone.

Hermione took a shaky breath and whispered, 'L-last week some men came to my house. They did something to my parents…I don't know what…and they took me away. This collar was put on me and I was told I was a witch, that I had magic…but I was to be a Menial because I had impure blood.'

Harry felt pity for the poor confused girl, remembering the other two Menials he, Neville and Ron's age, Dean Thomas and Lavender Brown, both Muggleborns. Dean had come three years ago and Lavender last year.
Harry wondered if he should tell Hermione that her parents had been Obliviated, that is, they had had their memories of her erased. Deciding against it, he settled for placing a comforting hand on her shoulder.

'Would you like some cream for your chafing?' he asked kindly.

Surprised that he had realised her collar was paining her, then remembering he bore an identical one, she hesitated before nodding quickly. Gently taking her hand in his, Harry pulled her up and guided her out of the kitchen and down a corridor.

The Menials occupied the lower tunnels of Hogwarts, below even the potions classroom and the old Slytherin dormitories. After Hogwarts became an exclusive school, only open to purebloods and the strongest half bloods, the Houses had been abolished. Students had dorms in their year level and took classes with them too. There was still four Quidditch teams but they were now named after constellations; Scorpius, Hydra, Aquila and Fornax.

Harry often sat on top of the astronomy tower with a borrowed set of binoculars, watching the games of Quidditch. He wished he could ride a broom one day but he knew he was destined either for the life of a Courtesan or a Menial.

He pushed open a door in the corridor and revealed a small room with four beds sitting in a neat row, the covers smoothed out. None of the boys wanted to face the wrath of Molly Weasley, unofficial ruler of their small family of Menials working at Hogwarts.

Dean and Neville were outside with Ron's oldest brother, Bill, chopping wood. Ron was with his mother and little sister, Ginny, reordering the food in the pantry.

Leaving Hermione hovering by the door, Harry walked over to the bed farthest from the door, which was his own, and rummaged around in the rickety bedside table. Finding the jar of cream he walked back over to Hermione and gently pushed her down onto Dean's bed, sitting beside her and unscrewing the lid.

He dipped his fingers into the cream and rubbed it in small circles under the collar, feeling the rough skin. Hermione was stiff at first but soon relaxed as cream did its work, numbing the chafing and soothing it at the same time.

'There, all done,' Harry proclaimed, screwing the lid shut.

Wiping his fingers on the cloth still tucked in his belt; Harry gave Hermione the jar of cream. 'Take it, you're going to need to reapply it every six hours for the next few days.'

She carefully took it from him and smiled faintly for the first time, gratitude clearly defined on her face. 'Thank you, Harry. You've been kind to me.'

Giving her a small smile of his own in return, Harry stood up. 'Come on, I'll show you to your room. You'll be sharing with Lavender-she's our age- and Ginny who's a year younger.'

Hermione trailed after him as he left the bedroom and entered the one next door, which was much smaller. A third bed had already been squeezed in, Hogwarts sensing another person present.

Lavender was lounging on her bed, idly drawing on a piece of spare parchment. Her long honey-blonde hair was tucked behind her ears and her hazel eyes were focused intently on whatever she was sketching.

She glanced up when Hermione and Harry entered, sitting up and crossing her legs on the bed.
'Hello Harry, who's this?' she asked curiously, looking Hermione up and down.

'This is Hermione. She's the new Muggleborn Menial,' Harry explained.

'I was wondering when the new girl would come. That bed's been sitting there for almost two days now,' Lavender mused. Then she turned to Hermione and smiled slightly. 'I'm Lavender Brown.'

'Hello,' Hermione murmured back, a little shyly. There was something so open about Harry that inspired her to like him, but she was unsure about Lavender.

'I would offer to give you a tour, Hermione, but this is my only break today and I wanted to catch up on my sketching,' Lavender explained apologetically, fingers itching to get back to her drawing.

'That's fine Lav,' Harry said quickly, 'I was going to offer to show Hermione around the school.' He liked Hermione, she seemed nice, and Harry was a sucker for nice people.

'Have fun,' Lavender replied absently, picking up her pencil and returning to work.

Once Harry and Hermione had left her to her free time, Harry began showing Hermione around. He started in the Menial floors, showing her the various rooms and supply closets.

Taking her to the massive pantry he popped his head in and quickly introduced Hermione to Mrs Weasley, Ron and Ginny who were busy labelling food products. Mrs Weasley had made sure all the Menial children she unofficially adopted received an education and knew their letters and numbers.

Hermione found herself being swept up in a warm embrace as the kindly woman welcomed her and assured her if their was anything she needed, even if it was just someone to talk to, she was to seek her out.

Blinking back tears at the comforting hug and words, Hermione shook hands with Ron and Ginny, the two redheads looking at her with interest. Ginny's ears turned as red as her hair when Harry smiled at her, Hermione noting the younger girl seemed to have a crush on him.

It took most of the day to show Hermione around the castle, practically empty as it was the summer holidays and the Hogwarts students were absent from the halls.

Hermione was completely bedazzled by the castle, coming out of her shell a bit and rattling off questions about the old school. Harry answered as best he could from the lessons Mrs Weasley had given him.

They were walking down the fourth floor corridor when footsteps sounded from the other end. Harry froze and looked over at Hermione quickly.

'Stand to the side and bow your head with your hands clasped in front of you; like this,' he demonstrated, looking the perfect picture of demureness.

Hermione hastened to copy his movements, lowering her head so that a curtain of hazelnut coloured hair obscured her face. She felt the nervous tension in her rise as the footsteps grew closer and closer.

The suddenly it stopped.

Harry's breath hitched slightly and Hermione held her breath too, Harry's anxiety bleeding off into her.
‘You there,’ a rich voice commanded imperiously.

Hermione lifted her head very slightly and saw a man in his late twenties or early thirties standing before them. His chocolate brown hair crimped slightly, almost brushing his shoulders. It framed a light aristocratic face with cobalt blue eyes. He was quite tall and very toned, adding to his atmosphere of superior handsomeness.

He was staring intently at Harry, who had also raised his head slightly to view the man.

‘My Lord, how might I assist you?’ he murmured quietly.

Completely ignoring Hermione, who was rather relieved, the man stepped forward to place his fingers under Harry’s chin and push his face up fully.

‘How old are you, boy?’ the man asked.

‘I have just turned ten My Lord,’ Harry responded politely, keeping his eyes respectfully lowered even as his face was being held up.

‘You are gorgeous,’ the man said with a slight smirk and Harry stiffened but kept his face neutrally blank.

‘Thank you My Lord,’ he said tensely.

‘I will be keeping my eye on you, little one. I have no doubt you will enter the Courtesan class. I avidly wait for your sixteenth birthday,’ he purred silkily and stroked a hand over Harry’s cheek.

Harry didn’t say anything in response and the man smirked once more, dropping Harry’s chin allowing the boy to quickly lower his face.

Then he went on his way.

Harry waited until his footsteps had faded before slumping against the cool stone wall behind him and letting out a lengthy exhale. Hermione waited awkwardly, unsure how to comfort him.

She had already been given an explanation of the classes and she knew that the Courtesan class was a class for those selling their bodies. Courtesans graduated from Aphrodite’s House of Pleasure when they turned sixteen and were contracted to a master. If they weren’t immediately contracted, which was extremely rare, they stayed on at the school until their contract was bought.

Birthers followed a similar path except they attended their schooling at Damara House and were contracted after their seventeenth birthday.

‘Who was he?’ Hermione asked.

‘Rabastan Lestrange, part time duelling professor here at Hogwarts, Inner Circle Death Eater and one of the Dark Lord’s closest confidants,’ Harry said tonelessly.

Swallowing heavily, Hermione took Harry’s hand in her own. ‘Should…should we go back to the Menial quarters?’ she proposed unsurely.

‘The rest of the tour-’

‘Can be done another day,’ Hermione interrupted gently.

She had never had a friend before, the students in her Muggle school shunning her because of her
insatiable appetite for knowledge. Hermione didn't know at what point she began thinking of the green-eyed boy as a friend but now that he undeniably was, she was determined to be a good friend.

This time it was Hermione who tugged Harry along, who seemed rather shaken by the man, and took him back to the Menial quarters.

She found her way to the kitchen and Molly Weasley fussed over the two of them, sitting them down and preparing two cups of calming chamomile tea for them.

'What happened Harry dear? Did you run into Headmaster Snape again?' Molly asked with concern.

Harry winced at the mention of Headmaster Snape, who seemed to have some sort of vendetta against him. He had to put up with snide comments and slurs against the father he had never even met whenever in the man's presence. The Death Eater never said anything about his mother though strangely enough.

'No it wasn't Snape,' Harry said tiredly.

'Headmaster Snape,' Mrs Weasley admonished.

Harry scowled but said nothing in retaliation.

'Well?' the woman prodded.

Seeing Harry was reluctant to recount what had happened, Hermione did so. After she had finished, Molly sighed and with a pained sort of look in her eyes she gathered Harry up into her arms.

She murmured soothing words under her breath and tried to comfort her surrogate son as best she could.

Three years.

In three years time Harry, Ron, Hermione, Neville, Dean and Lavender would be allocated their station in life. Mrs Weasley was fairly certain that Ron and Neville would remain Menials, but she felt that Harry and possibly Dean would end up as Courtesans. Lavender and Hermione both seemed like lovely young girls who would perhaps end up as Bithers if they were magically strong enough.

She wanted to protect all those children from their fates in life, she wanted to see them all happy and most importantly of all, free.

'What's wrong with Harry?' a loud voice inquired from the doorway to the kitchen.

Ronald Weasley stood framed there, blue eyes staring with concern at his best friend who was being rocked in his mother's arms. Mrs Weasley reluctantly let go of Harry who settled back in his chair and took a sip of chamomile tea.

'He just had a bit of a run in with a Death Eater, that's all Ron, dear,' Mrs Weasley said lightly, moving to chop up some vegetables for the Menial's dinner.

'Oh,' the redhead said, casting a sympathetic look Harry's way.

Taking a seat next to the boy he engaged him in a conversation about the centaur he had seen earlier that day, talking excitedly and helping to settle Harry's frazzled nerves.

Lavender wandered in next, sitting down beside Hermione and starting a polite conversation. The two girls were beginning to warm up to each other when three sweaty boys entered.
'That's Neville, Dean and Bill,' Lavender whispered in Hermione's ear, pointing out each individual boy.

Neville was a chubby sort of child with sandy blonde hair and baby blue eyes. He moved clumsily as though he were unused to his own body. Hermione deduced by the bruises on his shins that the boy was a klutz.

Dean had chocolaty brown skin and short black hair that grew close to his scalp. His dark brown eyes were thoughtful as though he was pondering a theory or just daydreaming. Dean was slightly taller than Harry, who was the shortest of the boys, even shorter than Hermione, and had wiry muscles.

Bill looked around nineteen years old, quite handsome with his sparkling blue eyes and mop of red hair he had grown rebelliously long and wild. The shaggy hairstyle drove his mother up the roof.

'Showers first boys, you're filthy!' Mrs Weasley commanded, brandishing a wooden spoon threateningly.

Grinning in return the three boys ambled off in the direction of the bathrooms, or in Neville's case, stumbled, as he bumped into a stool. The moment they left the room Ginny Weasley entered and sat down on Lavender's other side. She kept casting surreptitious glances at Harry who remained oblivious as he chatted with Ron.

A pair of identical twins waltzed in a few minutes later, claiming the seats next to Ron, mischievous grins on their faces. Harry groaned and said, 'Fred, George, what have you done now?'

They both chuckled and answered simultaneously, 'Nothing,' in falsely innocent voices.

'If I find out you've been pranking again, boys, it won't just be Mr Filch giving you a tanning,' she threatened.

Wincing as though remembering past beatings when they were caught in the act of pranking, the twelve year olds rushed to assure their mother they hadn't set any pranks. Yet.

Mrs Weasley was serving up a feast of food when her husband and her two sons Percy and Charlie entered. They had been taking stock of the magical animals Hogwarts had in captivity. Charlie was a natural with creatures of any kind and Percy was an excellent scribe. They made a good team whenever the animals had to be catalogued.

After being introduced to Hermione who was beginning to be overwhelmed by all of these new faces, Neville, Dean and Bill re-entered, freshly washed.

The extended family tucked into the veritable feast Mrs Weasley had prepared, who was smiling fondly at everyone's contented faces as they ate.

'Where are the other Menials?' Hermione asked Lavender quietly as conversation flowed around them.

'They're here and there, possibly in other kitchens. All together there's around thirty Menials contracted for Hogwarts. During school term we are assisted by house elves that prepare the feasts for the school children and tidy their dorms. But it's just us Menials during the summer months. I think the house elves work elsewhere. I'm not sure where,' Lavender explained.

Privately wondering what on earth house elves were, but unwilling to keep Lavender from her meal, Hermione thanked her and returned to eating.
Dessert was chocolate pudding and Hermione managed to squeeze in a few mouthfuls, promising herself to leave more room for dessert next time.

She was full and sleepy after dinner, dozing in her chair as Lavender, Ron and Harry washed the dishes while the others chatted quietly amongst themselves.

Mrs Weasley caught her yawning and insisted she head off to bed, shooing the other children off with her.

Once she was tucked in under the covers and listening to the quiet breathing of Lavender and Ginny, Hermione allowed herself a bit of time to cry silently. She missed her parents, her home, hell she even missed her old school.

'You'll get used to it,' the soft voice of Lavender came to her and Hermione caught her breath. Apparently she hadn't been quiet enough.

'Mum says it's ok to cry sometimes,' Ginny supplied helpfully.

Her heart clenching with emotion, Hermione managed a snuffled, 'Thanks,' to the two girls.

She would adjust. She knew she would.

Meanwhile Harry was curled up in bed, reliving the scene in the fourth floor corridor. He shivered slightly and hoped that his thirteenth birthday took an age to come, just so he could continue living in relative protection if only for three more years.
Chapter Two

Chapter Notes

The story will be jumping around a bit for the first few chapters I am afraid. It will settle down when Harry turns sixteen and the main plot line actually begins. So bear with me as we jump years and months in one chapter.
Sorry again,
Drops of Nightshade x

Chapter Two

Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry - Aphrodite's House of Pleasure

1993

This was it.
The day that had seemed like a vague idea on the horizon had finally arrived and the six thirteen-year-old Menials were exchanging nervous looks as a frazzled Mrs Weasley placed them in a line.
The woman kept adjusting their grey tunics and smoothing out non-existent wrinkles, muttering under her breath. At last Ron, rather tense, snapped at his mother who in turn escaped her distracted state to give him a whack for disrespecting his mother.

Hermione gave Harry's hand a squeeze in reassurance and their eyes, brown into green, locked for a moment. The two had become incredibly close over the past three years, alongside Ron. But Harry and Hermione shared a deeper bond, both knowing the right words to say when the other needed comfort and always being able to sense it when something was bothering the other.

They were like brother and sister, inseparable, and now that they were faced with possible separation it tore at them both deeply.

Two Ministry officials entered, one a woman and the other a man. They wore regulation silver Ministry robes and looked over the six children with interest. Mrs Weasley left the room with one last glance at her six charges all lined up neatly with their hands clasped in front, ready for inspection.

They started with Neville, conferring quietly together before the man stated clearly, 'Menial.'

Neville's shoulders relaxed and the two moved onto Dean whom they spent twice as long at. There seemed to be an argument between the two and Dean stood between them, body stiff as he waited for them to choose his life path. At last the man seemed to give into the woman's demands and he said, 'Menial,' with a curt finality.

Dean spared a relieved glance with Neville as the two officials paused in front of Lavender. The woman withdrew a wand from her robes and murmured a spell under her breath. A hazy light appeared around Lavender and Harry knew that everyone would be able to see it, not just him with his rare talent. It coloured a rich green and the officials shared an approving glance.
Harry identified the spell as a fertility spell, used to test how fertile a potential Birther was. It seemed
Lavender had passed that first step. They got her to blow into a recorder-type object and instructed
her to stop after a peg popped out. There were six holes on the tube and Harry quickly deduced that
it measured a person's magical core. Lavender's peg popped out in the third hole from the bottom,
which he assumed meant she possessed an average level of magic. Although, Harry already knew
that because of his gift.

The two officials conferred quickly but Harry already knew they weren't going to make her a
Birther. She lacked the magical talent to produce powerful children.

'Courtesan,' the man said and Lavender's lower lip trembled slightly. Harry could see her fighting
back tears. The man leaned forward and tapped her iron collar with his wand. The iron morphed into
the gleaming silver of a Courtesan. It rested elegantly around her thin throat, the front left unmarked
and ready to be inscribed with her master's insignia when she was eventually contracted at sixteen.

They moved onto Ron, declaring him a Menial and the boy cast a sympathetic glance towards
Lavender before smiling at Neville and Dean who smiled back. They would be staying together at
least.

Hermione underwent the same fertility spell as Lavender and it came back just as green. Then they
got Hermione to blow into the magical sensor and as Harry had expected, the peg popped out at the
fourth from the bottom, indicating above average power.

They barely conferred, the woman simply nodding affirmative and the man said, 'Birther.'
Hermione's collar was shifted into a gold collar, like Lavender's having a space for her future
master's insignia.

Then they stopped in front of Harry.

He stared straight ahead and took deep breaths as two complete strangers decided his fate. He didn't
have to wait long for them to come to an agreement.

'Courtesan,' the male official said, tapping Harry's collar with his wand.

The weight around his throat lifted slightly as the iron morphed into lighter silver and the metal
thinned out to become more elegant.

The female official wrote out six dockets that would be handed into the Ministry registering them in
their various classes.

'A representative from Damara House will be here to collect the Birther and a representative from
Aphrodite's House of Pleasure for the two Courtesans, tomorrow, first thing in the morning,' she said
to the six teens.

Then they were gone.

Lavender instantly burst into tears and all but ran to Harry, burying her head in his neck and sobbing
desperately. He wrapped his arms around her and looked over her head to see four pairs of
concerned eyes staring back.

Hermione was biting her lip stubbornly to not dissolve into tears like Lavender. Her brown eyes
were wet with unshed tears as it finally sunk in that she was being separated from her surrogate
family, from Harry.

Arms wrapped a little awkwardly around her and she turned to see a blushing Ron standing behind
her. Touched by the show of affection the stoic boy usually never showed, she leaned into his embrace and inhaled shakily.

That was how Mrs Weasley found them. She took in Hermione's gold collar and Lavender and Harry's silver collars with little surprise. She had anticipated this happening.

But it still hurt.

Three of her charges were being carted off to their respective schools, possibly to never be seen by her again. And poor Hermione was going along this path alone. At least Lavender and Harry had each other.

'What…what time are they coming to collect you?' she asked a little dazedly, directing her question at Hermione and Harry as Lavender was still crying and working herself into quite a state.

'First thing in the morning.' Hermione replied without any inflection in her voice as she rested her head against Ron's shoulder.

Mrs Weasley nodded and swallowed heavily before dragging Harry and Lavender into her embrace. Lavender latched onto the woman, freeing Harry who stumbled away.

'Come now, Lavender dear, let's take some deep breaths now…' Her voice faded as she steered a near-hysterical girl out of the room.

Hermione stepped out of Ron's embrace and into Harry's, not crying, not saying anything, and just holding him like it was their last night on earth.

Which, in a way, it was- or at least their last night together with each other.

The morning found Hermione, Harry and Lavender standing at the Hogwarts main gate, waiting for the representatives to arrive. There had been a long, tearful farewell earlier on. Harry didn't want to think about it.

He carried a patched satchel over his shoulder that contained a few belongings of he and Lavender that they had been allowed to have as Menials.

The girl had calmed down after her breakdown last night and was pale but determined to set a good first impression for the representative from the pleasure house.

There was a crack of Apparition and a stern looking woman appeared. Her blue robes trimmed in gold indicated she came from Damara House. Hermione grabbed Harry in a desperate hug before hugging Lavender.

She returned to Harry giving him another squeeze, breathing in his familiar scent of apples that always calmed her in the past. The impatient cough of the representative reminded her time was short.

Leaning in she placed her lips by Harry's ear and whispered, 'I promise we will find each other one day. I promise. Look after yourself Harry.'

Then she was greeting the stern woman before being Apparated away, her brown eyes locking with Harry's green as they were torn apart, perhaps for good.

Feeling tears burn in his eyes, Harry took deep breaths before feeling back to normal. He felt glad for
Lavender's hand in his own, but he wished for Hermione to be there.

There was another crack and a plump woman with grey-streaked black hair and kind but firm obsidian black eyes appeared. She wore green robes trimmed in silver identifying her as the representative from Aphrodite's House of Pleasure.

She looked Lavender and Harry over appraisingly standing there in their grey tunics looking forlorn.

'The name's Fay. Not Mrs not Miss, just Fay. I run Aphrodite's House of Pleasure,' the woman said curtly.

Without waiting for a reply she removed a medallion from her pocket and tapped it, activating it as a Portkey.

'Better take a hold of it,' she said wryly, watching as her two newest Courtesans stumbled to place a finger on the medallion.

Harry felt a jerk on his navel and then the world erupted into coloured lights. There was a distinct sucking feeling before his feet hit the ground heavily.

It appeared they had arrived in an antechamber of sorts, decorated with silk hangings and panelled in rich wood. Torches flickered in brackets along the walls casting the chamber into light and shadow.

The scent of vanilla and cinnamon hung in the air and sent Harry's senses humming. The room highly sensual and made his skin tingle, not unpleasantly.

'Come on, I'll be showing to your sleeping chambers now.'

Fay left and Harry and Lavender exchanged exasperated looks at the woman's abruptness before chasing after her. They were led through room after room sometimes coming across other Courtesans, who were wearing green tunics tied with a silver sash. The outfit was form fitting and made their legs look longer.

Harry began to realise that he was the only male here as they passed female after female, all who stared at him in surprise.

Feeling a little bit unsettled, Harry stopped as Fay indicated a slightly ajar door.

'You share bedrooms with one other Courtesan. Girl, you're sharing with Alicia. She's a year older than you.'

Fay pushed the door open without knocking and a fourteen-year-old girl looked up from the book she was reading. Her hair was straight and toffee coloured, one strand braided. Her bluish-green eyes looked over the two new Courtesans and an eyebrow quirked at the sight of a male.

'Alicia, explain the ropes to the newbie,' Fay ordered.

Pushing Lavender inside Fay gestured Harry to follow her and the boy cast a look over his shoulder at Lavender who sent a timid smile back before slipping inside her new bedroom.

'You'll be sleeping alone, boy. Us girls have got a reputation to uphold after all,' Fay sniggered as though this was highly amusing.

Blushing lightly at the insinuation that he would be doing anything inappropriate with the other girls, Harry followed Fay into a smaller bedroom than the one Lavender would be sleeping in.
Thick green carpet covered the floor, the walls panelled in wood. There was a window that was obscured by a dark forest green curtain. An old four-poster bed took up most of the space in the room, with black sheets and a silver duvet. The hangings on the bed were green. There was a door in the corner that Harry assumed led to an en-suite bathroom. A tiny dresser and a bedside table completed the room.

'I'll leave you to get settled in then, boy. I'll send a girl up to give you a tour, later,' Fay said.

'My name's Harry,' he murmured back.

'I know,' Fay said with a smirk, bustling out of the room.

A knock on his door about an hour later alerted Harry to a guest. He had found a few sets of green tunic in the dresser along with some silver sashes. Putting on the uniform of a Courtesan and looking at himself in the bathroom mirror made Harry feel like a different person.

The tunic hugged his form showing off his lithe body and the green in the tunic brought out his eyes making them stand out. He felt exposed wearing the uniform and heavy with the realisation that in three years time he would lose his virginity and be serving a master.

Shuddering at that thought, the memory of Rabastan Lestrange singling him out when he was ten vividly in his mind, Harry had left the bathroom and taken his meagre belongings out of the satchel, reminding himself to give Lavender her possessions.

That was when the knock had come, startling the green-eyed boy. Upon opening the door he faced a tall dark-skinned girl with shoulder-length black hair. Her eyes were an unusual amber colour. She looked about fourteen-years-old.

'My name's Angelina Johnson, Fay sent me to give you a tour,' she said in a melodic voice.

'Hi Angelina, I'm Harry Potter,' the boy responded.

The amber-eyed girl looked him up and down before admitting, 'We haven't had a male Courtesan in years. No one…quite met the requirements.'

After that admission, the tall girl had led him on a tour of Aphrodite’s House of Pleasure. However it was more of a manor than just a house. When Harry commented on that, Angelina explained that it had belonged to a pureblood family whom had sold it to the Ministry to be converted into a training centre for Courtesans.

Harry was surprised to discover that there was a small library stocked with books of all kinds. Hermione would have loved it. Thinking of Hermione made a pang of grief go through his heart.

Angelina who spotted a friend distracted him. The girl was Angelina's age, with waist length black hair that tumbled in ripples down her back. Her grey eyes were curious as she looked Harry over.

'This is Katie Bell, my roommate. Kat, this is Harry Potter, one of the new Courtesans,' Angelina introduced.

Katie held out a hand that Harry shook and then she excused herself because she was due for a lesson in five minutes.

That led Harry to think about the sort of things he would be learning at the pleasure house. Angelina proved her attentiveness by picking up on Harry's reaction to Katie's words. 'You don't learn
anything sexual until a year before your sixteenth birthday. Up until then you learn other forms of entertainment—singing, dancing, decorum, politics—'

'Wait, politics? Why on earth would we need to know politics?' Harry asked, flabbergasted.

'You will be entering a vicious world of jealous pureblood wives and social minefields. At Aphrodite's they prepare you as best they can to ensure you give the school a good name and don't make a fool of yourself out in the real world,' Angelia responded matter-of-factly.

'Oh,' Harry replied. Then, 'Who teaches us?'

'We have different teachers for our different subjects. You get a…one-on-one tutor when you reach fifteen and are ready to learn the more erotic side of the Courtesan life.'

Blushing slightly, Harry asked, 'The tutor…will he…I mean…you know…'

'No Harry, the tutor won't go all the way with you if that's what you were trying to ask. The people they get in can teach you how to get and give the most pleasure. But they never perform any penetration because the Courtesans need to be pure to make the best contract,' Angelina said, without any trace of embarrassment.

Coughing slightly Harry muttered, 'Right, thanks Angelina.'

Smiling in amusement the taller girl said, 'You can call me Angel—all my friends do.'

'Are we friends then Angel?' Harry replied in mock-seriousness, warming to the girl.

He was surprised when the older girl levelled her serious amber gaze on him. 'If you want us to be, Harry.'

'Oh…well sure then.'

'Great,' Angelina replied with a beaming smile.

Somehow, Harry felt that everything might work out.

It was the end of the year; about five months after Harry and Lavender had arrived at their new home. They had a close collection of friends in the form of Angelina 'Angel' Johnson, Katie 'Kat' Bell and Alicia 'Ali' Spinnet.

The three older girls had welcomed the two newbies into their fold and had ensured that their transition into the life of a Courtesan was as smooth as possible.

Five months had taught Harry that he was an absolutely atrocious singer— the teacher Monsieur René had a tendency of cowering whenever Harry entered his classroom.

He was marginally better at dancing, especially if partnered with Lavender who has brilliant at it. Miss Belleview assured him that he would come along soon enough. Next year Harry knew they would be moving onto more sensual dances— ones performed alone. He didn't really want to think about that yet.

The decorum lessons were agonising with Madam Heldane, or 'Madam Hell' for short. The older woman was strict and liked to use a ruler to hit one over the palm should one break any rules in her class. There was so much to memorise— which utensils to use when eating, how to properly address each individual caste, the correct way to curtsey (or bow in Harry’s case) and the appropriate length
of time to spend talking with an individual.

Harry's favourite lesson was politics, not just because of the interesting subject, but also because of the teacher. Mr Sanders was a middle-aged man who brightened the classroom with his jovial attitude. One couldn't help but smile when in his cheery presence. The things he taught were interesting and seeing how the Wizarding society of Britain worked was intriguing.

Harry still missed Hermione and the rest of his surrogate family immensely, sometimes the grief hitting him rather hard. But Lavender or Angelina, whom he was particularly close to, was always nearby to talk to.

Fay was a domineering figure in the pleasure house, dropping in on lessons, eating with Harry and the girls at meal times when they gathered in the dining hall together and just generally being a presence. Harry came to appreciate her blunt outlook on life and her abrupt and at times snarky attitude was refreshing.

She was yet to refer to him as anything but, 'Boy.'

Life had fallen into a comforting routine and Harry could almost pretend that this was just a normal school, that the girls around him were simply everyday teenagers.

But the fantasy never quite held strong and Harry found himself dreading his fifteenth birthday in which his special lessons would begin.
Harry sat cautiously on his bed as he was surveyed by his private tutor, a man in his late twenties with blonde hair and light blue eyes. He was ruggedly handsome with a sensual mouth and a muscled body.

'My name is Demetrius and I will be your teacher for the next year, Harry,' the man said, still looking over the recently turned fifteen-year-old.

He sat down on the bed next to Harry who stiffened and turned away slightly to hide his flaming cheeks.

'There's no need to be ashamed or embarrassed Harry, it's just you and me here. And we have a whole year to get you ready. We'll take it slow, hm?'

Harry turned to face Demetrius and nodded slowly, swallowing his nervousness. The man reached over and took Harry's hands into his own.

'Let's just start by building a relationship first, ok? It will be good to foster trust when we really start getting into the lessons,' Demetrius proposed gently.

'O-ok,' Harry whispered.

It had been hard saying goodbye to Angelina, Katie and Alicia earlier on in the year. They had all been contracted within a few days of celebrating their sixteenths. Katie had been the first to leave, having her contract bought by a wealthy pureblood man of the second caste. Alicia had been next, also being contracted to a man of the second caste.

Angelina had been the only one to have her contract purchased by a man of the first caste, a Death Eater. He was relatively high in the hierarchy, in his mid-twenties, his name being Bartemius Crouch.

It was now just Harry and Lavender, whom was also receiving her private lessons.
Ten months had passed of weekly lessons with Demetrius and they had progressed quite a lot. Whenever Harry stepped into the bedroom for his lesson he became Harry the Courtesan, sensual, confident and able to please. When the lesson was over he would revert back to being just Harry.

He was learning much from Demetrius, but it had been awkward in the beginning especially when learning exactly how to undress himself for his future contractor. Apparently just taking his sash and tunic off wasn't enough. No, he had to be slow, as though unveiling a work of art. He had to move gracefully, fluidly and be able to stand naked without stiffening with fear. That had been hard.

His tutor had recently been teaching him how to 'orally pleasure a man' as Demetrius referred to it, or as Harry called it, 'giving a blowjob.' Harry was long past the point of getting embarrassed, delicately taking Demetrius in his mouth and showing how he had improved.

With strong, sure strokes of his tongue and gentle hollowing of his cheeks he pleased Demetrius who groaned quietly in encouragement. He took him to the root, feeling the other man's cock brush the back of his throat. Ignoring his gag reflex he swallowed slightly making Demetrius moan.

Pulling back to suck on the head of his cock, and humming lightly on the sensitive organ Harry locked eyes with Demetrius as he had been told to. It made everything more intimate.

Going back down on his teacher, he traced a vein on the underside of his cock and drew a breathy groan from his lips. Knowing instinctively that Demetrius was close to coming, Harry swallowed with his throat muscles and was rewarded when Demetrius came, shooting his seed into Harry's mouth.

The green-eyed boy swallowed the cum and released the cock which was now flaccid, licking a bit of leftover cum from the corner of his mouth. Demetrius drew Harry into his arms and tilted his head back.

When he pressed his lips to Harry's the younger boy opened his mouth to allow his tongue entrance. Demetrius tasted his own cum in the boy's mouth as he kissed him passionately, noting with pride that Harry knew just how far to respond to remain submissive and yet wonderfully responsive.

Demetrius reached down and stroked the boy's semi-hard cock making the Courtesan moan softly and tilt his hips up to encourage his hand. Leading Harry to the bed, Demetrius laid him down on his back and crawled on top of him, hand never ceasing its languid stroking.

Harry spread his legs wider to give his teacher better maneuverability and remembered to look Demetrius in the eye as the other man touched his manhood.

Speeding up his caressing, Demetrius noted the light flush of arousal on the boy's face and the needy moans spilling from his lips. Every so often his hips gave a desperate jerk, trying to force him to move faster.

Demetrius rubbed the pad of his thumb across the head of Harry's cock and the boy came with a beautiful groan, ejaculating into his hand. He lay panting beneath his teacher, feeling the post-orgasm bliss upon him.

Demetrius raised his soiled hand to Harry's lips and the boy lapped at his fingers, swallowing his own cum and taking the fingers into his mouth sensually. His teacher placed one last sweet kiss upon his lips before pulling away.

Harry stood and redressed his teacher for him as he had been taught and then redressed himself, slipping on a pair of briefs and throwing his tunic over the top of them and tying his silver sash.
His hair had a 'just got shagged' look even though there had been no penetration nor fingering, those rights being reserved to his future contractor.

'Well?' Harry asked, sitting on the bed once more. 'How'd I go?'

'You were marvellous, Harry. You are going to make your contractor a very happy man,' Demetrius praised.

He frowned slightly when Harry bit his lip and lowered his head. He waited for the Courtesan to speak. At last the boy did. 'Demetrius I am nervous about my future contractor. Will he treat me as well as you treat me? Will it hurt when he takes me for the first time? Will he give me preparation? Will-

Demetrius sat down beside Harry and pulled him into a one-armed hug. The younger boy snuggled up to his side, tilting his head so he could see his teacher's face. It was adorable.

'Courtesan's are generally treated very well Harry. I am sure that your contractor will want you to experience as much pleasure as you will be giving him. This means he will no doubt prepare you before he takes you and makes sure you come as well as him. There is no need to fear for your future, Harry.'

With a sigh Harry leaned in deeper to his teacher's embrace, letting his words reassure him.

At the beginning of July, a month before Harry turned sixteen and was contracted, there was a debuting of sorts for the Courtesans turning sixteen between July and December. There had been an identical one in January for those Courtesans turning sixteen between January and June.

Lavender's birthday was in late September so she was with him the day of the debuting, nervously primping her honey blonde hair and patting her pale cheeks to bring some colour to them. Courtesans did not wear make-up, using their natural beauty and sensuality to attract their contractors.

The debuting Courtesans were gathered in a dressing room, some pacing and others, like Lavender, standing at the mirrors fretting over their looks. Including Harry and Lavender there were eight of them.

They were at Aphrodite's Pleasure House still, the ballroom having been opened to the public to come and view the available Courtesans.

The creaking of the door opening caused eight pairs of eyes to snap to attention. It was Fay, bearing a scowl as she looked at Harry. Wondering what he had done to earn that look, Harry stared calmly back, his polite mask in place.

'The ballroom is packed to the rafters all because of you, boy,' she said, still scowling.

That's caused Harry's mask to slip briefly in surprise. 'I beg your pardon?' he asked in astonishment as the other girls stared at him with a mixture of envy and confusion.

'It's been years since there's been a male Courtesan. And it does help that your reputation has spread the years you've been here,' Fay said with a smirk, momentarily forgetting she was meant to be annoyed at the boy for cluttering up her pleasure house with interested buyers.

Harry blinked a few times and Fay turned to the rest of the room clapping her hands. 'Right, a stage has been placed in the ballroom; you will enter in single file and line up. I'll introduce each of you and then you may mingle for a time in the crowd. The guests will leave in three hours. Any
questions? No? Righto girls- and boy- no need to keep the wolves waiting.’ With that Fay led the way to another door, which obviously led directly onto the stage.

She shoved Harry in the back of the line, wanting to have a bit of dramatic build-up. Harry rolled her eyes but let himself be placed last in line.

Fay swung the door open and led the way out, the girls and Harry moving with a light grace that they had learnt over the three years they had been learning the ways of their class.

Like an actor, Harry slipped into his character of the Courtesan, moving fluidly to his position on the stage, barely noticing the crowded room filled with rich men. He kept his head tilted up, chin held high with his hands clasped loosely in front of him, to show that while he could be the perfect submissive, he did have fire still in him.

The conversation in the room had come to a halt completely when the Courtesans had entered, most eyes fixed hungrily on the gorgeous emerald-eyed boy in the green tunic that did so become him, silver sash complementing the elegant silver collar around his neck marking his station in life.

Fay began the proceedings, introducing one girl after the other, whom stepped forward under the scrutiny of the crowd. When she reached Harry there was an almost perceptible leaning forward.

'Harry James Potter, turns sixteen on the 31st of July in less than a months time. Our first male Courtesan in many years.'

When Fay said his name, Harry inwardly laughing that the woman had been forced to call him his proper name and not, 'Boy,' he stepped forward gracefully like the dancer he had become.

He moved back into line when Fay had finished his introduction, feeling the gazes of many burning into him.

'You now have a little under three hours to meet the Courtesans personally. I am sure they will delight you with their conversation,' Fay said, sounding remarkably dry.

She sat down on a chair behind the podium where she had been speaking and gestured for the Courtesans to step down off stage and begin mingling.

Two and a half hours later, Harry felt like repeatedly banging his head against the nearest available surface. The minute he had left the safety of the stage he had been swamped with admirers, all trying to speak at once and jostling for his attention.

Feeling like a hunk of tasty meat in the middle of a hyena squabble, Harry employed every one of his political and social techniques to speak to the crowd as a whole, keeping a charming smile on his face.

He was able to move, slowly, very, very slowly around the room, constantly impeded by men. It was all rather overwhelming and Harry wondered how Lavender was doing, wishing some of the men undressing him with their eyes would just spontaneously combust. Perhaps his wandless magic could…no he should stop imagining murdering possible future contractors.

'Hello there Harry. I did say I would keep my eye on you.' Recognising that rich voice, Harry turned around forcing down his nervousness when confronted with Rabastan Lestrange, still as handsome as ever, somewhere in his early thirties.

In keeping with his acting, Harry placed a flirtatious flicker of a smile on his face nodded his head
elegantly even though he wanted to run far away in the other direction. 'So you did My Lord. And so you have. I see you are a man of your word.'

Rabastan's eyes lit with desire seeing that flirtatious smile and those words spilling so sensually from Harry's mouth. He had been delighted when he had discovered the gorgeous ten-year-old boy had been picked as a Courtesan.

'I will be buying your contract of course, Harry,' Rabastan promised imperiously with a confident smile.

Harry leant in so his lips were hovering over the man's ear and murmured silkily, 'I hope that you do.' He pulled away and slipped off, blending into the crowd and leaving one, aroused, Death Eater behind him.

Sixteen-year-old Harry Potter stood in Fay's office, waiting for his new contractor to arrive by Floo and take him with him. He was sitting in a chair; nervously clasping his hands together as Fay informed him that the fight for his contract had been vicious. Apparently Harry's new contractor had spent more money on him than had ever been spent on a Courtesan.

Rabastan Lestrange.

He really was a man of his word, purchasing Harry's contract for some sort of obscene price and becoming his new master. Harry had already said his goodbyes, to Demetrius who had placed a gentle kiss on his lips and Lavender whom had cried as he said farewell.

The fireplace flared a bright green and Rabastan emerged from the flickering flames, a smirk on his face as he observed Harry who jumped to his feet and bowed formally to his contractor.

Fay got the Death Eater to sign a magically binding contract that would finalised when he took Harry for the first time. After placing his signature below Harry's that was already sitting there, Harry felt his collar heat up before fading, leaving the Lestrange coat of arms on the front of his silver collar.

'Come on beautiful, let's get you to your new home,' Rabastan purred happily, triumphant at the sight of the attractive teen collared with his mark.

Harry found his hand being taken by a larger, warm hand and looked up to stare into Rabastan's cobalt blue eyes. They were superior and cold but there was hidden warmth in them that soothed Harry's fears about the sort of man he would be losing his virginity to.

Giving his new contractor a timid smile, Harry turned to face Fay and said farewell.

'Take care-Harry,' she murmured, finally saying his name after three years of insisting on referring to him as, 'Boy.' That, more than anything, made Harry feel teary but he gave her a brave smile and allowed himself to be tugged toward the fireplace. Tucked in Rabastan’s strong embrace, Harry was whisked away as the man stated clearly, 'Lestrange Manor!

Fireplaces whipped past as they were dragged through the Floo system before they were deposited in the appropriate building.

Opulent, was the first word that came to Harry's mind as he stared around the vast atrium of Lestrange Manor. The marble floors and vaulting ceiling made Harry feel very, very small.

Seeming unable to wait until they reached the privacy of the bedroom, Rabastan spun him around and pressed his lips to Harry’s. His kiss was hungry and passionate, his tongue drawing a line along
The bottom of Harry's lip.

The Courtesan obediently opened his mouth allowing his contractor's tongue to slip inside and moaned quietly as the skilful tongue of the older man explored the moist cavern of his mouth.

They pulled away after a few breathless moments, Rabastan growling with lust as he saw the flush of arousal on the Courtesan's face.

'Let's complete that contract, hm?' he proposed, licking his lips and tasting Harry still on them.

Taking the boy's hand in his, he led Harry through the Manor and to his master bedroom. Leaving the boy at the door he took a place on the massive king-sized bed and waited for the show to begin.

Breathing deeply Harry placed on his false mask of a Courtesan and smiled slowly, undressing by carefully removing each article of clothing to expose his body bit by bit. It was a lengthy process that had Rabastan hard by the time he had finished and waited naked for his contractor to make the first move.

With a dry mouth, Rabastan patted the space on the bed next to him and Harry glided over, sitting down and allowing himself to be drawn onto the older man's lap, straddling him.

Feeling a hardened arousal pressing into his own, Harry experimentally rocked his hips causing Rabastan to groan in need, rocking back. He claimed his Courtesan's lips once more and leaned back allowing the boy to lounge over his body.

Harry continued slowly rocking, passionately kissing Rabastan and stroking his hands through the other man's chocolate brown hair.

Seeming unable to wait any longer, Rabastan rolled Harry over so the younger boy was beneath him. Harry opened his legs so that his contractor could settle more comfortably between them and waited a little tensely as his contractor reached over to the bedside table and drew a bottle of lube into his hands.

Unscrewing the lid, Rabastan coated his fingers with the substance and observed the twitching pink hole before him. He kissed Harry deeply to distract him as a single finger probed the boy's entrance.

Harry's breath hitched as it slipped within the first ring of muscle and Rabastan began gently pumping it in and out. He wanted Harry's first time to be a pleasurable experience so he made sure to take it slow even though he wanted to just push into his Courtesan and take him mercilessly and passionately.

Adding a second finger he probed his Courtesan's tight channel, trying to find that special spot that would make him see stars. He was rewarded when Harry gasped and groaned wantonly, pushing his hips and fucking himself on Rabastan's fingers.

Scissoring his fingers, he continued to brush against the boy's prostrate, turning Harry into a hot, squirming mess. Lubing up his erect cock, Rabastan withdrew his fingers and Harry looked up blearily, hair in disarray.

'What...?' The rest of the sentence died on the tip of his tongue, because he could feel the rock-hard cock of his contractor at his entrance.

The cock entered him inch by inch until the Death Eater was seated balls-deep within him. They stayed like that for a while, busy kissing. Rabastan waited for his Courtesan to adjust to the new sensation, but once the boy started to push against him, the older man was quite sure his new
Courtesan was ready. He really tried to go slow at first, but it was hard. Harry felt so much better than he would have ever hoped for.

'Gods, you feel incredible,' panted Rabastan, going at a steady rhythm.

The only answer he received were some incoherent words and fingers that clawed into his neck. The man increased his speed and started to stroke his Courtesan's member. He enjoyed the lustful sounds the younger boy was making and even more so the tightness around his cock.

It was over way too soon and they came together, Harry spraying his seed over the bed sheets and his own stomach and Rabastan coming deep within his new lover. Both were heavily panting, the Death Eater pulled out and laid down beside the younger boy, wrapping his arms around the Courtesan's midsection.

'How'd you like you first time, Harry?' Rabastan asked when he'd gotten his breath back.

'It was amazing,' Harry breathed back. He felt his contractor's already hardening member pressing against his backside and his breath hitched.

'Ready for round two?' Rabastan's rich voice inquired.

Chapter End Notes

For those of you possibly annoyed right now that Harry was taken first by someone other than Lord Voldemort, I would just like to quickly explain that in my eyes the Dark Lord would never attend a debuting of Courtesans and would thus have never had a chance to even know of Harry's existence. The bleak truth of Harry's life always was that he was going to lose his virginity to a stranger (or a near stranger in this case.) But never fear, the pairing is HP/LV so they will get together eventually. In fact, Voldemort is going to be meeting Harry in the next chapter and the official plot line will begin!
Chapter Four

Chapter Notes

We finally meet Lord Voldemort in this chapter. I hope you enjoy the update. The story has finally settled down (sort of?) and there will hopefully be no more obscene jumps in time. I have some important notes at the bottom that you should read for a few things to be explained. Thanks and enjoy,
Drops of Nightshade x

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter Four

Lestrange Manor – The Citadel

1996

It had been a month since Harry's contract had been purchased and he and Rabastan had made love nearly every other day, on every available surface in the Manor.

Harry had learned that Rabastan was wifeless, which certainly made things less complicated. The Courtesan wasn't sure how he would have dealt with an angry pureblood woman.

Rabastan was a younger son of the Lestrange family, with an older brother named Rodolphus whom was also a Death Eater. Rodolphus had married the infamous Bellatrix Lestrange and did not possess any Courtesan's- perhaps fearing for their safety from his ruthless wife.

Rabastan lived alone in Lestrange Manor, his older brother living in the Lestrange family's castle as the older son. He had a small army of house elves that dealt with everyday needs and a contingent of Menials that Harry had yet to have a full conversation with. The Lestrange Menials lacked the warm atmosphere that the Hogwarts Menials had and made Harry realise just how lucky he had been having a relatively happy childhood with his surrogate family.

It was the end of August, and Rabastan was soon to begin his part-time teaching job at Hogwarts. He worked on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays every week teaching fourth years and above the techniques of duelling.

For the next two and a half months Harry would be only seeing his lover part-time until the Christmas holidays when he would get his contractor back.

Harry wasn't sure how to feel about this. On the one hand, sex with Rabastan was amazing and he was truly beginning to warm up to the older man. However on the other hand, he sometimes wished for something more in his life and their relationship. He wanted to be more than essentially just a bought whore. They gave him a pretty title and had taught him how to dance through social situations like the finest pureblood and yet he was still expected to spread his legs for his contractor like a common prostitute.

An account had been set up for Harry at Gringotts, the Wizarding bank in which fortnightly deposits
were placed in his vault for his 'services.' It made him feel cheap. More than ever Harry was
reminded that he had never picked this path. He had never had a choice.

And yet he had become resigned to his station in life. He rarely used his wandless magic, only using
it for little things and always in private. But his magic was always simmering under the surface of his
skin, as though frustrated at not being used.

It was morning and Harry was curled up in one of the parlour rooms reading a book as the morning
sunlight streamed through the large French windows. Rabastan was Flooing to Hogwarts first thing
the next morning and returning around five o'clock.

Harry was disturbed out of his reading by the arrival of his contractor who watched as Harry lowered
the book and waited patiently for him to say something. Rabastan had already made it clear Harry
did not have to bow to him or lower his head when alone and not in public.

'We are having guests over for lunch today,' Rabastan informed him and Harry blinked in surprise.
He had not yet met any of Rabastan's friends or family. He wasn't even entirely sure if the man had
any friends.

'My brother and my sister-in-law will be coming,' he said and Harry nodded a bit nervously. The two
had a terrible reputation as being cruel and merciless. '…and the Dark Lord.'

Harry gaped at his contractor for a few moments, horror painted clearly on his face. 'The Dark Lord?'
he asked incredulously in a voice barely above a whisper.

'Yes, there are matters we need to discuss,' Rabastan answered cryptically. 'I am sorry for the short
notice Harry, my brother is renovating a wing of his castle and cannot hold the meeting there. Lucius
Malfoy, Severus Snape and Bartemius Crouch will also be present. It is a meeting of the Dark Lord's
highest confidants.'

Swallowing hard Harry asked, 'Will I be required to…meet them?'

'Yes, I need to introduce my new Courtesan to my family. You can meet our guests in the atrium and
then I will dismiss you for the duration of the meeting,' he reassured Harry.

Harry smiled a little in relief but when he remembered just whom he would be meeting in a few
hours time his smile faded. He remembered his time at Hogwarts with Snape breathing down his
neck and groaned. This was not going to be fun.

'Bastan!' the articulate voice cried out. Harry peeked through his fringe as he waited behind his
contractor with his head lowered respectfully and his hands clasped demurely in front of him.

A man who looked like an older version of Rabastan was striding towards him, a travelling cloak
thrown over one arm. Next to him a woman with a tumble of black curls and heavy black eyes
walked confidently, looking her brother-in-law's new Courtesan over.

They were the first to arrive at the Manor for the meeting and luncheon, perhaps because they were
family.

'It's good to see you brother. You too Bella, you are looking as wonderful as ever. However
'Dolphus, I swear you get more wrinkles every time I see you. Have you thought of getting Severus
to whip you up an anti-aging potion?'

Rabastan laughed as his older brother reached over and cuffed him over the back of his head. They
had an easy, affable relationship that reminded Harry of he and Ron a little bit- or at least before Harry had been taken away. Bellatrix rolled her eyes at their antics, expecting nothing less from the man she had married.

'Now, you have been telling me for the past month you have bought a new Courtesan.' Rodolphus' sharp eyes picked up the boy in the green tunic standing beside his brother, partially hidden in the shadows as though not wanting to be there.

'This is my new Courtesan, Harry Potter,' Rabastan explained to the duo, gesturing Harry to step forward.

The boy raised his head and slipped his mask into place, smiling politely at Rodolphus and Bellatrix, sinking into a graceful bow.

'It is a pleasure to meet you, My Lord, My Lady,' he said in a light tone.

'Well you certainly know how to pick them,' Rodolphus muttered, casting an appreciative look over his younger brother's Courtesan with the stunning emerald eyes.

His wife scowled and dug her nails into his arm breaking his concentration on the younger boy. Looking over the boy herself she deduced he was rather gorgeous. That didn't mean her husband should be looking at him that way though.

Giving Harry a slight nod to indicate he was to leave, Harry gave the first caste Death Eaters another bow and gracefully swept from the room. As soon as he left the atrium, the boy allowed his shoulders to slump with relief. Thank goodness Rodolphus and Bellatrix had arrived first. He wasn't sure what he would have done if the Dark Lord had arrived before them. Although, it seemed highly unlikely that he would arrive first.

Traveling through the twisted labyrinth of corridors in Lestrange Manor, that he had gotten used to during his month's stay so far, Harry reached he and Rabastan's bedroom and collapsed on the bed. Rolling onto his back he stared at the ceiling above him and wondered how long the meeting would last and then the luncheon.

Resting on the soft covers Harry allowed his eyes to close and he began to drift off to sleep with nothing better to do with his time.

They abruptly jerked open when he felt...

The magic within Harry shifted in response to the seductive presence he sensed and with rising concern Harry found he could no longer force it back. The power that had been simmering under the surface lashed out in victory, sending the dresser flying into the opposite wall and splintering.

Still the foreign magic, for Harry had no doubt it was magic, called to his own, whispering sweet seduction in his ear and encouraging him to go and find its source. Harry was halfway across the room before he came to his senses and jerked away from the door with a cry. The foreign magic hissed with displeasure at being denied and the call increased in strength.

As though he was a puppet and the intoxicating other magic was the puppet master, Harry was inexorably dragged out of the room, the door swinging open with an impatient burst of his own magic. Harry felt fevered and adrenaline was thrumming through his veins. His magic was writhing under the surface of his skin as though eager to escape him and go and join the other force.

Through the corridors he moved, heading undeniably toward the meeting room. There was no room any longer in Harry's mind for anything but that sweet siren's call. He had to find the person it
belonged to. He had to touch them, had to feel their magic wrapping completely around his.

With another shove of his magic the doors to the meeting room smashed open and crashed into the wall behind, the firm wood caving in from the pressure of Harry's power. Entering, he barely noticed the six Death Eaters in the room, including his contractor.

When he had first thrown the doors open six wands had immediately pointed his way. That would not do. He could have nothing impeding his path to the bearer of that beautiful power that did so tantalizingly beckon him forward. With a languid wave of his hand the wands in their hands jumped out and clattered to the ground.

Ignoring their furious and shocked cries he moved swiftly into the room and saw him. The Dark Lord.

They say he had found the gift of immortality long ago, and his flawless skin attuned to that. He was devastatingly handsome with his glossy black curls and aristocratic features, looking around thirty. His chilling crimson eyes bored into Harry and seemed to peer into his very soul.

Like in a trance, Harry moved towards him. One of the others in the room attempted to stop him but the Dark Lord waved them off, eyes locked on the boy striding towards him with the burning emerald eyes.

He paused before the man and tentatively reached out with his hand. Intrigued, the Dark Lord wrapped a long fingered hand around his wrist before the hand could reach him.

With a strangled cry, Harry felt the magic within him practically scream in pleasure, streaming out of him in waves to wrap around Lord Voldemort's magic contentedly and merge. Dimly he was aware of raised voices before someone- Bellatrix perhaps- sent a curse towards the owners of the loud voices to shut them up. If her Lord was not worried about the strange occurrence happening, then neither was she.

When Voldemort released his wrist Harry's magic detached unhappily and the adrenaline and euphoria left Harry in a rush. With a groan he slumped forward and was caught by strong arms. He felt dizzy and light-headed as though he was about to faint.

'My…My Lord?' Bellatrix said at last as she looked between him and the Courtesan.

'It appears as though Rabastan's little Courtesan was hiding a secret,' Lord Voldemort hummed in a considering manner, stroking back the boy's sweaty hair from his face.

Trading confused glances, the Death Eaters did not respond. Rabastan's cobalt blue eyes were fixed on his Courtesan.

'The boy has an incredibly powerful magical core. Incredibly powerful…and incredibly dangerous in the state it is now,' the Dark Lord said calmly.

His followers focused sharp attention on the beautiful courtesan in their master's arms. He looked innocent enough now, half-conscious and incredibly tired. But they had all seen him as he entered, black hair swirling around his head like an inky halo and those eyes burning with inner fire, had watched as he disarmed them all with a wave of his hand.

'I have no doubt he can perform more wandless magic than we have already seen, and can sense other magical cores like I can. However he is highly unstable, his core unused to large amount of magical strain. I can only deduce that the boy sensed my own great power and his magic, in its wild
state, broke free to bring him here in order to bond and stabilise itself,’ Lord Voldemort finished.

'What...what will you do with him?' Rabastan asked, deeply concerned for the fate of his Courtesan.

'You could not hope to contain his power should it escape him, Rabastan,' Lord Voldemort said quietly. Rabastan froze as he realised where this conversation was leading. 'He must be given to me. Only I can contain his power-perhaps even use it to fuel my own. Our cores are compatible.'

Rabastan swallowed as his suspicions were confirmed. He felt a powerful loss already beginning to rise inside of him.

'You will buy his contract from me?' Rabastan asked slowly, watching as Harry stiffened in the Dark Lord's arms.

'Yes. The boy needs to be trained lest his power get away from him and destroys something important-or someone important. He is a disaster in the making.'

'Of course, My Lord,' Rabastan said in a voice barely above a whisper.

'Do you have the contract here now? I'm afraid we must postpone our meeting if only for a few hours, I must get the boy to my Citadel as soon as possible.'

With Harry still firmly in his hold, the Dark Lord watched as his follower reluctantly fetched his Courtesan's magical contract, slightly aghast that he would not even get to keep his Courtesan for a few more hours. With the tap of a wand his name vanished. Taking the magical parchment, Lord Voldemort peered down at the contract.

Harry Potter.

He knew that name. During his rise to power Lily and James Potter had been two of his most irritating adversaries. They had died for their precious cause and sentenced their infant son to the life of a Courtesan. Here was that name back to haunt him. Filing away the boy's heritage for later perusal, Voldemort wandlessly conjured a quill and wrote his name in the space left.

Harry felt his collar heating up and then settle down. He knew without looking that it now possessed Lord Voldemort's coat of arms- the Slytherin insignia as the Dark Lord was the Heir of that ancient house.

'It is done. I will make sure you are fully recompensed for your loss, Rabastan,' the Dark Lord assured his follower.

'Thank you, My Lord,' Rabastan responded a little bitterly.

'Does the Courtesan have any belongings?' Lord Voldemort questioned.

'Not really, no. He preferred to use the things I provided for him. He has his...account in Gringotts of course. The details should be in the contract,' Rabastan explained.

'Very well then. I will be leaving now. While I am absent Severus, I wish for you to give a full report on what you have discovered of the old Order of the Phoenix,’ the Dark Lord said in his cold voice and waited for the man to give his affirmative.

Harry noted blearily that the greasy git had a hidden guilt in his onyx black eyes as though he was reluctant to disclose the information he had discovered. Pushing that thought aside, Harry allowed himself to be escorted from the room, being half-carried by the ruler of Wizarding Britain.
Rabastan watched as his ex-Courtesan was taken away, his no longer.

'Cheer up little brother. I can find you a Courtesan just as fine,' Rodolphus said dismissively.

But Rabastan knew deep down there would be none other quite like Harry Potter.

When Harry came to he found he was lying on an unfamiliar bed. Frowning up at the ceiling, the Courtesan attempted to remember what had happened to bring him here.

Abruptly it all came flooding back and with a gasp, the boy shot up. The Dark Lord. His contract had been bought by the ruler of Britain's Wizarding community.

Sensing a presence Harry turned his head so quickly his neck cricked painfully. Lord Voldemort sat on a plush chair beside his bed, watching him with his head tilted to one side as though Harry was some fascinating specimen.

'My Lord…' Harry made to get up but the Dark Lord's hand was on his shoulder, pressing him back down onto the bed.

'There is no need to bow; you are still weak from earlier. It is unfortunate it drained you so but I believe you fought against your magic's pull.'

Settling back down on the silk pillows behind him, Harry thought about Rabastan with a slight twinge of regret. Only slight because he had barely gotten a chance to meet him in the brief month he had been contracted.

'Will you complete the contract now?' Harry asked, forcing his voice to remain steady even as he nearly wilted with nervousness.

'No. You are to be my pupil, not my whore,' the Dark Lord said firmly.

Flushing with embarrassment, but feeling oddly happy that he wouldn't be expected to have bought sex with his partial-contractor; Harry nodded and asked, 'Will you remove my collar then?'

'I will not. It gives me some power over you as your contractor, and you truly need someone regulating your magic. It is a miracle you have not obliterated anything yet. I assume you haven't been exercising your powers for a while.' He paused before continuing. 'People will talk. They will say you are my lover, however much that is not true. But that mark around your neck will protect you inside my Citadel and in the wider Wizarding community. None will harm what I have marked as mine.'

Resigned but not surprised at this decision, Harry nodded and the Dark Lord rose.

'Oh and there is one last thing my little Courtesan,' he said softly.

'Yes, My Lord?'

'I've enrolled you for your sixth year at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. You'll get a wand tomorrow.'

With a smirk at Harry's shocked face, Lord Voldemort left the room and his beautiful Courtesan, who wasn't really his Courtesan, behind.

The next day was September the first and the rest of the Hogwarts students were boarding the
Hogwarts Express and heading off to the waiting welcoming feast. Harry, however, was joining the rest of the student body in a few days time.

He needed to collect his school supplies first and start his private lessons with his contractor, learning how to tame his core.

Lord Voldemort had assigned one of his most trusted Death Eaters, Lucius Malfoy, to accompany his Courtesan to Diagon Alley and collect his school supplies.

Leaving the Citadel, which he was yet to explore, Harry had to put up with the silvery-blonde haired man boring into him with a calculating grey-eyed gaze, obviously thinking of what had occurred the day before. Harry ignored him as best he could as they shopped, purchasing the necessary items.

Harry was slightly overwhelmed with the sights and sounds of the shopping precinct, only ever having explored Hogwarts, Aphrodite's House of Pleasure, Lestrange Manor and soon the Citadel, that was the centre of power in Wizarding Britain.

People stared as he and his silent guardian passed by, taking in Harry's silver collar marked with the Dark Lord's insignia. Lord Voldemort had never taken a Courtesan before, so the sight of the beautiful boy wandering through Diagon Alley bearing his mark shocked them. Whispers followed the duo as they purchased Harry's books and other necessary supplies.

They were passing the magical menagerie when Lucius stopped Harry by latching his snake-headed cane onto the boy's shoulder. 'My Lord wishes for you to possess an owl,' he said in his cool voice.

Harry raised an eyebrow but said nothing in response, entering the store with Lucius close behind him. He strolled up and down the aisles with the shopkeeper fluttering around the blonde Death Eater and totally ignoring the Courtesan.

'I would like this one, My Lord,' Harry said at last, pointing to a beautiful snowy white owl with intelligent amber eyes that reminded him of Angelina.

'Very well,' Lucius replied and paid for the owl. The shopkeeper went to transfer the owl from her perch into a silver cage but the creature clicked her beak in irritation and flew to Harry, perching on his shoulder instead.

They left the store with the owl, whom Harry had decided to name Hedwig after a famous witch he had been reading about recently, perched on his shoulder. Harry carried her silver cage in his hand.

'We'll need to go get your wand,' Lucius said slowly, staring at Harry in consternation. The servile caste was not permitted to own or even touch a wand. The fact that Harry was being sent to Hogwarts, that he was being granted a wand, told Lucius that he was no ordinary Courtesan. Then there was the occurrence at Lestrange Manor. Lucius was…intrigued.

When they entered Ollivanders the eerie blue-eyed man stared long and hard at Harry for a few moments before he greeted them. He was unsurprised when Lucius said that Harry would be receiving a wand.

He made to go and fetch a box but something in Harry drove him to instinctively reach out with his magic. The boy held out a hand as a black box flew from the back of the store and into his hand.

Lucius gaped at him, momentarily forgetting his cool pureblood mask. Ollivander seemed once more unsurprised by this turn of events, staring at Harry with a glint in his icy blue eyes.

Harry uncovered the wand within, a lovely holly instrument. When he removed it from the box, pure
gold light erupted from the tip of the wand and Harry could sense the wand singing with joy at finally finding its rightful owner.

The brilliant gold light faded eventually and he was met with a smiling Ollivander and a stunned Lucius Malfoy.

'This is my wand,' he said softly, caressing the wood lovingly.

'Holly wood, eleven inches, phoenix feather core,' the wand maker rattled off. He paused and then added, looking directly into Harry's eyes, 'Your wand has a brother. The phoenix that gave its feather for your holly wand gave one other feather. I sold that wand to our very own Dark Lord when he was a boy. Your paths truly are bound.'

Listening to those words, Harry felt a shiver of premonition roll through him and the temperature in the shop seemed to drop slightly.

After getting over his shock and slipping his mask back into place, Lucius bought a wand holster for the Courtesan to wear on his wrist so that his wand could remain close.

Their shopping done for the day, Lucius escorted the green-eyed boy back to the Citadel and decided that he would treat the boy with respect. It seemed he had a bright future ahead of him, and Lucius wanted to be a part of that future. He did have ambition after all.

After leaving him in his bedroom, which Lucius noted with interest was separate to the Dark Lord's, the blonde haired man went to go find his master, with much to report.

Once Lucius had left, Harry spent a while sitting on his bed stroking Hedwig's feathers. As he sat there, feeling his wand tingling against his wrist, a sudden thought hit him. Looking at Hedwig, Harry carefully detached her talons from him and ran to the desk in the corner of the room.

Grabbing a piece of parchment, the Courtesan sat down with a quill and inkpot and began to write. He could now send letters.

With sure strokes of his quill Harry composed his message.

Dear Hermione…

Chapter End Notes

Awww poor Rabastan. But don't worry, we'll be seeing more of him. He works part-time at Hogwarts remember. It's going to be a little bit awkward for Harry taking lessons from his ex-contractor...who isn't really over him yet...

For those thinking that Rabastan let Harry go too easily, you must remember this is the Dark Lord we're talking about. You do not deny the ruler of Wizarding Britain. Not if you want to stay alive. Rabastan is loyal to the Dark Lord. Yes, he is upset that he had to give up Harry but he would never refuse his Lord.

It seems Voldemort is not interested in Harry that way...or is he...? It is labelled a pre-slash for a reason. They won't jump into bed immediately- I didn't think that the Dark Lord was that sort of person, you know? But there will be Voldemort/Harry slash in this story. I promise.
Hmm...I wonder what Severus discovered about the old Order of the Phoenix...Maybe it's not as abolished as once thought...
As for the whole 'partial-contract' thing, Voldemort is Harry's contractor however the magical binding between them has not been finalised because they have not been sexually intimate. The repercussions of this is that if someone is sexually intimate with Harry, they will automatically become his contractor and Voldemort will be able to do nothing. So Voldemort had better keep and eye on his Courtesan who isn't really his Courtesan...
A note on contracts: Birthers, Courtesans and Menials are bound to the owner of their contract (the Hogwarts Menials are bound to the school.) The binding is permanent until,
  a) Either the servile or the master dies
  b) The servile is set free (in circumstances involving perhaps a servile saving the life of their contractor or their contractor's family)
  c) The contractor agrees to sell the contract to another (like in the case of Rabastan and Harry)
Courtesans are usually released from their contract once reaching a certain age. If they have accumulated enough money they can pay back their contractors for what they were bought for. In this case they join the third caste in society, the half-bloods. If they do not have enough gold they are made Menials either for the same contractor or sold to another to work.
You will learn more about Birthers and how it all works later on in the story.
Finally, I just wanted to say that there is a prophecy involving Harry and Voldemort but it hasn't been heard yet and probably will not be heard for a while. Lily and James Potter were not specifically hunted down; they were killed in a raid by an unknown Death Eater(s.)
I hope you enjoyed this update.
Drops of Nightshade x
'Miss Granger!' a curt voice snapped, dragging Hermione out of her thoughts.

Blinking in shock the hazelnut haired girl turned to face her teacher Madame Hewitt. She had been thinking about Harry as she often had ever since she had received his letter the night before.

'Pardon me Madame Hewitt, I won't let my attention stray again,' Hermione promised firmly.

'See that it doesn't,' the woman huffed before turning back to the rest of the class and continuing her lecture about decorum.

Hermione had hardly believed it when she had seen the beautiful snowy white owl sitting on the windowsill of her bedroom. She had let the creature inside and had been rewarded with a letter, with untidy handwriting on the front she could recognise anywhere.

Harry.

The owl had waited while the sixteen-year-old girl had read and re-read the letter, tears trailing down her cheeks as she reverently touched the paper that Harry had touched. She had been shocked at what Harry had wrote, that his contract had been bought from Rabastan Lestrange by none other than the Dark Lord himself.

Hermione shivered in sympathy that Harry was now in the Dark Lord's possession but had been relieved to read that Lord Voldemort apparently had no intention of bedding Harry. And Harry was going home! To Hogwarts! He would be able to see Mr and Mrs Weasley and the rest of their surrogate family. The brown-eyed girl had felt a twinge of jealousy at that but been too happy for her foster brother to care so much. After she had replied to Harry's letter and given it to the lovely white owl she had stood at her window watching as the creature winged its way to Harry with her message.

'Hermione,' a voice to her right hissed and she turned to see Ginny Weasley standing up and collecting her books. The class had ended without her noticing.

Hurriedly following suite, she gathered her writing implements and her workbooks and touched the pocket of her tunic where Harry's letter rested. Satisfied it was safe and close to her, she followed Ginny out of the classroom.

Hermione had been both relieved and saddened when the red-haired girl had arrived a year after her at Damara House. Relieved because she would now have a friend and saddened that Ginny would be expected to carry children like herself.

The two girls with identical golden collars around their throats and long blue tunics tied with golden
sashes walked outside to enjoy some fresh air before their next class. They had a relatively private spot that they had claimed as their own. The little stone bench was screened by rose bushes and provided a spot for Ginny and Hermione to discuss happenings at Damara House or reminisce about their surrogate family.

Ginny and Hermione rounded the corner and froze in their tracks at the sight of the woman in her late twenties wearing a floral summer dress and carrying a baby in her arms. She was unusual with bright bubble-gum pink hair and soft violet eyes. And she was sitting on their bench.

As though sensing their gazes the woman turned around with her head cocked to one side. 'Hello girls,' she said in a friendly tone, rocking her baby gently.

'Hi,' they responded simultaneously, still shocked by her odd appearance.

Hermione noticed the gold metal band around her right wrist and realised that she was a released Birther. Contrary to popular belief, Birthers were not expected to have child after child with their contractor. After three children their contracts were considered fulfilled and their contractors released them more often than not. Birthers stayed on either in the family home or in a supplied residence, raising their children. The woman before them had obviously given her contractor three children and was now a free woman.

'I'm sorry, did you want to sit here?' the woman asked kindly, making to get up.

'Oh no, it's fine,' Ginny said hurriedly.

The woman sat back down and the two younger girls stood there awkwardly for a few moments. Seeing them still hovering the woman smiled slightly and gestured them to sit on the thick carpet of grass before the stone bench. After the two girls had exchanged glances and taken their seats the woman looked down at them.

'My name is Nymphadora Tonks, but I would prefer it if you called me Tonks,' the bubble-gum haired woman said.

Seeing Ginny staring wide-eyed at the woman's unusual eyes and hair, Hermione decided to introduce both of them. 'I'm Hermione Granger and this is my friend, Ginny Weasley.'

Tonks startled when she heard Ginny's last name and she stared intently at the redhead fifteen-year-old.

'I presume you are Molly and Arthur's daughter?' she asked curiously.

Blinking in surprise and a little bit of grief at hearing her parent's names, Ginny nodded mutely. Seeing Hermione's questioning look Tonks turned to face the other girl and explained, 'My parents were good friends with them…before the Dark Lord took over.'

'How old were you?' Ginny asked at last, coming out of her shock.

'I was thirteen years old when the Dark Lord won. My mother was a pureblood but had been labelled a blood traitor because she married a Muggleborn. She, and my father, ended up as Menials. I was one of the first students to graduate from Damara House and have my contract bought,' Tonks told them softly, staring down at her baby with a gentleness on her face that belied her sad words.

'What is it like?' Ginny suddenly blurted out, staring wide-eyed at the baby in Tonks' arms, obviously imagining herself in a similar situation in a few years time.
'Do you mean, what is it like to be contracted?' Tonks replied.

'Yes,' the redhead whispered.

Tonks stared into the distance over the two girls' heads and collected her thoughts. 'It was hard at first,' she admitted quietly. 'But, as Birthers, we are very lucky to not be bought for sexual gratification, not like the Courtesans. I only saw my contractor once a week until it was confirmed I was pregnant with our first child. He visited me every other day to check on our unborn child and me. He was...kind. He still is.'

Hermione spoke up asking, 'Your contractor...his wife...was it difficult living under the same roof?'

'I am very lucky. My contractor, Rabastan Lestrange, does not have a wife. He bought my contract because his sister-in-law was barren and could not have children. He himself loathed the idea of a wife, having no wish for marital life. So I have borne him the Lestrange heir, my firstborn Calix whom has recently turned eleven and has started his first day of Hogwarts yesterday,' Tonks said proudly.

Hermione had gasped when Tonks mentioned the name of her contractor and Ginny frowned before her eyes widened as she realised why her friend had reacted that way, remembering the letter Hermione had showed her.

'Rabastan Lestrange? He really is your contractor?' Hermione asked in a quiet voice.

'Yes- although now he no longer my contractor considering I gave him our third and final child. Why do you seem so shocked?' Tonks asked in confusion.

'A friend of ours was recently contracted and...well he never mentioned his contractor had a Birther-or three children for that matter,' Hermione explained.

'Your friend's name is Harry Potter isn't it,' Tonks stated. Without waiting for an affirmative the woman ploughed on. 'Bastan never told him about the children or me because he didn't think Harry was ready for the knowledge of our existence yet. In fact, Bastan was planning on introducing us any day now. Of course he can't anymore, not with Harry in the Citadel and out of his reach.'

'But how could Harry not notice a woman and three children drifting around the house?' Ginny asked in confusion.

'I live in a lovely townhouse not too far from Lestrange Manor. It's been my home ever since Calix was born and I wished for a cosier abode. Bastan visits me every week to check on the children. There would have been no way for Harry to see me until Bastan introduced us,' Tonks finished.

There was a silence as Hermione and Ginny digested this information, Hermione feeling a little bit angry for Harry's sake that the boy had no knowledge that his ex-contractor had children. Wanting to fill up the lengthy silence the sixteen-year-old asked, 'What are the names of your other children?'

Smiling at the change of topic Tonks responded, 'My second child was also a boy. I wanted to name him Teddy after my father, but Bastan talked me out of it. Instead we named him Theodore and I call him Teddy for short. He's six years old currently.'

The woman then looked down at the baby in her arms. 'This one here is my only girl. She's a little over a year old now and is named after my mother, Andromeda.'

Hermione stood up and peered over Tonks' shoulder to look down at the baby girl who had her mother's violet eyes. Suddenly, those eyes changed to a deep brown that mimicked Hermione's own.
With a gasp of surprise, Hermione's hand flew to her throat.

Chuckling at Hermione's reaction, and Ginny who scrambled to her feet to see what the commotion was about, Tonks quickly explained, 'I am a Metamorphmagus; I can change my appearance at will. My three children inherited my ability.' The woman demonstrated by changing her hair to black and her eyes to a bright cornflower blue.

After entertaining the two girls for a while by changing her appearance and making her own daughter chuckle happily, Tonks then settled down with her bubble-gum pink hair and violet eyes once more.

The woman surveyed the two teens before her and quickly made up her mind. They both seemed trustworthy, one of them the daughter of people she knew could be trusted. She owed it to Arthur and Molly to help their only daughter in any way she could. Hermione seemed like a strong young woman and Tonks got the distinct impression she was meant for far greater things than the life of a Birther. She would help these two girls as much as she could.

'I wish to give you both something,' Tonks said softly, eyes carefully peering through the rose-bush screening them to ensure no one was lurking.

From a secret lining in her summer dress she pulled a gold medallion out. On both sides of the coin a flaming phoenix was engraved. Cupping the ornament in one hand and holding her daughter with the other, Tonks leaned down and breathed soft words down at the medallion. The gold shone brightly before two identical copies landed on the ground. Hermione and Ginny's eyes grew wide at the show of magic, shocked that Tonks had performed it, albeit just activating a pre-existing spell.

Tucking the original back in her secret pocket, Tonks picked up the two copies and gave one to each girl. 'These medallions are extremely precious. I am giving them to you because I know I can trust you. Or perhaps I can't trust you but I just want to help you,' Tonks shrugged helplessly and the two girls exchanged slightly nervous glances.

'It is unwise of me to say too much but know this; there are some out there who still fight the Dark Lord. There are some who have not given up. Those medallions are direct links to those people who can make a difference,' Tonks paused before continuing. 'There will come a time when those medallions will heat up. You will know it is time. Press your lips to the metal and say, 'Sanctuary.'

Seeing the worried and sceptic looks on the teens' faces Tonks added, facing Ginny, 'Your parents and brothers each have an identical coin. Trust me, and when the time comes, say the word and you will be taken to the right people.'

'What if someone sees the medallion- what if it gets taken off us?' Hermione asked logically.

'The beauty of this magic is that only those who have been let in on the secret or are about to be let in can see the medallions. Simply keep your medallions on you at all times and somewhere safe. When the call comes, you will be ready.'

Tonks rose from the bench and rocked her daughter in her arms, watching as Hermione and Ginny placed the medallions in their pockets for temporary safekeeping.

'I must leave now- I was simply visiting to give a short lecture to some seventeen-year-olds about to be contracted. 'Bastan is working at Hogwarts now but I still need to return home,' Tonks told the two girls.

She said her farewells and turned to leave but Hermione's soft voice stopped her in her tracks. 'Can
you and your...people...help Harry too?’

Tonks turned and looked at the sixteen-year-old girl who stared back with dogged hope in her brown eyes.

'We will try with every ounce of our determination. If it is possible for us to free Harry Potter from the Dark Lord's clutches, we will. That is a promise Hermione Granger,' Tonks murmured before turning back around and disappearing from view.

'Try it again.'

The familiar cold words from the Dark Lord caused annoyance to rise in Harry before he quashed it ruthlessly. Taking a few deep breaths he nodded to signify he was ready for his contractor to begin again.

It was his third day in the Citadel, including the day he had arrived, and Harry had been woken in the morning by a house-elf whom had informed him the Dark Lord was expecting him in the western training room at nine o'clock sharp.

After a hasty breakfast Harry had dressed in the black robes that he had discovered on his bed, uncomfortable with wearing different clothes to his Courtesan uniform. Whoever had organised his outfit had added green accents to the robes and had ensured his silver collar was still visible, perhaps to more clearly indicate his station. Strapping his wand to his forearm, using the leather holster Lucius had bought for him, Harry had left his bedroom and made his way to the west training room.

He was now quite familiar with the layout of the Citadel and its surrounding fortified grounds. The inner keep was where the private wings were located including the sleeping quarters and dining chambers. The outer wings were where official business was conducted and Ministry officials regularly came and went. Harry made sure to avoid this section of the Citadel due to the calculating and sometimes lascivious looks that were frequently directed his way.

The training rooms were scattered throughout the Citadel but the Death Eaters exclusively used the western one. As Harry had glided through the vaulted halls he had only encountered a few people all whom had ignored his presence.

The Dark Lord had been waiting for him in the large training room sitting imperiously on a raised dais on a wooden throne-like chair. Harry had approached and bowed deeply to his contractor and the ruler of Wizarding Britain and their first lesson had officially begun.

Voldemort wished to first test his Courtesan's restraint, making Harry stand on the other side of the training chamber and summoning his magic forth. It had taken Harry numerous times to stop himself from running to the Dark Lord in a trance. Now he was able to still vividly sense his contractor's power but remain mostly unaffected by the seductive call.

They had moved onto harnessing Harry's power and that was where Harry was a little lost. He was comfortable with using spontaneous wandless magic but Lord Voldemort wished for him to be able to channel his magic through his wand, as he would be expected to at Hogwarts. His wandless lessons would come after he had a solid foundation. They had been trying for hours and there had not been a breakthrough yet.

Standing before the raised dais Harry closed his eyes to better concentrate without the intensely handsome face of his contractor staring closely at him. With his wand grasped tightly in his right hand Harry took another deep breath and stated clearly, 'Aguamenti.'
Consciously channelling his magic through his holly wand Harry felt triumph rise in him as at last a jet of water gushed from his wand's tip, splashing noisily onto the hard floor of the training room. Beaming proudly, Harry glanced up at the Dark Lord who merely tilted his head in the tiniest acknowledgement. Slightly disappointed Harry cancelled the spell and waited patiently for his contractor to speak.

'That is enough for today. I will summon you tomorrow to continue our lessons,' was all the Dark Lord said before gesturing Harry to leave the room.

Swallowing his bitterness at being treated with so little feeling, missing Rabastan's passionate albeit sometimes cold presence, Harry bowed and swiftly left the room.

Feeling an unfamiliar heaviness in his stomach Harry wandered aimlessly through the Citadel, not paying any attention to where he was going. The sound of raised voices startled him out of his sour mood and he jerked his head up, taking in his surroundings. He had travelled in the wrong direction, now somewhere in the outer keep where the Ministry business was usually conducted.

The raised voices were coming closer to him and Harry quickly backtracked, to avoid whoever was coming his way. Slipping into a room with a slightly ajar door he noted distractedly that it was a small parlour room with elegant chaise lounges and an empty fireplace.

To his consternation the raised voices grew even louder and the door slammed open ferociously announcing the arrival of the arguers.

'…not going to present your case to the Dark Lord, Black. It is beneath his attention,' the sniping voice of Severus Snape hissed.

Beside the Potion Master was a handsome middle-aged man with sleek, wavy black hair that fell around his face and brushed his shoulders. His greyish-blue eyes that had been fixed furiously on Snape flicked Harry's way and widened, grief and wonder flooding the unique orbs.

'Harry?' he choked out, taking a step forward with a look of disbelief on his face.

Snape's head flicked Harry's way and his onyx black eyes narrowed with annoyance. 'Potter,' he barked in that all-too familiar voice that he used back during Harry's Hogwarts days.

Harry jumped slightly at the Headmaster's abrupt voice and swallowed heavily, torn between keeping his gaze on the volatile man or the unknown stranger who was staring at him with so much unbridled emotion.

'Forgive me Headmaster, I will leave you now,' Harry said hastily and bowed, making to edge out of the room, eager to get away.

As he moved to pass through the doorway, a hand fastened around his wrist and Harry snapped his head towards the owner of said hand, the unknown stranger. For a few moments the other man seemed content to just stare at him, almost hungrily. An unspeakable look of sorrow flitted across his face when he saw the silver collar around Harry's throat.

About to request he be released, glancing over the stranger's shoulder to see a glowering Severus Snape, Harry's mouth snapped closed at the man's next words.

'Oh Harry…James and Lily would never forgive me for letting this happen to you…' the man whispered, staring at Harry's Courtesan collar.

'Black-' Snape began growling warningly but Harry was now fixated on the man who must have
known his parents.

'Who are you?' he asked breathlessly.

'My name is Sirius Black,' he said, completely ignoring the Potion Master behind him who looked like he wanted nothing more than to strangle the man. Sirius' greyish-blue eyes bored into Harry's as though searching for something within them. 'And I am your godfather.'

Chapter End Notes

I'm a bit anxious about this chapter. I hope you all don't mind me straying from Harry, but I really had to reintroduce Hermione to the story and continue along the Order of the Phoenix vein. It will be very important later on. I'm sorry if you are unhappy with how Voldemort is treating Harry but I really don't see him as a welcoming, loving person. He is a Dark Lord, used to fending for himself and depending on no one. Harry is currently a passing interest. Voldemort is immortal and treats the people around him like brief candles. They burn bright and then die. He is attached to no one. However that will change. Harry will become very precious to him. He will become the Dark Lord's one weakness.

Well now Sirius is in the story. I would like to quickly clarify a few things. You are probably wondering why on earth he was allowed to live considering his involvement in the Order of the Phoenix. Regulus Black, Sirius' younger brother and legitimate heir to the Black name and fortune was killed two years before the rise of the Dark Lord as you should know if you have read the books or watched the movie. Sirius remains the only male heir of Black blood from the main line of Blacks (Draco doesn't count because Narcissa is from a side branch.) When the Dark Lord won he was spared because of his precious blood but he remains closely monitored and is constantly tracked. You will learn more about it later on in the story. He is considered part of the second caste considering his pure blood but is treated poorly amongst the elite because of his previous involvement with Dumbledore and the Order.

Lastly, I wanted it to be clear that Rabastan did not inform Harry about Tonks or the kids because he honestly did not believe Harry was ready for the knowledge of their existence. Yes, Harry will eventually find out. No, I will not reveal how he will react to that yet. :)

Drops of Nightshade x
I wanted to quickly outline the caste system to make things easier to understand for everyone or to refresh your memories.

First Caste: Death Eaters- They can be either purebloods or half-bloods. Death Eaters are selected fresh out of school and are branded with the Dark Mark. They are essentially the elite of society. Within the Death Eaters there is a hierarchy but you will learn more about it later on in the story.

Second Caste: Purebloods- They are the purebloods that are not magically strong enough to be accepted into the Death Eater ranks. They form a sort of socialite class and possess titles, land and wealth. Half-bloods that are Death Eaters are considered 'above' them. You can be sure this can cause some dissent.

Third Caste: Half-bloods- This is the working class, those of magical and non magical heritage. They are the ones not strong enough to be picked for the honor of being a Death Eater. Children born of BIRTHERS and their contractors are a part of this caste. There are some exceptions, as in the case of Tonks and Rabastan. Because the children they had are the only Lestrangheirs, they are considered of the second caste, not the third. Werewolves and other magical creatures are in this caste also because of their part-magical part-creature blood. You will learn more about Voldemort's dealings and laws surrounding magical creatures later on in the story.

Fourth Caste: Serviles- This is of course the lowest caste in society made up of BIRTHERS, Courtesans and Menials. That order is the order of ranking within the world of serviles. Muggleborns are taken when they first show signs of accidental magic and their parents are Obliviated. Blood-traitors and disgraced half-bloods are sentenced to this caste as punishment to join the Muggleborns in servitude. I hope this has helped clear up all of your questions and has better outlined how everything works. One last thing, Voldemort is at the very pinnacle of the entire caste system. Naturally.

Drops of Nightshade x

Chapter Six

The Citadel

1996

For a moment in time Harry's mind went blank and he stared uncomprehendingly at the man, Sirius he said his name was. If what he was saying was true…

'Leave. Now,' Snape hissed angrily, that terrifying black gaze directed on Harry who stood there dumbstruck.
The hand around his wrist tightened and a look of desperation came across Sirius' face. 'We need to meet again,' he said in a low voice, hoarse with emotion.

'Caution, Black,' Snape said and there was coldness in his tone. 'There are eyes and ears everywhere. You'll do well to remember that.'

Did Snape just give some valuable advice? Harry shook his head and detached himself from the man who might truly be his one link to his mother and father. With one last lingering glance Harry slipped through the doorway without so much as a bow to either of them. The door slammed shut behind him, causing the sixteen-year-old to flinch.

Dazed, he drifted back into the inner keep and somehow found his way to his bedchamber where he stumbled over to his bed and sat down. His previous disappointment over Voldemort's dismissal of him had faded into the recess of his mind and his thoughts were entirely consumed by intense greyish-blue eyes and those words on his lips: 'I am your godfather.'

The richness of the man's clothes indicated he was either of the first or second caste, but Harry was willing to bet Sirius Black was a second caste pureblood due to Snape's obvious rudeness towards him. The Headmaster would have been at least civil to a fellow Death Eater.

As a result of his deep thinking, Harry did not hear the incessant tapping on his window, the source being one irate owl that had been attempting to get her master's attention. When Harry eventually realised Hedwig was at the window with a letter clasped in her beak he was quick to lurch to the other side of the room and let her in.

The proud creature fluffed her feathers in annoyance and flew in gracefully, dropping the letter on his head and perching on his bedstead with her regal gaze averted from him as though in disgust.

Forgiving the owl, and hoping she would forgive him with time, Harry picked the letter up off the ground where it had fallen after landing on his head and quickly began reading it.

He sat down next to Hedwig and reached out to absently stroke her, however she had not gotten over his previous ignorance of her and snapped maliciously at his fingers. Leaving her to cool off he read the letter carefully taking in each word and laughing or choking back tears in equal parts.

He missed Hermione so much.

It was one thing to write to her and be written back in return but he wanted to hold her in his arms and see her face light up with happiness and laughter as they spoke to each other. It was painful to be so close in contact and yet not close enough.

They would never be close enough until they were together once more.

Carefully folding the precious letter Harry tucked it in his deepest pocket and was relieved when Hedwig finally let him pet her soft feathers. He was tempted to write a reply to Hermione but he knew Hedwig needed a break. Judging by the time it took her to fly to his foster-sister and then fly back with a reply, it was obvious Damara House was a long way away.

Then another thought struck him. Hermione might be too far away currently to write to, but Sirius might not be. If he could get a message to the man then he might be able to arrange a meeting like his supposed godfather wanted.

A short while later Harry was sitting in front of a blank sheet of parchment wondering what to write to someone he had only met roughly twenty minutes ago. Dipping his quill in the ready inkpot Harry bit his bottom lip before writing out his message.
Mr. Black,

He cringed at the impersonal tone he had set, but he barely knew this man.

I would like to meet you tomorrow afternoon at the same time we have met today, but in the northern maze of the Citadel. The centre is relatively easy to find if you take every right-hand turn. It is private and a good place for us to talk.

Harry Potter

Blowing gently on the ink to let it dry, Harry read and re-read his message, uncertain about what reception he would receive from the other man. After slipping it in a waiting envelope he approached Hedwig and cautiously offered the letter to the volatile owl.

She tilted her head to one side before accepting it in her sharp beak and left the room in a flutter of movement, her form soon only a faint white speck in the afternoon sky.

The Dark Lord was displeased.

He sat alone in a shadowed chamber, the light of the roaring fire illuminating his profile and casting his face in sharp clarity. Crimson eyes flashed as they read the short letter in his hand.

Mr. Black,

I would like to meet you tomorrow afternoon at the same time we have met today, but in the northern maze of the Citadel. The centre is relatively easy to find if you take every right-hand turn. It is private and a good place for us to talk.

Harry Potter

It seemed his pupil was hiding secrets from him. He had allowed the sickeningly emotional letters with some silly chit from Damara House but consorting with an ex-Order member was stepping over his bounds.

He had been surprised when his pure black eagle owl, Hades, had arrived harrying a snow-white owl with him that the Dark Lord recognised as his Courtesan's bird. He had not been expecting another letter passing through so soon after the last one.

After relieving the owl of its letter, as he had every other letter that passed by the white owl, Voldemort had left Hades in charge of guarding the other creature while he had scanned the letter's contents.

Now the parchment hung loosely from his long pale fingers as he stared into the fire, his other hand curled around the stem of a glass of wine. His formidable mind was quickly formulating a suitable solution to the issue.

At last, a satisfied smile flickered across his lips and the Dark Lord cast the letter down, nudging it towards the blazing hearth with a tendril of wandless magic. Like an autumn leaf in the wind the letter drifted towards the blaze and was consumed in the fiery inferno, the message it contained never to be seen by Sirius Black's eyes.

Now the only thing to be dealt with was how to punish his conspiring pupil. An idea struck Lord Voldemort and he closed his crimson eyes in contentment as he raised the glass of wine to his lips.
Perhaps he would take a stroll in the northern maze tomorrow afternoon.

The next day found Harry walking briskly across the Citadel's grounds, his lesson with Voldemort finished earlier on. He had mastered some of the more advanced spells and was working on expanding his magical vocabulary.

After carrying a huge stack of books to his chamber on a variety of magical-based subjects, Harry had spared a second to think about Hedwig whom had appeared in his chambers a few brief hours after taking his letter from him. She had borne a simple response: 'I will be there.'

Casting a surreptitious glance around to make sure there was no one watching him and probing the area with his unique powers to sense any magical cores nearby, Harry slipped into the large maze.

He did not see the intense crimson eyes watching as he stepped within the maze, the owner of said eyes having cloaked his magical core, an ability he had yet to teach his pupil.

Taking every right-hand turn Harry walked along, trying to ignore the faint prickling from his magical senses. Shivering at the odd feeling Harry sped up, the heady scent of tree sap surrounding him. For some strange reason the hairs on the back of his neck refused to stay down.

Finally, to Harry's relief, he arrived in the heart of the maze and quickly swallowed his disappointment after seeing no sign of Sirius Black. There was a long stone bench in the centre of the maze, ideal for lounging on in good weather or for two lovers to meet in secret.

Harry sat down, shuddering as the cold from the marble seeped through his black robes and chilled his bones. Rubbing his neck, trying to dispel the feeling of being watched, Harry shifted uneasily on the bench.

He had no idea for how long he had been sitting there, drenched in sunlight from the open space above him, before he realised he wasn't imagining things, that he really was being watched.

Dread coursing through his veins Harry slowly turned and faced whoever had obviously just entered the heart of the maze. He wanted visible confirmation for the person he believed had just appeared.

Sure enough, the Dark Lord stood framed by thick hedges, looking like some sort of fallen angel with his devastatingly handsome face and his menacing aura. He was looking at Harry, like a predator observing his prey, knowing full well he had the prey cornered.

Forcing his suddenly stiff limbs to move, Harry stood and bowed deeply to his contractor with a quietly murmured, 'My Lord.'

To his consternation Lord Voldemort glided deeper into the hidden heart of the maze and languidly sat down upon the stone bench Harry had recently vacated. With an elegant gesture of one of his perfect white hands he waited while Harry sat down jerkily, his natural grace forgotten through his fear.

'Such fear from you Harry…one would think you were doing something…illicit,' Voldemort said in a silky voice, his pupil's name rolling off his tongue with a cool ease that sent shivers down Harry's spine.

'Of course not, My Lord,' Harry whispered after a short pause, not even trying to convince the Dark Lord that his words were the truth. Voldemort's presence here indicated he somehow knew of the meeting Harry had organised with Sirius Black.
Suddenly Harry realised what a fool he had been. Of course the Dark Lord had been monitoring his letters. Had he really thought he could organise secret meetings with people in Lord Voldemort's own home? Judging by the Dark Lord's presence here, Sirius Black was more than just a second caste pureblood. Merlin, he could only hope his contractor would have mercy.

'I can see you have come to recognise the full implications of your actions,' the Dark Lord mused as he observed his pupil's horrified face.

Harry said nothing, waiting for the inevitable. Rabastan had never punished him, simply because Harry had never done anything to earn disciplining in the short month he was contracted to the Death Eater.

'You will be confined to your bedchamber for three days, starting this afternoon,' the Dark Lord said abruptly, startling Harry. The sixteen-year-old had thought his punishment would be far more severe. 'There will be no contact with outside influences. Our lessons shall be suspended until the end of your isolation, however I expect you to have finished reading the texts I have provided and be prepared to be questioned on them.

Harry felt a weight lift off his shoulders at the realisation that his punishment would be so mild. But there was a lingering suspicion in his mind that there was more to the Dark Lord's decision, that Lord Voldemort was putting him at ease only to make the true revelation of his disciplining all the more amusing.

As though reading his thoughts, which Harry sensed he was, the Dark Lord smirked. Harry couldn't help the jump in his heartbeat at the deviously handsome look on his contractor's features.

'You will of course be experiencing all of this…without your magic.'

Silence hung between them and Harry could only freeze in shock at the Dark Lord's words. Without his magic? How was that even possible?

Lord Voldemort leant in towards his pupil and for one brief moment, Harry thought he was going to kiss him. Strangely enough, the thought didn't frighten or repulse him. Instead he felt one moment of expectation as the Dark Lord's face inched closer to his.

But then he felt a wand at his throat, pointed at his collar, and that train of Harry's thoughts ended right there. Lord Voldemort had already made it very clear he had none of that sort of interest in Harry. Then why was he feeling disappointed?

Voldemort cast a wordless spell and Harry felt his collar go abruptly ice cold. The freezing feeling spread from his neck and dripped through his body, numbing his limbs and making him feel terribly weary.

In a scene reminiscent of Harry and Lord Voldemort's first meeting, Harry pitched forward as all of the energy was drained from his body. His contractor caught him with ease, pulling him closer so he could lie against his chest.

'I did say having that collar on you gave me certain powers over you,' Voldemort commented in a bland voice as though Harry was not practically fainting in his arms as he spoke. 'Your magical core is slowly being blocked by the spell I have cast on the metal. In a few moments you will be nothing more than a Squib.'

Harry's breath hitched in terror and a shaky sob exited his throat. His magic meant the world to him. It was what made him feel special even though he had such a low station in life. Harry felt that the
Dark Lord knew this, and had chosen this punishment knowing full well how much it would traumatise him.

The cold now covered his body completely and slowly yet surely Harry could feel his connection with his core fading. He desperately tried to keep his grip on his magic but the ice cold feeling was blocking the channels in his body.

Pain flared inside of him as the spell did its terrible work and Harry found himself stifling a scream at the horrendous feeling as his link to his magic finally disappeared. His body went limp and he frantically searched for the magic that had always been at his disposal.

Nothing.

His magic was gone.

At last Harry did scream, a hoarse sound filled with grief and loss. He struggled against the Dark Lord, wanting to be nowhere near the person who had done this to him. In that brief moment Harry considered attempting to kill him, to destroy the one who had done this to him.

'I wouldn't consider doing anything rash Harry,' the Dark Lord said mildly, brushing a lock of Harry's hair out of his face, beaded with sweat. 'I am the only one capable of ending the spell and giving you back your power.'

Harry froze at that comment. Lord Voldemort held the key to Harry's magic. He could decide to never return it to Harry if he disobeyed. Like a prey caught by the stare of a predator Harry stayed very, very still. He would do anything to get his magic back. Anything.

Lord Voldemort rose from the bench with Harry tucked in his arms and easily Apparated to Harry's bedchamber, the wards around the Citadel bending to allow the master of the stronghold to move freely.

In a curiously gentle movement he laid Harry's limp form on the bed before stepping away from his pupil. Harry flicked his eyes open and fixed them on his contactor, his gaze burning with pleading to have his magic returned now.

The strangest look came over the Dark Lord's face as he observed Harry lying on the bed, flushed from exertion and begging with his emerald eyes. For the tiniest of moments Harry could have sworn there was desire in those crimson depths. Then the Dark Lord turned away and approached the owl post in the corner.

Hedwig fluffed up her feathers when Lord Voldemort came near, recognising the man that constantly intercepted her master's letters. With a flick of wandless magic the Dark Lord opened the window in Harry's bedchamber and banished the owl.

Harry watched his movements hungrily, wishing fervently for his magic back, even as he worried about Hedwig's health. He knew the owl could fend for herself but he still worried for her.

With another tap of his magic the window closed and magically sealed to prevent Harry escaping the room. After that was taken care of the Dark Lord turned to face his pupil and said in a clinical tone of voice, his eyes determinedly not looking directly at Harry for some reason, 'You should feel numb and weak for an hour or so as the spell sinks in. I will have a house elf conjure your dinner directly into your bedchamber.'
Saying nothing more, Lord Voldemort turned to leave the room but the weak and broken voice of his pupil stopped him in his tracks.

'I'm s-sorry,' came the breathless and miserable voice.

Lord Voldemort finally turned around and looked at Harry, crimson eyes staring intently into green eyes. He saw genuineness in those emerald orbs.

'I know you are. You must understand you are being punished severely now so that you will not repeat your actions. I will not have you ever go behind me again, Harry.'

This time the Dark Lord made to leave the room and was not stopped by his pupil. He left the sixteen-year-old behind and sealed the door shut with his magic.

He felt an odd emotion build in his chest as he realised he would not be seeing Harry for three days. Well, the boy certainly did provide some entertainment between meetings and reports. And there was nothing stopping him from placing a charm on his pupil's room to observe him. Annoyed at his thoughts, Lord Voldemort pushed his musings on Harry Potter out of his mind.

He was feeling inexplicably angry now.

Gliding through the inner keep on the way to a meeting the Dark Lord consoled himself with the thought that he could Crucio some lower level Death Eaters if their reports failed to please him.

Anything to get the emerald-eyed boy out of his head.
Chapter Seven

Chapter Summary

In a world where the Dark Lord won, ten year old Harry Potter is part of the servile caste, the lowest caste in the new society. Destined for the life of a Courtesan, Harry is resigned to his fate. But it seems his unusual gifts have drawn the attention of the Dark Lord and Harry finds himself becoming so much more than just another war-orphan of the new regime. Eventual LV/HP.

Chapter Notes

Author Note: This is a longer chapter than usual and has quite a bit of important plot development so you should pay attention to what's going on.

I am very sorry for any grammar mistakes in this chapter, I don't have a Beta to pick these things up and whilst my editing is quite good, I can't pick everything up.

Drops of Nightshade x

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter Seven

Number 12 Grimmauld Place - Order of the Phoenix Headquarters – The Citadel

1996

Sirius Orion Black had been in a sort of daze ever since he had stumbled upon his godson at Voldemort's Citadel the day previously. It had been a shock to see Harry after fifteen years of absence and the sight of Lily and James' son, wearing the collar of a blasted Courtesan had horrified him beyond all comprehension.

The guilt he had kept buried for so long had reappeared in his life, and Sirius could do nothing but move mechanically through his daily duties sorting out the Black family accounts and filing his reports for his desk job at the Ministry. A job, which he hated with a passion.

It was not like he had a choice in his profession, however.

When Voldemort had won, succeeding in destroying Albus Dumbledore and scattering the Order of the Phoenix and its supporters, Sirius found himself captured by Death Eaters. Rather than granting him the mercy killing he craved he was instead placed back into pureblood society and mockingly granted the title of Lord Black and a position in the second caste of the new society.

After the death of his little brother Regulus during the war, a mysterious occurrence that Sirius bitterly believed the Dark Lord to be directly responsible for, Sirius became the last remaining heir to
the main line of the Noble and Most Ancient House of Black. The society under the Dark Lord was anything if not obsessed with the purity of one's blood.

Thus, Sirius was granted his life and freedom because of his precious lineage and to encourage the general populace that the Dark Lord was merciful to his enemies. Although, freedom was stretching his situation a bit.

There was a constant guard outside of Number 12 Grimmauld Place that observed the people coming and going from the ancient home. Monitoring charms layered the building itself, having been placed there by a deviously amused Bellatrix Lestrange whom had been able to manipulate the wards due to her Black blood. Each fireplace in the home had restrictions placed upon them that did not allow Floo travel or firecalling without express permission.

Sirius' mail was screened before it was allowed to reach him and his outgoing letters and packages were thoroughly checked for hidden messages before going to their intended destinations. At his day job at the Ministry his office was also layered in monitoring charms and he was confined to his floor during his time working there. At the end of the day he was expected to Floo home directly.

In pureblood society he was something of a joke, a topic to be gossiped about and sneered at mercilessly.

But Sirius knew he had no right, no right whatsoever to complain about his situation. Whilst he wore fine robes and enjoyed what little benefits he could scrape together there were people living under Voldemort's tyranny far worse off than him.

Harry.

His innocent sixteen-year-old godson with James' wild jet-black hair and Lily's gorgeous emerald eyes. How he had failed him.

Truly, his best friends would never forgive him if they knew how he had been unable to locate their baby boy after they had been murdered. How he had failed to try harder to hear a whisper about a boy by the name of Harry Potter. How he had not been there when Harry had been sold, like a piece of meat, to Rabastan Lestrange. How he had been too late to track Harry down, little Harry now in the possession of the Dark Lord.

He was pathetic, really.

Technically he was Harry's guardian but his godson's status as a servile negated any claim on him except that of his contractor. Sirius constantly asked himself what kind of guardian would allow their charge to remain in the possession of a man apparently four times his age, in mental years if not physical years. He didn't even want to think about the sort of things the Dark Lord was doing to Harry, whom was a Courtesan, a bought pleasure worker.

Pushing all thoughts of that way Sirius glanced out of the window to casually observe his guard for the day. The man's grey coloured strip of material around his left bicep indicated he was a third tier Death Eater, the lowest tier in Death Eater society.

Standing beside him twitching occasionally at odd noises was a new recruit, a Reaper, as they were known, bearing the tell-tale white material around his left bicep and of course the nervous demeanor of a trainee. Reapers spent six months training at a special facility before being chosen by a fully-fledged Death Eater to go under their wing for another six months. At the end of their training, if successful, Reapers were given the Dark Mark on their left forearm and inducted into the third tier.
It appeared as if his guard had decided to bring his pupil with him to sentry duty rather than a fellow Death Eater. This would be easier than Sirius thought.

With sure strides the pureblood moved to his study and enured his nuisance of a house elf, Kreacher, was nowhere near him.

The bitter creature was bound to him as the head of the House of Black but made sure to cause havoc in Sirius’ life. He wanted nothing more than to release the useless thing but Kreacher had witnessed treasonous things Sirius had done during the long years living at Number 12 Grimmauld Place after the Dark Lord had won. So the elf had to stay.

Luckily the house was relatively comfortable to live in once Sirius had hired some workers to dispose of all the Dark items and clean the years of grime and mildew away. Kreacher had been insufferable during the cleaning process, hoarding items and stirring up his mother’s portrait in the front hall.

But in the end Sirius had prevailed and the house was liveable if not exactly the finest establishment. Kreacher refused to cook or clean and so Sirius was forced to fend for himself, the man refusing to purchase at least one measly Menial to help him. There was no way he would buy a human being, no way he would support the Dark Lord’s twisted and yet efficient society.

As for his duty to his house to marry and produce an heir, Sirius managed to dance out of that particular obligation by artfully negotiating with his fellow purebloods. Sirius would express interest in a pureblood woman, woo her- for months sometimes, before dropping her.

He had an absolutely terrible reputation in the love department but Sirius knew it was necessary to avoid being tied down to some pro-Dark, vapid woman whom he would be forced to have pro-Dark, vapid children with.

Confident that Kreacher was skulking somewhere on a lower level, Sirius pricked his thumb on a pin and pressed the bloody drop onto the bottom drawer. Recognising his blood the drawer slid open noiselessly and Sirius reached inside, lifting out one of his most precious possessions.

James' invisibility cloak.

He had acquired the item after Lily and James had been killed in a raid and the Ministry had confiscated Harry. Sirius swore to himself as he swung the priceless material around him that he would give it to Harry as his rightful inheritance when his godson was freed. Sirius was already determined to redeem himself and rescue his charge, the son of his best friends.

Completely invisible, Sirius made sure his wand was at the ready before he moved downstairs using his Marauder training to move noiselessly so as not to alert Kreacher to his wandering. He passed the second landing and saw Kreacher muttering to himself about ‘traitorous masters’ as he scrubbed at a table with a filthy cloth, steadily making the surface dirtier.

Rolling his eyes Sirius passed down onto the ground floor and approached the front door, casting an apprehensive look at his mother’s portrait, which slumbered away unawares. Satisfied, Sirius stood before the front door and withdrew his wand from the folds of the invisibility cloak.

With his other hand he pressed the already bloodied thumb to the door and began chanting under his breath, waving his wand in a complicated pattern. It was a rather Dark spell, but it suited Sirius' needs perfectly.

No one would ever think Sirius Black, staunch supporter of the Light, would know of, let alone
perform a Dark spell such as this. But it was the only way to slip through Bellatrix's wards undetected and leave the house.

As Sirius whispered the Latin words under his breath his blood seeped into the wood of the door and was recognised as Black blood by the enchantments around the house. With one last flick of his wand Sirius finished the spell and the door swung open.

The Fidelius Charm protected number 12 Grimmauld Place and the result was a blind spot on the doorstep of the ancient home. The door could open or close and the guards standing outside were none the wiser. Sirius had learnt of this many years previously when he had begun finding ways to sneak out of the house without his watchers learning of his movements.

Making sure James' cloak was covering every inch of him Sirius closed the door behind him and stepped out of the protective circle of the Fidelius Charm, holding his breath as he surveyed the guard and his Reaper trainee.

Neither so much as twitched.

Grinning to himself, Sirius strolled away from Number 12 and walked down Grimmauld Place. He paused and turned back to the Death Eater and the Reaper, casting a silencing charm their way. With a twist of his body he Disapparated away, the loud \\
crack of his movement not registered by his guards due to his carefully placed charm.

Sirius reappeared in Godric's Hollow on a lonely stretch of road. After he readjusted the cloak to ensure he was still invisible he began walking towards a familiar cottage, pushing away the pang of grief he received from looking at the cosy abode.

Lily and James' house still looked as it did fifteen years ago when they had died in a Death Eater raid. Sirius lingered outside of the picket fence and reached into the pocket of his waistcoat pulling out a gold coin engraved with a phoenix on each side. He pressed the coin to the pretty white gate that seemed so innocent and yet would viciously repel anyone who didn't have the correct method of entry.

The medallion blazed before settling down as the gate swung open admitting Sirius into the property. When the gate clicked shut behind him he pulled the cloak of his body, knowing he could no longer be seen by people on the road because of handy enchantments.

After tucking the cloak and his medallion into a pocket Sirius approached the front door, his hand hesitating before knocking on the smooth wood. He was suddenly assaulted by a memory.

_He knocked smartly on the door, waiting with a grin on the front porch. The door swung open revealing James with an apron around his waist and flour over his cheeks._

_Sirius blinked in surprise at seeing his best friend dressed in such a way but was distracted when Lily wandered into the front hall, carrying baby Harry with her. Two sets of identical emerald eyes watched him curiously._

_'Sirius! We weren't expecting you until tomorrow,' Lily exclaimed readjusting her grip on Harry who had recognised his godfather and was squirming and reaching with his little hands to be held by the man._

_James stepped aside to let his best friend inside and Sirius moved over to Lily, who passed over Harry. The baby boy chuckled happily and startled playing with a lock of Sirius' hair, sticking it in his mouth and gumming it contentedly._
Wincing slightly at seeing his hair disappearing into Harry's mouth, Sirius faced his friends and explained, 'I got let off work early. I didn't want to miss my godson's 6 month anniversary.'

Lily gently tugged Sirius' hair out of her son's mouth who pouted unhappily until she produced a teething ring from her blouse pocket. Harry shrieked with joy and accepted the toy, putting it straight in his mouth and snuggling closer to his godfather.

'You can help me make desert,' James said enthusiastically, dragging Sirius through to the kitchen.

When Lily was distracted he bent down to Sirius' ear and admitted quietly, 'Lily is making me prepare desert tonight because apparently I don't do enough around the house except play with Harry.'

James was in the process of rolling his eyes at his wife's expense when Lily called out casually, 'I heard that dear.'

James paled dramatically and Sirius couldn't help but laugh at his best friend's look of guilt at being heard complaining about Lily in the woman's presence. Harry joined in adding his gurgling chuckle and the kitchen was filled with the sound.

'...irius? Sirius!' a voice was calling insistently and Sirius blinked, forcing the memory away and the smarting tears that threatened to culminate in his eyes.

Emmeline Vance stood framed in the doorway, her silky chestnut hair in a loose ponytail and her hazel eyes concerned as she faced her old friend and fellow Order of the Phoenix member.

'I'm fine Em,' Sirius assured the 35-year-old woman whom looked at him unsurely.

'Well there's no use just standing there, Moody is waiting for you to report,' she said briskly, trusting Sirius to tell her if something was truly bothering him.

She led the way into the house and through to the study at the back of the cottage. After seeing Sirius through the door she said gently but firmly, 'I'm going to put the kettle on. You look like you could do with a good cup of tea. It will be waiting for you when you get back.'

Without waiting for any confirmation Emmeline left and wandered away towards the kitchen, leaving Sirius standing in the doorway to the study. Shaking his head at the woman's determined attitude Sirius entered the room.

Walking over to the large fireplace he scooped up a handful of Floo powder and stepped onto the empty grate, dropping the powder and saying clearly, 'Order of the Phoenix Headquarters, France.'

He was sucked into the Floo network and was surrounded briefly by swirling colours as fireplaces rushed past him.

The cottage at Godric's Hollow was one of a few safe houses scattered throughout Britain, but it was the only one that had a direct and isolated link to the Headquarters in France. Emmeline lived here maintaining the cottage and acting as a sort of go-between for the members operating in France and the members working undercover in Britain in the Dark Lord's society- such as Sirius.

The woman was a half-blood with a pureblood mother and a Muggleborn father and worked at the Ministry like Sirius. She was never discovered as a member of the Order after Voldemort won and was an ideal person to live here at Lily and James Potter's old cottage and monitor the Order members working in Britain.
Sirius jerked as he reached the desired fireplace and stumbled out into the atrium of the Headquarters, righting himself and brushing soot off of his clothes. The reception chamber was quite beautiful with a vaulted ceiling and wooden panelling.

Sirius took a moment to appreciate the elegant atrium before a flash of colour alerted him that he was not alone in the reception hall.

Remus Lupin leaned casually against a pillar, a leather tome open in his hands. He wore comfortable black slacks and a slightly unbuttoned white shirt, the sleeves rolled up out of the way. His golden-brown hair was shaggy from lack of a haircut but it seemed to suit his appearance, framing his tanned face and giving him an untamed look. His bright blue eyes were now fixed on his best friend and a smile emerged on his face revealing white teeth with slightly sharper canines than was normal.

The man slipped the book into a bookcase behind him and approached Sirius who met him halfway. After exchanging a heartfelt hug the two men drew away and seemed to study each other. This was the first time they had laid eyes on the other for around three years, both always busy with duties. Sirius noted that the tired expression and early wrinkles had faded from the face of his old friend. He knew it was because the man had finally accepted the wolf within him and was no longer taking the wolfsbane potion at the full moon.

Remus noted the stressed look around Sirius’ eyes and sighed inwardly, missing the open and cheerful attitude Sirius usually had. The pureblood had been struggling to fix the recent issue within the Order.

It was common news that Hestia Jones had been captured a few days previously and had been executed for spying, all due to Severus Snape, a man both hated and grudgingly respected in the Order.

It was believed the woman had been tortured before her death however the oaths all members took upon being inducted spared her from betraying her friends and colleagues. The result of her tragic demise meant that there was now no longer a spy within the Department of Mysteries where the witch had been working undercover.

'Moody is waiting for your report,' Remus said eventually, breaking the silence.

'What? No hello? No good to see you?' Sirius asked playfully, a little bit of his old cheerfulness shining through.

Remus rolled his eyes but was inwardly pleased that the old Sirius wasn't completely gone from existence. 'Come on Padfoot,' he said and left the room.

Sirius flinched slightly at being called by that name, remembering a time when four mischievous teenage boys had been friends. That was before the traitorous rat Peter defected to the Death Eaters and James had been killed.

Now it was just him and Moony, Peter didn't count.

His old friend took him through the Headquarters, which was a lovely chateau in southern France, surrounded by thick forest and far away from civilisation.

Remus was the alpha of a pack of rebel werewolves whom had escaped Britain after new laws were passed claiming that any werewolf that did not swear allegiance to Fenrir Greyback, would be considered 'rogue' and therefore forfeited their right to life.

Many French werewolves had heard of the pack in the south of their country and had come to join,
expanding Remus' followers. The forest surrounding the chateau was home to the werewolf pack that lived deep within the woods in a small but pleasant colony of houses. Wards were placed up during the full moon when the werewolves turned wild.

As Sirius and Remus walked through the chateau they passed a few Order members whom greeted the two men with strained smiles. The entire mood in the building was sombre after the news of Hestia's capture and execution had reached the ears of the members.

At last the duo reached Moody's office and before either could knock the door swung open, obviously the man's magical eye spotting them through the wood. They entered the office, which was covered with maps of Britain, marked with glowing magical dots. A massive desk took up a large space in the room, also covered with maps and live figurines, which shifted to reflect the movements of Death Eaters and Order members alike.

Alastor Moody sat at the desk, magical eye fixed on the two men and his beady brown human eye fixed on the moving map in front of him, tracking certain figurines. It was rather unnerving.

'You're late, Black,' he growled, finally fixing both eyes on the pureblood.

'My apologies,' Sirius said, smoothly.

Moody's human eye narrowed and he barked out abruptly, 'I don't have all day! Report!'

Before Sirius could open his mouth to give his report to the grizzly man, the door swung open behind them and Minerva McGonagall swept into the room with a great deal of grace for a woman of her years.

She surveyed her two ex-students with a cool, steely gaze and watching as they gave her respectful nods. The woman had become the leader of the Order after Dumbledore's demise and it was her quick thinking that had allowed so many members to survive. She had ordered the evacuation to France where they had some connections and friends, ensuring as many Order members as possible could be withdrawn. Together with Moody as her tactician adviser and Kingsley Shacklebolt as her representative within the French Ministry, the trio made a formidable team.

'I have our specialist spy prepared for the Tri-Wizard Tournament,' McGonagall said, straight to the point as usual.

It had been announced, quite late, that Hogwarts would be hosting the Tri-Wizard Tournament this year between the old school itself, Beaxbatons and Durmstrang. The Order was using the influx of foreigners to Britain to witness the historic event as a way to smuggle in more spies.

However there was one spy in particular that would be heavily involved in the Tournament and that person was the one McGonagall was referring to.

'Come on in Ms Delacour,' McGonagall said directing her attention outside of the office.

A beautiful female entered with long silvery blonde hair, flawless porcelain skin, cornflower blue eyes and a trim figure. She looked about nineteen or twenty-years-old and Remus could detect with his own creature senses, faint traces of Veela inheritance on the young woman.

'This is Fleur Delacour, the youngest French ambassador in government. She has been selected to attend the Tri-Wizard Tournament with the Beaxbatons party. Her father, Monsieur Delacour, happens to be a supporter of the Light and of our cause,' McGonagall explained as the three men in the room scrutinised the carefully structured mask of the young woman.
'It is an 'onour to meet you all,' she said in pleasantly accented English.

McGonagall then fixed the men in the room with her strong gaze and continued firmly, 'Ms Delacour here is going to be the key to rescuing our trapped members…and Harry Potter.'

Sirius and Remus' heads snapped up at that, staring at the woman intently, eager to hear the plan that would free their best friend's son and to size up the person that was being entrusted with the crucial mission.

Fleur met their stares evenly and, having been briefed on the two male's relationship to the Courtesan Harry Potter, spoke to them. 'I will use every skill I possess to save zis, 'Arry Potter. 'E will be free by June next year. On my own 'onour Monsieur's.'

Lord Voldemort absently dismissed Lucius, whom was still trembling with the after effects of a well-placed *Crucio*, his negotiation efforts with the French Ministry sadly lacking. Months of talks with the French Minister for magic, Monsieur Valcroix, had yielded no result. The man was sheltering the remnants of the Order of the Phoenix and a pack of rogue werewolves and refused to turn them over to face justice.

Voldemort hoped that the coming Tri-Wizard Tournament would go towards fostering a better relationship with France and his most trusted Death Eaters were already preparing to convince the French officials representing their Ministry over to their side.

Once Lucius had given a shaky bow and had hastily left the room, wrapping his shredded pride around him, Voldemort had stayed in the meeting chamber. His fingers tapped a rhythm on the arms of his throne-like chair as he formulated plans to eradicate the last members of Dumbledore's thrice-cursed organisation. The old coot still managed to affect him even in death.

Growling to himself, Dumbledore having always managed to make him loose his cool, Lord Voldemort pulled a small mirror from his pocket. With a quick tap of his yew wand the glass rippled and then cleared to reveal his pupil sitting on his bed reading one of his required books.

The boy looked pale and tired, sickly one would say. The strain of losing his magic, if only temporarily, was definitely taking its toll.

But the boy's punishment would only last until tomorrow, and then Voldemort intended to restore his magic to him. The past two days had been surprisingly tedious with only reports to complete and meetings to attend.

Voldemort had found himself watching his pupil with his special scrying tool more and more as the days of his absence stretched on. To his consternation he had discovered a fascination with watching the teenager sleep.

Such pure innocence on one's face was an unusual sight for the Dark Lord and as he no longer required sleep or the consumption of liquids and solids he had long periods of time where there was nothing to do but spy on his pupil.

He planned to send Harry off to Hogwarts on Tuesday in five nights time, due to the rapid and astonishing progress the boy was making. He was more than ready enough to tackle sixth year, but Voldemort felt a great deal of consternation with the realisation that he was rather loath to send the boy off.

Perhaps he could request his pupil return to the Citadel on weekends…
No. He would not give into this steadily growing obsession with the boy. Harry would stay at Hogwarts and return for the Yuletide holidays.

An unusual response in his chest blossomed and Voldemort scowled, absently rubbing his pale fingers over the spot trying to make sense of the…feeling. He was confused and there was nothing the Dark Lord hated more than not being able to make sense of something. That, and Albus Dumbledore and his pathetic followers.

Voldemort was distracted by the arrival of his beloved familiar, Nagini, whom contained a portion of his precious soul. The beautiful snake reached the foot of his throne and travelled up to languidly cover his body, squeezing his shoulders affectionately with her coils.

'What iss on your mind, Masster?' she questioned curiously, resting her head over his heart, flicking her forked tongue out to taste his emotions.

'Nothing to concern you, beloved,' Voldemort replied, easily slipping into Parseltongue.

'Who iss the hatchling?' she asked suddenly, perceptive eyes peering at the enchanted mirror in her Master's hand.

The Dark Lord cancelled the spell on the mirror and watched as the surface rippled and faded, leaving behind nothing. He tucked it away in a pocket and stroked Nagini's smooth scales, responding to her question by saying, 'He iss my pupil. I sspoke about him to you remember, beloved? He wass not to be eaten.'

Nagini gave a hiss of remembrance and tilted her head to one side before saying slyly, 'He iss a very pretty hatchling.'

The Dark Lord let out a small surprised chuckle, only ever heard by his serpent and never his followers. 'That he iss, my beloved. That he iss.'

Chapter End Notes

Author Note: I know originally Voldemort created Nagini as a necessity when he was a bodiless spirit after his Killing Curse rebounded on him but in my fic he has made her into a Horcrux to create seven perfect pieces of his soul (including the portion inside of himself.) I just wanted to clear that up in case someone brings it up in a review.
Chapter Eight

In a world where the Dark Lord won, ten year old Harry Potter is part of the servile caste, the lowest caste in the new society. Destined for the life of a Courtesan, Harry is resigned to his fate. But it seems his unusual gifts have drawn the attention of the Dark Lord and Harry finds himself becoming so much more than just another war-orphan of the new regime. Eventual LV/HP.

Chapter Eight

The Citadel

1996

The three days Harry suffered without his magic, was some of the worst in his life so far. He was constantly tired and lethargic, his appetite non-existent and his mood dark. The only thing that kept him from going completely insane was the knowledge that at the end of his punishment his magic would be returned to him.

He threw himself into his studies, reading through each of the tomes his teacher had given him to learn from and studying the magical theory to prepare him for his Hogwarts schooling. Even with his powerful and mature magical core he still lacked the experience and skill other students in his year would possess. However he had a quick mind and was able to learn at astonishing leaps and bounds to build a strong foundation for his magic.

It didn't escape Harry's notice that all dangerous implements had disappeared from his bedroom and his en-suite bathroom, as though Lord Voldemort thought he would consider self-harm to escape the pain of losing his power. Harry found himself offended that the Dark Lord had taken such measures, because even though Harry knew life could get terrible, there was too much for him to live for.

During his isolation Harry had plenty of time to ponder about Sirius Black and what made organising a secret meeting with him so criminal to warrant this type of punishment. Harry realised he needed to speak with someone who would not only hold the answers to his questions but also not report back to Lord Voldemort.

The longer Harry thought, the clearer things became for him, and he knew just whom he would speak to for answers.

The Menials.

He knew the Citadel had a small army of the Serviles but they worked covertly and quietly so as not to draw attention to themselves. Harry had caught glimpses of them, but whenever he drew near they would disappear into various secret passages or servant stairs.

As soon as he was released from his rooms and given back his magic then Harry was determined to hunt down the Menials and get some answers from them. Harry remembered his own time as a
Menial and he knew how people of the upper classes tended to talk freely in front of the Serviles, not believing they would dare repeat what they had inadvertently overhead.

Friday afternoon found Harry sitting on his bed impatiently, his books stacked neatly beside him and his wand strapped to his wrist, lacking its familiar pleasant tingle due to Harry's absence of power. He felt pale and shaky but there was a fire burning in his chest as the time of his magic's return drew ever nearer.

When the wards around his door broke down and it opened noiselessly, Harry expected his contractor to be waiting on the other side. Instead there was only an empty hallway and the Dark Lord nowhere in sight.

Confused and hesitant, Harry picked up his books and approached the open door, greedily taking in the sight of the stone wall opposite, the first new sight of his in three days. Taking a deep breath Harry gingerly placed his foot outside of his room and paused to see if this invoked any harsh repercussions.

Nothing happened, and so Harry walked outside of his bedroom, readjusting the books in his arms as he did so.

Making up his mind, Harry started walking toward the training room where he had been practicing his magic with the guidance of the Dark Lord. He assumed his contractor would be waiting for him there. It was just like Lord Voldemort to imperiously open his door and expect him to come and find him to have his magic returned, like some dog coming back to its master, pleading for a treat.

Sighing in annoyance, Harry wandered through the corridors of the Citadel ignoring anyone he happened to come across. The books in his arms were beginning to become unbearably heavy as he finally came to the wooden doors leading to the training room.

Harry felt fevered with the physical effort after his time doing nothing but lounging on his bed and studying. Thankfully, the doors swung open at his arrival and Harry entered the cavernous room, placing his burden on the small wooden table that stood by the door.

Glancing around he noted Lord Voldemort, as dashing as ever, sitting calmly on the throne-like chair placed in the training room and watching him with an unreadable expression on his attractive face.

Harry approached the throne and bowed deeply in respect to his contractor and the ruler of wizarding Britain and rose slowly, keeping his head lowered in submission as a show of apology for his past transgressions.

The silence was thick in the room and with his head lowered and his neck bared Harry felt awfully exposed and vulnerable. Combined with his lack of magic Harry had never felt at the mercy of another as he did now, not even when he was contracted to Rabastan and had, had no choice but to please him.

When cool fingers touched his chin Harry stiffened as he realised Lord Voldemort had soundlessly risen from his throne and come to stand before him. Those beautiful, elegant fingers nudged his chin up and Harry lifted his head, keeping his emerald eyes lowered so as not to meet the intense crimson gaze of his contractor.

'Look at me, Harry,' the Dark Lord commanded, his silky voice with that barely noticeable hiss causing the sixteen-year-old to shiver.

Harry reluctantly obeyed and met his contractor's eyes staring deeply into the red orbs before him.
and trying to read the expression in them. For a few moments no sound breached their perfect world of ruby and emerald intensity.

Then the moment was over when Lord Voldemort released Harry’s chin and stepped away, satisfaction on his face. Harry found himself leaning towards the Dark Lord as though magnetically drawn to him. He caught himself before he took a step forward and wondered what that had all been about. He didn’t have to wait long for an explanation.

’I have scoured your thoughts and memories and have concluded that you have learnt your lesson and will not pursue Sirius Black again. However,’ here the Dark Lord paused and bored those dangerous eyes into his own green ones once more, ’if you should choose to hunt for information about the man, I will not stop you, but I ask that you remember in all your fifteen years as a Servile, did the man come to look for you even once?’

Harry gaped at the Dark Lord and thought about his words. He was shocked that the man possessed the ability to read his mind and Harry was suddenly more nervous of his contractor than before. There would be no hiding his thoughts from the wizard, no privacy in his own head.

Then he considered the knowledge that his contractor would not stop him from visiting the Menials and looking for information on Sirius Black. He supposed it was too much to ask the Dark Lord to give him any answers. No, Lord Voldemort seemed the sort of person that would never willingly give up information to someone. He would make Harry work to find answers.

Lastly Harry thought about what his contractor had said about Sirius Black and realised what he said held much truth. Where had his supposed godfather been when he slaved away at Hogwarts? Where had he been when he had been chosen as a Courtesan and sent off the Aphrodite’s House of Pleasure? Where had he been when Rabastan Lestrange had bought him? Where had he been when Harry had lost his virginity and freedom to a man he didn't love?

It was this last thought that made the slow-building anger in Harry disappear momentarily to be replaced by overwhelming sadness. He was always wanted to give his virginity to someone special, someone who had won his heart. He had wanted to make love with someone who truly cared about him and whom he cared about in return.

So lost in his memories Harry failed to notice the expression on Lord Voldemort's usually blank face. There was anger on his features as he listened and watched his pupil's thoughts and memories of Rabastan Lestrange. And in his eyes was a powerful, burning jealousy, the likes of which he had never experienced.

What had Tom Marvolo Riddle ever had to be jealous of? Yes, he had been a supposed orphan, but from his first day at Hogwarts he had known he was above his peers. He had intelligence, power, charisma and good looks combined with a healthy abundance of ambition.

But now, as he flickered through Harry Potter's mind and saw the memories of his time with his ex-contractor Voldemort felt a familiar urge that he got when he desired to possess something. He had felt it when he had seen Slytherin’s locket and Hufflepuff’s cup in Hephzibah Smith’s possession, had felt it as he watched Gellert Grindelwald spur his followers into a frenzy at a meeting of Dark supporters and he had felt it when he had first laid eyes on the treasure trove of information in the secret library within the Chamber of Secrets at Hogwarts.

He desired Harry Potter.

Rather than the knowledge disgusting him, Lord Voldemort simply analysed this new revelation with a cool head. He had a great deal of self-control, enough so that he wouldn't fall prey to unwanted
feelings when in the boy's presence. He also noted that the boy was completely under his power and already technically in a position to satiate the Dark Lord's desires.

Then why did the thought of taking the boy, making him truly his Courtesan, not appeal to him?

It wasn't that the thought of the taking itself that wasn't attractive, quite the contrary in fact. If Harry was in a position to please him, at his mercy and inspired in him such novel feelings of jealousy and desire then why shouldn't he take advantage of that?

It was with fleeting shock that the Dark Lord realised the true reason why he didn't wish to make his pupil his Courtesan, to force him into that position.

He wanted the boy to offer himself to him. He wanted to boy to come to him because he wanted to, not because he had to.

How strange.

Pushing aside all musings about his desire for his beautiful pupil Voldemort considered the issue of Sirius Black. He was satisfied now that Harry felt anger and hurt towards the ex-Order member and wouldn't seek him out.

Watching the boy, whom was still lost in thoughts and memories, Voldemort decided to honour his strange whim of waiting for the boy to give himself to him. His many years of living and his iron control meant that he was content to wait and fulfil the novel feeling of wanting a person in this way.

Though not forever.

If his pupil took too long to come to him then he would claim the boy himself.

Content with that promise, that he wouldn't completely fall prey to his desires, Lord Voldemort drew his pupil's attention to himself by pulling out his wand and placing it at the base of his collar.

Hopeful emerald eyes burned into him and with a smirk-like curl to his lips, the Dark Lord cancelled the spell on his pupil's collar that blocked his connection to his magic.

The force of his magic returning drove Harry to his knees and gasping with strength of the magic surging through him. He felt like laughing and crying at the same time, felt like dancing for joy and screaming out his happiness for the world to hear.

His magic was back and he was happy at last.

Returning to his throne Lord Voldemort sat down elegantly and observed as his pupil staggered upright, a goofy grin on his face. The Dark Lord likened it to a face one would wear in post-orgasmic bliss and had to hurriedly bury the feeling of lust this contemplation invoked in him.

'Thank you My Lord,' Harry whispered.

'I will now review your studying over the past three days,' the Dark Lord said calmly, ignoring his pupil's thanks in his usual way.

Harry straightened as much as he could, standing before his contractor and teacher, scrambling to collect his thoughts and remember all he had learnt.

'Tell me, what is the correct wand movement for…’
Later that same day, Harry descended into the bowels of the Citadel, a mental argument going on in his head as he approached where he assumed the Menial quarters were located. He had decided after much thought to seek information on the mysterious Sirius Black even after the upsetting revelation that the man had done nothing to assist him in his years of servitude.

Regardless of his hurt he still desired knowledge on his potential godfather and perhaps a chance to avoid a similar punishment from his contractor in the future. Harry would do anything to avoid having his magic removed again.

The corridors he was moving through were rapidly becoming less well lit, the flickering torches casting dubious light in the gloomy lower levels. It was a far cry from the cheery halls of the Hogwarts Menial quarters.

As Harry rounded a corner he heard a frightened squeak and looked around sharply in time to spot a mop of sandy blonde hair flitting behind a moth-bitten tapestry. Feeling rather lost in this unfamiliar part of the Citadel and having his chance at a conversation with a Menial rapidly disappearing, Harry made the decision to give chase.

'Hey, wait up!' Harry called and flung the tapestry aside, finding a hidden passageway. A set of stone steps led up into murky darkness. He could see the sandy-haired Menial about half way up and the other Servile hesitated at Harry's voice, glancing back uncertainly.

In the light of a nearby torch Harry noted the Menial was male, around thirteen years old, with unkempt sandy blonde hair and wide, frightened brown eyes. He seemed uncertain about how to react to someone coming after him; obviously he was used to having to stay out of sight. Harry doubted anyone had ever actively followed him and asked to talk.

'H-how can I h-help you, My Lord?' he asked in a low, stammering voice, one hand pressed firmly to the stone wall beside him as though drawing strength from the solid surface.

'I am no Lord,' Harry said with a sad sort of smile, moving into the light of a torch so the Menial boy could see the glimmer of silver around his throat.

He received a gasp, indicating the young boy had seen his Courtesan collar. Suddenly feeling awkward, Harry moved back into shadow and cast about desperately as to what to say. He had, had it all planned out what he would ask but now that he was confronted with a possible informant he was at a loss.

'You're Harry Potter,' the other boy's voice came softly, jerking Harry out of his frazzled thoughts.

'How do you know that?' Harry asked, genuinely curiously.

Seemingly gaining courage the younger boy slowly walked back down the stone steps until he was standing a couple of feet away from Harry.

'Everyone knows who you are. You are the first Courtesan the Master has ever taken. You are special,' he gushed and Harry got the distinct impression that the boy was a chatter-box once he got over his initial fear.

'My name's Dennis, Dennis Creevey,' the boy continued with a small smile, sticking out his hand.

Blinking at the abrupt introduction, Harry took the hand proffered and shook it gingerly. He was relieved the boy was content to talk and fill in the silence that would have otherwise lingered.

Harry was at a loss as to how to talk with someone younger than himself after so long without
contact besides Rabastan and Lord Voldemort.

'So what are you doing down here?' Dennis asked inquisitively.

Clearing his throat Harry said, 'I've come here looking for people with information about…'

Harry trailed off as Dennis' face became closed and the fear re-entered his brown eyes once more. Harry felt like banging his head against the stone wall next to him. He shouldn't have phrased his statement that way. He himself remembered being raised with the firm teaching to never trust anyone who came asking for information. Menials ended up being brutally tortured if their contractors thought they knew something they shouldn't. Dennis must think that Harry had come at the bidding of Lord Voldemort, as ridiculous as it seemed. But one couldn't always be sure.

'I have the freedom to be here. I just want to learn more about a man who might be a link to my past,' Harry said urgently, his green eyes burning into Dennis and imploring the boy not to flee and leave him lost in the labyrinthine corridors beneath the Citadel.

Dennis' demeanour changed and a sympathetic and knowing look came into his eyes. 'Come on then, I'll take you to my brother. He'll be able to help you better than I could.'

That was how Harry found himself following Dennis even deeper into the bowels of the Citadel, wondering how on earth the boy knew how to navigate the confusing twists and turns. While they walked towards where Harry assumed the Menial quarters were, Dennis chattered on about his life and his brother whom he was taking Harry to see. He appeared to idolise the older boy, made clear by the light he painted him in.

Dennis and his brother, Colin, were both Muggleborns and had been discovered five years ago when Colin had turned ten and began causing accidental magic. When the officials had come to collect the boy they had discovered his younger eight-year-old brother also possessed magic, a rarity for Muggleborn families. Both children had been brought to the Citadel and had been here ever since, both being picked to continue Menial work after their thirteenth birthdays.

Dennis' stream of talk was cut off as they reached a wooden door. He turned back to Harry whom had been mostly silent during the boy's lengthy chatter. 'This door leads to one of the kitchens. My brother and I work in this particular one along with some other younger Menials.'

Dennis turned back to the door and pushed it open, leading the way into the better-lighted room with Harry close on his heels. All conversation in the room halted when the people inside caught sight of a stranger.

Three sets of eyes slid down to the silver collar around Harry's neck and there was an almost perceptible slackening of bodies. Harry took stock of the three teenagers in the room, deducing their ages. There was a tall boy with floppy black hair and teal blue eyes who looked about Harry's age and a plumb, rosy-cheeked girl who also seemed about the same age. The third occupant of the kitchen looked like an older version of Dennis so Harry assumed this was Colin.

'This is Harry Potter,' Dennis said in a rush. 'He's come looking for some answers about a man who is a possible link to his past.'

There was a tense pause before Colin stepped forward and held out his hand like his younger brother had. 'Hello, my name is Colin Creevey, Dennis' older brother.

Harry shook the hand and glanced at the other two, nameless teens. They exchanged a glance before the boy stepped forward, taking charge.
He didn't offer Harry a hand to shake but he wasn't openly hostile at least. 'I'm Justin Finch-Fletchley. This is Hannah Abbot,' he said gesturing to his female companion who gave Harry a timid smile, twisting a lock of honey blonde hair in her fingers nervously.

'You said you wanted information?' the boy prodded, folding his arms over his chest defensively.

'I was wondering if any of you knew about a man named Sirius Black?' Harry asked tentatively, watching their faces closely for a reaction.

Hannah paled slightly and pressed a hand to her mouth whilst Justin tightened his arms over his chest, eyes glowering at Harry. Dennis moved closer to his brother as though looking for protection and Colin himself gave a nervous twitch.

'Why do you ask about him?' Justin spat out, shuffling closer to the shorter girl as though wanting to shield her. She was visibly trembling and her eyes darted around the kitchen as though looking for an escape.

'I met him a few days ago,' Harry said desperately. 'He claimed to have something to do with my past. All I want to know is what he did before the Dark Lord took over.'

Justin sighed and pressed a hand to his temple as though there was a headache forming. 'Fine. I suppose it wouldn't hurt to tell you what's already common knowledge. We were just worried that you are here to spy…for the higher ups.'

Harry nodded in understanding and waited for Justin, the clear leader of this little band of Menials, to collect his thoughts. 'I'm sure you're familiar with the Order of the Phoenix, unless you've been living under a rock?' Justin asked sarcastically.

Harry jerked his head impatiently, wanting answers.

'Well he was a member- an important one too. He played a large role in the rebellions against the Dark Lord in the years of war.'

Harry tried to process this all but it didn't make sense. Why would the Dark Lord let a member of the Order live on, in a life of privilege it seemed? Harry voiced his thoughts and it was Hannah who answered, surprisingly enough.

'He's watched constantly, hated and sneered at by the purebloods. It's hardly a luxurious life, regardless of his wealth and standing,' she explained softly, eyes not meeting Harry's.

Harry questioned the Menials for a little while longer, wanting to collect every scrap of knowledge he could about the man. When he was finally satisfied he bid the four teenagers goodbye, knowing there would be dinner waiting for him in his rooms.

He was stopped by Dennis who shyly invited him to come back if he wanted, just to talk perhaps. Touched by the younger boy's offer Harry regretfully told him that he was leaving for Hogwarts very soon, possibly in the next week, but he would be glad to come visit him when he came back to the Citadel for the winter holidays. Dennis had stared at Harry in wide-eyed shock at that admission and Harry realised that news of his enrollment must have been mostly kept hushed up.

After saying his final farewells Harry moved back into the upper levels, following Colin's directions and navigating the twisting corridors. He pondered his impending arrival at Hogwarts with a great deal of nervousness.

He was concerned how the other students would treat him. Awfully no doubt. There was also the
issue of his education; whilst Harry was gradually becoming a skilled wizard he still wished he had more time to train with his contractor. He found he was anxious he wouldn't do his contractor proud. Finally there was the issue of Rabastan Lestrange. He would be having one lesson a week with the man and possibly be seeing him around the school regularly.

Swallowing determinedly Harry pushed his fear and doubts down and decided that whatever might be thrown at him, he would rise about it all and make the Dark Lord proud.
Chapter Nine

Chapter Summary

In a world where the Dark Lord won, ten year old Harry Potter is part of the servile caste, the lowest caste in the new society. Destined for the life of a Courtesan, Harry is resigned to his fate. But it seems his unusual gifts have drawn the attention of the Dark Lord and Harry finds himself becoming so much more than just another war-orphan of the new regime. Eventual LV/HP.

Chapter Nine

The Citadel – Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry

1996

On Sunday morning, two nights after his punishment and his meeting with the Menials, Harry made his way back to his chambers. His arms were straining under the weight of a hefty pile of books and he had his chin resting on top of the stack peering over his burden to see where he was going. The sight of the beautiful Courtesan boy roaming the halls with an armful of texts was no longer an uncommon sight in the Citadel.

Harry had discovered he was to travel by Floo to Hogwarts on Tuesday morning and given that day to settle in and meet his year-mates. His first day of classes would begin on Wednesday and it was because of this that Harry was being given so many books to read. Lord Voldemort wished to ensure Harry would not only perform competently but hopefully excel beyond his peers.

As the Courtesan turned into an open courtyard and moved into the brilliant light glowing down from above, he was momentarily blinded. As a result, when he came across a loose tile that jutted out of the ground he stubbed his toe and tipped forward rather violently, books spilling out of his arms. With an undignified squeak, that he would later viciously deny ever emitting, Harry landed heavily on the tiles and rested there with his cheeks flaming. Praying that there was no one taking advantage of the nice day to rest in the courtyard and witness his embarrassing fall, Harry paused on the ground to rub his wrist, determining if it was sprained or not. Satisfied it was fine he lifted his head and squinted in the warm sunlight.

’Harry?’ the soft, almost reverent voice asked.

The boy in question cringed, realising he wasn't alone after all before his mind caught up with him as he recognised the smooth voice. Sure enough when he shaded his hand over his eyes, he made out the form of Angelina Johnson sitting on one of the courtyard benches wearing the green tunic and silver sash of a Courtesan, her collar gleaming against her dark skin.

Suddenly she laughed and stood up moving fluidly to his side and helping him up, dragging him into a tight embrace as she did so. Harry was momentarily exasperated to discover she had grown an inch since he had last seen her. Then his joy at seeing a familiar face won over his irritation and he returned the hug in earnest.
She pulled away, staring at him at arms length, scrutinising his face almost obsessively as though searching for signs of depression or abuse. Apparently pleased with what she saw in his face she grinned, white teeth flashing.

'Still haven't grown I see Harry,' she teased him playfully.

'It's wonderful to see you too, Angel,' he drawled back. Eager to change the subject of his condition of being vertically challenged, Harry asked her, 'Not that I'm not ecstatic to see you, but what are you doing here?'

Angelina bent down first to help him pick up his books and Harry watched enviously as she gathered them in her arms with ease, the weight not bothering her at all.

'Barty- that's my contractor, decided to bring me with him to one of his meetings. He's promised to show me around the Citadel.' Harry couldn't help but notice the fond look in Angelina's eyes and he wondered if she liked her contractor beyond their bought relationship.

'You seem quite familiar with him,' Harry began tentatively and watched intently as Angelina looked slightly embarrassed.

'He is kind to me and gives me many liberties that I know other Courtesans would never enjoy,' she responded softly. Suddenly a flirtatious and sultry look entered the older girl's eyes and she added, 'It also helps that he is brilliant in bed.'

Harry could only splutter incomprehensibly, cheeks flaming as Angelina laughed throatily, her eyes gleaming with mirth.

'Oh Harry,' she murmured through her peals of laughter. 'Still so pure and innocent against all odds.'

Grumbling under his breath, still aware of the blush staining his pale cheeks, Harry grabbed the pile of books out of Angelina's arms, supressing a grunt at the weight he now carried. Marching over to the bench his friend had recently vacated, Harry took a seat and placed the books beside him, patting the spare space to his other side. He didn't know how long Bartemius' meeting would last, but he wanted to spend every second with his old friend.

Angelina moved with the grace of a trained professional and practically draped herself over the stone bench next to the smaller male. Harry knew what it was about Angelina that drew one of the first caste Death Eaters to her. There was a sort of untamed beauty about her that Harry was relieved to note hadn't been restrained or dimmed through the years of her contract.

Angelina suddenly picked up one of his books, eyes flicking over the title and delicate brows rising in surprise at the words she found there.

'Advanced Charms? Harry why would you be reading a book like this?' she asked him in confusion.

Sighing wearily, knowing Angelina wouldn't be satisfied with a vague answer, Harry launched into an explanation. He admitted to being able to perform wandless magic as well as sensing and seeing magic in others and around him. Glossing over his meeting with the Dark Lord and the subsequent trip to Diagon Alley, Harry pulled up the left sleeve of his black robes and revealed his holly wand strapped to the underside of his wrist.

Angelia's golden eyes went round with shock, struck dumb at the sight of a Courtesan possessing a wand. There was also a glimmer of hurt in her amber orbs at the realisation that the boy she saw as a brother had kept his wandless magic a secret from her.
Harry knew instinctively where the hurt in his friend's eyes originated from and was quick to place his slender hands over Angelina's own ones. 'Angel I know I should have told you about my powers, but I rarely used them. They weren't an important part of my life while I was living at Aphrodite's. I'm sorry,' Harry offered finally.

Angelina blinked and a soft smile appeared on her face. She gently grabbed Harry's chin so she could look into his guilty emerald eyes and said firmly, 'No Harry, you were right to not tell me. Even though I would keep any secret of yours safe with my life, the less people who knew about your powers, the better. There is nothing to apologise for because there is nothing to be forgiven.'

Relief blossomed over Harry's beautiful face and he graced the older girl with a warm smile and went on to inform her that he was receiving lessons from the Dark Lord and was to attend Hogwarts in a few days time.

He was half expecting jealousy or resentment from the other Courtesan but he should have known Angelina better than that. Joy spread across her features and she said softly, 'I always knew you were meant for better things Harry. The life of a Courtesan was never meant for you. You don't know how happy I am to hear you will be getting a magical education.'

'Thanks Angel,' Harry managed to murmur a little thickly around the sudden lump in his throat. Merlin, he had missed her so much.

Suddenly Angelina's eyes widened as though she had remembered something important. 'Harry, the reason why Barty was called here today was to finalise a plan involving Hogwarts and two other magical schools. I don't know much; only that it's some sort of tournament involving representatives or some such thing. If you are going to be attending Hogwarts then you could be involved in this competition.' A grave light entered her eyes and she said, 'It seems dangerous, whatever this tournament is. Barty spoke about past competitors dying. Promise me Harry, that you won't enter the tournament.'

Unable to look away from those piercing amber eyes Harry nodded in acquiescence and responded, 'Don't worry Angel, I have no intention of entering any life-threatening competitions. I just want finish my education and graduate.'

Satisfied that Harry would not consider putting his life in any sort of peril Angelina smiled and moved onto lighter discussions, bringing Harry up to date with Alicia and Katie whom were handling their lives quite well. Angelina saw them on occasion when Bartemius had business with their contractors and was able to exchange well wishes. Harry asked after Lavender whom he was ashamed to admit he had not thought of as often as he probably should have. Angelina had no news on the girl but admitted it was probably because someone Bartemius did not conduct business with had bought her contract.

Angelina then carefully breached the topic of the Dark Lord, having not seen any physical trauma on Harry but worried about any psychological or emotional suffering hiding behind Harry's apparently healthy façade.

Harry admitted freely that he did not warm Lord Voldemort's bed as most of the Wizarding world believed of the Dark Lord's first and only Courtesan. Angelina informed him that tales of his ethereal good looks had spread like wildfire and one of the most popular rumours currently circulating was that he was a Veela and had seduced the Dark Lord into his bed.

The two had laughed a bit at that, Harry scoffing at the thought of anyone being able to catch Lord Voldemort's eye in that way. His contractor was unflappable and untouchable, remaining aloof around the most attractive people that he interacted with.
They would have continued talking for hours more but the two old friends were interrupted by the arrival of Bartemius Crouch whom had come to reclaim his Courtesan. The sandy-haired man had been waiting in the shadows on the courtyard's edge, watching as his Lord's mysterious Courtesan and his own interacted happily with one another.

Realising the two would continue talking indeterminately he revealed himself and watched as Angelina rose to her feet and curtseyed slightly. Harry remained seated but gave a respectful nod to the first caste man. It had been established later on in Harry's stay at the Citadel that he would only have to rise and bow in his contractor's presence. He needed only to nod to the first and second caste and was able to avoid any pleasantries with the third caste altogether.

'Come Angel, I did promise you a tour of the Citadel,' the man said smoothly.

Harry's eyebrow quirked at hearing Angelina's nickname coming out of the Death Eater's mouth with a current of fondness underneath his words. Perhaps Angelina's feelings were reciprocated by the older man?

The girl in question hesitated, wanting to hug Harry goodbye seeing as she could possibly not see him for years and years. This could be the last time she was able to hold him. However she was unsure how her contractor would react to her hugging the smaller male. Then she caught Bartemius' eye and the man gave the slightest tilt of his head in Harry's direction. Bestowing a beaming smile to her contractor Angelina pulled Harry up to her level and engulfed him in a strong embrace.

Harry clung back, hoping that he would see her again soon even though he knew deep down the chances of that happening were slim. At last the two pulled apart and as Harry opened his mouth to say goodbye, Angelina placed her finger over his lips and murmured softly so only Harry could hear, 'Don't say goodbye Harry. That suggests that we might never see one another again. Instead say... say until we meet again.'

She removed her finger and Harry looked at her with softened green eyes. 'Very well Angel. Until we meet again.'

Hiding her trembling she gave her contractor a forced smile and left with him, not looking back at the forlorn figure standing in the sunlight.

It was not goodbye after all.

Lord Voldemort reclined behind his imperious desk in his private study, observing his pupil as the sixteen-year old fidgeted under his contractor's scrutiny. It was Tuesday morning and Harry had been summoned to the Dark Lord's study in order to use the fireplace, which had been temporarily connected to the Hogwarts' Floo system.

His trunk with his polished brass trimmings sat packed and waiting with a weightless charm cast upon it, done by himself. His snowy white owl sat unhappily in her cage giving the odd irritated hoot. Harry was dressed in the standard black robes bearing the Hogwarts crest that all the students wore and his wand was within easy reach. His silver Courtesan collar was still visible above the collar of the robes and Harry's fingers occasionally brushed the metal, as though concerned about what his year-mates would think when they saw it and knew its implications.

But the Dark Lord was confident that none would even dare torment or target the Dark Lord's property. Harry wore his sign at his throat and any attack on the teen would be construed as an attack on his own person. And, in the unthinkable occurrence of an assault on the beautiful male, Lord Voldemort was certain that Harry could handle himself. That did not mean he would not extract swift
and unmerciful vengeance on anyone that harmed his Harry. Because the boy was undoubtedly his.

As he unashamedly stared at the younger male he became increasingly curious as to what was lurking in his pupil's mind. He was an accomplished Legillimens, so skilled in fact that he was able to read a person's surface thoughts with only eye contact as an instigator. The longer he kept eye contact, the deeper he could delve into a mind. Using the proper Legilimency spell he could more thoroughly scour someone's mind but his unique ability to skim a person's current thinking patterns was a useful and prized gift.

Finally emerald and crimson met and the Dark Lord gleefully delved into the unsuspecting boy's mind picking up a strain of thought that involved himself.

…still staring at me. Merlin, he's handsome. I can't seem to make myself look away. Come on. Look away. Look. Away. Look-

And he was subsequently nudged out of Harry's mind as the boy scraped together the willpower to break eye contact. Smug at the boy's thoughts towards him, Lord Voldemort watched as Harry twitched as though wanting to take a step back but being unable to.

Surveying his Courtesan he wondered how he could get the boy to trust him more, to stop these subtle flinches. He would not be seeing Harry until the Yule holidays and he had no desire to have his sway over the smaller male fade in any way. The answer came to him and as much as it would interrupt his fun, it was one sure way to win Harry's devotion, perhaps once and for all.

'Harry, I have a proposition for you,' he all but purred, intently observing the shiver that ran over Harry's lithe body at his tone.

'What would it be, My Lord?' he managed to ask a little breathily.

'I think it's time you learnt how to Occlude your thoughts. There is currently an Occulemency master teaching at Hogwarts that would be able to give you lessons in the art at my behest.'

Harry's eyes went wide and Voldemort knew that the boy understood the trust that he was giving to him; offering him a way to protect the privacy of his mind and potentially hide things from his contractor.

'My Lord…you would allow me to have such lessons?' Harry asked disbelievingly.

'I trust you Harry and I am sure after your last…punishment…you would not be eager to have a repeat of it.' Voldemort allowed a hint of darkness to enter his tone and was satisfied when Harry swallowed heavily and nodded quickly.

'Yes I-I would like to have these lessons.'

Voldemort pulled a sheet of fresh parchment towards him and a quill and began to efficiently dictate an order to Harry's soon-to-be Occulemency teacher. Glancing over the message he folded it and pressed his signet ring bearing the same coat of arms that graced Harry's slender neck. With a flare of magic he sealed the letter shut with the mark clearly visible. Holding it out for Harry to approach and take it, he noticed that the boy hesitated before taking the missive.

'My Lord, if I might ask, whom is to be my teacher?'

Feeling black humour rising in him, all too aware of Harry's future tutor's dislike of the boy and what he represented Voldemort stated mildly, 'Headmaster Snape is to be your tutor, Harry.' Seeing a dawning horror in the boy's eyes Voldemort questioned, 'Is there an issue with this arrangement?'
Gritting his teeth Harry took the letter from his contractor's hand as though it was something vile, tucking it in his pocket as he managed to say, 'Not at all My Lord. I simply have some bad history with the headmaster.'

Bad history indeed. It was obvious the boy had no clue that the sour Potions Master had been tormented by his father and his friends in his schooling years and had fallen in love with his mother whom in turn had married his childhood bully. Voldemort only knew of this pitifully tedious tale after sifting through Severus' mind to determine where the man's loyalties lay.

'Very well. It is time you Flooed to Hogwarts. You will return the same way at the beginning of the Yuletide season.'

Harry pulled out his wand and tapped his trunk shrinking it to a pocket size, before picking it up and tucking it away. After taking his owl's cage in one hand he approached the fireplace and was about to reach for the Floo powder waiting on the mantelpiece when Lord Voldemort spoke up once more.

'There is no need for you to hide your wandless magic Harry while you are at Hogwarts. It is something to take pride in, not to hide.' The Dark Lord knew all too well that his Courtesan would probably attempt to fade into the background and avoid bringing any attention to himself. The Dark Lord did not understand this at all. Why would someone voluntarily hide their true potential? Wouldn't Harry leap at the chance to make connections and allies?

Harry turned around in time to see his contractor rise and move over to where he was standing by the empty grate. Voldemort saw the boy swallow nervously as he came closer but the Dark Lord noticed that the boy leaned in almost imperceptibly.

Pulling out his own wand Lord Voldemort leaned in and tapped his Courtesan's silver collar and allowed a tendril of wordless magic to embed itself in the warm metal. The teen stiffened as though thinking for one wild moment that he was having his magic taken away again.

But the Dark Lord's spell lurked harmlessly in the metal of the collar, waiting to be called into use. Harry had no idea what charm the Dark Lord had cast and as the stronger wizard had coated an anti-detection spell over the mysterious enchantment, he would not be able to explore what Lord Voldemort had done.

Knowing better than to ask what his contractor had done to his collar, Harry took a handful of Floo powder and stepped into the fireplace, throwing the dust down and stating clearly, 'Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry.'

Lord Voldemort made sure to lock eyes with Harry as the boy was taken away in a swirl of flames allowing some of his true emotions to come to the surface of his crimson eyes. By the sight of Harry's wide emerald orbs the younger male had seen a glimpse. The Dark Lord did have to leave his Courtesan with something to consider during his absence after all.

As Lord Voldemort reclaimed his seat he contemplated the enchantment he had cast upon Harry's collar and felt a surge of satisfaction. It was an old spell that he had dredged up, one that was once cast upon engagement rings or in this case, a silver collar.

The spell would alert the caster if the bearer of the enchanted object was touched sexually in any way whether that be a kiss or something more. This way, he would be alerted immediately if his Courtesan engaged in that sort of activity with someone that wasn't him.

Woe to the person that tried anything like that with what was his.
When Harry stumbled into the headmaster's office at Hogwarts he cast his eyes about nervously, praying that Snape was not there. Luckily, the man was taking a class it seemed because the room was empty of human life.

Harry allowed himself a moment of blissful joy that he was finally home at this place he had decided long ago he truly belonged. Then the recent memory of his contractor's eyes as he left by Floo assaulted him and he felt a blush creeping onto his face.

Harry wasn't sure what to think now about the Dark Lord. The raw lust and desire he had seen simmering in those ruby eyes had momentarily taken his breath away and for a brief moment the world had ceased to exist but for that one deadly man.

Forcibly pushing all thought of the man out of his head Harry vowed to think through it later. For now, he would need all his wits about him as he met his year-mates and tried to make a good impression despite his Courtesan status. That made Harry think of the mysterious enchantment that had been cast on his collar but that train of thought led to Lord Voldemort once more and Harry was forced to abandon all thought of it lest he think of those red eyes…

The sound of heavy footsteps tramping up the spiral staircase leading to the office snapped Harry out of his reverie and he faced the wooden door, half-fearing the arrival of Snape. Instead the door swung open to reveal a painfully familiar mop of red hair.

Harry saw a freckled face and a pair of startled blue eyes before he was running, his legs having a mind of their own. Awkwardly, still holding Hedwig's cage in his hand, Harry flung his arms around the taller boy.

Strong arms, honed from years of hard labour wrapped around his back and he was pulled away to face those wonderful blue eyes that were stubbornly holding back tears.

'It's good to see you mate,' Ronald Weasley ground out, determined not to let any tears loose.

'Ron…' Harry trailed off knowing that if he said any more he would probably end up crying in a completely unmanly like way.

'Welcome home,' the taller boy whispered.

Home.

Harry was home.
In a world where the Dark Lord won, ten year old Harry Potter is part of the servile caste, the lowest caste in the new society. Destined for the life of a Courtesan, Harry is resigned to his fate. But it seems his unusual gifts have drawn the attention of the Dark Lord and Harry finds himself becoming so much more than just another war-orphan of the new regime. Eventual LV/HP.

Chapter Ten

Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry

1996

After Harry had doggedly reigned in his turbulent emotions he had allowed Ron to lead the way from the headmaster's office, gazing around the familiar corridors and laying his eyes over the moving portraits he had walked past so many times in his childhood. His heart swelled a little bit to see the castle had not changed one bit, retaining the same image that he had harboured during his three year absence.

After his initial greeting, Ron seemed to be at a loss with what to say to the boy he had grown up with, casting numerous glances back at Harry, his blue eyes lingering on his foster brother's silver collar. He opened his mouth many times as though about to strike up a conversation but every time he allowed his jaw to shut.

Unable to handle the awkward and uncomfortable silence Harry jumped to fill in the blank space between them. He loved Ron like a brother and it hurt that the two of them couldn't find anything to say after so long separated.

'So...what's been happening while I've been...away,' Harry began tentatively, inwardly wincing at his hesitant tone. However seeing Ron's look of relief at being given a safe topic to talk about made up for it a bit.

'Not much really mate. I mean, the biggest thing that happened after you left was when Gin was picked as a Birther.' Ron's face tightened with fury and Harry noticed the clenching of his fists as the taller boy struggled to govern his anger.

Harry had already know the fifteen-year-old redhead had been sent to Damara House thanks to his communication with Hermione, but seeing the hurt and helpless ire on Ron's face just highlighted the terrible situation.

Casting about for some way to soothe his friend's mounting anger Harry quickly asked, 'How have everyone been back here? Are the twins still pranking?'

He gave a quiet sigh of relief when some of the tension drained out of Ron and the boy launched into a detailed and slightly envious description of the twins' elaborate and yet effective pranks on the
habitants of Hogwarts. The eighteen-year-olds were masters of avoiding blame for the many "unfortunate" mishaps that occurred around the school, taking particular delight in targeting the sour caretaker, Filch.

Despite the previous dark topic Harry found himself laughing at an account of the prank the twins had done a few months back, apparently having formulated some sort of sweet from stolen magical ingredients that caused the one whom ingested it to break out in hideous boils. Filch was the unlucky receiver of a box of these treats and had been covered in unsightly sores for a number of weeks.

As the two boys bonded once more over laughter and discussion of the moments Harry had missed while he was learning the ways of the Courtesan, they descended deeper into Hogwarts, past the old Slytherin dormitories and into the painfully familiar network of corridors in the deepest section of the castle.

As they turned a corner Harry only had time to hastily place Hedwig's cage on the ground before he was bowled over by the two redheaded menaces that he and Ron had been discussing only moments before. With twin cries of, 'Harry!' he was unceremoniously knocked to the ground with their combined weight and pinned with two grinning faces hovering above his own.

Ron watched on with amusement as his old friend was suffocated in a hug from each of his twin brothers. Eventually the raven-haired boy was let up, a little breathless after being nearly squeezed to death by Fred and George.

'It's great to see you both,' Harry said warmly, feeling his spirits lightening even further by merely being in the presence of the two boisterous pranksters. Then he added with a grin, 'I hear you've been keeping Hogwarts on its toes.'

He was rewarded with sly grins from the older boys whom then shared a meaningful glance with one another. Fred reached into his grey Menial tunic and appeared to touch something in his pocket as though checking it was still there. Harry hoped it wasn't a volatile prank lurking in there but he simply caught a flash of yellowed parchment and nothing more.

'Perhaps we'll show you the secret to our success later on Harry,' George promised, ignoring Ron's splutter of indignation. 'You'll be attending school after all and we always wanted an inside man.'

Throwing an arm each around Harry, with Fred grabbing Hedwig's cage, the twins escorted their foster-brother down the corridor towards the kitchen where the Weasley family and their extended adopted children worked.

Ron was still spluttering behind the trio, muttering something about prats not sharing their secrets to their success with their own little brother.

When they entered the kitchen the twins moved aside to let Harry be engulfed in a warm hug from the matriarch of the Weasley family whom clung to Harry like she was drowning and he was a piece of driftwood. But Harry was not complaining, pressing himself nearer to the closest person he had ever had to a mother and allowing some of his burdens to slide away.

When at last Molly Weasley pulled back she scrutinised his face much like Angelina had, searching for signs of abuse or depression. With softness in her warm brown eyes she brushed his black fringe back tenderly and scoured his features as though memorising every detail she saw there.

At last she proclaimed into the silence with a slightly tremulous smile, 'You're much too skinny, Harry dear,' and the Courtesan knew everything was the same, Mrs Weasley still being the protective mother hen.
Or at least almost the same. The woman had dark shadows under her eyes as though the combined loss of Harry, Hermione and Lavender then her own daughter by blood, Ginny, had drained away some of the life in her. There were tired lines on her face where there had only ever been supple skin and Harry noticed a few strands of silver in her hair.

'It's good to be home,' Harry murmured softly and was swept into another tight hug. At this rate his ribs would give out before the end of the day. And it was only morning!

After being forcibly sat down Harry watched in bemusement as Mrs Weasley bustled about the kitchen throwing together a meal for him, insisting that he couldn't leave so soon without her trying to fatten him up a bit more because he was apparently so frightfully skinny.

Ron, Fred and George had left sometime as he was being welcomed home by Mrs Weasley, obviously wanting to give Harry some privacy with his foster mother.

So engrossed in watching the familiar movements of the woman, he missed the pair of silvery blue eyes that stared unblinkingly at him from a seat in the corner of the room. Feeling goosebumps break out over the back of his neck Harry reached up to rub the skin, frowning slightly.

Casting his gaze around the kitchen, Harry's attention landed on an odd looking girl staring unflinchingly at him from a seat in the corner of the room. Feeling goosebumps break out over the back of his neck Harry reached up to rub the skin, frowning slightly.

Casting his gaze around the kitchen, Harry's attention landed on an odd looking girl staring unflinchingly at him. Her intense eyes were fixed on him unnervingly, a pale and pointed face framed by equally pale hair. The light blonde locks fell in an unempt and tangled mess to her mid-back. She looked a bit younger than him, perhaps around Ginny's age and Harry initially thought she was a new Menial. Then he saw the black robes with the Hogwarts crest and an un-collared neck and realised whoever this girl was, she was a student at the school.

Who was she?

Mrs Weasley seemed to realise Harry's attention had shifted and glanced up from where she was busily chopping vegetables.

'Ah I see you've spotted Luna,' she told Harry with a fond smile. Then she directed her focus on the strange girl and said, 'This is the boy I told you about dear, Harry Potter.'

Luna rose from her seat and wandered over to where Harry was sitting, plopping herself down beside him. She tucked a strand of blonde hair behind her ear and Harry noticed she was wearing radish shaped earrings of all things.

Distracted by her odd choice of ear jewellery, Harry almost missed the dreamy smile she gave him and the calm voice that stated, 'I'm Luna Lovegood.'

'Nice to meet you Luna,' Harry said politely and extended his hand for her to shake.

Luna stared down at the offered appendage but did not take it, a look of interest on her face as though she was staring at a specimen of some sort. Harry's cheeks flushed and he retracted his hand, looking over Luna's face to see if she had any malicious intent.

Instead she gave him another dreamy sort of smile and said in her voice, which carried a faint accent, 'It is nice to meet you too, Harry Potter.' Then she promptly focused on a crack, which ran along the ceiling and tilted her head to one side in a bird-like fashion as she contemplated it.

Completely and utterly at a loss with how to act around this odd girl Harry looked helplessly towards Mrs Weasley who gave him a rueful smile as though assuring him this was normal Luna behaviour.

Thankfully Neville and Dean chose that moment to enter and Harry was happily reunited with the
two boys from his childhood. Luna remained focused on the crack in the ceiling and Mrs Weasley was humming under her breath as she prepared his welcoming home meal creating cover for the question he wanted to ask. Taking the opportunity, Harry questioned Neville and Dean discreetly as to what Luna was doing in the Menial kitchens and why she was so…strange.

'It was about a year after you and the others left, Harry, she just found her way down here. She's been visiting ever since. Doesn't say very much and her quirks are as odd as hell but she's a sweet person when you get to know her,' Neville informed him, blushing slightly after describing her as sweet.

Dean elbowed Neville playfully and informed Harry with a grin, 'Neville here has a crush on Luna.'

Poor Neville's cheeks flamed and he gave Dean a look of horrified mortification, eyes flicking hastily to the blonde-haired girl to see if she had heard. Luna was no longer staring at the crack in the ceiling; instead she had somehow procured a magazine and was reading it upside down.

The quirks of this girl never ended.

After getting permission from Mrs Weasley to go and find Mr Weasley and the remainder of Harry's foster-brothers that he had yet to see, the trio left the kitchen and found their way back outside, towards the old gamekeeper hut, which had apparently once been the home of a good man by the name of Rubeus Hagrid. A member of the Order, he had managed to retreat in hiding with other fugitive followers.

Now his old home had been converted into a workshop owned by Mr Weasley whom used it to create handy gadgets from old materials. It was here that Harry hoped to find his foster-father tinkering away.

They crested a grassy knoll and the massive Quidditch pitch came into view bringing forth Harry’s old memories of sitting on top of the Astrology Tower and watching the games with a pair of binoculars. With a surge of sudden excitement Harry wondered if he would be able to fly on a broomstick now that he was an official student. He might even be able to try out for a team.

Elation blossomed inside of him at that thought, and his eyes hungrily tracked the distant figures that were having a flying class by the looks of it. He was interrupted from watching the people zooming around the field by an exuberant Charlie that started him by hugging him from behind.

Laughing, Harry turned around and hugged Charlie properly, missing the stocky older man's cheerful and easy-going personality. Percy stood beside his older brother, waiting patiently to hug Harry in a much more sedate fashion than the more animated man.

After hugging the prim twenty-one-year-old who offered him a rather formal welcoming back after three entire years of absence, Harry asked the two older men where Bill and Mr Weasley were. He was directed to the workshop, which had been he, Neville and Dean's original target. Percy and Charlie had to leave to go complete a stock report on the plants in the Herbology greenhouses so the three younger boys were left to go and say hello alone.

Inside the home-turned-workshop, Bill was holding a piece of wire steady with a pair of pliers whilst Mr Weasley threaded it through a small contraption. Rather than interrupt the two and risk startling them, the three waited. Harry watched with a fond smile on his face as he remembered all the times he had had to walk out to Mr Weasley's workshop to give the man a plate of dinner or lunch after he hadn't shown up, so engrossed in his latest invention.

At last with a cry of success Mr Weasley held up the completed gizmo and beamed towards his
eldest son. Glancing at the watch on his wrist, a Muggle item he had restored a few years back, Mr Weasley gave yet another cry, this time in shock.

'The blasted watch's gone and stopped working again! Harry's probably home by now!'

Rapidly wiping his oily hands on an available cloth the frazzled man turned only to catch sight of his three foster-sons, a smiling Harry in the middle. After striding over and tugging the green-eyed boy into his arms, Harry breathed in his smell of freshly cut grass and machine oil. Just like it always was.

A calloused hand held his head to his foster-father's shoulder and a voice whispered next to his year, 'You don't know how happy I am so see you, Harry. Molly took your absence, all of your absences, very hard. You've been sorely missed.'

To have verbal confirmation of the hardships Molly had faced caused Harry to have to push away the sudden burn of tears that stung his eyes. Pulling away he turned to Bill and gave the man a hug and accepted his words of welcome a little distractedly.

All Harry could think of was the pain Mrs Weasley had been through losing four children, and the difficulties and fears Hermione, Ginny and Lavender, not to mention Angelina, Katie and Alicia, could very well be facing today. It was all because of a stupid set of laws that had created the Servile caste.

A set of laws that Harry's contractor and the man that had given him more freedom than he had ever experienced before had set in place.

How could he still tolerate, and dare he think it, feel attracted to, the man whom had caused so much pain in the lives of his family and friends and thousands of others?

After a delicious hot meal from Mrs Weasley, Harry was feeling full and content once more, his dark thoughts from earlier banished for now. With his adopted family and the girl from earlier, Luna, gathered around him he enjoyed the present and ignored his growing apprehension about what would happen when he moved into his dormitory and met his fellow sixth year students.

He was scheduled to meet his year-mates during the lunch break, his contractor informing him that it had been arranged to happen in the sixth year common room. Each of the year levels had their own communal chamber where both genders could interact and form study groups. There were separate male and female dormitories branching off from the common room. Harry knew that there were two or three people to a dorm room now that there were nearly half the number of students that used to attend Hogwarts.

Harry wondered idly whom he would be sharing his room with and fervently hoped that whoever it was, they would be at least be tolerant of him and his status.

As the lunch break drew nearer Harry distracted himself by releasing Hedwig from her cage and feeding her a few strips of bacon from his late breakfast. He glanced up in time to hear Mrs Weasley say, 'Ron, I just remembered I needed you to go to the potions classroom, Professor Slughorn required assistance labelling his new stock of ingredients.'

Ron instantly protested with his trademark whine saying, 'But mum, I wanted to take Harry to his dorm to look around with him.'

Whilst the Menials were familiar with almost every nook and cranny in the school, they were not permitted in the actual dormitories of the students. Only the house elves handled the daily cleaning of the private rooms. Ron obviously wished to poke around and see the sort of standards his friend
would be enjoying.

Mrs Weasley was having none of Ron's attempts to get out of his chore. 'Now Ronald,' she commanded curtly and with a huff Ron slipped off his chair and offered Harry a goodbye, extracting a promise for Harry to come visit him in the kitchens.

Once Ron had left Mrs Weasley turned to Harry and said gently, 'You should be heading up dear. Your year-mates will be arriving soon to meet you.'

Swallowing heavily Harry stood and waited while Hedwig fluttered up to perch on his shoulder. Grabbing her empty cage and brushing his fingers against his shrunken trunk to make sure it was still securely in his pocket, Harry faced his foster family. Fred and George rose and stood to be beside him. Fred assured him, 'We'll come with you to your dorm room Harry.'

'You'll do no such thing. Ron is not the only one with chores,' Mrs Weasley admonished with an apologetic look towards Harry.

'Then who's going to accompany him?' George argued.

'I'll take him,' a quiet voice stated.

Harry turned towards the source and found those odd silvery blue eyes staring at him again. There was an awkward pause before Mrs Weasley spoke once more saying, 'Thank you for offering Luna, dear. That's very kind of you.'

The girl sprung up from her chair and wandered over to Harry, the boy noting happily that she was an inch shorter than him. Surprisingly enough, Hedwig abandoned Harry's shoulder in favour of Luna's settling on the girl and giving her hair and affectionate preen.

Luna did not seem startled by this in the slightest, turning slightly to stroke Hedwig's snowy feathers. She must have sensed the entire family staring at her and looked up, focusing her gaze on Harry.

'Well are we going to head off?'

Coming to his senses Harry gave another quick round of hugs, even though he knew he was going to be seeing a lot of his family. Leaving behind the Weasley's kitchen he walked along beside Luna who was now crooning softly to Hedwig.

They ascended the levels at a good pace and Harry discovered that whilst the silence between them was filling, it was neither oppressive nor uncomfortable. There was something soothing about the younger girl that set Harry's mind at ease. Although she was admittedly strange, Harry could begin to feel a liking towards her. He had Hedwig's approval about the girl at least.

Wanting to know more about her, Harry asked curiously, 'What year are you in?'

'I am in my fifth year,' Luna replied in that dreamy voice, absently continuing to stroke Hedwig's soft feathers.

'Do you have any siblings?' He questioned.

'It is just my father and me. My mother died in an accident when I was nine,' she said in a matter-of-fact tone as though discussing the weather.

'I'm sorry for you loss,' Harry said sincerely, thinking of his own mother that he would never meet.
Luna turned so she could look at Harry's face and read his emotions over his features quite efficiently. Whatever she saw on his face pleased her because she smiled serenely and announced to him, 'I can tell we're going to great friends Harry Potter.'

Harry vaguely remembered the way to the sixth year common room from his time living at Hogwarts but he had only ever been in the communal chamber and never beyond. He and Luna reached a portrait of a regal looking woman dressed in fine silk; her auburn curls piled high on her head. She looked down on her nose at the two youngsters, taking in Luna's bedraggled hair and Harry's silver Courtesan collar.

'Password?' she demanded imperiously.

Harry froze as he realised he had no idea what the password was. Usually Mrs Weasley or the twins would know the common room's daily passwords, but it had slipped everyone's minds in the excitement of Harry being home. The lady guarding the sixth year dorms was getting more and more smug as she observed Harry's flustered state.

'Draconis,' Luna piped up and the superior smile was wiped off the aristocratic lady's face. With a decidedly less attractive sneer she swung open to reveal a darkened hallway.

'Thank you,' Harry told Luna in relief as they entered and the portrait slammed shut behind them, secretly wondering how she knew what the password was.

After a very brief walk in darkness they entered the large chamber where the entire sixth year commoned. It was just as Harry remembered, large vaulted windows giving a view of the lake and the surrounding mountains.

Comfy and yet elegant chairs were grouped together around sturdy worktables, done in tasteful colours of cream and pastel shades. A massive fireplace dominated one wall, merrily crackling away to keep the warmth in the room. An expensive rug covered the flagstone floor to keep the chill at bay.

Harry noted two staircases, which obviously led to the different gender dormitories.

'I have to leave now,' Luna informed him as he took in the room. She nudged Hedwig who returned to Harry's shoulder. 'Lunch is starting downstairs and they have my favourite pudding.'

She turned to go but Harry felt he owed her for getting him in the room and offering to take him in the first place. 'Wait Luna,' he said causing her to pause and look back with her head cocked to one side in the bird-like way of hers. 'Would you like to catch up sometime- to study maybe?' He didn't know what students did in their spare time but he assumed they did their homework.

A huge beaming smile took precedence on the girl's face and she told him, 'I would love to, Harry.'

Then she skipped from the room, radish earrings swinging to and fro with her movement, one hand raised over her head in a goodbye.

Harry watched her exit in bemusement before turning and contemplating the stairs. He tried the one on the right and managed to get up about three steps before the surface below him turned sleek and smooth and he was deposited in a heap at the bottom, Hedwig having hastily left his shoulder just in time to avoid going down with him.

Flushed in embarrassment, realising the stairs were charmed so that no males attempted to get into what he now realised were the female dorms, Harry turned to the left set of stairs and tentatively
climbed. Hedwig flew back to his shoulder, giving his ear a reprimanding nip for giving her a fright. Relieved when the ground didn't give way beneath him, Harry quickly got to the next level and took in the corridor lined with doors for the first time.

There were five doors in total and Harry walked forward and opened the one closest. It was fully furnished with three king sized beds and individual wardrobes for the inhabitants. Closing that door, as it was obviously full, he checked each and every door. A couple of the rooms contained only two beds whilst the rest had three.

Finally he reached the end of the hallway, frantically worried about the time and when his year-mates would arrive, and pulled it open to reveal two beds. However the difference was that the bed furthest from the door was in neutral shades and grey and white and that the bedside table and wardrobe were bare of any personal effects. The bed beside it was black and Irish green and as Harry entered the room, which could only be his, he looked over at his dorm-mate's bedside table. He saw a grinning boy in one of the moving photographs standing beside a woman that could only be his mother. They were waving at the camera and standing in front of an ancient Celtic burial mound by the looks of it.

Pulling out his trunk Harry enlarged it with a surge of wandless magic and placed the weightless luggage on top of the neutral bed.

Not wanting to snoop, but curious as to who he would be sharing with, Harry looked over the many framed photos that littered the other boy's bedside table and wardrobe. Taking in the same familiar face that appeared Harry deduced that he would be sharing his room with him. The boy looked tall to Harry's disappointment but friendly enough, with sandy blonde hair and bright blue eyes.

About to start unpacking, Harry froze when he heard the faint hum of laughter from down below and realised that his year-mates had arrived. Encouraging Hedwig to perch on his bedside table and assuring the owl that he would come up later to feed her again, he looked in the handy mirror against the wall and straightened his robes and hair.

Two nervous emerald eyes looked back at him and he attempted a shaky smile that ended up looking more of a grimace. Harry hated being in the spotlight.

Drawing up his courage he left the room and walked back down the corridor, slowly descending the steps to enter the common room. As soon as he came into view, all conversation stopped and Harry was instantly pierced with many curious and evaluating eyes. He noticed every pair lingered on his silver collar, some in interest and others with derision.

Harry made a quick count of heads and discovered there were nineteen people in the sixth year, now an even twenty with him attending. Swallowing heavily Harry offered a smile to the assembled students and said softly, 'Hello, my name is Harry Potter.'

There was a pregnant pause in which some of the people in the room exchanged raised eyebrows to one another. Harry knew the Potter name was a well-recognised title, pureblooded as it was. He also knew most if not all of his year-mates would have had no idea who the Dark Lord's only Courtesan was. Now they would know it was the last of the Potter line, the scion of the once-noble house, now sullied by his status as one of the Servile caste.

Just when Harry began seriously fearing no one would step forward to welcome him or just say something, a tall boy with familiar silvery blonde hair stepped forward. Grey eyes appraised him as the boy walked up to where he was hovering by the steps and Harry finally remembered where he had seen that colour of hair. This must be Lucius Malfoy's son and heir; the young man was practically a carbon copy of his father minus the longer hair. Harry also noted the boy's magical core
was quite substantial, not up to Harry's par, but a strong wizard nonetheless.

A pale hand was offered to Harry and he nearly stopped breathing in shock. This was probably the most influential student at the school, having a father whom was in the Dark Lord's Inner Circle. He should not be associating with the likes of him, a Servile and not even a pureblood to boot.

Harry took the hand, half-fearing a trick, but the other boy had seemingly honest intentions. He shook his hand lightly and said in a cultured and articulate voice, 'My name is Draco Malfoy. I wish to formally welcome you here to Hogwarts, Harry Potter.'

As the boy, Draco, spoke Harry noticed that instantly all the other students began re-evaluating him, shrewd eyes deciding where he stood socially within their ranks. Harry himself was wondering the same thing.

After Draco had retracted his hand Harry was then inundated with other members of the sixth year, all eager now to greet him after their unofficial leader had given his approval of the new boy. As Harry shook hands or kissed them in the case of the females as his etiquette mistress back at Aphrodite's had taught him was the pureblood way, Harry took stock of the different cliques in the year.

The children of Death Eaters and the richest of purebloods surrounded Draco, and they stood apart from the rest of the year. There were eight of them including two hulking young men who seemed to be bodyguards of some sort for Draco. They didn't look particularly bright.

Hovering near the eight 'elite' students were six other students that seemed pureblooded from the way they greeted him, but perhaps not rich or influential enough to earn themselves a place in the most popular group.

Finally Harry scrutinised the last clump of people who were probably the lowest in the social ladder. Harry could only assume these were the half bloods. There were five of them, now six including him.

One of the boys in the outcast group was the figure seen in the photographs in Harry's new room and so he decided that he must he his new dorm mate. When he shook hands with the taller boy, he introduced himself with a strong Irish accent as Seamus Finnigan.

The name didn't appear important nor familiar so Harry presumed the boy was a half-blood most likely with a Muggle or Muggleborn father. After meeting all of his year-mates, most of their names going over his head except for Draco's and Seamus', Harry was then graciously offered a tour from one of the pureblooded friends of Draco's.

Harry was forced to explain that he was already familiar with Hogwarts as he grew up here working as a Menial. That had caused a stir, with many eyes flickering to Draco to see his reaction to that statement.

Draco simply offered a small smile and smoothly changed the topic to that of the curriculum, distracting his peers effortlessly. Harry found himself somehow sitting with the elite circle, on Draco's right hand side no less, whilst the other students scattered around the room to talk in small huddles, casting longing and envious glances to where Harry was enjoying his privileged spot.

'So Harry, what classes will you be taking this year?' one of the girls asked, with honey blonde hair and hazel eyes. Harry remembered her name to be Daphne Greengrass.

'I am taking the required subjects of Potions, Transfiguration, Charms, Duelling and Theory of Dark
Magic,' he began and then added, 'I have also selected the Curse Breaking, Healing and Ancient Runes classes.'

Daphne's eyes lit up slightly and she said, 'I'm taking Healing and Curse Breaking as well. I used to be the only person from our year in the Healing classes, I'm glad to know I will now have someone to talk to,' she informed him.

Offering her a smile in return Harry settled back to listen to the purebloods talk about this or that social function. His interest was perks when he heard something about a tournament mentioned. The darker-skinned Italian boy, Blaise Zabini, was saying, '…Beauxbatons and Durmstrang are due to arrive next week. I wonder who is going to represent Hogwarts for the Tri-Wizard Tournament?'

'Draco you should try for it,' one of the girls simpered. She had short brown hair and brown eyes of the same shade, her face faintly resembling that of a pug. 'I'm sure you would become the Hogwarts Champion.'

Draco gave her a cool smile but turned slightly to Harry to discreetly roll his eyes at the girl's advances on him. Once again Harry was shocked, confused as to why Draco was showing him so much trust, so soon in their relationship.

'Pansy I would put my name in, but if you had been paying attention you would know that only seventh years are allowed to place their names in the Cup,' Draco said dryly, causing Daphne to smirk and the other dark haired girl's eyes to crinkle in hidden amusement.

Pansy blushed in humiliation and turned to glare at Daphne and the other girl whom Harry recalled was named Millicent. If looks could kill, those two would have already keeled over.

The ringing of a bell that signalled the end of lunch and the beginning of the third period classes heralded the end of Harry's meeting with his year-mates. It had all gone surprisingly smoothly.

Whilst they were now heading back to class, Harry was unsure as to what he was meant to do. He supposed he could unpack, but then what? He wasn't expected in classes until the next day.

When Draco moved to leave Harry awkwardly placed his hand on the other boy's shoulder. He wanted to ask him about why he had broken the social norm and had treated him as one of the elitist purebloods.

Draco turned back, one pale eyebrow raised as he stared down at the hand gently restraining him from going to class. Harry quickly moved his hand back and ignored the stares aimed at them from the trailing students.

'Draco I was wondering whether I could ask you something,' Harry began.

'Go on,' the grey-eyed boy encouraged when Harry trailed off.

Waiting until the last student had left, Harry met Draco's eyes and said simply, 'Why are you being so nice and…well welcoming? Not that I'm complaining. I really appreciate it. But, why?'

Draco seemed to think before answering, Harry could practically see the thinking going on behind the pureblood mask he had in place. At last he seemingly found a satisfying enough answer and replied, 'You are no ordinary Courtesan. The Dark Lord himself has taught you, has given you permission to buy a wand and attend school. If you hadn't been anyone important to him, then you would not have been given all of the privileges you have experienced. It would be a political and social blunder on my part if I alienated you.'
Feeling disappointed, Harry asked him, 'So you only want to be my friend because it is advantageous to you?' He had been beginning to like the cool and mature attitude the pureblood exuded.

'Well of course it is advantageous to me. I do not yet know you well enough, but I am confident in time we could perhaps be friends,' was Draco's response.

Knowing he wasn't going to get a better answer out of him, Harry smiled wryly and decided that he would be satisfied with that, at least for now.

'I won't keep you any longer. Sorry if I made you late for class.'

Draco swept from the room with a distinct presence, nowhere near the level that the Dark Lord excreted but enough to apparently make him the most popular boy in the year, if not the school.

Harry began wondering if this year was going to be so bad after all.
Chapter Eleven

Chapter Summary

In a world where the Dark Lord won, ten year old Harry Potter is part of the servile caste, the lowest caste in the new society. Destined for the life of a Courtesan, Harry is resigned to his fate. But it seems his unusual gifts have drawn the attention of the Dark Lord and Harry finds himself becoming so much more than just another war-orphan of the new regime. Eventual LV/HP.

Chapter Eleven

_Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry_

1996

After returning to his dorm room, which he now knew he shared with Seamus, Harry set about unpacking his school trunk. Folding his clothes he stored them away in his wardrobe and then contemplated his bare bedside table, biting his lip as he glanced from the plain wood to Seamus' colourful and decorated one.

He had no photos to display, no special items that meant something to him. In his life, it had always been his family and friends whom were what mattered. At last Harry placed Hedwig's empty brass cage upon the table, if only to have something sitting there.

Finishing up, Harry remembered the sealed letter that the Dark Lord had given him to deliver to Snape and realised that he should probably get it over and done with. He also had to get his timetable from the sour Potions Master so he might as well kill two birds with one stone.

But firstly he needed to work out where he could get Hedwig a more substantial meal than a few strips of leftover bacon. Suddenly remembering the school owlery, and feeling like an idiot for not remembering it, Harry clicked his tongue to summon his snowy companion to his shoulder.

Once Hedwig had secured her talons to the fabric of his robes he left the dormitory and walked back out through the empty common room, purposefully ignoring the snobbish portrait as he left.

Walking through the empty corridors of the castle Harry exited into a courtyard, pulling his robes tighter around him in the early autumnal chill that was beginning to set in. Moving quicker to warm his limbs he began climbing the twisting steps that led to the owlery.

By the time he reached the top he was pleasantly heated up, his pale cheeks flushed a delicate pink. Moving into the owlery and carefully stepping around the droppings that littered the floor, Harry located a bag of food pellets that were supposedly nutritious according to the advertising on the outside.

Filling a tray for Hedwig, he watched fondly as his owl hopped down to peck contentedly at the food, amber eyes glaring at the other birds in the owlery as a clear warning to stay away from her meal and her human.
A startled gasp was what alerted Harry to another presence in the open chamber and he looked around to see a small boy wearing the Hogwarts uniform, with disturbingly familiar cobalt blue eyes and crimped brown hair. Harry could only stare in confusion as he felt he should know who this young boy was and yet no name came to mind.

The younger student turned away and approached a rather large grey owl to attach a letter. An owl with a very distinctive black band around his breast. An owl that undeniably belonged to his ex-contractor, Rabastan Lestrange. He had seen it enough delivering mail to the man.

At last everything clicked into place in Harry's mind. The familiarity about the boy's features, his use of Rabastan's private owl, even the child's age, which looked around eleven-about the time the first Birthers would have graduated from Damara House…

Rabastan had a son.

Shock and perhaps a trace of hurt lingered in Harry as he watched the boy send off the owl, most likely with a letter to his father. Or perhaps his mother. Who was his mother? Wait, why did he even care? It wasn't like he had any claim on Rabastan. At least not anymore.

The boy left the owlery after that, oblivious to the burning emerald eyes that followed him on the way out, an echo of pain in their depths.

After recovering from the shock of discovering his old lover had had a son and had never seen fit to even tell Harry of his existence, the raven-haired teen had left Hedwig to socialise with the other owls and had made his way to the headmaster's office.

Reaching the office, Harry cursed as he was yet again confronted with a guardian demanding a password, this time a stone gargoyle. Resigned to waiting outside for Snape to show up, Harry leaned casually against the wall whilst viciously shoving all thought of Rabastan and his young son out of his mind. He was becoming quite adept at pushing unwanted thoughts away.

The tolling of the bell signalling the arrival of the final class of the day made Harry jump, unused as he was to the once-familiar ringing. Soon the halls flooded with chattering students whom gaped unashamedly at Harry and his gleaming collar. Some actually had the nerve to stop and cause a bottleneck in the hallway.

Harry had never been so happy to hear the snide tone of Severus Snape as he did then, the dark-haired man demanding to know why the students were hovering around like mindless buffoons. He soon came to the source of the problem, and his lips twisted into a sneer. 'Of course you would be behind this Potter.'

When he realised the students hadn't moved and were watching their interaction avidly, Snape gave them an onyx-eyed glare and asked in his deadly voice, 'Do you not have classes to go to?'

Harry had never thought people could run so fast.

Then that slightly terrifying gaze was pinned on him and Harry gulped, before steeling himself and pulling the sealed letter out. Before Snape could begin either insulting him or dismissing him, Harry offered it up and said, 'The Dark Lord asked me to give you this.' He decided to not disclose what was probably inside the message seeing as Snape would most likely incinerate the paper and Harry's hand while he was at it.

With that trademark curl to his lips, Snape took the letter, eyes expertly tracing the seal to check its legitimacy. At last he spun on his heel, black robes flying and didn't even give the password as the
stone gargoyle leaped hastily aside. Harry didn't blame it.

Snape was halfway up the stairs before he realised Harry wasn't following. With a curt, 'Potter!' he had the green-eyed boy scampering up the stairs which had not moved ever since Snape decided it made him dizzy with the corkscrew turning.

Harry entered the office to discover Snape already sitting behind his impressive desk, opening the letter with a tap of his wand. The seal crumbled away and Harry hovered near the door, not wanting to take the available seat and be closer to the volatile man than he already was.

Snape unfolded the note and began reading, his face growing stormier as he read its contents. At last he pressed two spidery fingers to his temple as though easing a looming headache.

'It appears the Dark Lord believes you require lessons in Occulemency. And as I am the only competent teacher in this institution, he has seen fit to grace me with this task.' Harry already knew this but he held his tongue.

'Furthermore, he has informed me that the Potter vault at Gringotts has been unfrozen and officially returned to your name. The Dark Lord has arranged for you to have a weekly allowance, which he will regulate. You are to go to the new Gringotts branch in Hogsmeade this weekend to receive your first payment.'

Harry thought his heart might have stopped beating. He now had money and an account, which would have been in the Potter family for centuries. Gratitude and wonder rose in him, directed towards his contractor. He was entirely lost for words, and apparently Snape noticed this for his lips tightened and he said firmly, 'I cannot deny the Dark Lord's request for your lessons. So be here in this office at eight o'clock sharp on Friday night. Do not be late. The gargoyle will be expecting you.'

Knowing a dismissal when he heard it, Harry nodded respectfully to Snape and hurriedly left the office, mind going at a million miles an hour. He knew his contractor was lenient towards him and gave him honours and privileges like no other of the Servile caste, but this was something entirely of a different calibre.

He now had financial support behind him and with his weekly allowances, a chance to purchase items he had never been able to before. Then another thought struck him. It was commonly known that one of the ways a person could escape from their servitude to their contractor was to essentially pay back what their contract was initially bought for.

If Harry gathered enough money from his weekly allowance he could potentially buy his freedom. He knew Rabastan had bought his contract for an obscene amount of money but he didn't know exactly how much. Once he knew, he would be able to begin building up enough funds to purchase his contract from Lord Voldemort.

Unexpectedly, Harry felt a twinge of remorse at that thought. But that was ridiculous. Harry wanted to be free.

Didn't he?

Suddenly a piece of parchment chose that moment to smack into his face and Harry pulled it away with confusion, noticing the traces of magic leading back towards Snape's office with his unique ability. It was his timetable, accidentally forgotten while he had been meeting Snape. The man had chosen to send it to Harry by hitting him in the face with it.

Some people just never changed.
It was oddly comforting in a way.

Scanning the neatly outlined boxes Harry's eyes found his schedule for Wednesday, which was the next day and when he was beginning classes.

He started off the morning with a double of Potions. Luckily Snape no longer taught the subject, instead teaching Alchemy for the most advanced Potion students in the sixth and seventh years only. Professor Slughorn now took the classes, Harry drawing on an image of a blading, pot-bellied man from his time earlier on at Hogwarts. The man had always thrown an elaborate Yuletide party every year with only the most elite students invited to the event.

After his lunch break Harry groaned as he realised he had his once a week Duelling class with none other than Rabastan Lestrange. Well, at least he could get that meeting over and done with. And on the bright side he wouldn't have to see the man for another week.

After Duelling Harry would finish off the day with Curse Breaking with Professor Wester. He was quite looking forward to the class, having read many books on the topic.

Folding his timetable and tucking it in his pocket for safekeeping, Harry headed back to the sixth-year dorms trying keep the confident smirk of Rabastan Lestrange from haunting his thoughts.

Later on that night Harry sat in the common room in front of the blazing fire surrounded by the elitist members of the sixth year. He listened to their chatter but was not really paying attention as he struggled with his tiredness. It had been a massive day for him filled with a mixture of good and bad surprises.

Earlier on he had entered the Great Hall for dinner and had sat down with Draco to one side and Daphne Greengrass to the other. There were eight tables in the hall including the teacher's raised one. The students' tables were round and scattered through the hall with the first years closest to the teachers and the seventh years the furthest away and nearest to the door.

Year levels sat together at their respective tables, and Harry had seen Luna sitting at the next table over, a space next to her on either side. It appeared she wasn't very popular. Having felt a surge of overprotectiveness he had given her a reassuring smile when he caught her eye and a small wave.

Pansy's sharp eyes had witnessed whom he was gesturing to and she had asked in her shrill voice over the low hum of voices, 'You know Loony Lovegood?'

Her loud voice had carried to the rest of the table whom looked up from where they were having their own separate conversations. Harry had stiffened and given her his coldest glare, his emerald eyes like frozen jade.

'Yes, I know Luna Lovegood. I consider her to be a friend of mine,' he informed the brown-eyed girl stonily.

Pansy shrank from his menacing glare and once Harry was sure she had gotten the message loud and clear he turned away to face Daphne and engage her in talk. He had discovered as he spoke with the blonde girl that she was the eldest of two and the heiress to the Greengrass family fortune. She had a little sister named Astoria in the fourth year and she had pointed her out sitting a few tables down, talking with a knot of friends and giggling about something or other. The two sisters looked very similar except Astoria's hair was more golden than her older sister's and her hazel eyes had more green in them.

Harry was surprised to discover that Astoria was betrothed to none other than Draco Malfoy, but
Daphne assured him that pureblood marriage contracts rarely held and they would probably not end up wedding. Astoria was not the only Greengrass daughter to have her marriage arranged, Daphne telling him laughingly that her parents had arranged her to marry Theodore Nott who sat a few seats down from them.

Theodore, or 'Theo,' as he had told Harry to call him seeing as his father was also named Theodore, had heard his name mentioned and glanced their way with a grin on his lips. He gave Daphne a mock wink and she chuckled quietly.

'Well you seem to like each other,' Harry had mentioned after witnessing their short interaction.

'Of course we do, we were practically raised together. He's one of my closest friends,' Daphne said.

Theodore had then started talking with Millicent and the two began a debate on which book more accurately covered the Transfiguration course. The two appeared to be bookworms of some sort.

Now sitting next to Draco once more in the warm common room, Harry politely excused himself announcing that he wished to get a good night's sleep before his first day of classes. He was given a round of goodnights and he offered the gathered students a warm smile in return before heading up to his dorm room.

Upon entering he saw Seamus sitting cross-legged on his own bed, reading a Wizarding magazine. The Irish boy looked up when Harry entered and gave him a crooked smile before looking back down at his magazine.

Harry prepared for bed, getting into a pair of soft pyjamas and discovering a small bathroom leading off from their shared bedroom. He hadn't even seen it earlier. Brushing his teeth Harry stared into the framed mirror and noticed the faint bags under his eyes. He really needed to get some sleep.

Walking back into the dorm room he sat on his bed and snuggled into the covers. Noticing the tied back drapes around the bed he cast a glance towards his silent roommate and wondered how he would react if Harry wandlessly and wordlessly closed them. His wand was at the foot of his bed lying on top of a pile of clothes and he couldn't be bothered rising from the soft warmth of his bed.

Seamus wasn't even paying attention so Harry flicked his magic out and nudged the drapes to close around him, screening him from view. When there was no shocked cry of surprise, he settled in and said quietly, 'Goodnight, Seamus.'

There was a pause before the taller boy called back, 'G'night.'

Harry cast another wandless spell, this time setting up a silencing charm around his bed before he lay down and closed his eyes. He was asleep the second his head touched the pillow.

Their tongues were tangled, battling for dominance as passion and arousal throbbed between them both. At last Harry allowed the other man's tongue to dominate his own, moaning slightly as the tip mapped out his mouth, claiming every inch of it for his own.

The scrape of the other man's teeth against his lip drew a growl of lust from Harry and with boldness he didn't knew he had he pushed his lover's chest down and straddled the other man's hips. Leaning over he engaged his mouth against the other's once more and ground his erection against the hardness beneath him.

Elegant hands ran over his chest under his shirt, teasing his nipples and sending jolts of lightning pleasure straight to his groin. Throwing back his head to reveal the pale column of his throat Harry moaned shamelessly, breath hitching when his bed companion's teeth nipped at his exposed throat,
possessively marking and staking his claim.

Suddenly Harry found himself rolled onto his back and he spread his legs for his lover, cheeks heated and eyes filled with love and lust.

'Take me,' he whispered, thrusting up invitingly.

With a hiss of pleasure his companion settled in between his thighs and ran his hands down them leaving fire in his wake.

Bending down, lips found a place behind the raven-haired teen's ear, licking and sucking at the sensitive skin to draw needy whimpers from the writhing mess beneath him.

'Mine,' the dangerously seductive voice murmured in his ear.

There was a flash of lust-darkened crimson eyes in the shadows before-

Harry woke with a start, flushed and aroused in bed. Sitting up he cast a wandless Tempus and saw it was half past six in the morning. Breakfast began at seven and classes started at nine so he had plenty of time to handle his…problem.

Thanking Merlin he had thought to cast a silencing charm the night before, Harry dismantled it and shuffled out of bed noting Seamus' closed drapes around his bed. Light snores emanated from behind them indicating the other boy was still fast asleep.

Trying to ignore the hardness in between his legs, Harry grabbed his clothes for the day and entered the bathroom, locking it behind him. Starting the shower he stripped quickly and noted his erection which sprang free once released from his pants.

It wasn't like this was the first time he had woken up with a raging erection. But it was the first time that his bed partner had been Lord Voldemort. Those ruby red eyes were unmistakable and Harry knew once and for all there was now no way he could deny his attraction to the man.

When he decided the water was the right temperature Harry stepped in and dealt with his hardened flesh, bringing himself off with firm strokes. After coming he washed all trace of his arousal from the shower and scrubbed himself clean.

Feeling refreshed Harry dressed in his Hogwarts uniform and towelled his raven hair dry. He cast another Tempus, noticing he had spent half an hour dealing with his problem and getting ready for his first day before he strapped his wand to his holster on his arm.

Seamus was still sleeping deeply and Harry wondered whether or not he should wake the boy before deciding he probably had an alarm set to stop him from sleeping in too much. If Seamus was still asleep when he got back from breakfast then Harry promised himself that he would wake him.

Leaving the sixth year dorms Harry made his way to the Great Hall. There were not that many people about; obviously most of the students came down for breakfast closer to when classes started. A few boys and girls were sitting at the sixth year table but there were none that Harry were that familiar with. Resigned to a quiet and lonely breakfast Harry was surprised when an arm looped into his own and he was tugged toward the empty fifth year table.

Luna smiled at him as she pulled him with her and sat him down beside her own seat. Food already sat ready and waiting, prepared as Harry knew by the busy house elves. As he and Luna served themselves Harry ignored with practiced ease the incredulous stares directed their way.
Once he felt full and ready for the day, Harry sat back and watched as more people filtered in, yawning and rubbing their eyes, making beelines towards the pots of fresh coffee available.

Luna had procured the magazine from yesterday and was reading it quite happily, upside down yet again.

'What's that magazine?' Harry asked her.

'It's the Quibbler. My father owns the company,' she told him as her eyes focused on the page in front of her.

Surprised at this new titbit of information on Luna's life Harry looked around to see the cover and saw the name, 'Xenophilius Lovegood' printed on the front in flashing colours.

Soon the fifth year table had begun truly filling up and so Harry offered his goodbye to Luna and made his way back to his room to retrieve his books for his classes that day.

Seamus was in the shower, cutting things a bit fine, but he was up and about at least. Harry gathered his books after double-checking his timetable and wondered whether or not he should wait for Seamus. They would have Potions together after all seeing as students took classes in their year levels except for some electives such as Healing or Alchemy where students from different years were in a class together.

The Irish boy had been a bit distant around Harry, but he didn't blame him. The emerald-eyed boy had been accepted into the elite group and Seamus was at the bottom of the social ladder. The other boy probably thought Harry wouldn't want to associate with him.

Determined to win his roommate over Harry sat on his bed and waited for Seamus to come out of the bathroom. When the blue-eyed boy appeared, Harry said quickly, 'I decided to wait for you so we could go to Potions together.'

Seamus frowned as he rummaged around in his wardrobe pulling on a fresh set of black robes over his casual clothes. 'I thought you said you knew your way around?'

'I do know my way around, but I thought we could go together,' Harry said simply.

Seamus paused and looked Harry over before smiling that crooked smile of his and saying finally, 'All right then. But I need to swing by the Great Hall to grab a bit of toast. I'm starved.'

With that, Harry knew he had been given a chance to become friends with the sandy-haired teen, and he wasn't going to let that venture fail.

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Potions was long and arduous for Harry whom was forced to deal with Professor Slughorn asking this or that question about the Dark Lord. It didn't help that the entire sixth year were listening in to hear how he responded to those questions.

Well, the entire sixth year but for the two hulking bodyguards of Draco's whom hadn't gotten good enough grades to continue Potions.

When he wasn't interrogating Harry the man was reminiscing about his time teaching Lord Voldemort, claiming to have been the young man's favourite teacher. Somehow, Harry found that hard to believe.

What shocked him was that Professor Slughorn had taught his mother, Lily, and had been rather
fond of her. He had hoped that Harry would have inherited her talent at Potions, but the teen was only a bit above average at best.

Sitting beside Seamus, Harry stirred his potion five times clockwise and three times anti-clockwise before sitting back to let it simmer away for a few minutes. Seamus was struggling with his own potion, which had turned slightly gelatinous.

Harry found that potion making was similar to cooking, which is something he knew how to do very well thanks to Mrs Weasley growing up. One had to follow the instructions carefully and keep their wits about them and they were fine. Harry did however sense that there was more to the art than that, and that Snape would probably have a fit if he heard his precious subject simplified in such a way, but it worked for Harry.

Thankfully the double period was coming to an end, and Harry couldn't wait to escape to lunch and get away from the ambitious Professor. He made a few samples of his potion into his new set of glass vials and noted proudly that it was the right colour, if not a shade or two lighter than it should be. It was very good for his first time.

Professor Slughorn set them a short essay on the potion they had just made, wanting to know its properties and various uses. It was due the first lesson on Friday morning.

Leaving the dungeon room where their lessons would be held, Harry walked along beside Seamus who was talking with two of his good friends and fellow half bloods. The other boys had kindly reminded Harry of their names, as he had already forgotten. They were Terry Boot and Michael Corner and seemed to be quite close with Seamus.

On Harry's other side were two twin girls named Padma and Parvati Patil that hadn't said much to him beside giggle whenever he came into sight. They reminded him a bit of Lavender and he knew they would have gotten on wonderfully with her.

Together, the six of them including Harry made up the half blood presence in the sixth year. So few had passed the entrance exam to get into Hogwarts, but Harry saw that the three boys and two girls had strong magical cores and intelligent minds.

They deserved to be here, had proven themselves to be worthy enough to learn beside the purebloods. Harry had taken no entrance exam. Whilst he knew he would have passed it, it still didn't sit right with him that the Dark Lord had pulled some strings and enrolled him without any testing. He hadn't even taken his O.W.L's for Merlin's sake!

Daphne tugged him over to sit next to her when he reached the Great Hall and sat him down between herself and Millicent. Harry noticed quite a number of females casting looks out of the corner of their eyes today towards the teacher's table, blushes on their faces.

Following their gazes he felt a thrill race through him when he saw Rabastan Lestrange sitting at the teacher's dais talking quietly with Professor Vector, the Arithmancy teacher. He must have just Flooed in, only having the sixth year class today after the break.

Harry found he couldn't take his eyes off the man, looking over his cobalt blue eyes and wavy brown hair.

'I see you've spotted Professor Lestrange,' Daphne murmured with a slight grin.

'Isn't he dreamy?' Pansy sighed, staring with longing at the handsome man.

'I heard he's not interested in the fairer sex,' Millicent remarked clinically, staring shrewdly at the
Duelling Professor as though trying to dissect him with her eyes.

'Don't be stupid, of course he's interested in women,' Pansy snapped back.

Wanting to put her in her place, Harry informed her blandly, 'As a matter of fact he truly isn't interested in women.'

'How would you know?' Pansy asked dismissively.

'He was my contractor for a month,' Harry told her lightly.

Silence descended over the table as nineteen pairs of eyes locked on him.

Pansy was sitting there gaping unattractively like a fish, struggling to find something to say. Suddenly Parvati giggled and asked him, 'Well...how was he...you know. In bed,' she finished nervously.

'Don't be so common,' Daphne growled at the other girl, leaping to save Harry from having to answer the question.

Parvati flushed in mortification, not believing she had actually just asked that. It had just sort of slipped out. But then again, it was what everyone at the table was privately wondering.

Regretting his hasty decision to reveal his past relationship with Rabastan Harry sighed and sat down a little lower in his chair. Sometimes he just didn't think before he acted. But he had been so eager to get one up on Pansy.

With his eyes wandering back to the teacher's table he muffled a gasp when Rabastan's dark blue eyes bore into his own, unidentifiable emotions warring over his aristocratic face. Harry knew his cheeks were flushed but he couldn't find the strength to look away.

At last Rabastan offered him a small smile, which Harry returned slowly, memories of their admittedly short time together coming to mind. Blushing even deeper as some particularly _inappropriate_ ones crossed his thoughts, Harry saw a flash of heated desire enter Rabastan's eyes.

Harry knew two things in that moment.

Rabastan was still attracted to him.

And he found that didn't bother him.
Chapter Twelve

Chapter Summary

In a world where the Dark Lord won, ten year old Harry Potter is part of the servile caste, the lowest caste in the new society. Destined for the life of a Courtesan, Harry is resigned to his fate. But it seems his unusual gifts have drawn the attention of the Dark Lord and Harry finds himself becoming so much more than just another war-orphan of the new regime. Eventual LV/HP.

Chapter Notes

Warning: May contain content distressing to some readers. Please read on with caution.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Chapter Twelve

Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry

1996

Walking towards the Duelling classroom, Harry had time to prepare how he would act around Rabastan, or Professor Lestrange, as he should probably think of him now. He decided he would strive to act completely normal, as though he had not repeatedly had sex with said teacher not yet a month ago.

Entering the room Harry took a moment to look around the large chamber that was empty save for a wall of mirrors, which he assumed was used to show you your own form, and padding in the centre of the room for duels no doubt.

Rabastan hadn't made an appearance yet so the students of the sixth year were grouped together talking quietly. Harry was standing beside Seamus, Terry and Michael when a boy approached. He had light brown eyes and carefully styled brown hair, and was bearing a sneer on his face.

Harry racked his brain as he attempted to work out who this boy was but could only remember he was a pureblood but not from an influential enough family to earn a spot in Draco's group.

'Is it true,' he demanded, drawing the attention of a few other students nearby.

'Is what true?' Harry asked calmly, already taking a dislike to this rude person.

'Is it true that you were fucking with Professor Lestrange?'

Harry was stunned that the boy had the audacity to confront him like this, realising that it was probably because he was standing with the other half blood boys and not with one of the purebloods.
'Piss off Smith,' Seamus snarled, coming to stand behind Harry offering silent support. Terry and Michael flanked him as well, faces twisted with dislike for the boy, Smith.

'I asked you a question. Were you his whore?'

Daphne and Draco heard this last question and both turned simultaneously, twin looks of incredulous distaste on their faces directed towards the brown-haired teen. The pureblood girl actually took a few steps forward as though to confront Smith.

'That's enough,' a smooth voice interrupted the building conflict. It was Rabastan, standing in the entrance to the classroom and looking over Smith with an unimpressed air.

'I apologise, sir,' Smith muttered.

'It is not I whom you need to apologise to,' Rabastan said mildly with an obvious look towards Harry who was desperately trying to avoid his ex-contractor's eyes.

Smith scowled before turning and offering a curt and meaningless apology to Harry, his sneer still firmly in place.

After that start to the class, Harry really wasn't looking forward to the rest of it, but luckily he was instructed to stand by for this lesson seeing as the others had all been training since their fourth year. Leaning against a free wall Harry observed Rabastan as he kept the class under control and directed the students. They were paired off and Harry noted that Smith had been singled out by Rabastan to be his partner.

Rabastan then proceeded to teach the class a series of humiliating and rather painful jinxes and curses using the unfortunate Smith as a test subject. Harry had to hide his sniggering as Smith collapsed to the ground juddering around on the floor as his muscles twitched out of his control.

Rabastan caught his eye when the rest of the students scattered to try out the new spells and he gave him a discreet wink. Harry's felt a smile curl the edges of his lips in response, remembering how Rabastan had always told him that he would look out for him when he was his Courtesan. Apparently that still applied even though another had bought Harry's contract.

Smith was recovering in the corner, sending dirty glares in Harry's direction as he panted and his limbs gave the odd jerk in an after-effect of his exposure to Rabastan's spells. Harry ignored him and instead focused on the way Rabastan roamed through the classroom, elegantly dodging flying spells and offering advice or tips to the students. He was a very good teacher.

Any yet Harry couldn't help but compare him to the Dark Lord and decided that whilst Rabastan was pretty good, Lord Voldemort was better. There was something about the way his crimson eyes watched him that spurred him to achieve his best.

An unusual pang of longing hit Harry and he realised he was missing his contractor. He wouldn't be seeing him for roughly three months.

'All right class, that was great for today. I won't be seeing you until next Wednesday so remember to practice in your own time and use those new spells I've taught. I expect all of you to have learnt them adequately by this time next week,' Rabastan told the class.

Harry moved to leave with the other students but Rabastan said quickly, 'I need you to stay behind, Potter.'

As Smith passed him on the way out he threw him a knowing and derisive look as though thinking
that Rabastan had asked him to stay behind to have a quickie in between classes or some such thing. Glaring at Smith Harry moved back into the classroom but kept a safe distance between he and Rabastan.

Rabastan conjured two chairs so they could sit down and then gestured for Harry to take the available seat. Harry only hesitated for a moment before sitting down, placing his chair at an angle so he could make a quick escape if Rabastan tried anything inappropriate.

Rabastan easily picked up on Harry's defensive movement and a flash of hurt entered his eyes before quickly disappearing.

'Harry I asked you to stay behind because I needed to assure you that despite our background history, you are now my student and as such our relationship is purely professional,' Rabastan told him seriously, cobalt eyes begging to be given even a shred of trust that they had once shared.

'I understand,' Harry said softly, eager to leave. He was unsure of how he felt toward this assurance of Rabastan's that the man would treat him no differently from the other students. Then he remembered the young boy he had seen yesterday morning in the owlery, the boy he believed was Rabastan's.

'Rab-Professor Lestrange,' Harry began, catching himself as he began calling Rabastan by his first name. 'I know this is a personal question, but…do you have a son?'

Harry waited for the answer to his question, hoping that he had imagined everything and Rabastan would laugh and deny it. Instead he received a sombre face and the words, 'Yes I have a son, Harry. Two in fact. And a young daughter.'

Harry could only gape and felt a surge of betrayal. He felt like Rabastan had owed him the truth when he was his Courtesan. The man had had three children running around and Harry had no clue as to their existence.

'Who's their mother?' he asked, not knowing why it mattered so much to him. He just had to know.

'She's a Birther. You know that I never wanted to marry, but I needed to produce the Lestrange heir,' Rabastan explained, worriedly watching Harry's reaction to everything.

'Why didn't you tell me?' Harry blurted out, resentful anger building in him.

'I didn't think you were ready to know about them,' Rabastan explained gently. 'I wasn't planning on keeping their existence from you indeterminately, I had actually intended on introducing you to the three of them quite soon. But then the Dark Lord met you and...well you know the rest.'

Harry understood he supposed, but he no longer wanted to be in the man's presence, he needed time to get over his shock at his suspicions being correct and digest the information. Thus, Harry gave Rabastan a hasty goodbye and left the room with his back firmly turned on his ex-contractor.

As a result he didn't see the longing cobalt blue eyes trained on his retreating form and the sorrow in them. But he did hear the voice that said, 'Promise me you will tell me if Zacharias Smith picks on you again.'

Harry turned slightly and said in a voice devoid of emotion, 'I can take care of myself. Sir.' He added as an afterthought.

With that Harry left the classroom and one hurting man inside alone to contemplate his thoughts and his memories of the beautiful green-eyed boy that had once been his.
But his no longer.

Harry feared that he would be late for his first Curse Breaking lesson but he shouldn't have been worried because when he reached the correct classroom his year mates were milling about outside waiting for Professor Wester.

It appeared their teacher was running late for whatever reason and so Harry had time to assure Seamus, Michael and Terry whom were all taking the course, that he was fine about what Smith had said. Even though he really wasn't, and the other boy's words had stung.

As Harry stood outside he did a headcount and noticed that there were eight people there including himself. Millicent, Theodore and Daphne waved from where they were standing by the door and Harry noticed a quiet, but pleasant pureblood girl named Susan Bones also standing near them.

Unsure of whether to stay with his half blood friends or go join the purebloods, Harry glanced towards Seamus and saw him talking animatedly with the other two boys. They were obviously engaged with one another so Harry shrugged to himself and strolled over to stand by Daphne.

'Smith was totally out of line,' Daphne snapped, hazel eyes flashing dangerously as soon as he came to be beside them. Millicent and Theodore nodded their agreement, faces tight with anger. Even Susan put in her support of Harry, giving him a sad smile and admitting that Smith's comment was inappropriate and hurtful.

Smiling at the four of them, he was inwardly rejoicing that he was already making good friends with the people in his year besides Smith of course. He would never be friends with that conceited and rude prick.

'Sorry I'm late, your Professor Flooed me to ask to fill in for him when he came down with a headache before lunch,' a masculine and slightly husky voice announced from behind them.

Harry turned with the other seven students and swore his heart nearly stopped beating then and there. Because, walking towards him with a smile on his face was none other than Demetrius, the man whom had taught him the ways of the Courtesan. The first man he had been intimate with.

He looked pretty much the same, in his later twenties with windswept blonde hair and glittering blue eyes. His ruggedly handsome features were enhanced by the tight jeans and shirt he wore that hinted at the muscles underneath. Oh yes, Harry was very familiar with those muscles.

This could not be happening. It was impossible. How bad could his luck possibly be that he would run into two past lover in one day? Nobody could be this unfortunate. Come to think of it, what in Merlin's name was Demetrius even doing here? Although, Harry had never known what Demetrius did in his free time when he wasn't working at Aphrodite's getting Courtesans ready for their contractors.

Luckily Demetrius hadn't noticed him yet and had reached into his jeans pocket to pull out a wand to unlock the wooden door to the classroom. After casting a quick Alohomora he had the door open and entered, casting back over his shoulder, 'My name is Demetrius Talbot, but I suppose you'll have to call me Professor Talbot. I will be your substitute for today's lesson only. I am an old acquaintance of Professor Wester and he called in a favour to get me here.'

Demetrius reached the head of the classroom where the teacher's desk was and sat down on the edge, facing the class and saying, 'I work at Gringotts as one of their Curse Breakers.'
Daphne, Susan and even Millicent were staring with varying levels of interest and desire at their substitute for the day. When Demetrius offered them a smile, Susan nearly tripped over one of the desks.

Harry was still waiting for Demetrius to notice him, wondering how the man would react. As he followed Theodore to sit beside him, adjacent to the girls, Harry cast glances over at his old teacher. Sitting down at the desk Harry pulled out his books, parchment, inkpot and quill and looked up in time to see Demetrius' incredulous gaze fixed on him.

‘Harry?’ was the choked question.

The other seven occupants in the room looked in confusion from their substitute professor to Harry, wondering if and how they knew each other.

‘Demetrius,’ Harry responded after swallowing around his tight throat.

‘What are you…’ Demetrius trailed off after realising now was definitely not the time to be starting an interrogation and that there was a class that needed teaching. With a meaningful glance at Harry asking him to explain later, Demetrius quickly grabbed the other students' attention and began lecturing.

Harry barely paid attention, folding the corners of his spare parchment and agitatedly tapping his dry quill against the table top as the lesson crept by. Theodore worked busily beside him, taking down copious notes and glancing at his book to double check his answers.

The bell could not have rung soon enough for Harry who waved his friends on ahead of him saying he needed to make sure he had taken down a dot point correctly. Theodore raised one eyebrow knowing full well that Harry had not taken a single note all class before deciding not to say anything on the matter.

Only after the last person had left and closed the door behind them did Harry sit back down at his seat, awkwardly fiddling with his quill again. He looked up in surprise when Demetrius came to sit on his desk, so close that Harry could smell that almost-forgotten scent of spices and the undertone of male muskiness.

‘Hi,’ Harry began tentatively.

‘What are you doing here, Harry?’ Demetrius asked, not harshly but certainly inquisitively.

With a sigh Harry began his story explaining how after being bought by Rabastan Lestrange he had then caught the attention of the Dark Lord whom purchased his contract. Said Dark Lord had decided to give him a proper magical education and thus he had ended up a student at Hogwarts.

Demetrius was silent throughout his tale, watching his face and the emotions that flickered across it. He had wondered what had happened to the beautiful green-eyed boy, and now he finally knew. To think he had had his contract purchased by the Dark Lord himself, was astonishing.

‘I am glad to see you making more out of your life than just that of a Courtesan,’ Demetrius said kindly. ‘I always knew that you were special.' Here his voice deepened and affection warred with caution in his bright eyes.

Harry smiled at the older man and then sighed looking at the magical clock on the wall. He needed to start his Potions essay and the begin researching those new spells Rabastan had assigned the class to learn.
'You didn't assign any work did you?' he asked Demetrius worriedly who grinned and shook his head in the negative.

'Like I said earlier, I was only filling in for today. You teacher will be back teach you for your next class.'

Harry felt disappointed, wanting to see more of the man. Demetrius had been his pillar of strength, helping Harry through the tumultuous period before his contract was bought. Then again, because their relationship had been so physical and intimate, it might have made things uncomfortable after awhile to remain in close contact.

'I have to go, Demetrius. I have work I need to start on,' Harry told him quietly and rose from the desk. He was about to move away when Demetrius' hand shot out and wrapped gently around his wrist impeding his movement. The other man leaned in and Harry froze, thinking he was about to be kissed. It would not be the first time he had thought that, only to be proven wrong.

Sure enough, Demetrius simply brushed his raven locks away from his face, his lips so close to Harry's own and said, 'I'm stationed at the new Hogsmeade branch of Gringotts. If you're ever in town…come find me.'

Harry remembered the money he needed to get out of his newly unfrozen account and said, 'I will actually be coming down this weekend to Gringotts. I need to retrieve an amount of money.'

Demetrius face lightened and he murmured, 'Until then, Harry,' before reluctantly letting Harry go. The boy left the room after looking back one last time with a fond smile before disappearing through the door.

Demetrius knew he cared about the younger teen, perhaps more than he would like to admit. But he also knew that Harry was out of bounds. However that didn't mean he couldn't look after him and make sure he was happy.

He was an experienced lover and he knew it when someone clearly wasn't interested. Demetrius could easily tell that Harry felt nothing but a sort of friendly affection towards him combined with a dash of appreciation for his looks. That was all it would ever be.

Demetrius was determined that if he could not be Harry's lover like he had once been, then he would be Harry's friend and watch over him.

It was the least he could do.

Hundreds of miles away Lord Voldemort gripped the arms of his throne-like chair and fought down the urge to storm into Hogwarts and demand to know what fool had touched what belonged to him.

Unbeknownst to Harry, the enchantment on his silver collar had briefly flared to life as Demetrius had stroked his hair from his eyes, with his lips so close to Harry's own. It was not a proper reaction as there had been no legitimate intimacy. But the spell had picked up the fact that someone was very interested in the beautiful Courtesan boy.

And the Dark Lord was furious. He felt a burning, jealous rage smoulder in him as he imagined the scenario which could have occurred just moments ago. Whilst he knew whatever had happened was minor, the spell was strong enough to sense when another had certain urges towards his Courtesan.

Someone in the castle was lusting after Harry, and he wanted to know whom so they could be swiftly and brutally removed. Briefly he considered Rabastan. It would make sense considering the
boy had once been his.

But no, Rabastan wouldn't dare cross him.

As the Dark Lord calmed down slightly, noting for the first time the objects in the room, which had shattered from the force of his fury, he decided that it wouldn't hurt to place Harry under surveillance. Perhaps one of his Death Eaters whom taught at the school.

Plans were already tumbling through Lord Voldemort's mind as he wandlessly repaired the room of its broken objects.

His Courtesan was not aware of it, but he was coming to the school in six nights time in order to be present at the Goblet of Fire ceremony, as it was a prestigious event. He wasn't expected to stay but Voldemort had decided to remain the night at Hogwarts from the seventeenth when the announcing of the Champions would occur and then to lodge there for another two nights and depart on the Friday morning.

That would give him ample time to keep a personal eye on Harry and review his learning so far. Perhaps he would uncover who it was in the castle that was so interested in what was his.

Harry would stay by his side, he would get the boy an adjoining bedchamber to his own. He knew people would talk, would speculate about the two of them, but he honestly did not care. The Dark Lord wanted Harry near and safe by his side, and nothing was going to stand in his way.

On Friday night Harry was sitting with Luna in the library doing some study with her as he had promised he would. He knew he was due to have his first Occulemency lesson with Snape very soon but he was enjoying Luna's company and the quiet atmosphere that the books in the library created.

There weren't many other students here on a Friday night, only the most studious. There were no classes for the next two days after all, seeing as it was the weekend. Furthermore, the delegations from Beauxbatons and Durmstrang were arriving on Monday afternoon and so the teachers had assigned less work considering the Tournament was going to be starting. The following night the Champions were going to be announced. Already there were betting circles at Hogwarts about which seventh year was going to be selected by the Cup.

The most popular candidate was a pureblood boy named Cormac McLaggen whom strutted around the castle like he had already been announced as the Champion of Hogwarts. He played as the Keeper and Captain of the Aquila Quidditch team. However he would not be able to play this year, and Harry would not be able to try out seeing as the season had been cancelled due to the Tournament.

Harry was disappointed at the chance missed but he knew he would be able to try out next year. But realistically, he knew he would never get onto a team. He had never even been on a broomstick before, for Merlin's sake!

His past two days of classes had gone quite well and Harry had slipped nearly seamlessly into his lessons, catching up with his classmates and in the case of most courses, excelling beyond his peers.

Today had been his first lesson of Healing with the school nurse Madame Pomfrey, a fierce and yet kindly woman who cared deeply for the health of Hogwarts' students. Harry had been delighted to find out that Luna was taking the course, and seeing as it was a class that combined fifth years and above together, it meant that he was able to enjoy the lesson with both his quirky friend and Daphne whom tolerated Luna's oddness. It was far better than most people in the school.
Harry and Luna had had breakfast with the Weasley clan and their adopted children this morning as opposed to eating with the rest of the student population. It had been a refreshing change from the constant staring and whispered rumours that haunted Harry's footsteps wherever he went.

Finishing his Ancient Runes essay that he had been assigned the day before, Harry stretched his back, popping his stiff joints. Casting a *Tempus* he noted he had ten minutes to get to Snape's office. That was plenty of time for the short walk from the library to there.

Saying goodbye to Luna he glumly made his way to the headmaster's office, truly not looking forward to an hour locked up with the man trying to learn the very difficult art of Occulemency. He decided to take one of the hidden passages in order to save time walking through the corridors and to hopefully avoid any gawking students.

Later, Harry would wonder if he had not been so caught up sulking about having these lessons with Snape, he would have seen the *Petrificus Totalus* spell hastily cast his way. Alas, he hadn't been paying attention and the red beam of light hit him soundly, freezing his body and causing him to topple to the floor, his essay and books spilling from his stiff arms.

The spell had come from behind and so he was now lying on his front, furious that whomever had cast the spell had been so cowardly as to attack him where he couldn't see them. Footsteps drew nearer and Harry realised there was more than one attacker.

A booted foot rolled him over none too kindly, and he came face to face with none other than Zacharias Smith. He should have known. Standing on either side of Smith were two unfamiliar boys that would have had to be from a different year level because Harry didn't recognise them. Judging from their size he would have to say they were in the year above.

'Hello there Potter,' Smith spat with a nasty smile.

Harry could do nothing but continue to stare up, with his eyes frozen in surprise as they had been when he felt the spell hitting his back. Smith's gaze became mocking and he asked, 'Don't have anything to say then, Potter?'

His two lackeys sniggered, nudging each other in amusement in a rather unintelligent manner.

Smith grew visibly angry as he saw Harry's emotionless, frozen face and he hissed so strongly Harry felt spit hit him, 'You had the Professor humiliate me in Duelling on Wednesday, all because you couldn't handle the truth that you're a whore. Everyone knows the only reason you're at the top of most classes is because you're spreading your legs for every teacher you come across.'

The spiteful and untrue words stung Harry and he wanted nothing more than to punch the git in his face right then and there. But he was paralysed and helpless.

'So my buddies and I here have decided that you need to be put in your place. If you want to be a whore Potter, then by all means be a whore.'

That's when Smith's hand trailed to his jeans zipper in a very deliberate fashion. Harry's mind momentarily went blank with panic. He wasn't going to...

'Maybe after the three of us have used you to our hearts content then you will know your place at the bottom of the food chain.'

Smith had admitted it. He and his 'buddies' were going to rape him.

The two lackeys suddenly exchanged confused and slightly apprehensive glances. One of them
asked, 'I thought we were just going to threaten him a bit…'

Smith spun around and snarled at the two young men, 'The plans have changed.'

The same teen that had spoken before, obviously the brighter of the two straightened his spine a little and said, 'He's the Dark Lord's Courtesan. Who knows what will happen if he finds out that you've fucked his pretty little pet.'

Smith stiffened and snapped back, 'Harry won't tell him. I'll cow him enough so that he'll never speak a word of this to anyone.' Here Smith turned back around and knelt in front of Harry, slowly opening his thighs with a cold smirk on his face.

'I didn't know you were gay, Zach,' the other boy who hadn't spoken yet commented.

'I'm not gay,' Smith protested even as he tugged Harry's robes out of the way and started working on his belt buckle. 'I just want to put him in his place.'

'Well I'm out of here,' the smarter of the two announced, nervously looking about as though fearing Lord Voldemort might suddenly appear at any moment.

'Me too. I didn't come to watch two guys fuck each other,' the other one said with a trace of disgust in his voice.

'Whatever. More for me I suppose,' Smith muttered lecherously as he finally got Harry's belt undone and unbuttoned his pants.

Harry barely heard the footsteps fading away as the other two made their escape, as his mind was completely and utterly numb with horror. Perhaps if he had been in a calmer state of mind he would have been able to reach into his magical core and draw together enough strength to break Smith's spell. As it was, he was in a state of blind panic and his magic kept slipping away as he frantically tried to gather it together.

His pants and the boxers underneath them were quickly slid down to his ankles, revealing him bare for Smith's perusal. His legs were pushed wider apart and Harry felt his heart freezing into a tiny knot of horror as Smith's uncaring eyes trailed over his soft member and puckered hole.

'Huh,' the boy commented conversationally. 'Still tight I see.' Then a finger began circling Harry's entrance and that was when the raven-haired teen finally snapped. It was his most private spot, a spot that only Rabastan and Demetrius had ever been near. The fact that Zacharias fucking Smith was touching him there broke Harry out of his pitiful state and allowed his magic to come crashing forth in a wave of rage and panic.

He should have used the power to break the paralysing spell or to perhaps to knock Smith unconscious, but the panic in Harry still lingered and so in this alarmed state his primal urges kicked in. Adrenaline coursed through his veins as Harry reached for someone he could trust to come and find him.

Lord Voldemort's magic still pulsed strongly around his Courtesan collar and Harry saw a thin line of power connecting the metal to his contractor, he assumed. Whatever enchantment Lord Voldemort had cast a few days ago was reacting as Smith continued to trace his unwanted fingers around his entrance.

It was this line that Harry's magic gripped and gathering his magic Harry mentally screamed down the bond, 'VOLDEMORT!'
The answering echo indicated that the man was already aware that Harry was in a compromising situation and now he knew it was entirely involuntary. Harry could only hope he would now be coming to help him. At least he hoped that he would. The thought did cross his mind that the Dark Lord wouldn't care if someone violated him...Despite all of the privileges he experienced, he was only of the Servile class at the end of the day.

Smith had now managed to completely pull off Harry's pants and had unbuttoned his own to reveal a half-aroused member. Leaning down, the taller boy allowed his frame to completely smother Harry's so that their faces were inches apart.

'I'm going to enjoy this,' Smith murmured into Harry's face, brown eyes alight with merciless greed and a cold cruelness that terrified Harry down to the bone.

Harry's magic stirred weakly in response as he struggled to gather enough to force Smith off of him. He shouldn't have used so much to call his contractor, but he had been panicked, he still was, and he hadn't been thinking straight. Harry's thoughtlessness might just now cost him more than he was willing to give up. Despite all of his training, he was still inexperienced in magic. It was still all so new to him.

Smith was now poised, ready to violate Harry without so much as a bit of lubrication or even stretching to ease his entrance. It was as Smith's lips brushed Harry's own in a sickening kiss that the sharp crack of Apparition resounded through the hidden passage that Harry had fatefully taken as a shortcut.

The weight on Harry was unceremoniously blasted away and the emerald-eyed teen became aware of an insidiously dark presence permeating the hallway.

Lord Voldemort had come.

And he was furious.

Chapter End Notes

Author Note: Poor Harry! I hated doing this to him, absolutely hated it, but the bastard Smith had to try to get his twisted revenge for the fic to continue.

Be prepared for lots of angry/jealous (and dare I say it) concerned Voldemort in the next update.

As for Harry's luck...well it sucks. Two ex-lovers in one day and a near-rape experience two days later. I'm an awful person. Absolutely awful.

Lastly, I do not condone nor tolerate the atrocity that is rape in any way, shape or form.

Drops of Nightshade x
Chapter Thirteen

Chapter Summary

In a world where the Dark Lord won, ten year old Harry Potter is part of the servile caste, the lowest caste in the new society. Destined for the life of a Courtesan, Harry is resigned to his fate. But it seems his unusual gifts have drawn the attention of the Dark Lord and Harry finds himself becoming so much more than just another war-orphan of the new regime. Eventual LV/HP.

Chapter Notes

Author Note: I apologise once more for any spelling or grammar mistakes in this chapter. Seeing as I don't have a Beta I rely on myself to pick up any errors. But I do not need a Beta, don't worry, I am quite content with editing my own work. I am simply sorry if you spot a mistake.

Drops of Nightshade x

Chapter Thirteen

_Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry – The Citadel_

1996

Lord Voldemort had been in a meeting with his Inner Circle- minus Severus whom could not be excused from his duties- when he felt the monitoring charm on Harry's Courtesan collar come to life for the second time in three days. He could only assume it was the same person fraternising with Harry.

His Death Eaters exchanged slightly apprehensive glances as the atmosphere in the room suddenly darkened and their Lord's magic pulsed dangerously around them. It was both seductive and terrifying as it charged the air in the meeting chamber.

The Dark Lord had made the spell very precise so he could detect the level of intimacy between his Courtesan and whoever was idiotic enough to touch what was his. The information he was getting from the monitoring charm was relaying that the person with Harry was about to bed him.

The anger he had felt two days ago when the spell had reacted slightly, paled in comparison to the raw fury that thrummed through him now. And yet, he would not demean himself to force his way through the Hogwarts wards and confront his wayward charge and his unknown lover.

Lover.

The word felt bitter in his mind, weighing against his conscience like a cold stone.
No, he would summon his Courtesan the next day and tear through his mind to discover whom he would have laid with the night before. Then he would ensure the person would have an untimely end.

As much as he wanted to publically and violently execute the person that was right at this moment preparing to sleep with Harry, giving him pleasure and love, he had an image and a reputation to uphold.

His power in the international scheme of things was undeniable, enough so that the other wizarding leaders turned a blind eye to the fact that he had forcefully taken over the magical community of Britain. Not to mention his system's constant violations of basic human rights. However, as his advisors always tentatively reminded him, he could not go around torturing and executing every man or woman that slighted him.

But he was determined to ensure Harry's lover would endure a painful 'accident,' maybe a drawn out death over an extended period of time. Dark pleasure twisted in him at that thought, tinged with bitterness and jealously as he tried to ignore the monitoring spell giving him feedback.

His Inner Circle was used to him slipping into contemplative planning during such meetings as these and so Rabastan had bravely continued while his Lord's mind had been elsewhere.

However he faltered now slightly as he felt the Dark Lord's gaze on him, piercing and relentless as he looked him over. The Duelling Professor let out a discrete breath of relief when his Lord finally turned away into his brooding thoughts once more.

Lord Voldemort had carefully noted Rabastan's presence in the room and felt brief satisfaction that the man truly hadn't dared to cross him despite any lingering feelings towards Harry. The gratification was short-lived as his mind then returned to the matter at hand.

Suddenly, the Dark Lord stiffened minutely as he felt Harry's magic grip the bond connecting his collar to himself. Was the boy attempting to sever it, to hide his traitorous actions?

Then he felt a wave of terror, anger and helplessness wash over him from where the emerald-eyed teen's magic was connected to his link. One word came crashing down the line, filled with complete and utter panic and horror.

'VOLDEMORT'

The Dark Lord did not even hesitate, surging to his feet and startling his Death Eaters who also leaped to their feet, questions on their lips. He ignored them; he did not owe them any answers.

Instead he gathered his power and Apparated with a sharp crack from the meeting hall, moving the wards around the Citadel with ease to allow his passing.

He barely blinked an eye when confronted with Hogwarts' anti-Apparition enchantment, simply smashing his way through with a burst of Dark magic. Instinctively he allowed his body to be drawn to Harry through the spell he had layered on the boy's collar.

Materialising in a hidden corridor he had a short moment to analyse the situation, and what he saw made his wrath burn hot once more.

Harry was lying paralysed with his robes bunched up around his hips and his pants and boxers discarded to the side. There was a look of complete and utter terror on his features as he stared up frozen in the grip of whatever spell had caught him, *Petrificus Totalus* it looked like.
An unknown boy was smothering Harry beneath him, tasting those soft lips and poised to thrust into Harry's unprepared entrance.

With a surge of magic he blasted the bastard off of his pupil, watching with sadistic joy as the boy smashed into an unforgiving stone wall and slumped to the ground unconscious with blood trickling out of his nose.

Sparing little time to appreciate the sight of the insentient and bleeding teen, the Dark Lord turned to his charge. Harry's beautiful green eyes were staring unflinchingly at him with a mixture of relief and mortification and a faint echo of the horror that had previously been lingering in them.

On any other occasion if Harry had been spread out and bare for him he would have spent time lathering attention on his body, but now was neither the time nor the place. Instead he schooled his expression into blank neutrality and reclothed Harry with a twitch of magic.

With another nudge of magic he broke the spell around his Courtesan, watching as he slumped to the hard flagstones and curled into the foetal position, breathing heavily.

Harry's attacker would die.

Of this, there was no doubt in Lord Voldemort's mind. His previous hesitation of tarnishing his international image was swept aside in the face that his charge had almost been raped. His assaulter would be executed. And he wanted to be the one to do it.

Casting a spell over the unconscious boy in the corridor to ensure he wouldn't awaken, and that he could not be moved if discovered, the Dark Lord leaned down in an uncharacteristic show of concern. His Courtesan had not moved from his position curled in on himself. Lord Voldemort extended one of his white hands and stroked Harry's shoulder, encouraging him to turn over.

Harry did so with only a slight shudder, staring in confusion up at his contractor realising that he should probably have bowed to him, or at the very least said something by now to thank him for coming. But his throat was clenched tightly allowing no words to slip out and he was violently shaking as he went into delayed shock.

A small gasp left his lips as the Dark Lord's toned arms wrapped around his lithe form and picked him up, pulling his limp body close to his chest. Numb, Harry barely registered the arms protectively encasing him, nor the safe chest he rested on so comfortably.

There was vague crack in the distance of Harry's mind and an unpleasant sucking feeling before the roaring in his ears faded. He sensed the appendages around him shifting before he was placed on a soft surface.

The protective presence moved away and Harry cried out incoherently, reaching blindly for that feeling of safety that was slipping from his grasp. A sigh of relief left his lips as the presence moved back, not doing anything, nor saying anything, but merely being there by his side.

Exhaustion drawn on from his emotional distress threatened to overwhelm him, but he doggedly clung to wakefulness, afraid of sinking into his dreams where nightmares would undoubtedly haunt him.

'Sleep,' a firm voice commanded him, but Harry trembled, unwilling to succumb.

'Nightmares,' he managed to gasp out, hating himself for being so weak.

'I will keep them at bay,' the silky voice promised.
Harry trusted the owner of the voice, his saviour and his protector. So he closed his emerald eyes and sunk into unconsciousness. As he slipped away he felt a cool hand hesitantly and almost uncertainly touch his cheek, as though unused to such an action.

Harry dreamt of blue skies with the wind at his back, and a pair of protective crimson eyes that watched over him in his dreams and kept the darkness from consuming him.

When the Dark Lord was confident his charge was deeply asleep he made to move away from the bed he had placed him on, savouring a few more moments stroking the pale skin of Harry's unblemished cheek.

He didn't know what had inspired him to caress that smooth skin, but he couldn't help but revel in the feeling beneath his fingertips. He froze when Harry mumbled in his sleep, eyes flickering beneath his closed lids, and the Dark Lord retracted his hand and stepped away from the bed.

Why had he done that?

The strange feelings in him, unfamiliar and overwhelming sparked anger in him as he tried fruitlessly to decipher them. His Courtesan held some sort of unexplainable sway over him, coaxing emotions out of him where none had existed before.

The urges to keep the boy near him, to ensure his safety, to allow no other to have him in the way that he did constantly burned in him, driving him to do things he had never done before. He had given Harry a wand, an education, finances and most importantly of all he had given him time to come willingly to his bed.

Why?

The unanswered question blazed hotly in his mind, taunting him as though he should know the truth but he was too blind to see it.

A growl forced its way out of Lord Voldemort's throat that cut off when Harry whimpered slightly in his sleep as though hearing the angry noise and it had disturbed him.

It snapped him out of his thoughts and reminded him that his Courtesan had been attacked and almost raped by one of his peers. New anger bubbled forth and the Dark Lord swept from his chambers where his charge was currently sleeping in, sending Menials, officials and Death Eater's alike throwing themselves out of his way as he stormed through the halls of his Citadel.

The Dark Lord was out for blood.

And by Merlin, he was going to get it.

Lucius and Narcissa Malfoy had been enjoying a light supper in their private chambers in their Lord's Citadel when a new Death Eater recruit burst into the room without so much as a knock to announce his presence.

Lucius had opened his mouth to demand an explanation from the rude youth before the young man had squeaked out in a high-pitched voice, 'The Dark Lord to see you, Lord and Lady Malfoy.'

The Reaper had only a second to dodge aside as said Dark Lord glided into the room with a thunderous expression on his face.
As the new recruit made his escape back through the door, closing it hurriedly behind him, Lucius and Narcissa both rose from the table they had been dining at and bowed or curtseyed in turn.

'My Lord, to what do we owe this hono-' Lucius began smoothly, before being cut off with a curt hand movement from Lord Voldemort.

'Lady Malfoy, your healing expertise is required in my chambers. You will find my Courtesan within.'

The blonde-haired woman barely batted an eyelash at the location of the Dark Lord's charge, instead inquiring calmly, 'May I know the extent of his injuries? I will need to collect my medical supplies if they are extensive.' There was no judgement in her voice, even though she suspected the cause of the boy's wounds would have been from an angry Dark Lord. But she kept her opinions and thoughts to herself and off of her face.

'He is merely in shock and will need monitoring until he wakes and a potion to help him recover. I assume you have some Pepper-Up potions brewed by Severus in your supplies?'

'Yes my Lord. I will attend to your charge immediately,' Narcissa promised and gave the Dark Lord another curtsey before sweeping from the room with all the grace of a pureblood, sparing her husband a cautioning glance as she abandoned him to be left alone in the room with a barely-controlled Dark wizard.

As soon as Narcissa had left the chambers the Dark Lord gave his attention to his Inner Circle Death Eater and began without preamble, 'My reason for leaving so abruptly from our meeting earlier was due to the fact I became aware that my Courtesan was in the process of being sexually assaulted by a student of Hogwarts.' His voice was detached and cold as he spoke as though he had no further feelings in the matter other than the inconvenience of having someone else attempting to fool around with his property.

Lucius' eyebrows rose a fraction before he asked, 'I see…And what punishment do you intend to dole out to this student?' The pureblood man assumed the student would be fined, most likely expelled from Hogwarts in disgrace.

Thus, he was totally unprepared for the answer that came from his Lord.

'Death.' Seeing Lucius' incredulous expression the Dark Lord's face darkened and he said lowly, 'The boy launched an attack on someone under my protection. Harry wears my insignia, and therefore any assault on him will be considered an attack on my own person. The punishment, which is death.'

In his anger the Dark Lord failed to notice how he had unconsciously referred to Harry by name, making the entire issue entirely more personal.

Lucius aptly picked up on it and filed it away for later perusal. It seemed there were subtle layers to the relationship between Courtesan and contractor that were invisible to the general public. He felt intrigued at his Lord's actions and behaviour around the Potter heir.

One could almost believe he-

Lucius' thoughts were cut off as the Dark Lord continued to speak. 'I want you to arrange the boy's immediate arrest. He will be detained here in the Citadel dungeons until his trial. I trust the result will be execution.'

'Might I ask after the boy's name, My Lord?' Lucius asked, keeping his shock off of his face just
Lord Voldemort frowned, and conjured an image of the boy as he lay unconscious with blood covering part of his face. 'Does he seem familiar to you?'

Lucius scrutinised the image before him and then replied, 'I am almost completely certain that that is the Smith heir, Zacharias Smith. I have seen him in passing at functions.'

'Put in a warrant for his arrest,' the Dark Lord commanded coldly, reminding himself to pay a visit to Severus to have a second opinion on the boy's identity.

Lucius stared at his Lord as he callously ordered the arrest of a pureblood heir, believing that he would have at least lessened the punishment considering the teen's age and heritage. But the deadly seriousness in Lord Voldemort's eyes promised retribution should he hesitate in his actions.

So Lucius gave a deep bow and murmured, 'It will be done post-haste My Lord. The Smith heir will be in custody in a few hours time.'

'See that he is,' the Dark Lord ordered and left the room, taking his dark presence with him.

Lucius stared after his leader with thoughts whirring in his head as he processed all he had witnessed and learnt from this meeting. He remembered only two weeks previously that he had considered the Courtesan and had decided that the boy had a bright future ahead of him. It seemed Lucius' prediction was starting to come true.

Severus Snape had been sitting behind his desk, writing a note to his Lord with relish when he felt the anti-Apparition ward around Hogwarts being smashed apart.

The Potter brat had failed to appear for his Occulemency lesson and had provided no plausible reason for his absence. Thus the Potions Master had taken it into his own hands to inform the Dark Lord about his Courtesan's lacklustre attitude to his learning and to express his concerns as to whether the child was ready for such lessons.

When he sensed the ward being shoved aside as though the centuries old enchantment was nothing more than a slight nuisance, he had leaped to his feet. The sudden burn of his Dark Mark only assured him somewhat that there was no danger to the students.

A furious Dark Lord was just as deadly as a group of rebels forcing their way inside. In fact, even more so.

However the presence only lingered briefly within Hogwarts before disappearing as quickly as it had come leaving Severus confused and rather apprehensive. The anti-Apparition ward was in tatters and Severus muttered furiously under his breath as he made a mental note to request his Lord to come back and fix it.

It was useful though, allowing the Headmaster to Apparate to the location of the fleeting disturbance and work out what was wrong and how many angry parents he would have to deal with.

He found himself in one the castle's many hidden passages and he carefully surveyed the area before his attention was drawn to the unconscious student lying slumped with blood covering his face.

With a grimace of distaste on his face Severus went to nudge the teen with his foot to get a better look at his face but found he could not move the body an inch. Waving his wand, Severus picked up
an immobilising charm that reeked of Dark magic. There was also a sleeping enchantment on the student, whom he could now identify as Zacharias Smith, a pureblood sixth year.

His Lord had done this.

But why?

Severus could not combat the powerful spells and was forced to leave the boy lying against the unforgiving flagstones with crimson blood drying on his face.

Apparating back into his office he started pacing as he waited impatiently for the Dark Lord to arrive as he undoubtedly would.

Sure enough, Lord Voldemort Apparated in with a sharp crack a while later, halting the Potions Master's striding and causing him to wince as his Dark Mark burned once more.

Blood-red eyes bored into him and his Lord asked in a silkily dangerous voice, 'I fear your monitoring of the students is lacking, Severus.'

With a stiff bow Severus greeted his Lord and asked jerkily, 'May I ask what has given you this assumption My Lord?'

Lord Voldemort's eyes blazed and he hissed, almost slipping into Parseltongue in his fury, 'My Courtesan was almost raped under your very surveillance. Do you still deny that your monitoring is in need of improvement?'

Suddenly the unconscious and bleeding student in the corridor made more sense to Severus, not to mention the Dark Lord's uncaring entrance into Hogwarts. He felt a faint echo of a pang in his heart as he thought of Lily and what she would have felt had she known her son had almost been violated.

'Forgive me, My Lord. I will make arrangements to improve the level of observation of the students' movements and-

His words were halted when the Dark Lord spat out coldly, 'Crucio.'

The Potions Master collapsed to the floor, writhing in agony under the affects of the Unforgivable. After a short time under the influence, which felt like eons to the pained Headmaster, he was released from the spell to shakily climb to his feet, refusing to let his legs give way.

'Your inattentiveness resulted in the assault on what is mine. See to it that you remember this punishment Severus. I will not tolerate another mistake,' Lord Voldemort promised.

Bowing his head Severus managed to grit out between pained gasps, 'I will have your Courtesan placed under constant surveillance. He will be protected at all times, My Lord.'

Nodding sharply the Dark Lord then turned to the next most pressing topic. 'The one who attacked my charge…his name is Zacharias Smith, yes?'

'Indeed, My Lord,' Severus replied, already knowing there would be no mercy for the Smith heir.

'I wish for you to detain him until Lucius has arranged the warrant for his arrest. He will be trialled and executed for his crime.'

Unwilling to face another Crucio, the Headmaster nodded quickly in response and said, 'I will have him kept in a holding cell in the North tower until his arrest.'
Satisfied, the Dark Lord turned to leave before pausing and looking back at his Death Eater saying, 'My Courtesan will remain with me at the Citadel until the announcing of the Tri-Wizard Champions. He will attend the event with me and then stay on at the school afterwards once I am sure his protections are sufficient.'

'As you wish, My Lord,' was Severus' response.

The crack of Apparation echoed in the vaulted office allowing Severus to slump with relief against his desk, limbs still twitching from his punishment.

He needed to summon Smith's parents to inform them of the situation, something which he was not looking forward to. Smith himself had to be transferred to the holding cell. Then he needed to deal with the broken anti-Apparition ward and arrange for the Potter brat to have 'sufficient protection' once he returned from the Citadel.

Again Lily rose into the forefront of his mind, emerald eyes accusing as though blaming him for not looking after her child.

The child that Severus always felt should have been his.

Harry stirred into wakefulness, his mind fuzzy from his sleep. As he yawned and stretched on the silky sheets he absently noted that the bed he was lying on was not a familiar one. In fact, now that he thought of it, this entire room was one he had never seen before.

His brain caught up with him and Harry shot up quickly, eyes flickering nervously over his new surroundings. There was something else too…something had happened.

Harry racked his mind for answers and almost wished he hadn't pursued that train of thought as a barrage of images and feelings threatened to swamp him. With a choked cry he pressed his hand to his lips as though to keep the sounds of pain inside, to not be voiced in the air of this comfortable and yet unfamiliar chamber.

He had almost been raped. Zacharias Smith had almost raped him.

But then the Dark Lord had come, and had rescued him. The rest of his time was rather blurred but Harry vaguely remembered a pair of arms around him and a tentative hand touching his cheek…

But that was surely impossible. No, he must have made that up in his head. It had to have been wishful thinking, nothing more.

A movement in the corner of the room alerted the Courtesan that there was someone in the room with him and he flushed with humiliation as he realised whomever they were they had witnessed his show of weakness as he had momentarily lost control.

Turning around in the bed he saw a blonde-haired woman dressed in expensive robes sitting in a comfty chair observing him quietly with interested cornflower blue eyes. When she noticed him staring at her she rose gracefully and moved to his side, pulling a vial from a pocket in her clothes.

When Harry shrunk away from her she hesitated before slowly moving forward with a reassuring look on her face as though dealing with a frightened animal.

'I am the Lady Malfoy,' she informed the green-eyed boy. Harry blinked in surprise looking over the woman whom was his almost-friend's mother. Knowing he need only give the woman an inclination of his head in recognition of her status, he did so.
'I have been informed that you are suffering from shock. The Dark Lord has sent me to monitor you and to administer a Pepper-Up potion,' the pureblooded woman went on.

'The Dark Lord sent you?' Harry repeated.

'Indeed,' she replied, not elaborating on the subject.

With a quick nod of his head to allow her into his personal space, Harry accepted the Pepper-Up potion from her and downed it, feeling it fizz pleasantly on his tongue. Almost immediately he felt more aware as energy coursed through his veins.

With that awareness came the full crushing knowledge of what had occurred only just before and Harry had to blink back the sudden onslaught of tears as it truly sunk in. His eyes burned as he held his pain away, but he refused to cry in front of this near-stranger.

A knowing look entered the Lady Malfoy's eyes and she busied herself tucking the empty vial away as she allowed Harry time to compose himself. Once she sensed the Courtesan had regained some semblance of calm she turned back and looked him over carefully as though evaluating him. At last coming to some sort of decision she clasped her hands and told him, 'My son informs me that you are at the top of almost every one of your classes. He speaks very highly of you.'

Harry blushed at the praise, but found that words still evaded him. He was afraid that if he tried to talk he would choke up with his unshed tears.

'It is for that reason that I am offering to you that if you are ever in need of medical attention then you may contact me. With or without the Dark Lord's prior knowledge.'

Harry's breath hitched at the generous offer, and he wondered what had inspired this from the woman. The emerald-eyed teen's quick brain suddenly caught onto the woman's thought processing.

Did she think the Dark Lord had inflicted this on him? Was that why she was offering her son's friend an easy way to access her healing skills without his contractor knowing?

Feeling the sudden need to defend his saviour's honour Harry blurted out, 'He didn't do it.' Mentally smacking himself for being so tactless and seeing the bewildered look in the Lady Malfoy's eyes he elaborated saying, 'The Dark Lord that is. He was not the one that left me in this state. In fact, he saved me.'

Draco's mother allowed surprise to flicker across her features before it was hidden behind a cool mask that all purebloods seemed to have perfected.

'My offer still stands regardless. It would not do to have Draco's…friend lacking a healer in a time of need,' she replied, pausing before saying the word 'friend,' as though she was not yet used to the fact that her pureblood son considered a Courtesan to be a suitable companion.

'Thank you,' Harry whispered with a ghost of a smile on his face.

Giving him the tiniest of smiles in return the pureblood woman then took her leave, her face once more a cool façade, making Harry wonder if he had imagined the brief curl of the lips that she had given him.

Now that he was finally alone Harry allowed his barriers to break down and the tears came in a hot rush, his sobs muffled by the pillow beneath him. The scent over the surface was strangely comforting and yet he could not describe the smell. All he knew was that it made him feel content and safe.
It was a relief in a way to let it all out, to let his pain drain away as his tears dripped onto his clothes and the sheets and pillow beneath him. He allowed himself this weakness because he knew he needed it.

At last his sobs subsided and his tears dried on his face leaving it feeling sticky and rather unpleasant. But he felt like a weight had been lifted off him as all of his emotions had bled away. Scrubbing at his face he sat back up in the bed, exhaling and inhaling deeply to steady his breathing.

Yes, he had almost been raped. The most important word in that sentence was 'almost.' Voldemort had come in time, had saved him.

He was a strong person, and he couldn't let himself drown in something that was already behind him. To do so would mean that Smith had won.

Harry knew that he was still a way off from completely recovering from this awful experience but he was on the road to recovery.

Unbeknownst to the Courtesan whom sat upon the bed with renewed determination in his emerald eyes, his contractor lingered in the shadows by the doorway, an unreadable expression in his own ruby eyes as he watched his charge.
Chapter Fourteen

Chapter Summary

In a world where the Dark Lord won, ten year old Harry Potter is part of the servile caste, the lowest caste in the new society. Destined for the life of a Courtesan, Harry is resigned to his fate. But it seems his unusual gifts have drawn the attention of the Dark Lord and Harry finds himself becoming so much more than just another war-orphan of the new regime. Eventual LV/HP.

Chapter Notes

Author Note: Wow, over 60,000 words! I never anticipated the story being this long, but I am really happy with how it has turned out so far.

Drops of Nightshade x

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter Fourteen

The Citadel - Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry

1996

After his brief breakdown, and Harry had once more established calm, the Courtesan boy rose from the comfortable bed and attempted to determine where he was. The presence of the Lady Malfoy, coupled with the lavish decorations around him indicated he was no longer at Hogwarts, and he could only logically assume his contractor had taken him to the Citadel.

Wandering absent-mindedly over to the mahogany bookshelf in the corner of the chamber, Harry failed to notice the creature lurking in the shadows cast by the torchlight, blending seamlessly into the darkness.

Running a slender finger over the leather tomes, Harry read the titles and approved instantly of the selection of books on show. The owner of the room had similar tastes to him it seemed.

As Harry ran his finger over one particular little black book, he felt a surge of eerily familiar Dark magic. Pausing over the innocent looking paperback he stared at it in complete shock, trying to decipher what his magic was telling him.

The aura and magical taint surrounding the book informed Harry that the Dark Lord was contained within the pages. Or at least a piece of himself. But how was that even possible? How could one place a bit of themselves in an object?

For that matter, why would they place a bit of themselves in an object?
Harry's interest was piqued by this fascinating development and he itched to take the book and discover the secrets of its creation. However he hated to think of the consequences should he be found with the paperback on his person. It seemed important and undoubtedly special.

But just a quick look wouldn't hurt.

Two things happened in quick succession when the Courtesan boy's fingers trailed over the black cover.

A sudden force slammed into him with enough power to leave bruises, knocking him to the ground and driving the air out of his lungs. Almost straight afterwards Harry's magic picked up the presence of the Dark Lord as he unloaked his magical core and made his company known.

A string of rapidly hissed words were spoken and the heavy weight around Harry shifted before hissing back in response. The burden upon his chest moved away and the sixteen-year-old took in a large gulp of air. He noticed that whatever had been on top of him possessed the same aura as the black book and deduced that it was another bearer of the Dark Lord's essence.

Coughing slightly, Harry sat up and saw a massive black snake with coal-red eyes gazing at him before slithering away, scales glimmering as they caught the light. Following the undulating creature he saw its destination.

Lord Voldemort stood in the entrance of the room, eyes fixed not upon the intimidating snake making its way towards him, but on the emerald-eyed boy.

Harry felt his cheeks blush at the intensity of that crimson gaze and fixed his attention on the ground to avoid it. However the sound of hissing caught his attention and the teenager glanced up to see the snake draping itself over his contractor's shoulders and waist, wrapping lightly about the Dark Lord's frame.

A conversation seemed to be taking place, and Harry forgot about his previous embarrassment as he watched with curiosity as Lord Voldemort spoke with the large snake. It was common knowledge that the ruler of Wizarding Britain was the last known living Parselmouth, but it was one thing to read about it and another to actually hear and witness it.

Harry fought down his ever increasing blush as he listened to the silky vowels spilling from the Dark Lord's lips, trying to ignore the affect the language was having on him. Feeling a twitch of interest from his groin Harry muffled a groan of embarrassment and hoped his contractor wouldn't notice.

Peeking cautiously through his raven bangs Harry almost squeaked as he saw two burning ruby orbs staring at him with rapt focus.

It wasn't his fault he had such a strong reaction to the snake language! Combined with the fact that the Dark Lord looked like he had been sculpted in the image of a God, how could Harry not desire him?

A smirk touched the handsome features of Lord Voldemort and Harry remembered a second too late that as long as his gaze was connected with the Dark Lord, the wizard could read his surface thoughts. And despite wishing his Courtesan to know how to Occlude his mind, Lord Voldemort would not be able to prevent picking up the odd stray thought.

Mortified, Harry choked out, 'You didn't…didn't hear that did you? My Lord?' he added hastily at the end of the sentence.

Rather than answering right away, Lord Voldemort moved forward to where Harry was sitting on
the floor, the smirk on his features growing as Harry became more and more flustered.

An elegant hand was offered to the Courtesan whom took it hesitantly, breath hitching as he came in direct contact with the cool skin of his contractor. Harry had not calculated what would happen when Lord Voldemort rather abruptly tugged him forwards, a sly look in his red eyes.

As it was, he was shocked when his form was suddenly crushed to a firm chest, the snake's black coils moving aside to allow Harry more contact with the taller wizard's body.

Flush against his contractor Harry became thankful for the arm that wrapped loosely around him, as he feared his knees may or may not have given way by now. His magic perked up, and even his training in restraint could not force it to back down, as close as he was to Lord Voldemort's insidious presence.

Confused, anxious and perhaps a little bit aroused, Harry peered up at the Dark Lord whom was staring down at him with lust and desire in his ruby eyes.

'Would you prefer me to lie and say I heard nothing, Harry?' Lord Voldemort all but purred, Harry's name rolling off his tongue like pure sin as his hands wandered down the curve of the smaller male's spine.

Shivering in want at the sound, Harry nevertheless leaned away slightly.

He had fantasised about his contractor initiating intimate contact like this, had even dreamt about begging for sex from the wizard, but when it came to clear reality he was hesitant. A thousand questions and worries burned through his mind, stopping him from relaxing in the Dark Lord's embrace and letting the scenario continue.

He was a Courtesan for one thing, in a position to bring pleasure to his contractor. It was his obligation; his duty. But it was simply that, which made Harry so unwilling to engage in sexual intimacy with Lord Voldemort.

He wanted to give himself to the Dark Lord, not because he had no other choice, but because he did it for shared pleasure.

The truth startled Harry as much as it finally made the pieces in his mind click.

He truly wanted his contractor, wanted him in more ways than just sexually.

The sad fact was that Harry couldn't have that. Lord Voldemort would never…he would never give Harry what he really wanted.

More than just sex.

Far more.

Ripping himself away from the Dark Lord, Harry swallowed heavily and took the first excuse in his head. He could hardly say that he didn't want to have sex because he wanted more from the Lord than just physical intimacy.

'I'm sorry, My Lord. It's too soon…Smith…' Harry trailed off, hating himself for lying. Although he was truly still shaken from his near-rape experience, he felt ironically safe near the most dangerous man in Britain and beyond. He had saved him after all.

Careful to keep his gaze from his contractor's so his deceit could not be uncovered, Harry flinched
when a hand brushed his cheek. It triggered his memories once more and the boy stiffened slightly as he realised that the supposedly imagined hand upon his skin when he had been rescued was not just wishful thinking. It had really happened.

'I will give you your space,' the Dark Lord promised, but the unspoken 'for now' lingered perceptibly in the air between Courtesan and contractor. Both parties understood how the other felt, and there were no barriers stopping them from engaging in certain activities, besides Harry's passionate wish for the promise of something more.

'Thank you, My Lord,' Harry whispered.

He had time now, time to fully unravel these sudden realisations. Harry was mildly shocked that his contractor had consented to give him space in the first place. He was within his rights to demand Harry's 'services' whenever he pleased, and yet he was allowing the Courtesan invaluable time to come to come to him when he was ready.

He was waiting for Harry to initiate the intimacy, to give the final consent.

Confused by this new insight into the Dark Lord's thinking, Harry chanced yet another look at his contractor.

Luckily the taller wizard was staring at his snake, stroking its black scales in a contemplative silence. 'Smith is to be put to death,' he said suddenly, in a conversational tone.

Harry choked and his eyes widened almost comically as he attempted to decide how he felt about this rather harsh decision. On the one hand, Smith had almost raped him, forced him against his will. At least with Rabastan and Demetrius he had had some semblance of control when becoming physically intimate.

The fury in Harry at being treated so vilely would be sated with the pureblood's execution. But then there was the fact that Smith was only sixteen. He was a bastard, yes, but he probably had parents; maybe even brothers or sisters. What would his family think to know their loved one was being put to death over a matter involving a servile?

Suddenly wondering about Smith's two lackeys, and half-hoping they had received a lesser punishment Harry asked quietly, 'And the two boys with Smith? Have they too been sentenced for death?'

Harry was not ready for the Dark Lord's reaction to his question, gasping in shock when he was jerked towards Lord Voldemort, face tilted upwards so that his emerald eyes would be forced to meet crimson ones.

'There were others?' his contractor demanded, a faint deadly hiss underlying his words as though he were about to lose control.

'Y-yes,' Harry stammered and then winced as the Dark Lord shook him slightly as though attempting to dislodge the answers from him.

'Tell me. Who are they? Their names, Harry. Give me their names!' he snarled, and Harry was honestly afraid for the first time since he had been punished by his contractor. Despite the fact that the anger was not directed at him, as far as he could tell, it was still quite terrifying being near a furious Dark Lord.

'I don't know!' Harry cried out in frustration.
'Conjure an image of their faces,' Lord Voldemort commanded, fighting to keep his voice steady.

Harry stepped away from the Dark Lord's clutching hands and summoned forth a bit of magic to produce two images of the teenagers from what he could remember. They might have been a bit off, but it was still slightly accurate.

Lord Voldemort's red eyes roved over the two magically-conjured images as though memorising them permanently in his mind, which he probably was doing.

Once he thought his contractor had seen the images for a sufficient amount of time, Harry gladly released the spell, still not up to his optimum level of magic since his draining earlier.

Seeing the murderous intent on the Dark Lord's features and those now terribly cold red eyes narrowed in calculation as though working out the most painful way to detain the two boys, Harry murmured quickly, 'They did not engage, nor plan the…rape. It was all Smith's idea. They admitted they had only come to threaten me a bit.'

'That does not change the fact that they did not go for help. They were content to let what is mine be taken by someone who has no right to you. I am the only one who has that privilege. You belong to me,' Lord Voldemort spat possessively, almost unconsciously reaching for the Courtesan to pull him to his body once more, before remembering that he had promised to give the teenager space and time.

Harry felt a mixture of hope and sadness at his contractor's words. Hope, because he wished for Lord Voldemort to care for him enough to fight ferociously to be the only one to have him, and sadness because he knew that he would never be more than a possession to the Dark Lord. He would no doubt be a passing pleasure. Maybe even once he had finally given in and had sex with his contractor, the wizard would pass him off like used goods.

Shuddering at that possible scenario, nursing the hurt in his heart, Harry forced himself to be resilient and to tend to the most pressing matter at hand.

'It's true they never went to report the attack, but I ask again My Lord; will you have them killed?' Harry questioned. He didn't want more blood staining his name, already knowing Smith was a lost cause.

'You would defend them?' the Dark Lord asked stiffly, trying to catch his Courtesan's eye to delve into his mind, even though he had promised not to. Harry's thought processes continued to baffle him.

'I will not deny that they deserve to be punished,' Harry said, injecting his voice with enough steel to prove to his contractor that he was serious. 'But the death penalty seems extreme in their case, My Lord.'

Harry knew that he had spoken presumptuously and out of line for someone of his caste, to the ruler of wizarding Britain no less, but he had to at least try to convince the Dark Lord to show a little mercy.

To his surprise he noticed out of the corner of his eye that Lord Voldemort nodded eventually and replied evenly, 'I will…consider your request.'

The Dark Lord had listened to him? Had treated him like his opinion meant something? A warm, fragile feeling of hope blossomed in Harry's chest and he wanted this moment to last, to cling to this sensation of possibilities opening up.
Alas, Lord Voldemort was already turning to leave the room, perhaps to hunt down the identities of
the two other boys involved in the attempted rape of his Courtesan.

He stroked his snake's scales and murmured something in Parseltongue, resulting in the snake
unwinding itself and sliding to the floor. To Harry's surprise and slight fear the creature slithered over
to him and began climbing his body. The teenager shivered at the feeling of scales whispering
against his clothes and staggered a little under the new weight draping itself over his small frame.

'Nagini will guard you while I am gone. I advise you to get some sleep, it is the early hours of the
morning. Feel free to use my bed,' Lord Voldemort said.

Harry flushed as his suspicions were confirmed, now knowing for sure that the bedchamber he was
in belonged to the Dark Lord. He had begun suspecting when he had found the little black book on
the shelf in the corner.

Thinking of that made Harry wonder why the snake, Nagini, had reacted so violently to him about to
touch the magic-infused object. Perhaps it would be safest to put the mystery of the book from his
mind considering said snake was wrapped firmly around him.

'As for school, I have pulled you out for the next few days until I am sure you will be protected
sufficiently within Hogwarts' walls. You will be staying with either myself or Nagini for the duration
of your visit here.'

When Harry opened his mouth to ask if he would be sleeping in his old chambers, wondering if
tonight was a one-off occurrence, he was halted when Lord Voldemort said, 'Yes, you shall be
sleeping in my chambers. Think nothing of it, I do not require sleep and so you will not be expected
to share a bed with me. Unless you want to of course,' the Dark Lord added silkily.

After receiving a blush, Lord Voldemort addressed the final issue he wished to speak with his
Courtesan about. 'Lady Malfoy's offer to you was generous but entirely unneeded. You will never
come to any severe harm by my hand, I swear it.'

Harry felt like he had had enough of these sudden revelations for one day. The knowledge that the
Dark Lord had spied on his conversation, and had most likely seen his breakdown made Harry
cringe slightly, but he saw neither judgment nor disgust in his contractor's eyes as he shiftily glanced
at him.

There was only a calm look in the ruby orbs that in turn reassured Harry that he had done nothing
wrong by accepting Lady Malfoy's offer.

'Thank you, My Lord,' Harry said meaningfully. The thank you was for more than just calming him;
it was a thank you for coming to his aid, for caring in his own, twisted way.

And Harry knew that the Dark Lord understood the deeper meaning behind his words as he was
rewarded with an almost softening of the aloof red eyes.

Then his contractor was gone, stately sweeping from the room and placing a few protective charms
and wards over the door so that none could enter without his express permission.

Yawning widely, Harry moved awkwardly to the bed, attempting to manoeuvre his limbs that were
currently weighed down by Nagini's heavy coils. He was too tired to care that he was about to sleep
in Lord Voldemort's bed, regardless of the fact that the wizard wasn't even there to share it.

When he tried to lie down he found he couldn't considering the huge snake clinging to his body and
so Harry blearily said, 'You're going to have to release me, Nagini. I need to sleep.'
The creature was obviously more intelligent than a normal snake because it, or perhaps 'she' as Harry decided to subconsciously start referring to her, slid off his body and allowed him to curl up under the covers unhindered.

She twined around his legs and rested her triangular shaped head over his heart as though monitoring its beating. Bemused at her protective actions and more than a little apprehensive of the large and deadly snake, Harry forced it all aside and rested his head on the pillow that smelled of the Dark Lord.

That unidentifiable scent spoke volumes of comfort and safety that helped to ease Harry into sleep. Nagini watched on as her master's precious 'mate' slipped into unconsciousness, and she settled down to guard the nestling through the night.

The presence inside of the little black book, once known as Tom Riddle, contemplated the sweet and powerful magic that had brushed against him all too briefly. He had been slumbering, lying coiled within the bounds of the diary caught between awareness and nothingness when he had sensed the arrival of the strong magical aura probing his own.

Half drugged from pleasure at the feeling of that pure and untainted magic caressing his own, the shard of Lord Voldemort's soul had lamented when the owner of that beautiful power moved away. Beckoning and enticing the individual back to him, he had sensed the other piece of himself in the snake stir in agitation.

Ignoring it he had called to the bearer of the sweet magic, needing them to just touch the cover of the diary, perhaps to hold it. Then he would be able to plant the seeds of obsession in the person's mind. They would be unable to resist finding him and then writing within his pages, inviting him into their mind and body.

Tom Riddle wished to reside in this individual. Their magic would be enough to sustain him and bolster his strength. It was also safer than the fragile diary, not to mention entirely more appealing than living in the creases of the book.

Here was a worthy host for him, a suitable bearer for this particular shard of his soul.

Just as the individual had brushed their fingers over the spine of his prison once more, he sensed the other Horcrux awaken and force its snake host to protect the human from its other self. With a silent scream of fury, Tom Riddle was forced to deal with the presence being shoved away.

But he had had enough time to lay a small Dark influence on the person as they had lightly touched upon the black book. It was not enough to inspire the complete obsession that he had wanted, but it was adequate to not let the diary slip from his mind.

Hopefully, with time, the human would come to him once more.

And when they did, Tom Riddle would be ready.

He had decided on a new host for this fragment of his soul, and nothing was going to stand in his way.

Not even himself.

The next morning when the sixth year students awoke, it was to the discovery that neither Harry nor Smith had returned to bed the night before.
As Millicent left the common room to find a teacher to report their mysterious absence, Draco's mind was working quickly as he put two and two together. He knew that Smith had had a problem with Harry from the beginning, and now with both males missing he assumed that something had occurred between them.

Feeling a flicker of concern, Draco did not let it appear on his face, instead assuring an openly worried Daphne that he was confident they would find both teens safe and well.

'I don't care about Smith,' the blonde haired girl spat, before her eyes gentled. 'It's Harry I'm worried about. If that bastard did anything to him…' she let her threat hang in the air, watching with satisfaction as the people closest to her leaned away slightly.

'Language,' Pansy tutted in a reprimanding fashion, completely unconcerned that two boys were missing as she straightened her hair in the mirror.

Daphne flashed her a dirty glance before focusing on the door to the common room, waiting for Millicent to return with a teacher who could perhaps shed some light on the situation. Draco came to sit next to her, joining in her silent wait.

He had been beginning to enjoy the company of the Courtesan boy, and had a great deal of respect for his intelligence in class. It was for those reasons that Draco hoped that the joint disappearance of both Smith and Harry was a coincidence. He was beginning to form a friendship with the emerald-eyed teen, something he did not do lightly.

Draco may not be so bold as to publically voice his support of Harry as his friend Daphne had, but the pureblood boy made a private promise to avenge the Courtesan should it turn out he had been wronged. No body harmed Draco's friends and allies without retribution.

When the portrait swung open it revealed a confused looking Millicent and their Theory of Dark Magic Professor, Amycus Carrow.

Professor Carrow was a second tier Death Eater and was the twin of Alecto Carrow, the History of Magic teacher at Hogwarts and also a high ranking Death Eater. He stomped into the room with his usual bad attitude and growled out at the gathered students, 'There is no need for concern. Both Smith and Potter are accounted for. Neither will be returning to school this weekend.'

Daphne spoke up saying, 'Might we inquire why they are to be absent?' She wanted to know the cause of Harry's unexplained departure.

'No,' the professor responded shortly, which informed the students that he actually had no idea why they had been removed.

Not waiting to allow any more questions the man left the room taking his stormy manner with him. The students left behind exchanged glances with one another before conversation erupted, the sixth years bouncing ideas and speculations off of one another.

Daphne however sat in silence, deep in thought as she contemplated what she knew about the situation.

'He'll be fine,' Draco said softly so as not to be overheard.

Daphne met his attentive grey eyes and took a deep breath in. At least someone knew where Harry was, and he was most likely being taken care of. The blonde-haired girl just wished she knew what had happened.
Little did she know, the answer was soon to be winging its way to her the following morning, plastered over the front page of the Sunday morning Daily Prophet.

Chapter End Notes

Author Note: I'm sorry if that wasn't enough possessive Voldemort for you, but I had intended to have this chapter finishing with the announcing of the Tri-Wizard Champions and thus including Harry's time at the Citadel. As usual my writing got away from me.

So, I apologise if there was not enough good interaction.

Hopefully I will be able to fit in more during the next chapter as Harry spends the next few days with Lord Voldemort.

As for the Horcrux, or 'Tom Riddle' as I have labelled the presence, he will be trying to get Harry near him to be able to shift from the diary to Harry's body. If he achieves this then Harry would react in the same way as he did during the book series. Eg: Being able to speak to snakes, having a connection with the Dark Lord, sharing dreams etc.

Drops of Nightshade x
Chapter Fifteen

Chapter Summary

In a world where the Dark Lord won, ten year old Harry Potter is part of the servile caste, the lowest caste in the new society. Destined for the life of a Courtesan, Harry is resigned to his fate. But it seems his unusual gifts have drawn the attention of the Dark Lord and Harry finds himself becoming so much more than just another war-orphan of the new regime. Eventual LV/HP.

Chapter Notes

Author Notes: I would like to clarify that if Harry were to be inhabited by the diary Horcrux, he would not be affected in the same way as Ginny Weasley in the Chamber of Secrets. He would react in the same way as he did in the original books series. The presence of 'Tom Riddle' would be sentient but would not possess Harry nor be able to communicate directly with him. In certain situations the Horcrux would perhaps 'nudge' Harry into doing things for his own good. Or maybe what the Horcrux perceives as good…

Drops of Nightshade x

Chapter Fifteen

The Citadel - Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry

1996

Saturday morning found Harry sitting beside the Dark Lord in the Citadel's inner meeting chamber, self consciously avoiding everyone's gazes. Nagini was draped languidly over his body, once more restricting his movements.

He had been woken that morning, not by a house elf, but by Lord Voldemort himself. After being given a set of brand new robes as his other clothes were sitting in his wardrobe at Hogwarts, Harry had been instructed to have a quick breakfast and then to be waiting outside of the bedchamber for the Dark Lord to escort him to a meeting.

It seemed that when the Dark Lord had insinuated Harry would be under constant supervision, he had truly meant it.

They had entered the room together, causing a stir to go through the assembled Death Eaters whom had already taken their seats around the large ebony table. Rather than make Harry sit beside him on the floor, or take a seat at the end of the table, Lord Voldemort had conjured a comfortable chair beside his own for Harry to sit on.
The Death Eaters had been shocked, many eyes narrowing in calculating fashions as though completely reassessing the beautiful Courtesan boy that had somehow won the Dark Lord's respect.

Harry had noticed Rabastan's presence at the table and had been given a small, reassuring smile, which he returned. Unfortunately this small interaction had been picked up on by Lord Voldemort whom twined his fingers in Harry's raven locks and began caressing his head absent. Whilst this action seemed innocent enough, the dark look of warning he had shot Rabastan destroyed the image.

Harry had therefore started off the meeting with a vivid blush on his cheeks and had determinedly avoided all other eye contact since then. It took all of his effort and concentration to retain a semblance of calm, drawing on his Courtesan training to make a good impression in front of the gathered elites.

Barely paying any attention to the debate occurring around him, something about inflated dragon blood prices; Harry concentrated on the soothing fingers still running through his hair. It was a calming motion, yet the teen could sense the possessiveness behind the action. He was clearly stating to everyone present that Harry was his and his alone.

The resounding crash of the double doors to the chamber slamming open halted the rather dry report coming from one of the Death Eaters. All heads turned to incredulously survey whom had dared to enter the chamber of the Dark Lord in such a callous manner.

Harry held his breath, peering up over the sea of heads to see for himself who had just arrived. Standing in the opening of the doors was a hulking figure of a man, standing well over six foot tall with powerful muscles covering his body. He wore only a ragged pair of pants, foregoing a shirt and giving the room a rather nice view of his defined chest.

His silver hair hung in a tangled mane around his face, which was sharp and angular giving Harry the impression of a wild animal. The man's blue eyes were flecked with shards of amber and were currently flickering across the room as though searching for threats.

When those unique eyes landed on Harry the man smirked and he began sauntering into the meeting chamber, moving with a deadly prowl.

Gulping slightly, Harry half-turned to his contractor with a questioning look, clearly asking why he had done nothing to halt this bestial man from coming closer.

Lord Voldemort glanced towards his Courtesan and let the teen see the calmness in his red eyes. Harry relaxed instantly, knowing the Dark Lord had this situation under control even though it didn't look like it.

The silver haired man stopped a few feet away from where Harry and Lord Voldemort were sitting and swept into a slightly mocking bow.

'My Lord,' he ground out with a faint growl in his tone.

'Fenrir Greyback,' Lord Voldemort stated coolly. 'To what do we owe this…pleasure?' A round of chuckles occurred around the room, and dozens of contemptuous eyes were fixed on the man.

'The last batch of Menials you gave me were very disappointing. Three died in the transformation and a further two were killed within weeks of turning.'

Harry shivered slightly, knowing how lucky the Weasley children had been to never be selected for the werewolf territories in the north. Twice a year a collection of randomly chosen Menials between the ages of sixteen and twenty-one were given to Fenrir Greyback, the unofficial king of the British
werewolves.

It was part of the decade old contract between Greyback and Lord Voldemort, the Dark Lord agreeing to supply the Alpha with young people to turn and make his pack and the wider werewolf population flourish.

'What do you expect me to do about this?' The Dark Lord inquired, an icy hint in his voice.

'The Menials are malnourished weaklings, not strong enough to survive the turning. Even the most pathetic Omega in my pack could take one of them on and come out the victor,' Greyback snarled recklessly.

'Do you accuse me of not meeting our arrangement?' Lord Voldemort asked. The Death Eaters in the room stilled at the tone of their Lord's voice, exchanging apprehensive looks.

The werewolf had barely begun to confirm it before he went down on the ground with a grunt.

The Dark Lord had not spoken, nor had he pulled out his wand. He watched impassively as the mighty king of the werewolves thrashed on the floor of the meeting chamber, trying in vain to muffle his hoarse shouts of pain.

The sheer show of power both frightened and awed Harry, not to mention the others present in the room.

At last the Dark Lord relented and Greyback staggered to his feet, panting harshly as he tried to regain his composure.

'Perhaps we should continue this conversation in a private manner?' Lord Voldemort suggested lightly as though he had not just tortured the man a second ago.

When he received a jerky nod the Dark Lord, dismissed his Death Eaters with a wave of his hand, observing as they filed out of the room into the special Apparating chamber that allowed them to pass through the wards around the Citadel.

Harry made to rise and allow his contractor his privacy, but was surprised when a hand pressed down on his shoulder, insisting he stay. Cautiously settling back in his seat Harry stroked Nagini's scales to have something to do, and to avoid acknowledging the amber flecked eyes boring into his head.

'I apologise for my accusation My Lord,' Greyback said at last, painfully swallowing his pride down.

'You are in luck, Greyback,' the Dark Lord said whilst one of his hands returned to caressing Harry's locks. 'I currently have three healthy teenagers in my keeping whom have committed crimes against my name.'

Harry stiffened in suspicion. He couldn't be talking about…?

'You would be willing to give them over to my authority?' Greyback asked. Then his eyes, suddenly hungry, turned to Harry and he asked, 'Is this one of them?'

'No,' the Dark Lord snarled, hand gripping Harry's hair. 'My Courtesan is mine alone.' He relaxed and continued smoothly, 'No, the three I speak of are disowned purebloods. Their families were quick to sever ties when they discovered what they had done.'

'What is it that they did?' Greyback asked curiously.
'They attacked what is mine,' Lord Voldemort replied evenly, as his hand continued to pet Harry's head.

Harry turned huge green eyes on the Dark Lord, now knowing that the three were Smith and his two lackeys that had attacked him.

'However,' Lord Voldemort continued, not meeting his Courtesan's eyes, 'I must deny you access to one of them. His life was forfeit the second he touched what belonged to me. You may have the other two to turn and add to your pack to serve you.'

'Thank you, My Lord,' Greyback said with a pleased, toothy grin.

A dark look of pleasure suddenly came across Lord Voldemort's face as though an idea had just come to him. 'Have you decided yet on a sacrifice for the Samhain ritual?'

The old pureblood families still celebrated the pagan rituals and whilst Harry knew of the proceedings of quite a few, he had no clue as to what happened on Samhain. It was all very secretive.

Harry recognised the word as the celebration held on the thirty first of October, when the veil between the world of the dead and living was at its thinnest. Muggles called it 'Halloween' and had commercialised it according to Hermione. The reminder of his foster sister caused pain in Harry's heart, but it was not as virulent as it would have been a few months before. The knowledge caused a tiny seed of guilt to enter Harry's mind but he still missed Hermione and wanted nothing more than to be reunited. They had picked up their owl correspondence, Harry writing much more cautiously than before, knowing that Lord Voldemort was monitoring his messages.

The grin on Greyback's face grew even wider, a look of insatiable blood thirst entering his eyes. 'Not yet, My Lord.'

'Might I suggest the third prisoner in my keeping? Once I have taught him...a few lessons of course.'

'Of course, My Lord. I assume then that you wish to take part in the ritual?'

'Naturally,' Lord Voldemort drawled.

'It will be arranged,' Greyback promised with a bow, which was still rather shaky from his torture.

After the werewolf had been sent away, no doubt to collect his two prizes, Harry asked carefully, keeping the accusation out of his voice, 'Will none of them get a trial?'

'Their families disowned them,' Lord Voldemort explained calmly. 'They have lost their rights as purebloods. Even half-bloods are above them. It was an unexpected move on the parents' part, but welcome nonetheless. It saves having to go through an unnecessary trial.'

'This ritual you were speaking of...will Smith die?'

'Quite painfully. But it is what he deserves for attempting to take you,' the Dark Lord explained.

Harry squeaked as he was abruptly tugged to his feet, but Lord Voldemort kept his distance as he had promised. With his intense crimson eyes staring into emerald ones he said clearly, 'I will show no mercy to Smith- or Zacharias, as he should be referred to, as the Smith family have disowned him. The world must know the punishment for harming you.'

The zealous words made that feeling of hope grow a little bit more in Harry's heart.
The pleasant hum of many voices permeated the Great Hall of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry as the students congregated for their Sunday breakfast.

Daphne picked absently at her scrambled eggs, her thoughts undeniably on her missing friend. Saturday had passed in a blur with no further information being revealed as to where Harry was, or what reasons there were for his absence in the first place.

The pureblood girl was beginning to become distinctly worried.

Her hazel eyes roamed over the large chamber, touching briefly on her little sister before continuing to peruse the gathered students. As she flicked her gaze over the fifth year table she found a pair of intense silvery blue eyes staring unflinchingly at her.

Almost imperceptibly, Luna Lovegood tilted her head towards the doors that led out of the Great Hall, a subtle invitation to join her outside. The other blonde then rose, her presence being ignored, and drifted in her dream-like way out into the atrium.

Daphne blinked, wondering if she had imagined what she had seen. It had all happened so quickly.

She was by no means close with Luna, merely being on cordial terms with the strange half blood, as Harry was rather fond of her quirkiness. But she knew a hint to follow when she saw it, and as much as she was loath to have to deal with the girl's eccentricity at this time of morning, Daphne knew that if Luna had anything to say to her, it would have to be important.

Elegantly rising from her chair, Daphne was stopped when Theodore turned concerned eyes towards her and murmured so they would not be overhead, 'You've barely touched your breakfast. Surely you're not done?'

'I'm fine Theo,' she reassured her childhood friend and current betrothed.

He sighed, running a hand through his hair and said, 'I know you're worried about Harry- most of us are. We just…don't show it as clearly as you. But you won't be able to work out where he is on an empty stomach. Harry wouldn't want you to lose weight worrying about him.'

Daphne's hazel eyes softened slightly at her friend's protective manner and lightly placed her hand over his own. 'There's something I need to do right now Theo,' she informed him. When he looked unconvinced at her excuse she sighed in annoyance and picked up a slice of warm toast, making an effort to take a bite even though she didn't really feel like it. 'I'll take this with me. Honestly Theo, I'm fine.'

After soothing her friend's concerns she quickly left the Great Hall, stepping out into the atrium and peering around trying to spot the elusive girl whilst simultaneously taking bites out of the toast.

Just as she finished chewing, Daphne finally found her lingering in the shadows by the grand staircase and made her way over, preparing herself for what was sure to be a potentially confusing conversation.

She was shocked when instead of finding just Luna, she was presented with the sight of three Menials. They were undoubtedly brothers, all bearing the same red hair and smattering of freckles across their tanned skin. Two were identical and the third was shorter and seemed to be the youngest of the trio.

All three Serviles were staring at her with a mixture of nervousness and open curiosity. Daphne suddenly felt self-conscious in her pristine black robes and her perfectly styled blonde hair.
Compared to the scruffy appearance of the three Hogwarts Menials she stuck out like a sore thumb. Even Luna fit in more with her unkempt hair and slightly dishevelled clothes as though she had not hung them up when she had gone to sleep the night before.

'What is the meaning of this?' Daphne demanded, more curtly than she had intended it to sound.

The youngest Menial flinched slightly and the twins gave her each an unimpressed look.

'I have news about Harry,' Luna said mildly, ignoring Daphne's rudeness. She instantly had the rapt attention of her four companions. 'And I decided I might as well tell you all at once.'

Daphne felt suddenly grateful to the odd girl whom had decided to make her privy to whatever information she was about to offer. A trace of guilt ran through her at the thought of how she had treated her with such indifference in the past and even just recently.

'Mum's been worried sick,' the youngest Menial said with a cautious glance towards Daphne's way.

The pureblood girl knew that Harry had once worked as a Menial, within these very walls, but it was one thing to hear it mentioned and another to be confronted with proof. The three boys here must have been close to Harry, and knowing the sweet boy's attachments to people, they probably still were.

Luna suddenly said, completely off-topic, 'These are my friends Ron, Fred and George Weasley.' She pointed out each of them in turn and Daphne gave them a strained smile.

'Hello…my name is Daphne,' she introduced herself politely, avoiding any titles or further background information.

After the incredibly awkward exchanges of names, Luna, whom smiled vaguely as though they were all old friends, reached into her robe's pocket and withdrew a sheet of paper.

With a tap of her wand and a muttered spell she created an extra copy, giving one to the Menials and one to Daphne whom took the parchment and began reading.

At the top of the page it announced the document to be a draft for The Quibbler, the special-interest magazine that Daphne was sure that Luna's father owned and ran. Beneath that there was a bold red stamp that proclaimed the article to be 'denied' to be published.

Frowning slightly, wondering why Luna was getting them to read this, and trying to work out what this had to do with Harry, Daphne began reading.

Her entire mentality changed when she read the large title in heavy black letters:

**THE DARK LORD'S COURTESAN IS ATTACKED AT HOGWARTS SCHOOL OF WITCHCRAFT AND WIZARDRY!**

Daphne's breath hitched and she gripped the paper so tightly it crumpled a tiny bit. Harry had been attacked? When? What had happened? Where was he? Why hadn't she known?

She saw out of the corner of her eye similar reactions from the Menials, whom apparently knew how to read.

Hunggrily scouring the article, which was written by the infamous Rita Skeeter, Daphne mentally shifted aside the useless sections of the account and focused on the parts that really mattered.
Steadily growing more and more angry, Daphne finished before the redheaded teens, practically shaking with her fury.

She had known deep down that the arrogant git had had something to do with Harry's disappearance, had instinctively sensed that it was no coincidence that both were missing. But to think that Smith had almost...

She was distracted when one of the twins swore fluently and punched a fist at the wall next to him. His double seemed no better off, eyes narrowed as though working out if there was a way to get Smith and extract some of his own revenge.

The youngest, Ron, was white with rage, fists gripping the paper as though by ripping it apart he could somehow deny the event had happened.

'This is true? It hasn't been fabricated or exaggerated by Skeeter?' Daphne finally managed to ask, a little hoarsely.

Luna nodded slowly, eyes staring off into the distance.

'The report says two of Harry's attackers are being sentenced to the werewolf colony and that Smith is being 'detained.' What does that mean? Is he even going to be punished? One of the twins spat.

The other twin picked up on his brother's tirade and snarled, 'They're probably going to let him go with a slap on the hand and a petty fine.'

'Don't be so sure, Fred,' Luna murmured without even looking to confirm she was addressing the correct twin.

Daphne spoke up addressing the Menials and saying, 'Luna's right. All three were disowned. That's the highest form of disgrace in pureblood society. When you have your family name stripped from you, you lose everything. Right now those three are the dirt beneath our feet.'

There was a surprised silence before Ron input abruptly, 'Why was the article denied? Shouldn't people know what Harry's gone through?' His face was losing its paleness and becoming flushed.

'My father doesn't like publishing articles written by Rita Skeeter. But the Daily Prophet does have a copy of this report on the front page. In fact, I believe the owls should be arriving with it any second now.'

Sure enough the sound of flapping wings and hooting of owls became apparent, interspersed with the thumping of packages arriving at their destinations. Daphne wondered how the girl just seemed to know things. It was uncanny.

The quintet didn't have to wait long for the first gasps of shock to resound throughout the Great Hall. Soon the volume of sound rose to a roar as students discovered the front page headline.

'We should get back to the kitchens...tell mum and dad what's happened,' one of the twins suggested uncertainly.

Daphne didn't blame the three for not wanting to go back, with news as awful as that.

After the Menials had left Luna finally focused her attention on Daphne and said with complete certainty, 'Harry will be ok. I know he will. We shall be seeing him soon.'

And just like that the girl was gone, wandering away in that dreamy way of hers.
Daphne stared after her, wondering if perhaps Seer blood ran in the Lovegood family line.

It would explain a lot.
Chapter Sixteen

Chapter Summary

In a world where the Dark Lord won, ten year old Harry Potter is part of the servile caste, the lowest caste in the new society. Destined for the life of a Courtesan, Harry is resigned to his fate. But it seems his unusual gifts have drawn the attention of the Dark Lord and Harry finds himself becoming so much more than just another war-orphan of the new regime. Eventual LV/HP.

Chapter Notes

Author Note: In regards to wizarding money in my story:

Knut = US$1.00
Sickle = US$10.00
Galleon = US$100.00

Therefore:

Ten Knuts = One Sickle
Ten Sickles = One Galleon
One Galleon = One hundred Knuts

On another note, sorry once more for any mistakes in this chapter.

Drops of Nightshade x

Chapter Sixteen

Hogsmeade – Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry

1996

Despite Harry's temporary removal from Hogwarts, it seemed his contractor was still determined to allow the Courtesan to visit Gringotts and retrieve a sum of money from his account.

Because of the article that Lord Voldemort had authorised, there were now numerous reporters on the lookout for the emerald-eyed teen. They were not so suicidal as to attempt to enter the Citadel, but that did not stop them from lurking outside of the wards, hoping to perhaps catch the Courtesan if he left the building.
As Harry's public profile was now in the light, the Dark Lord had chosen to take his charge to the Hogsmeade branch of Gringotts that Sunday afternoon as opposed to the more popular Diagon Alley. By the time the media discovered Lord Voldemort and his Courtesan were visiting the small wizarding village, he planned that they would be long gone.

Nagini had been left in the Dark Lord's chambers as she would draw immediate and unwanted attention to the duo. The snake had been rather displeased about this decision, and had curled a bit too tightly around Harry to demonstrate her reluctance to be removed.

However a few sharp words hissed by Lord Voldemort and she had slid from Harry's body with a distinct air of disgruntlement.

The two had Apparated to the main thoroughfare of the wizarding village and had travelled along the cobblestone street to the obviously new building standing out amongst the humble wooden and stone structures that lined the road.

As they had passed through, people had bowed or curtseyed deeply at the sight of their Lord, eyes flicking to the beautiful Courtesan at his side, curious whispers following the pair. They made an impressive sight, two undoubtedly attractive and influential people walking down little Hogsmeade's main street.

Now, standing within the opulent Gringotts, Harry tried his best to keep the look of awe off of his face as he looked around, observing the goblins at work. The vaulted ceiling gave the main chamber a sense of extreme space and the polished marble surfaces glinted superiorly in the lamplight.

The Dark Lord ignored the incredulous looks he was getting from the people moving about him and instead watched his Courtesan with amusement hidden within his crimson eyes. The look of wide-eyed wonder on Harry's face was both entertaining and appealing.

'Harry!' a voice called happily over the light chatter of noise in the building and both males turned to find its source.

A tall golden-haired man was striding over in the robes of a Curse Breaker, warm eyes fixed on Harry with so much intensity he failed to notice the imperious presence at the teen's side.

Lord Voldemort's eyes narrowed when he saw the pleased expression on his Courtesan's face and he looked between both the Curse Breaker and the emerald-eyed boy with ill-hidden discontent.

Harry started forward as though to meet the man before remembering at the last second that it would be rather inappropriate considering his current companion.

Lord Voldemort's ire grew as he saw the way the Courtesan had eagerly stepped forward, so keen to greet the blond-haired Gringotts worker. His sharp red eyes were fixated on said man, sizing him up and attempting to deduce how he knew Harry.

The man by now realised that Harry had not come here alone, and was staring with astonishment at the ruler of wizarding Britain. He stopped a few feet away and bowed deeply with a murmured greeting for the Dark Lord, blue eyes flicking over slightly to Harry as he rose.

'We have come to collect a sum of money from Mr Potter's vault. If you would direct us to the nearest available goblin?' Lord Voldemort asked in a clipped voice, his words laced with venom to the man that had caught his Courtesan's eye.

The man bowed once more and gestured respectfully for the Dark Lord to follow him, walking a bit stiffly to the nearest workstation where a goblin sat on his high, spindly chair inspecting a flawless
ruby with a delicate lens.

With a final nod to the ruler of wizarding Britain and a long glance towards Harry, the blonde-haired man took his leave.

'Greetings, Griphook. May your gold ever flow,' Lord Voldemort began without preamble after one suspicious glance at his Courtesan. The formal Goblin greeting flowed off his tongue with practiced ease that Harry could only ever dream of achieving, even with his extensive Courtesan training.

'And may fortune serve you well, My Lord,' Griphook returned with a toothy grin that revealed a set of pointed teeth.

Harry gulped slightly at the sight of those impressive fangs and reminded himself not to get on a Goblin's bad side. It was incredibly fortunate that the Dark Lord had created a treaty with the clever creatures that ensured the continued peaceful dealing with humans in return for the repayment of a number of ancient Goblin artifacts and fairer dealings within the Ministry.

'I have already spoken with you as you are the Keeper of the Potter family vault, and I now wish to withdraw a sum of money for one Harry James Potter.'

'Do you have the key, My Lord?' the goblin asked.

From the darkness of his cloak Lord Voldemort drew forth a tiny golden key, which he placed, on the high countertop. Picking up the small implement the bank worker glanced at it briefly and Harry shivered as he saw the foreign Goblin magic at work, checking the validity of the key.

At last satisfied, Griphook gave a sharp nod and asked, 'Do you wish to travel to view the vault? Or would you prefer to have the pre-arranged amount of gold to be brought to the atrium?'

Even though almost every wizarding family's vault was located in the Diagon Alley branch, the unique Goblin magic had enabled access from the Hogsmeade subdivision to the main bank.

It was apparently none too pleasant to traverse, and the Dark lord was already impatient to interrogate his Courtesan about his relationship with the Curse Breaker.

'I would request that the money be brought to the atrium,' he said briskly, ignoring the disappointed green eyes trained on him. There would be time to give Harry a tour of Gringotts, but now was not the right occasion.

As Griphook left to retrieve the gold, Lord Voldemort wandlessly and wordlessly cast anti-monitoring and eavesdropping charms around he and his Courtesan and then asked, straight to the point as usual, 'What is or was your relationship with the Curse Breaker? And remember my Courtesan, you have not yet had your first Occulemency lesson. If I feel you are lying to me I shall simply take the truth from you.'

Harry swallowed heavily and looked at his feet, suddenly nervous. He knew how possessive and jealous his contractor could be, and he knew the man would be none too pleased to learn just what sort of interaction he and Demetrius had had in the past. But he refused to lie. The Dark Lord would see right through him.

'He was my…private tutor at Aphrodite's House of Pleasure,' Harry explained quietly, even though he had seen the charms go up around him to avoid people overhearing.

'And what did he teach you?' Lord Voldemort asked, now dangerously close to the smaller male, ruby eyes narrowed.
'How to…to please my contractor,' Harry answered with a crimson blush staining his cheeks. He was mortified at having to say that out loud.

His embarrassment evaporated though at the furious look in the intense red eyes of his contractor and he tried not to flinch when the Dark Lord spat, 'You will not be seen in association with him again. If any were to find the connection between the two of you it would not bode well for your 'friend.' I am being merciful as it is for allowing him to have touched what is now mine and remain unscathed.'

Hurt developed in Harry's heart at the thought of being denied a chance to have a link to his past, to see an old friend. It must have shown on his face because something in Lord Voldemort's visage softened minutely though he kept the coldness in his voice as he spoke.

'It is for the best.'

With a jerky nod, Harry agreed to his contractor's demand, watching in silence as the Dark Lord swiftly disassembled the charms surrounding them. It was just in time, as Griphook arrived back then with a soft leather pouch in one hand.

'Here is the agreed amount of fifteen Knuts, five Sickles and two Galleons for Mr Potter's weekly allowance. The pouch has been charmed to accept each week's payment on a Sunday for your convenience,' the Goblin announced in a polite, methodical voice.

Harry's eyes had widened when he heard the amount that he would be granted each week. It was far more than he had anticipated.

Lord Voldemort took the offered pouch and presented it to his Courtesan who took it numbly and fastened it to his belt with a securing and cloaking charm. There was no way he was going to lose this money to a pickpocket through his own negligence.

With the appropriate formality, the Dark Lord concluded his business with Griphook and escorted his Courtesan off the premises of the bank, eyes on the lookout for the Curse Breaker. However the man had obviously picked up on the malice directed towards him and was most likely lying low for now.

Harry was torn between elation over the amount of money he would be receiving weekly every Sunday and sadness over the news that Demetrius was out of bounds.

But the emerald-eyed boy was determined to find a way to keep in contact with the man, even if that meant going against his contractor's wishes. There was always the chance that Demetrius could act as a substitute for Professor Wester once more. Or maybe Harry could possibly run into him whilst on a Hogsmeade weekend. There were plenty of opportunities for Harry to accidentally come across the Curse Breaker.

And he was willing to take advantage of that.

Unbeknownst to Harry, Lord Voldemort was already formulating a plan to eradicate all chance of his Courtesan and his previous tutor stumbling across one another. It was nothing too insidious, he would simply arrange to have the man transferred, perhaps overseas.

He refused to allow the Curse Breaker to remain anywhere near what was his, especially considering his past relationship with the teen.

The Dark Lord was resolute in that decision.
Later that afternoon, whilst Harry was supposed to be writing a transfiguration essay, he was instead reading through one of his contractor's darker volumes. Ever since his encounter with the black book, Harry had become preoccupied with working out how the Dark Lord had done it.

As of yet, he had found no mention of a spell or ritual that could have completed what Lord Voldemort had done, and he was getting increasingly frustrated.

To top it off, he had not seen the fascinating book since his brief discovery of it the day before. He had been distracted by the meeting yesterday morning, but he certainly noticed its mysterious absence in his contractor's bookshelf when he had returned.

He had felt the overwhelming urge to question the Dark Lord as to its whereabouts and he had been given an evaluating look before the taller man had replied ambiguously, *It has been taken care of.*

What did that even mean?

Had he realised Harry's interest and hidden it away? Or had he destroyed it?

That thought sent a pang of distress through Harry's body. He desired to look upon it once more; to uncover its secrets.

Feeling a headache forming, Harry sighed unhappily and closed the thick tome he had been studying with a dusty thump before standing and heaving it back over to the bookcase in the corner. Once it had been replaced he returned to his seat at the Dark Lord's desk and glanced down at his parchment, tapping his dry quill against the blank page.

Where could Lord Voldemort have hidden the book?

These rooms were the most secured in the Citadel; it would make sense to have something as special as the volume concealed in here. But Harry already knew it was not the case.

Just as he had discovered his magic was sensitive to Nagini's presence, he was confident he would react in the same way to the book. After wandering his contractor's chambers from top to bottom he could safely say that the volume was not hidden away here.

Perhaps he had sent the book away?

But *where*?

With a frustrated groan Harry allowed his head to hit the desk in front of him, lost as to what to do next. He had no idea where the Dark Lord had decided to conceal the volume. For the matter, he had no indication that the book still existed.

However something instinctively inside of Harry knew that he would sense it if Lord Voldemort destroyed the paperback. He had some sort of unexplainable link with the book.

Not even Nagini roused this longing in him; her aura did not call to him as the mysterious volume's did.

It both frightened and intrigued Harry, but even despite his brain whispering caution, his gut was telling him to find the book at all cost.

It was an excellent distraction from his traumatic experience on Friday night, as well as the Dark Lord's promise of a sexual relationship when Harry was ready.
Those interactions were shunted aside in the face of the sly obsession that was creeping upon Harry with startling quickness.

What in Merlin's name had that book done to him?

As anticipated, classes concluded early on Monday afternoon in preparation for the arrival of the Durmstrang and Beauxbatons students.

The corridors of the castle were still buzzing with gossip about the incident on Friday night, which had resulted in the permanent removal of three students and the temporary absence of another. Chattering students made their way to the outside courtyards and sloping front lawn, eager to witness the historic arrival of the visiting schools.

The faculty were also standing in attendance, some of their faces as curious as the pupils of Hogwarts.

It was a petty tradition of sorts for the schools to attempt to outdo one another when presenting themselves for the Tournament. The method of transport was possessively guarded behind tight lips, with the aim to shock and impress the host school.

Thus, when the black speck appeared on the horizon, not many noted it.

As it drew nearer to the ancient castle however, cries of surprise rang out and the students pressed forward to catch a better glimpse.

An elegant pastel blue carriage was being drawn through the air by a team of flying horses, drifting steadily closer. Charlie and Bill Weasley were standing on an open patch of lawn, seemingly directing the horses in for landing.

Both ended up throwing themselves to the side in order to avoid a rather messy end as the winged creatures touched down on the school grounds. The carriage rocked wildly as it bumped along behind the large animals, and many winced in sympathy for the occupants who were no doubt being jostled around.

Recovering from their close call, Bill and Charlie set about calming the horses, stroking their soft noses and murmuring soothingly as they edgily stamped their hooves and pranced backwards and forwards.

All attention was fixed upon the door to the carriage, which eventually swung open after a decidedly dramatic pause. Stepping from it was the largest woman many had ever seen, a handsome and refined witch clothed in tasteful albeit extravagant clothes.

Behind her streamed a sea of blue silk-clad students, all moving with the grace and poise many purebloods desired but never achieved. They were shivering slightly in the chilly weather, their flimsy uniforms doing nothing to protect them from the cold.

As Snape greeted the incredibly tall Headmistress in the customary way, a beautiful young woman stepped down from the carriage, cornflower blue eyes slightly troubled. She ignored the gawking stares from the Hogwarts' students, so used to gaining such a reaction from her Veela heritage, and instead pondered the issue that was Harry Potter.

He was to be absent for an undetermined amount of time due to a vicious assault on his person last Friday evening.
It could complicate matters.

When the Hogwarts Headmaster greeted her as an official representative of the French government, escorting the students, she offered him a radiant smile. She needed to make a good impression on these British, needed to gain their trust.

Her smile became slightly strained when she realised her Allure had no effect whatsoever on the stoic man before her. So he was an Occlumens. And a brilliant one at that.

'Welcome Mademoiselle Delacour. I trust your flight was pleasant?' The man's dry tone indicated a snarky personality that was not handling the position as a polite dignitary particularly well.

Smothering an amused grin, the twenty-year-old woman assured her host that her journey had been agreeable.

There was a distraction that saved the Headmaster from further interaction in the form of the Durmstrang students' arrival via a submerged ship in the heart of the great lake beside the castle.

As the Hogwarts' pupils excitedly turned to observe this new happening, and the Headmaster moved away to reluctantly welcome the visitors, Fleur allowed her mask to slip a little.

Her past Headmistress, Madame Olympe Maxime cast a reassuring look in her direction, warm eyes promising nothing but support for the part-Veela and her mission. She was well aware that the younger woman was here in assistance of the Order.

Fleur Delacour knew her objectives, and the timeline presented to her.

Come July, Harry Potter would be liberated and safe in France out of the Dark Lord's clutches.

She would not fail.

As the Durmstrang ship glided along the smooth lake, its sides still pouring with excess water, the students were appearing on the main deck, squinting in the bright afternoon light.

Their Headmaster, Igor Karkaroff, loyal Death Eater to the Dark Lord Voldemort stood alone at the prow of the ship, hands clasping a heavy wooden staff. He was dressed in thick fur robes that were unsuited in this warmer climate. Sharp brown eyes were taking in the castle, the students and the approaching welcoming party, a sneer of a smile on his craggy face.

'Father?' a strong voice inquired.

Turning slightly Karkaroff could not keep the look of pride off of his face at the sight of his seventeen-year-old son, Kostadin, or Kosta for short. He was a well-built young man with his father's eyes and his late mother's straight brown hair.

'What is it Kosta?' Karkaroff responded.

'The students have made the final preparations. We are awaiting your command to dock.'

'Very well, give the order.'

Kosta offered his father a short nod of the head and then strode away, shouting commands at the other students who moved quickly to do as he had ordered. As the son of the Headmaster, Kosta was both envied and feared by his peers.
Glancing back at the shoreline where the ancient castle loomed in the sky, Karkaroff evaluated his Lord's wishes. Although he was loyal to the Dark Lord, he had been assured to still encourage the Durmstrang Champion to win. Just the thought of purposefully throwing the competition left a sour taste in Karkaroff's mouth and so he was relieved his Lord was not going to ask that of him.

He hated losing after all.

Lord Voldemort had instead instructed him to investigate the Beauxbaton Headmistress, believed to be a supporter of the Order as well as the French delegate, Delacour, whom was the daughter of a declared spokesperson for the rebel group in France. The Dark Lord had reason to believe Delacour was here on a mission, but no action could be taken on the young woman without the French retaliating.

It would be a stalemate until evidence was brought condemning the ambassador as a spy and perhaps the Headmistress as an associate. In which case both would be put to death as was the right of the British government in that situation.

Karkaroff was determined to assist his Lord in thwarting the French and revealing both Delacour and Madame Maxime in their false intent.

He would not fail.
Chapter Seventeen

Chapter Summary

In a world where the Dark Lord won, ten year old Harry Potter is part of the servile caste, the lowest caste in the new society. Destined for the life of a Courtesan, Harry is resigned to his fate. But it seems his unusual gifts have drawn the attention of the Dark Lord and Harry finds himself becoming so much more than just another war-orphan of the new regime. Eventual LV/HP.

Chapter Seventeen

Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry – The Citadel

1996

There had been a lavish welcoming feast to receive the visiting schools, as well as a rather long-winded speech from a Wizengamot member about the rules and regulations surrounding the Tournament.

Seventeen-year-old candidates were to place their name and school on a slip of paper, which would then be entered into the Goblet of Fire. They had until six o'clock sharp the next night to submit their names into the Goblet. The Champions' names would be drawn by the host school's Headmaster, in this case Severus Snape, after dinner at seven o'clock.

Once the speaker had finally stepped down the hum of chatter resounded as the Hogwarts students began speculating once more as to who would be the school representative. At their respective tables the Durmstrang and Beauxbatons students sat for the most part in silence.

After a brief and blunt reminder from Severus as to the school rules, the gathered students were at last dismissed. Many lingered in the Great Hall, eager to see who was already planning on putting their name in the Goblet.

Cormac McLaggen was the first to strut across the Age-Line, giving his friends a cocky smirk as he placed his name in the burning flame. They cheered him on as he swaggered back to them, acting like he had just won an award.

A smattering of Durmstrang and Beauxbatons students wasted no time in following the arrogant teen, placing their names in the Goblet to polite applause.

As the night drew on, most of the students drifted away and as the final name was placed in the Goblet around eleven o'clock the last few people were shooed from the Great Hall. To avoid any tampering with the Goblet, the doors were to be sealed until dawn the following morning after which students would be permitted to continue putting their names up for consideration.

The Wizengamot representative from earlier on, oversaw the strong enchantments go into place as he glanced at his pocket watch impatiently. Two other Ministry officials were muttering under their breaths as they cast the spell together over the heavy wooden doors.
With a sharp click the Wizengamot member snapped his pocket watch shut and announced imperiously, 'I trust you will be able to finish up here? I have business to attend to.'

He truly did not, but the man considered he had better things to do than overseeing his two subordinates.

Sharing a look of exasperation with each other, the Ministry officials nodded in assent nonetheless and watched as their superior swept away.

'Bloody useless he is,' one of them snarled as he circled his wand in a repetitive motion.

His companion, too busy with his own side of the spell, merely grunted in agreement.

They continued with the rather complex enchantment in silence after that, their wands moving in unison as they set up the ward so that none could enter the Great Hall until the spell was broken the next morning.

When they finished, the two officials slumped with exhaustion and gave each other weary grins of accomplishment at the impressive spell they had woven together. Turning around and preparing to settle into a sleepless night of guarding, both stopped dead in their tracks when they saw the person standing in front of them.

With a coy, seductive smile, Fleur Delacour turned on the full power of her Veela Allure.

'You wouldn't mind opening those doors for me would you?' she purred, voice laced with hypnotising power.

The officials stumbled over each other to do as she had asked.

Bill Weasley yawned as he walked towards the main entrance to the castle, rubbing his eyes tiredly as he tried his best to stay awake. This was the fourth late night of his in a row, and he wanted nothing more than to reach the Menial quarters and collapse into bed.

His father had required his assistance yet again for one of his more delicate inventions and Bill hadn't had the heart to refuse the man's pleading. There was only one small bed in the corner of the workshop and Bill had insisted his father to take it after they had retired for the night, resulting in him now trekking across the school grounds.

When the tall red-head reached the doors to the entrance hall he waited as the spell on the wooden surface read his Menial collar and confirmed him as a resident of Hogwarts.

With a creaking groan the massive doors swung inwards, allowing him access to the atrium. Almost stumbling in his tiredness, Bill made his way towards a partially hidden Menial passageway that would take him straight to the kitchens.

His thoughts filled with nothing but the tempting promise of sleep, Bill initially missed the vacant looking Ministry officials standing outside the Great Hall doors.

The Great Hall doors that should be sealed until dawn.

Freezing in place, Bill turned to incredulously survey the gaping entrance, blinking a few times to make sure this wasn’t some hallucination in his exhausted state. What the hell was going on?

He, as every other inhabitant in the castle knew, that to prevent someone from tampering with the
Tournament, it was imperative that the Great Hall remained sealed and guarded through the night.

Yet now the doors were wide-open and the supposed guards were standing outside with slack mouths as though they had both taken one too many hits to the head.

Approaching them both cautiously, the redhead waved his hand tentatively over one of their faces. The official didn't even flinch.

Bill wasn't particularly familiar with magic, but he had certainly never seen a spell like this before. Then another thought struck him as he peered anxiously past the incapacitated guards and into the shadowed Great Hall. Whomever had done this to them could still be inside, doing who knew what.

What should he do?

Before Bill could formulate a plan, there was a flicker of movement from inside the Great Hall and he acted instinctively. Concealing himself in the shadow of the Grand Staircase, the Menial watched as a figure made their way out of the massive chamber, pausing by the guards.

He couldn't see the person's face, but judging from their form they were female. Their next words confirmed this theory.

'I'm going to need you both to lock up again. After zat, you can just forget zis ever 'appening,' the smooth and powerful voice commanded with a noticeable French accent.

Bill shivered at the sound of it, feeling the sudden urge to show himself to the unknown woman. He felt a tug of attraction to her, and he hadn't even seen her face for Merlin's sake!

He watched as the two guards slouched over to the doors and began weaving a spell, faces haggard with tiredness as they performed it. The woman stood behind them, watching their efforts impassively as they struggled to complete the enchantment.

Bill was holding his breath, almost afraid that the woman with the frightening powers of persuasion would somehow hear his shallow breathing, his fast-beating heart. Every thump in his chest sounded like thunder in Bill's ears.

The Ministry officials eventually finished, falling to their knees and weakly attempting to pick themselves up again. The woman walked over and prodded the sealed doors as though testing them before pulling back with satisfaction. She turned on her heel and abandoned the two men where they lay still struggling to rise to their feet.

Bill stiffened when the woman approached his hiding place, her aim being the entrance doors. He made sure he was thoroughly hidden in the shadows as she drew nearer. Her face was at the wrong angle to get a good look unfortunately.

If she was heading outside did that mean she was with the Beauxbatons party? The French accent certainly indicated it.

That train of thought was abruptly finished when Bill found himself forcibly dragged from his hiding place and slammed against an unforgiving stone wall. The woman had found him.

An equally terrifying and utterly breathtaking face filled his vision and Bill could do nothing but gape at the beautiful woman now pinning him ruthlessly to the wall behind him.

"Ow much did you see?" she spat.
Bill felt inexplicably prompted to answer truthfully, and he did so replying quickly and methodically, 'I've been here the whole time. I saw everything.'

He clicked his jaw shut with a look of horror on his face at revealing so much. It was that woman and her damn powers, hypnotising him as she had done the poor Ministry officials still lying on the ground.

'I thought so,' she hissed and Bill felt a sinking feeling in his gut.

Before the deadly woman could do anything to harm him, Bill felt the Order of the Phoenix medallion in the pocket of his grey Menial tunic heat up, so much so that it started to burn the surrounding cloth.

Obviously the woman felt it too because her blue eyes widened and she let go of Bill as though she had received an electric shock.

'You are with ze Order?' she asked incredulously after hastily casting some sort of anti-spying spell around them.

Due to the advanced screening charms on the gold coin, the only way the woman could have felt the burning medallion was if she herself was a member of the Order. So Bill reached into his pocket and withdrew the gold coin engraved with a phoenix, flashing it to the woman and staring at her nervously.

She touched it briefly and then glanced up at Bill with an apologetic expression on her face. 'Forgive me, I did not know you were also a member.'

'You too then?' he asked a little breathlessly. The woman was incredibly gorgeous after all. Not to mention extremely frightening when angry.

'Oui,' she replied, pulling an identical medallion from her pocket. After allowing Bill to see it she carefully replaced it and addressed him seriously. 'I assume you are one of ze Weasley clan? I was briefed that you 'ad been given medallions to escape when ze time is right.'

'Yes, my name is Bill Weasley.' Out of habit his mother had instilled in him, Bill proffered his hand to the woman. He flushed as the she glanced down at the offered appendage before daintily taking it in her own hand.

'A pleasure. I am Fleur Delacour, a representative of ze French government. I am also an undercover member of ze Order.'

It was a pretty name and Bill decided it suited her.

Knowing better than to question her movements this night, Bill settled instead for the question, 'Is the Order finally making its move now?' The warm glow of expectation started stirring in him. Why else would she be here?

Fleur offered him a beauteous smile but her hard eyes belied her hidden lethal nature. She answered him firmly with a great deal of triumph, 'At long last we are. It is time for ze Dark Lord to fall.'

Bill couldn't help but be affected by her strength and her passion.

He had only just met her.

And he was already head over heels in love.
It was Monday night and Harry was curled up in the Citadel library, pouring over yet another Dark book to ascertain how his contractor had managed to separate pieces of himself and place them in both inanimate and animate objects.

He had resigned himself to the fact that he had no leads on the little black book, and as painfully hard as it was, he decided to push it aside and instead solely focus on working out what exactly said book was.

Glancing at the Wizarding clock on the wall Harry bit his lip as he realised it was nearing midnight. He really should get some rest considering he would be making his reappearance at Hogwarts tomorrow night at the announcing of the Champions.

Nagini was coiled around his body as well as the sofa Harry had made himself comfortable on, keeping a wary but sleepy eye on her surroundings as she guarded him in the absence of her master. Her triangular-shaped head rested in its usual spot over Harry's heart.

The Courtesan boy was becoming accustomed to the large snake after being forced into such close contact over the past couple of days. His apprehension was still there, but he was becoming more and more relaxed every day.

Her intelligence was undeniable, and Harry watched quite frequently how she could make the Dark Lord smile in that razor-sharp way of his, lips curling with amusement. If only he could understand what was being said when she had those long hissed conversations with his contractor.

As though the thought of the man had conjured him, Lord Voldemort entered the library and approached the Courtesan, crimson eyes intent as usual.

'You should be in bed, Harry,' he commented as he paused before the teen whom gently closed the tome he was reading to give his contractor his full attention.

'I lost track of time, My Lord,' Harry explained ruefully, absently tracing the spine of the Dark book with his fingers.

Lord Voldemort followed the movement of his hand and his red eyes took on a thoughtful look as he read the title of the book Harry had been perusing before his entrance.

'You are taking an interest in the Dark Arts?' he questioned curiously.

Lord Voldemort had always intended on teaching his pupil the ways of the Dark when he deemed he was ready to handle the more complex form of magic, and had only taught him so far primarily Light magic techniques. He was aware that Harry was being given an introduction to the theory of Dark magic at school as was required of the Hogwarts students, but the pupils only began truly learning at the end of their seventh year when their magical cores were more stabilised.

The Dark Lord had of course begun delving into the difficult art at the tender age of fourteen, but he was a prodigy by any standards, his inner core maturing by the time he reached his third year of school.

'It is more of a challenge to master than Light magic,' Harry replied diplomatically as usual. He did not touch on the fact that Dark magic could be used for so much harm, considering his companion.

Sinking into the sofa beside Harry, Lord Voldemort elegantly crossed his legs and asked his
He knew the answer naturally, but he was curious to discover how much the sixteen-year-old had thought about the subject. Harry was talented in magic, with undeniable raw power but he had yet to polish and refine it. Intellectually he was above average, perhaps not on par with the Dark Lord but certainly no fool.

Lord Voldemort had yet to actually engage his Courtesan in a proper conversational debate, to test out where his opinions lay. With a flicker of realisation, the Dark Lord became aware that he wasn't as familiar with Harry as he would like to be. If the teen were just another attractive face he wouldn't have hesitated to take what he wanted and dismiss him later on. Something besides the boy's looks and magical strength had drawn him in.

He was determined to work out what over time.

Tilting his head to one side Harry answered carefully, 'Dark magic is more powerful than Light magic as it is directly connected to a witch or wizard's emotions. Very few can tame their feelings enough to truly master it. Light magic on the other hand is weaker but easy to completely bring under control. It is far less volatile than Dark magic.'

A safe answer, one approved by the Theory of Dark magic curriculum. But Lord Voldemort wanted a personal answer from the teen.

'Can you see yourself wielding Dark magic?'

To his pleasure Harry did not immediately give him an answer, instead thinking it over carefully before he replied. 'Yes, I believe I can. But it would be incredibly hard for me to reign in my emotions. I would need a lot of training and practice to make any leeway in the subject.'

Lord Voldemort nodded his head in agreement and then delved into the next thing he wished to ask Harry. 'What of the Dark winning the war? Without that occurring, the subject would still be taboo in society.' He was slowly creeping towards the true topic he wished to discuss.

'It is true that if the Light had won then people would be still be lacking knowledge of a dangerous but nevertheless useful art. Therefore on a universal balance it is a good thing that the Dark won. However the repercussions in the world we now live in...' Harry trailed off guiltily, realising he had been about to insult the Dark Lord's system.

But he had finally arrived at the point Lord Voldemort had been waiting for ever since initiating this conversation.

'I know your answer will be subjective, but I desire to know your thoughts on the society we live in.'

Harry glanced at him sharply, emerald eyes intent as though expecting some sort of trap. 'It is... efficient in keeping order,' he began cautiously. 'The system makes it difficult for rebellions to effectively occur, resulting in the Dark retaining power.' He closed his mouth and waited for the Dark Lord to respond.

'Yes, but what are your thoughts on it, Harry,' Lord Voldemort prompted.

The Courtesan gritted his teeth and finally spoke, the words suddenly pouring from a part within himself that viciously hated his lot in life, had always been there.

'I think it's barbaric,' he stated coldly.
Harry steeled himself and started unflinchingly into the Dark Lord's crimson eyes, deciding to allow the man entrance into his mind. He sensed a brief flicker on his surface thoughts as his contractor confirmed that the words Harry had spoken were true and his innermost stance on the matter.

'Care to elaborate?' the Dark Lord asked calmly, revealing none of his own feelings.

Like the floodgates had opened, Harry cast all caution aside and allowed the words to spill forth. 'How can you justify the system? People being pushed into what is essentially slave labour, with no promise ahead for a brighter future, denied a basic education. Young girls brought up like cattle to be bought and bred. Children, mere children forced to give away their bodies for the pleasure of their contractors. There is a term for that. We may be given the name 'Courtesan.' But we are nothing more than sex slaves. It's not right. It never has been and it never will be.'

Harry chest was heaving with passion as he let everything loose.

'The Muggleborns are taken from their homes and their families and thrust into a world that has already damned them. The half bloods are subjected to humiliating entrance exams, as though the dilution of their blood would somehow decrease their intelligence. Purebloods enjoy a life of privilege while people starve on the streets attempting to make a living.'

'The entire system…it sickens me. We are all human beings are we not? Why then should some be allowed their freedom and others denied it?'

Harry paused as he realised his eyes were beginning to burn with the promise of angry tears, and he furiously blinked them away while preparing himself for the punishment that would no doubt come. But it had been worth it.

'Do I then sicken you?' the Dark Lord asked unexpectedly, an unreadable expression on his handsome face.

Harry froze and stared at him. He hadn't expected that question.

Did Lord Voldemort sicken him?

The answer to that was, no. How could he, when he felt these traitorous feelings inside of him that made him long for the man. Long for something beyond a physical relationship.

'No,' Harry whispered.

The Dark Lord knew that he had said he would give Harry time, would let the teen decide when he was ready to engage in more intimate relations.

But to see the raw emotion in those shattering emerald eyes, to hear that broken, 'No' whispered on a shaky breath, Lord Voldemort for once ignored his brain and embraced his desire.

Leaning in, the Dark Lord Voldemort kissed Harry Potter.
Chapter Eighteen

Chapter Summary

In a world where the Dark Lord won, ten year old Harry Potter is part of the servile caste, the lowest caste in the new society. Destined for the life of a Courtesan, Harry is resigned to his fate. But it seems his unusual gifts have drawn the attention of the Dark Lord and Harry finds himself becoming so much more than just another war-orphan of the new regime. Eventual LV/HP.

Chapter Eighteen

The Citadel

1996

The second the Dark Lord's lips touched his own, Harry's mind went blank and the very core of his existence narrowed down to the sensual feel of them upon his own.

Something sparked in the pit of Harry's stomach, blooming upwards and wiping everything out in a thrill of sensation. He could barely breathe, blind and deaf to everything except the thunder that rolled through his body, the feeling of being connected to the Dark Lord.

Then, Merlin, those lips began to move.

Slowly, almost teasingly they languidly coaxed his own to respond in kind, giving him ample time to pull away, to come to his senses. But his senses had fled him, leaving him with nothing but the blistering desire throbbing beneath his skin.

Somewhere in the recesses of Harry's mind he knew that he should pull away, but this consuming magnetic pull to the man opposite him overwhelmed any argument that could be vaguely formulated.

A hand slipped into his hair, tangling with the raven strands and pulling him even closer, so much that he was part of the way into Lord Voldemort's lap.

He registered Nagini sliding off of the sofa and slithering away, the human interaction holding no interest for her.

When Harry felt the teeth nip at his bottom lip he dazedly allowed his mouth to part, feeling the Dark Lord's tongue stroke a line across the plump curve of his lip, leaving behind a trail of fire. When the tongue dipped in to brush against his own, Harry could not help the needy moan that came from deep within him, muffled by the mouth against his own.

It felt as if he had finally been given something he'd been waiting for.

Lord Voldemort responded with a growl pulling on Harry firmly so that he was straddling the man, Harry's arms reflexively twining around the Dark Lord's neck to keep his balance as he was abruptly tugged.
When the tongue returned to it's ministrations Harry responded in turn, shivering in delight as a soft husky sound escaped Lord Voldemort. The sound fanned the flames of desire within Harry to a white-hot heat and with a gasp he arched forward, canting his hips to meet the Dark Lord's.

It was the hard length beneath him that finally jerked Harry out of his mindless state of desire.

With a sharp intake of breath Harry threw himself backwards, landing awkwardly on the floor beside the sofa and jarring his arm harshly. His head met the low table he had been working on with a sickening crack and Harry found himself lying dazedly on the floor with black spots dancing in front of his eyes.

Caught between mortification and arousal at what had occurred, combined with the agony in his head, Harry made no attempt to rise from his position sprawled on the ground.

He was pathetic.

The teenager wouldn't put it past his contractor to simply walk out and leave him there.

Thus, he wasn't prepared for the burst of magic that levitated his body with ease and placed him on a comfy surface he identified as the sofa he had so spectacularly abandoned a second ago.

The short movement from floor to chair caused his head to spin nauseatingly and the acute tang of bile lingered at the back of his throat. Blinking blearily upwards Harry saw the Dark Lord hovering over him, face perfectly blank.

No emotion could be identified in those distant ruby eyes, and yet Harry still felt a surge of guilt rise in him for leading his contractor on and then pushing him away. Obviously the man caught this fleeting thought if the flash in his eyes was any indication.

Then his wand was moving, a diagnostic spell by the looks of it.

Harry watched him cautiously, almost anticipating some sort of punishment. He had not only insulted the man's system but had then refused him his right to engage in intimacy as the owner of his Courtesan contract. Then Harry remembered, perhaps a bit too late, that the Dark Lord had promised to give Harry time to decide when he was ready. A tinge of annoyance spread through the teen then, mentally kicking himself that he didn't think of that earlier, had let his hormones and his desire override his common sense.

He had lost all of his inhibitions when those lips had brushed against his own.

Neither Demetrius nor Rabastan, both talented lovers, had been able to invoke such a strong reaction in him. He had felt desire for them, yes, but he hadn't gotten to the point where his world, his very being had been narrowed down into that one person.

He had achieved that with Lord Voldemort.

'You have a mild concussion and your right shoulder is sprained,' the Dark Lord said methodically, snapping Harry out of his thoughts.

'My Lord I-' Harry began, wanting to apologise, to say something to alleviate the inexplicable ache in his chest.

'I will send for Narcissa to tend to you once more. Then you will sleep.' The underlying sharpness in those words caused the ache in Harry's chest to throb almost painfully and he nodded his head to his contractor, hiding the emotion on his face behind a veil of hair.
His plan was thwarted when a cool hand curled under his chin and tilted his head up to meet Lord Voldemort's crimson gaze.

'What troubles you Harry?'

Swallowing heavily and carefully keeping any thoughts of his true feelings stored away where a brief scan of his mind wouldn't reveal them, Harry took a deep breath and said, 'I am sorry. I'm just not ready.'

The Dark Lord studied him before releasing his chin and drawing away. 'When the time comes, you need only say the word. But be warned, I will not wait for much longer. My patience is not everlasting.'

With those ominous words he left the room.

Harry collapsed back into the cushions behind him and drew a shaky hand over his eyes.

He had lied; he was ready. Merlin, he wanted nothing more than for the Dark Lord to return and press him against the couch and take him now, to continue where they had left off, but the threat of the future held him back.

What would his contractor do once he had had him? Toss him aside? Give him to another Death Eater? Maybe even worse, he would use him, for as long as he was young and virile, taking him with no love and no mercy.

The mere thought of that made Harry shudder with horror and his belly coil with fear. He was attracted to the Dark Lord, not only for his looks but for more than that. Complete with his sadistic nature and ruthless attitude.

He knew the types of book the man liked to read, knew how he enjoyed a glass of fine wine in the evenings, knew how he enjoyed sitting by the fire. He knew the preferred quill he enjoyed using, the one with the ebony plume. He knew the owl he owned, named Hades after the Greek God of the Underworld.

He knew exactly how he signed his files, with that little flourish at the end. He knew how the man felt so passionately about the Dark Arts, the way those crimson eyes would grow passionate and alight with inner fire. He knew how much affection the man held for Nagini, how that smirk of a smile would creep into the corners of his mouth almost unwillingly.

Harry knew so much and yet so little.

He wanted to know more, wanted to know Lord Voldemort intimately and completely.

These tantalising insights into the complex person the Dark Lord was made Harry hunger for more.

The question was, was he willing to give himself to his contractor thereby shattering the false hope around him that their relationship could develop into something more? Or would he continue to cling to a false reality?

Regardless of his decision, time was rapidly running out.

Either he took the next step…or Lord Voldemort would for him.
formal dress robes.

When the Dark Lord had said Harry would be accompanying him to the announcing of the Tri-Wizard Champions, he had been unawares that that also involved attending the gala held beforehand. The most prestigious had been invited to the event, both British and foreign.

The dress robes were undeniably handsome, cut in a way that accentuated Harry's more prominent physical attributes. The black outer robe and snowy white button down shirt beneath it contrasted with his beautiful emerald eyes and made them stand out more than usual.

Despite feeling ready for the event on the outside, Harry was a bundle of nerves for the coming social minefield. The robes did nothing to hide the gleaming silver collar at his throat announcing to the world his station in life. If that hadn't been obvious enough just who he was, the articles in the media had been shedding plenty of attention on him. Obviously some reporters had taken the time to investigate into his life. It was easy enough considering how serviles were so thoroughly monitored by the Ministry.

There were many articles detailing Harry's childhood as a Menial at Hogwarts, and the buying of his contract by 'the handsome and talented Lord Rabastan Lestrange.' A journalist by the name of Rita Skeeter seemed particularly eager to make his story out like some sort of happy fairy tale; travelling from rags to riches as the Dark Lord's Courtesan. She painted Lord Voldemort in a flattering light, making him out to be some sort of saviour.

Most of the popular female magazines swooned over the 'forbidden love Courtesan and contractor shared.' Harry hadn't been able to help but laugh bitterly when he had read those words.

He wasn't going to fit in at this gala for all his decorum training had prepared him. He may be arriving at the Dark Lord's side but that would never change the fact that he was at the bottom of the social hierarchy. He could only hope that the gala finished quickly and he and Lord Voldemort could reach Hogwarts sooner rather than later. Whilst the Citadel was beginning to feel familiar for the Courtesan, he longed for the halls of his first home.

He noticed suddenly that the Menials at his side had pulled back and were now bowing deeply towards the open door to Harry's room. Glancing up, he saw the Dark Lord standing there, his eyes roaming appreciatively over Harry's body.

With a blush staining his cheeks Harry dipped his head and said softly, 'I am ready to leave My Lord.'

Lord Voldemort looked even more attractive than usual, the formal robes easily draping over his body as though worshipping his form. Those ruby eyes glittered and Harry smiled ruefully, used now to having his passing thoughts read.

'How is your concussion?' the Dark Lord asked, in a surprisingly considerate manner.

'Lady Malfoy administered a potion to heal my head and my sprained arm, so I am feeling fine now My Lord,' Harry replied.

'I am glad to hear that,' he responded smoothly before gesturing for Harry to follow him out of the room.

The gala was obviously being held at the Citadel as it was the hub of the Dark Lord's activities and the only venue large enough to cater for the guests.

As Harry and the Dark Lord walked through the corridors towards the ballroom where the event was
occurring, the teen fiddled anxiously with the lapel of his dress robe. He couldn't mask the slight tremor of his hands at the thought of being essentially thrown to the wolves. Very well dressed wolves, but wolves nonetheless.

The hand on his shoulder brought him up short and Harry looked up with confusion at Lord Voldemort.

'You will stay by my side the entire time, Harry.' The firm and almost possessive order both relieved and intrigued Harry. It was almost as though there were going to be people there at the event that the Dark Lord didn't want him to interact with.

It was possible.

'As you wish, My Lord,' Harry promised.

Satisfied, the Dark Lord offered Harry his arm and with a curious expression on his face Harry placed his small hand atop of the proffered appendage. The doors straight ahead swung open with a nudge of the Dark Lord's magic and Harry realised for the first time where they were in the Citadel. He had been so distracted by worrying about the impending gala that he hadn't even noticed where they had stopped.

Lord Voldemort moved forward gracefully and Harry followed as they approached the double doors that led to the ballroom. The hum of chatter floated up towards them from where they approached the open doorway.

Before emerging into the spotlight Harry gathered his Courtesan mask and placed a look of calm contentment on his face. He straightened his spine and held his head elegantly high. His instructor had always scolded him for raising his chin so indecently for someone of his status, and yet Harry simply refused to lower himself more than he had to.

And so he entered the ballroom on the arm of the most powerful and influential man in Britain, dressed in the most expensive and tasteful dress robes money could buy. His head was held high, the chin stubbornly raised upwards as he glided along beside his handsome escort.

As soon as the duo entered the room the chatter stopped and all eyes turned to fix upon the pair, burning with curiosity.

Lord Voldemort and his Courtesan walked through the crowd, which parted for them both, although there were more than a few disgruntled expressions directed towards Harry. The teenager allowed their envious and sometimes hateful looks roll off of him like water breaking upon a rock.

When they reached the top of a raised dais, the Dark Lord faced the crowd and said courteously and charmingly, 'Welcome to my Citadel. Please do enjoy yourselves this afternoon.' He made a signal of some sort with his free hand and music started up from somewhere on a balcony.

Almost immediately the talk started up again, many eyes flickering to Harry and away again quickly.

Lucius and Narcissa Malfoy were the first to approach Harry and Lord Voldemort, the blonde-haired couple both bowing or curtseying in turn to their Lord.

To Harry's shock the two also offered him a respectful nod each, the action not going unnoticed by the crowd. The hum of sound in the background increased as the guests discussed this interesting development. It seemed the Lord and Lady Malfoy held the Courtesan boy in high regard. He was definitely worth evaluating then.
Harry nodded back in return, glancing at his contractor out of the corner of his eye to gauge his reaction. There was a look of approval in his ruby eyes as he appraised his two loyal followers and they were soon joined by Bellatrix Lestrange and her tall husband Rodolphus.

Harry hadn't been in close contact with the two since his brief encounter at the Lestrange manor, which had resulted in Harry having his contract ownership shifting.

There was a distinctly mischievous glint in Bellatrix's onyx black eyes as she and her husband greeted their Lord, and Harry noted that her sister Narcissa was casting a concerned and exasperated look towards her sibling, as though anticipating something unorthodox was about to occur.

Sure enough, when the pair turned to acknowledge Harry, while Rodolphus only offered him a short nod, Bellatrix spread her arms wide and cried with a theatrical flair that drew the attention of every person in the room, 'Harry, darling! Oh it is so wonderful to see you!'

Harry found himself being crushed to the woman's chest, his face uncomfortably pressed against her bosom. Cursing his short stature, Harry struggled a little before she released him. But it was not over yet.

With an evil grin she leant in and placed a loud kiss on each of the teenager's cheeks, ruffled his hair affectionately and then offered her Lord one last curtsey before dragging her husband away to find someone else to antagonise.

Scandalised whispers thrummed around the ballroom at the improper greeting to one of the servile caste, but many whom knew Bellatrix Lestrange personally were aware how unstable and downright impulsive the woman could be.

Expecting a furious Dark Lord, Harry instead encountered a slightly annoyed one who's eyes bore a trace of amusement within. Possessively tugging Harry back to him, he wrapped his arm around the teen's body so that his hand rested on his lower back.

The warmth radiating from that spot made Harry's toes tingle and he furiously fought down his reaction at being touched by Lord Voldemort, no matter how innocently.

Lady Malfoy sighed and said, 'I apologise for my sister's uncouth behaviour. She always did take more after our father.'

The Dark Lord graciously accepted this apology before the topic shifted to some inconsequential subject that was so riddled with polite necessities that Harry tuned it out to avoid his ears bleeding. How purebloods handled everyday conversations like this he would never know.

More people came and went, nameless upper class purebloods who ignored Harry's presence as though he was a background ornament. Although, there were more than enough lustful glances from both males and females alike, enough so that Harry found himself pressed incredibly close to the Dark Lord, the hand now creeping towards his hip to hold him safely captive.

Time crawled by as the gala progressed, Harry keeping his attention on the beautiful people mingling below the dais or alternatively on the wonderful feeling of his contractor's arm wrapped securely around him.

Menials moved about carrying silver platters stacked high with expensive delicacies. As a particularly fragrant dish passed by beneath the dais, Harry's stomach whined hungrily. That earned him a shocked look from a pureblood woman nearby. Luckily Lord Voldemort heard it too, flagging down the nearest Menial server whom approached with his knees quivering.
Harry absently reached for a delicate sandwich and looked across to meet the face of the servile that was carrying the platter. He blinked in shock as he saw Justin Finch-Fletchley was the bearer, teal eyes nervously meeting Harry's own green ones.

Seeing that the Dark Lord was distracted by an elderly politician, and his arm had loosened enough for Harry to leave its protective circle, the Courtesan bent over the platter as though perusing it. Out of the corner of his mouth he asked Justin quietly, 'How are you?'

'I'm fine,' the other teen whispered back before saying quickly, 'I should be asking how you are. We all read the article about…' he trailed off awkwardly, eyes filled with sympathy.

Realising he was referring to near-rape on Friday night Harry winced and murmured back, 'I'm dealing with it quite well. Lord Voldemort came in time after all.'

'He seems, affectionate towards you,' Justin commented carefully, eyeing the hand that was almost unconsciously reaching for Harry's waist.

Harry shrugged slightly, trying to ignore the happiness that blossomed in his chest at that comment by the Menial teen. Before he could continue his discussion, Harry felt a hand grip his hip and Lord Voldemort's body sidle up behind him.

With his chest pressed firmly to Harry's back in a deliciously intimate position, he glanced over Harry's shoulder to see what dish he was looking at.

'I recommend the Windsor sandwiches, if you are attempting to decide what to eat,' he commented, pointing them out.

Taking one, Harry didn't dare thank Justin, not with the Dark Lord breathing down his neck. Instead he offered the boy a tiny smile that Lord Voldemort couldn't see at the angle he was standing at.

Justin didn't respond thankfully, but the glint in his eye indicated that he had noticed Harry's roundabout way of saying thank you.

With small, delicate bites Harry polished off the sandwich. When he was done Lord Voldemort asked suddenly, 'Would you care to dance?'

Blinking in shock, Harry simply stood there. He did know how to dance, but he wasn't particularly good at it. His partner had to be excellent for him to not make a complete fool of himself.

'I am not the best dancer My Lord,' Harry explained tentatively.

'I thought they taught you that during your learning?' he questioned.

'They did but…I was never any good at it,' Harry admitted.

'Well you are in luck, because I happen to be very good at it,' Lord Voldemort claimed easily with no arrogance in his voice. He simply stated it as though it was the undeniable truth.

Realising he was backed into a corner, Harry gulped and said in a strained voice, 'Then it would do me great honour to accompany you in a dance My Lord.'

Placing his hand on the Dark Lord's arm once more, Harry was led down towards the dance floor where colourful couples waltzed past, mere blurs in motion. They turned to face one another and Harry placed a hand on the Lord Voldemort's shoulder, automatically taking the position of the female considering his smaller stature.
He shivered when he felt that hand return to his waist, pulling him closer so their bodies were almost
flush against each other. Then, without any further ado, Lord Voldemort simply melted into the
melody of the song as though he had been a part of the dance from the beginning.

He manoeuvred Harry with ease, letting the Courtesan relax in his arms and simply follow his lead.
They swirled effortlessly around the dance floor and Harry felt like laughing at the exhilaration he
felt. It was almost like how he imagined flying would feel like.

Darkened ruby eyes watched him, as his face was blissfully open and free, lost in the song and
trustingly following his contractor's judgment. In that moment Lord Voldemort saw past the pretty
exterior and saw the passionate and loving man beneath.

As Courtesan and contractor twined around each other in dance, their individual magical cores
reached out to one another, tendrils of magic snaking together and rippling the air around the pair
with the taint of power.

They were partners in that moment in time, equals in every sense of the word as they moved in
unison to the beat of the song.

Gazing up into the face above him, Harry felt heat swell in his belly and electric shocks race across
every part of skin that was in contact with the Dark Lord. But perhaps the most potent feeling rose
from somewhere deep inside his soul.

A longing, so poignant that it downright terrified the sixteen-year-old.

And a question, thought in the depths of his mind where Lord Voldemort could not reach.

Was this love?
Chapter Nineteen

Chapter Summary

In a world where the Dark Lord won, ten year old Harry Potter is part of the servile caste, the lowest caste in the new society. Destined for the life of a Courtesan, Harry is resigned to his fate. But it seems his unusual gifts have drawn the attention of the Dark Lord and Harry finds himself becoming so much more than just another war-orphan of the new regime. Eventual LV/HP.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Chapter Nineteen

The Citadel - Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry

1996

As night began to descend the guests moved outside into the gardens where gauzy pavilions had been set up. The heady scent of roses permeated the air and the sound of tinkling glass and polite laughter rang out over the grounds.

The imposing presence of the Citadel itself shadowed the grounds, spilling light out from the large open doors leading to the ballroom. Magical lanterns had been strung up between the pavilions, floating by themselves in the air to further illuminate the party.

Harry took a tentative sip of the champagne in his hand, wrinkling his nose when the bubbles exploded across his tongue. He had picked up a glass on a whim, knowing very well that he was underage. But, seeing as he had done many other things in his life that were technically illegal for someone of his age, why should drinking alcohol be any different?

Surveying his contractor over the rim of his glass, Harry observed as he interacted with yet more dignitaries. The man was a diplomatic genius, out-manoeuvring even the most determined of opponents and coming out the victor of every conversation. His ruby eyes would shine when a particular person proved more of a challenge.

Harry was still glued to his side, a silent shadow that moved around after him watching and learning as he danced circles around the other guests at the party. It was rather entertaining to witness.

After his earlier revelation, Harry had been at a loss as to how to deal with it. He could hardly tell the man how he felt, not while knowing that his feelings would never be returned.

But it was hard when every time those red eyes landed on him his heart gave a flutter and his stomach clenched in anticipation. Harry could only pray that his true emotions did not show on his face.

Setting aside the champagne and swiping a glass of water instead, Harry's eyes drifted from his contractor whom was busily engaged with an American politician to the colourful array of people on
show.

He spotted the Lady Malfoy entertaining a group of other rich pureblood women, in her element as she playfully bantered with them. Casting his gaze further, trying to locate any familiar faces in the crowd, Harry felt his stomach lurch when he noticed a silver collared person in the crowd.

Whilst that was not entirely unexpected, seeing as Courtesans were commonly taken to parties to be shown off by their contractors, what really shocked Harry was the fact that the person bearing the distinctive mark of his caste was male.

There was another male Courtesan at the gala.

The man had his back turned to Harry, so he could not discern his features but from what he could see from behind he was sure to be handsome. Tall, with a chiselled body shown through his green Courtesan tunic, he was speaking with a beautiful dark-skinned woman garbed in a revealing red dress.

The male Courtesan had wavy bronze coloured hair that brushed his companions cheek as he bent down to hear her whisper something provocatively in his ear.

Harry felt his cheeks blush faintly by watching the way the woman's hand drifted towards the male's crotch and he noticed that he was not the only one aware of the duo's compromising position.

Disgusted looks were being cast their way, but no one stepped in to interrupt, leading Harry to believe the woman had to be of some influence. Why else would the other purebloods put up with the inappropriate behaviour?

Harry knew that there had been male Courtesan's before him, very few of course, but there had been others. Angelina had informed him on his first day at Aphrodite's that he had been the first in a number of years. That put the other male's age somewhere between nineteen and his early twenties perhaps.

Judging by the salacious actions between the couple, it was clear the male was contracted to the woman. This puzzled Harry, because he clearly remembered never being taught how to pleasure a female contractor, nor did he see any women at his debuting.

How then had this male ended up with a woman when he would have had men lining up to purchase his contract? Why did Harry never have this option discussed or explored?

There were so many questions he wanted to ask the tall man, and he would give anything to just briefly speak with him.

Glancing over to Lord Voldemort whom was still speaking to the American, Harry weighed his chances of slipping away momentarily to address the other male Courtesan. Before he could decide what course of action to take, Bellatrix Lestrange sidled up to him and placed her lips by his ear much in the same way as the scandalous couple had been doing only moments before.

'I see you've spotted the infamous Carlotta Zabini and her handsome boy toy,' the woman purred in his ear.

Wanting information, and willing to put up with the woman's insistence on being so physical with him, Harry turned his head slightly in her direction and asked, 'She wouldn't happen to be related to Blaise Zabini? He's a boy in my year.'

Bellatrix laughed and responded with malicious glee, 'Ah yes, Blaise happens to be her darling baby
She's been married more than once? It was slightly unusual for the higher society, but not impossible.

This time the woman cackled evilly and replied with a hint of delighted respect in her voice, 'Seven husbands she's been through. All of them dying in mysterious 'accidents.' The woman's amassed quite a fortune for herself.'

Shivering slightly and staring at the mother of his school acquaintance with new wariness, Harry asked the strangely helpful and lucid Bellatrix, 'What about the male Courtesan?'

'Oh he's an eyeful all right. Carlotta bought his contract the very day he turned sixteen,' Bellatrix grinned approvingly.

'They seem…very close,' Harry commented for want of a better thing to say, mentally slapping himself for such an inane observation.

'Well you could put it that way,' Bellatrix purred, pushing herself more against Harry in such a way that her breasts just happened to press against his torso suggestively.

'If you're quite done traumatising my Courtesan, then I recommend you go and find your husband. I believe he was speaking to the lovely Lady Greengrass just moments ago,' Lord Voldemort commented suddenly, interrupting their conversation.

Instantly Bellatrix was alert, black eyes flashing with murderous jealously as she offered her Lord a flippant goodbye and stormed off to go and find her supposedly errant husband.

Unbalanced from the sudden mood swing, Harry stared after her with his mouth agape before then sheepishly looking up at Lord Voldemort to gauge his reaction at this uncouth action. Thankfully the man ignored it and chose instead to pull Harry back to him so he was once more in the circle of his arms.

Obviously the Dark Lord had no qualms with announcing to the gathered elite that he and his Courtesan were intending to pursue a physical relationship. Most already thought they were engaging in such activities, considering Harry's status.

'You are curious about the other male Courtesan,' Lord Voldemort stated.

Seeing no plausible reason for hiding it, Harry nodded in affirmation, tilting his head so he could see his contractor's face.

'What is it you wish to know?' the Dark Lord asked evenly.

Surprised that the man was willing to impart information, Harry fumbled as he tried to come up with the least embarrassing approach to ask the question that had been bothering him.

'How did he end up with a woman? I mean…well I never…when I was being trained…I didn't…' Harry trailed off, closing his eyes in mortification. Lord Voldemort could make him entirely tongue-tied in the most unfortunate occurrences.

'You are wondering why you never received training to cater to female contractors?' the Dark Lord guessed swiftly.

'Yes,' Harry squeaked out, trying to swallow his embarrassment as he awaited an answer.
'The past male Courtesans have all had their contracts purchased by females. I believe it was decided that you would be trained only for men, because no other male Courtesan had been available solely for them.' This was all said emotionlessly, but Lord Voldemort's actions betrayed his feelings as he possessively tightened his grip on Harry.

'I-I see,' Harry managed to say a little shakily.

There was his answer; there was no need now to talk to the unknown male Courtesan. But part of him still wanted to, just to find a person to relate to about his situation.

Staring up at his contractor's attractive face, all other thought left Harry's mind and he felt a pang in his heart as he remembered his rather terrifying revelation of his feelings for the Dark Lord. Whilst he was not entirely convinced it was love, there was certainly *something*.

And Harry was rapidly realising that, that was what was currently tearing down his reservations about sleeping with the man, putting his feelings out for show and engaging in an intimate relationship knowing he would never receive love in return.

If what he was feeling was love, shouldn't he trust the Dark Lord enough to at least take care of him? Had he not proven himself by coming to his aid and providing him with luxuries none other of his caste had enjoyed? Even if it wasn't love…could Harry settle for Lord Voldemort's care?

Harry blinked in a pure shot of comprehension.

Yes.

Yes he could.

For now, at least, it was enough.

Highly aware of the crimson eyes avidly peering into his own green ones, Harry thought with anticipation and a dash of nervousness.

*I'm ready.*

Suddenly directly facing the Dark Lord, Harry froze like an animal caught in a blinding beam of light. His emerald eyes stared unerringly at his contractor, waiting for his reaction.

'You are sure?' Lord Voldemort asked in a husky voice, his tone laced with lust and desire.

'Yes,' Harry responded making the sound as forceful as he could even as his knees were shaking. What was he getting himself into?

Raw covetous longing entered the ruby eyes, bleeding into them and making them darken with hunger. The Dark Lord's hand came up to stroke Harry's cheek and he leaned in as though to kiss the teenager in front of all of these people. As though restraining himself, Lord Voldemort paused and instead murmured silkily, 'Tonight. After the announcing of the Tri-Wizard Champions.'

Taking a trembling breath in Harry steeled himself and nodded slowly, a tentative smile edging onto his lips.

Seeing the obvious signs of nervousness, Lord Voldemort gripped Harry's shoulder comfortingly and promised smoothly, 'I will take care of you.' He frowned slightly as though annoyed at this rather tender omission.
Looking elegant and beautiful in an ice-blue silk dress, Fleur mingled with the guests at the Dark Lord's gala. As the representative of the French government currently involved with the Beauxbatons party, she had been naturally invited to the event.

To her frustration, Harry Potter had been kept by Voldemort's side for the entire afternoon, and there had been absolutely no opportunity for her to approach him and give a warning for what was to occur tonight. She couldn't help but think the Dark Lord knew there would be people here at the gala that would try and get a warning to his Courtesan.

The nineteen-year-old caught the eye of Sirius Black, whom had been invited simply because it would look bad if the Lord of the Most Noble and Ancient House of Black was not present, and inclined her head toward a rose garden a short distance from the gathered guests.

Sirius acknowledged her intention to speak with him privately and forcefully dragged his gaze from his godson whom was on the verge of being molested by his cousin Bellatrix. Gritting his teeth at the woman's actions, Sirius moved away towards the drinks table.

From there he expertly looked around to see if there were any watchers surveying him currently. His mood darkened when he picked up two men discreetly observing him.

He needed a distraction.

Hiding a smirk when he found the perfect opportunity, Sirius absently brushed past a clump of pureblood women. Pretending to loose his footing, the man carefully pushed the woman nearest to him into her partner.

With an ear-piercing shriek the woman stumbled into her companion, spilling their drinks and causing an unholy racket that conveniently drew all the attention in the immediate area. Allowing a smug look to creep across his face, Sirius watched with satisfaction as his two spies allowed their attention to divert to the flailing pureblood women.

As people rushed in to help the two ladies to their feet and calm them down, Sirius strode away confidently and aimed towards the rose garden. Using the shadows created by the pavilions and the scattered ornamental trees, the man managed to reach the garden undetected.

Fleur was seated on a stone bench, absently twirling a blonde lock of hair with her fingers. She was the perfect picture of an air-headed pureblood woman, and to the passing eye she looked to be simply taking a breath of fresh air in the rose garden.

'Miss Delacour,' Sirius called softly, alerting her to his presence.

Her sharp blue eyes snapped up and she stood so that she had more of a presence to face her fellow Order member.

'Monsieur Black. I 'ave scoured ze garden and 'ave disabled two listening charms. We are free to speak for now.'

'Have you completed the first phase of your mission?' Sirius asked urgently.

'Oui. Ze Goblet 'as been tampered with and no one is aware as of yet,' the young woman responded.
immediately with a light of triumph in her cornflower blue eyes.

'Are you sure there is no way to escape the Tri-Wizard contract?' the man then questioned worriedly.

'It is impossible. Ze contract between a Champion and ze Tournament is stronger than any other pre-existing arrangement. Ze plan is sure to succeed,' Fleur assured the older man with a confident smile.

Sirius relaxed and allowed some of his anxiety to slide away. Hopefully by this time tonight they would be one step closer to rescuing Harry.

And yet, there was a feeling of dread in the pit of Sirius' stomach that refused to go away.

It was the promise that somehow, something was going to go wrong.

If Harry had thought that it was nerve-wracking entering a ballroom full of strangers, it was even more so entering the Great Hall of Hogwarts. He knew many of the people within- saw them on a daily basis during school and it was mortifying to have to enter on the arm of Lord Voldemort under their intent gazes.

The Headmaster's chair had been graciously left empty, with Snape occupying the next seat over to the immediate right. Harry noticed as he walked towards the raised dais that a small chair had been placed on the left hand side of the high-backed Headmaster seat, and he assumed that that would be his position for the night.

Wishing he could simply sit with the other sixth years, to meld into the crowd and become just another face Harry struggled to maintain a calm exterior. He adeptly avoided his year level's table, feeling dozens of eyes boring into his head as he passed.

Passing the fifth year table Harry couldn't help but glance to the side slightly to lock eyes with Luna. The girl gave him a beaming smile that he couldn't help but reciprocate to a lesser extent. Suddenly feeling a bit more bolstered Harry was able to hold his head high once more and finish the walk to the dais.

Waiting for the Dark Lord to take his seat, as did every other person in the room, Harry was finally able to sink into his welcome chair once his contractor had taken his place. There was a wave of movement as the people present also took their seats.

Snape rose and moved to the podium placed beside the Goblet of Fire, which was smouldering away as though impatient to announce the Champions. Under the watchful eye of his Lord, the Hogwarts Headmaster invited the gathered students, teachers and guests to enjoy their meals in his usual acerbic tone.

As the plates in the Hall filled with food, there was an atmosphere of tension, the students eager to have dinner finished and to have the Champions announced. Betting pools were running rampant through the student population, people changing their bets at the last minute on a whim. The excited chatter was deafening, however Harry soon discovered that there were muffling charms in place on top of the dais to prevent the student's noise from removing any chance of conversation.

Selecting some food to put on his plate, Harry looked out of the corner of his eye to see who was sitting on his other side. To his surprise he saw Lucius Malfoy, suave as ever, neatly cutting into a slice of venison.

Harry hadn't realised the man had arrived before he and Lord Voldemort had, but it made sense that the man was here considering his position as the Dark Lord's main political consultant.
As though sensing Harry's gaze, the blonde turned slightly and offered Harry a thin smile before turning to the person on his other side. Harry was left alone to eat his dinner in silence, feeling rather bereft. Before the feeling even had a chance to settle he felt a hand stroking his own under the cover of the table.

Glancing up in surprise Harry met Lord Voldemort's red eyes and felt that all-too-familiar clenching of his stomach. To think that tonight they were going to be…

The innocent caress suddenly became much less innocuous as the Dark Lord heard that passing thought behind Harry's brilliant emerald eyes. Lord Voldemort's hand crept down his arm, leaving a trail of goosebumps in its wake and brushed the teenager's clothed thigh provocatively.

Harry's breath hitched when the fingers drifted a little lower, so close, but then they were pulling away completely and Harry was left panting quietly in frustration and more than a little arousal. Though the reason for his contractor's teasing turned out to be necessary as the plates in the Hall magically cleaned themselves.

It was time for the announcing of the Champions.

With Lord Voldemort overseeing from his high-backed chair, the three Heads of the schools rose and moved toward the Goblet. Harry took the opportunity to gather himself and to observe the other two Heads of Beauxbatons and Durmstrang.

The Durmstrang Headmaster was a tall, foreboding sort of man with craggy features and sharp brown eyes that seemed to Harry were able to watch everything. The Head of Beaxbatons was a giant of a woman, rather handsome but bearing a rather imposing presence.

Gazing at both their magical cores Harry was quite impressed with their levels of magic, noting the incredibly Dark aura surrounding the Durmstrang Headmaster's core. By contrast his tall companion had an untainted aura. Harry wondered absently if their schools reflected their preferred method of magic before nudging those thoughts aside to focus on the Goblet of Fire.

'When the Champions names are called, they are to enter the chamber located behind the staff table wherein they shall receive their first instructions,' Snape begun, in a rehearsed tone of voice.

With a casual flick of his wand the candles in the Great Hall were extinguished plunging the entire chamber in an eerie semi-darkness. The bluish-white flames of the Goblet flared brighter in the shadows and the occupants of the chamber were hushed at the sight of the dancing blaze.

Abruptly the flames turned crimson red that Harry likened to Lord Voldemort's eyes, and a tongue of fire shot up to expulse a single piece of parchment from the Goblet. Snape caught the parchment with ease, and leaned towards the now bluish-white flames once more, reading the words written down.

'The Champion for Durmstrang will be Kostadin Karkaroff,' Snape announced.

There was thunderous applause from the Durmstrang table as a handsome, well-built young man rose and smartly stepped forward. As he passed the Goblet on the way to the receiving chamber Harry noticed how he looked up to meet his Headmaster's eyes.

There was a blatantly proud and delighted expression on the man's face as he clapped loudly for the Durmstrang Champion, and Harry wondered at their relationship. They seemed quite similar in appearance so perhaps they were father and son or uncle and nephew.

Kostadin disappeared into the chamber behind the staff table and the applause and chatter eventually died down as the Goblet changed colour once more. Another piece of parchment was propelled from
the flames, to be caught again by Snape.

'The Champion for Beauxbatons,' he said, 'is Antoinette Chauvette.'

Harry smothered a snigger at the man's atrocious pronunciation of the French name, watching with amusement as a red haired young woman rose gracefully from the Beauxbatons table, her face set in a disgruntled expression at the butchering of her name.

She too left the Great Hall and entered the chamber, leaving only the Hogwarts Champion to be revealed. Harry leaned forward in expectation as the Goblet flared red for the third time that night and a tiny piece of parchment was released into Snape's waiting hands.

'The Hogwarts Champion,' he called, with a barely perceptible sneer lingering around his mouth, 'is Cormac McLaggen.'

The arrogant young man stood up to boisterous applause and cheering from his posse of friends and followers, a cocky grin on his face as he strutted past the staff table and into the chamber off to the side. There were many annoyed faces in the crowd as money was discreetly exchanged for lost bets. Others bore irritated expressions simply because the young man chosen, whilst being quite talented in class, was hopelessly conceited and over-confident. It could only be hoped that he learnt some deal of humility before he lost the Tournament for Hogwarts.

'With the three Champions now cho-' Snape began saying. The sight of the Goblet blazing red once more cut him off. Frantic whispers broke out and people further back actually stood up to better see what was happening.

Harry was just as shocked as the rest of the people in the chamber, and unconsciously reached for Lord Voldemort's hand once more as a feeling of dread crept into his stomach. He was relieved to feel pressure on his hand as the Dark Lord conceded to calm him.

The expression of bafflement on the sour Potion Master's face would have been hilarious on any other day, but Harry could not muster any humour as he watched the man grasp the piece of parchment, which had been unceremoniously spewed forth.

For a few breathless moments he stared down, as though not comprehending what he was reading. Then, in one curt movement, he crushed the parchment in hand and announced clearly, 'There has been an unforeseen complication, which must be attended to immediately. The ceremony is concluded for the night, so you may all return to your dormitories.'

Then in a quieter voice so that only those on the dais could hear, 'A fourth Champion has been chosen. For obvious reasons I did not disclose their name to the students.'

Startled gasps rang out and voices rose in speculation about this unheard of occurrence.

'-tricked the Goblet-

'Impossible! That's-

'-demand to know how-

'Silence.'

That single cold command from the Dark Lord ceased all talk and with all his impressive bearing Lord Voldemort rose to his feet and stated, 'We will discuss this in the privacy of the Champion's chamber. If the Heads of the schools and diplomatic advisors could follow me?'
Harry took that as his cue to place his arm on the Dark Lords and allow himself to be swept away towards the chamber.

Following behind them were Snape and the two unnamed Heads of the schools, as well as Lucius Malfoy and the remaining two diplomatic advisors. They entered the doors to the chamber and then followed a short passageway into an elegant room.

The three Champions were scattered around the space in various positions, avoiding each other's eyes and preferring to remain in tense silence. They were to be rivals after all for the Cup.

When the party of Heads and advisors arrived to disturb them they all straightened their spines and waited eagerly for their first instructions. Instead they were greeted with the news that a fourth Champion had been chosen.

After their cries of indignation at this turn of events were silenced, the Headmaster of Durmstrang asked the question everyone desired to know.

'Who is the fourth Champion?'

Snape glanced around the room and when his onyx black eyes landed on Harry he felt his heart sink and he simply knew he was going to be caught up somehow in this.

'Harry Potter, a Hogwarts student.'

Judging by the confused looks on the gathered faces Harry realised numbly that they had no idea who he was; that he was currently present in the room. Distantly he became aware of a sense of great rage and he felt it as Lord Voldemort's magic snapped in fury.

'My Courtesan is not going to be competing in the Tri-Wizard Tournament. I will not allow it.'

Slowly the eyes in the room fixed on Harry, standing there dazedly under their shocked and incredulous scrutiny.

_Merlin, what had he gotten himself into now?_

Chapter End Notes

Any guesses as to whom the other male Courtesan is? I wasn't very helpful with the description, but surely with the rough age and vague characteristics you all have some ideas? I'm sure someone could easily get it correctly :)

Hopefully this chapter has cleared up why Harry never received training to pleasure a female contractor. To be honest, it never crossed my mind before some people luckily commented on it. I really am slightly ashamed as a writer to admit this mistake.

Drops of Nightshade x
Chapter Twenty

Chapter Summary

In a world where the Dark Lord won, ten year old Harry Potter is part of the servile caste, the lowest caste in the new society. Destined for the life of a Courtesan, Harry is resigned to his fate. But it seems his unusual gifts have drawn the attention of the Dark Lord and Harry finds himself becoming so much more than just another war-orphan of the new regime. Eventual LV/HP.

Chapter Notes

Warning: Underage sex, M/M, read at your own risk.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Chapter Twenty

Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry

1996

'Zis is ze fourth Champion?' an accented voice asked in an accusatory tone of voice.

Harry turned to see a young, attractive, blonde haired woman facing the other members of the room, one hand pointed to Harry critically as though he had had something to do with his name coming out of the Goblet.

'I must protest. 'E is much too young to compete,' the Beauxbatons Headmistress added imperiously.

The Durmstrang Headmaster made no comment on the issue, and by the way his brown eyes kept flicking over to Lord Voldemort he seemed too wary of him to include his own input.

'I will repeat this again,' Lord Voldemort stated coldly. 'My Courtesan will not be participating in the Tournament. Not only is he underage, but he has only recently begun learning to wield his power.'

There was a slight pause before Lucius murmured silkily, 'There is the issue of the magically binding contract, My Lord.'

Harry frowned, not understanding what the pureblood was referring to. The Durmstrang political advisor spoke up at that point, an apologetic look on his face directed towards the Dark Lord. The rules of the competition state clearly that should a person's name come out of the Goblet, they are bound to participate. It is a magically binding contract that can only be broken by death or by the complete and permanent removal of an individual's magic.' The man recited this in a fashion that indicated it had come straight out of a guideline book.

Harry paled at that piece of information, the true realisation that he was going to have to compete in
this Tournament sinking in. When the only other alternatives were death or the removal of his magic, Harry was not willing to even consider them.

Looking desperately at his contractor, Harry's heart nearly froze at the contemplative expression on his face. Surely he wouldn't remove his magic? The main reason why none of the servile caste had their magic permanently removed, was because such an operation often resulted in the complete insanity of the patient. The practice was reserved for the worst sorts of criminals, who were punished that way before receiving the Dementors Kiss.

Clenching his fists, Harry made the resolute decision that if Lord Voldemort decided to remove his magic to protect him from the Tournament, he would do everything possible to kill himself before his power was torn away from him.

'Surely you are not considering taking 'is magic?' the same woman from earlier spoke, reflecting Harry's thoughts as her cornflower blue eyes widened with horror.

Lord Voldemort gave her the full brunt of his burning red stare, and Harry noted how her eyes carefully avoided the other man's. So she knew about his Legilimency talent.

'What I do, or do not do with my Courtesan is none of your concern Miss Delacour. You'll do well to remember that,' he spoke, with a faint hiss underlying his words.

Face flaming with embarrassment, Delacour backed away slightly, her eyes lingering on Harry with more than a little worry in their depths. The Headmistress placed a warning hand on the younger woman's shoulder.

'What I wish to know is how Potter's name ended up in the Goblet in the first place,' Snape's snide tone spoke up.

'Surely 'e put it zair,' the Beauxbatons Champion spoke for the first time, flicking her long red hair out of the way. The action vaguely reminded Harry of Ginny. 'It is a great 'onour of course to be chosen by ze Goblet.'

'That would be plausible,' Lucius said smoothly. 'Had Harry been at Hogwarts at the time.'

There was another silence following this before the Durmstrang Headmaster asked, 'Where was the boy if not at school?'

'He was recovering in my Citadel for the duration of the Goblet's stay at Hogwarts. There is no way he could have put his own name in,' Lord Voldemort explained.

'Could he have asked an older student to put his name in?' Kostadin Karkaroff asked fairly, and not in an accusing way. He was simply exploring the possibilities.

'His mail is monitored and I doubt a mere student could have tampered with the Goblet in the first place,' Lucius responded evenly.

Suspicious looks were exchanged in the chamber at that thought, and before the fingers could begin pointing the Dark Lord addressed Lucius saying, 'I will retire now with my Courtesan to the ambassador chambers. If you would do the honour, Lucius, of giving the first instructions to the Champions?'

When the man nodded his head in assent, Lord Voldemort faced the rest of the room's inhabitants and said clearly with no uncertainty, 'Harry Potter shall not be competing. How I go about ensuring this is my own matter.'
Harry knew he was shaking but he still bravely placed his hand on his contractor's arm and straightened his shoulders as much as he could—considering the circumstances. Ignoring the pitying looks cast his way, Harry left the chamber beside the Dark Lord.

Who had put his name in the Goblet?

The ambassador chambers at Hogwarts consisted of an entrance chamber, a parlour room, formal and informal dining spaces, a study and a simply enormous master bedroom with an ensuite bathroom.

Harry had never explored this section of the castle, because whenever not in use the rooms simply vanished until they were required once more. Investigating the books in the study, privately wondering if there were any titles on Dark magic, Harry tried his best to calm down his nerves after the shock of having his name emerge from the Goblet.

Whoever had put it in there obviously wished him dead; why else would they place the name of an untrained, underage wizard in the running for an extremely deadly competition?

Wandering back out of the study and into the parlour room, Harry found the Dark Lord sitting on one of the chaise lounges waiting for him to arrive.

'I have something to propose to you Harry,' Lord Voldemort stated firmly, gesturing the teen to sit opposite him.

Taking his place on the other lounge, Harry folded his hands neatly in his lap and looked bravely into the Dark Lord's eyes asking, 'What do you wish to propose, My Lord?'

'A solution to the issue of the Tri-Wizard Tournament.'

Harry stiffened, already fearing his contractor was about to suggest Harry allow him to permanently remove his magic. Because he would never allow that to happen. He would rather die than-

'No Harry I will not remove your magic. It would be a tragic waste of talent and potential. There is another way to evade the Goblet of Fire contract that currently binds you.'

'Another way?' Harry breathed, painful hope clawing its way up his throat.

A frown fluttered across the Dark Lord's face and he admitted, 'The process is dangerous. There is a chance that you shall die…and so shall I.'

'You, die, My Lord?' Harry asked incredulously, the mere idea of this seemingly invincible man perishing beyond his capabilities to comprehend.

'Yes. If you decide to take this option then I must be involved. I must place my life at risk.'

'No, My Lord,' Harry spoke unthinkingly. Some small part of his brain suggested slyly that if the Dark Lord died, then so would his twisted system. But Harry wasn't listening to it. He was embracing the side of him that was slowly falling in love with this insidiously charming man. 'I cannot go through with that option if it means your life will be in danger.'

'You would rather have your magic stripped from you than have me potentially killed?' Lord Voldemort asked genuinely curiously.

Harry flinched, taking a moment to weigh up the consequences of either possibility. Finally he spoke
quietly saying, 'I would kill myself before that happened. You would be able to continue living on without having to go through with this other option.'

'Then you have already answered me. We shall see through my plan,' the Dark Lord spoke calmly.

'May I have the details of the proposal, My Lord?' Harry asked tentatively, wondering if this was another one of those things that his contractor desired to keep a secret.

'Yes, of course Harry. You need to know what is going on to survive the process,' the Dark Lord said in a mild tone.

Harry waited expectantly for the explanation to come, wondering about what solution Lord Voldemort had developed. Maybe he would have his magic temporarily restricted? It wasn’t pleasant, but it was certainly more favourable than having it permanently stripped. But the Durmstrang advisor had said that the only way to get around the contract was full removal…

'Essentially, we shall bind our magical cores together.'

Harry froze and stared uncomprehendingly at his contractor. They would do what with their magical cores?

'When our cores unify, you will become incapable of competing in the Tournament due to the increased power you will wield. It is a breach of the rules to have a person participating who can draw on another whole magical source.'

'But…' Harry trailed off helplessly. Where did he begin to start asking questions? 'Why should I be bound to you?'

Seeing the anger on the Dark Lord’s face, Harry’s eyes widened comically and he added hastily, 'Not that I am ungrateful at being offered such an honour! It's just, why should your life be placed in jeopardy? Surely one of your Death Eaters could bind with me.'

'Impossible,' Lord Voldemort snapped curtly. 'Your magical core needs to have some level of compatibility with your partner before undergoing the ritual. On the day I first met you I said that our cores were indeed attuned. The unique nature of your magic would prevent you from successfully bonding with any other but me.'

Harry sat back against the lounge, digesting everything. Feeling the questions pressing urgently to be answered, Harry asked, 'What would be the nature of this bond…what is the core bonding?'

Seemingly comfortable answering this, Lord Voldemort adopted the tone he used when giving Harry a lecture on the theory of magic.

'Magical bondings are rarely practiced in modern times due to the complex and highly dangerous nature of the ritual. In the past, the process was commonly included in marriages to ensure the fidelity and continued dedication of the couple.'

'However, due to the high casualty rate the practice was banned to all but those who can gain a permit from the Ministry. Very few dare to bind their magical cores to another with such high risks threatening both participants.'

'Why would two people decide to go through with it, with all the risks? I know we have a special circumstance, but why would someone risk not only their life but the life of the other person involved?' Harry asked.
'Power,' Lord Voldemort responded evenly. 'By bonding your magical core to another, you not only can draw on your own magical reserves, but your partner's too. Furthermore, any magical traits are shared and gifted to the other. Such as the ability to speak in Parseltongue or to see magic.'

Harry blinked in surprise at hearing his own unique talent mentioned, before feeling a seed of excitement grow in him. To be able to speak to snakes would be wonderful. It would be like having his own private language with his contractor.

'Are there any drawbacks?' Harry asked quickly before he got too enthusiastic. Surely there would have to be some negatives from the bonding of two magical cores.

'Besides the chance of both participants perishing in the ritual to unify their cores, there is a key issue with joining your power. After the ceremony and a successful binding, should one of the partnership die, the other will end up a squib.'

'A squib?' Harry breathed in horror. If the Dark Lord died after they bonded, he would remain alive but without any power. Alternatively if he died then the ruler of wizarding Britain would be nothing more than a squib, as impossible as that seemed.

'Yes. Now you understand the full implications of going through with this ritual.'

'Are you… still willing to bond with me, knowing what will happen if I die?' Harry questioned his contractor.

'If I don't go through with this, then you will kill yourself. If I do, then I gain a massive source of power should the ritual work correctly and I keep you safe and out of harm's way.'

'When would we perform this ritual you keep mentioning?' Harry asked, not yet confirming he wished to go through with the bonding.

'It must be done before the First Task, which will be on the twenty-fourth of November. However we cannot perform the ceremony on any ordinary day. It must be on an auspicious day, a day of power.' A contemplative look appeared on the Dark Lord's face and he said carefully, 'The next day of importance in the magical year is the autumn equinox.'

'When is that, My Lord?' Harry questioned.

'Not including today…' Lord Voldemort paused and then said seriously, 'It will occur in four days time.'

'Four days?' Harry repeated in shock. It was incredibly close. Suddenly remembering the event at the end of October, Harry asked eagerly, 'What about Samhain? That's a day of power isn't it? If we do the ritual then, we can have more time to prepare.'

But his contractor was already shaking his head.

'As you know, Samhain is the one point in the entire year where the veil between the world of the living and the world of the dead is at its thinnest. If we bond on that day, there is a high chance that our ritual will be interrupted by unwanted shadows, attracted to the ceremony. Either we bond in four days time, or not at all.'

The ultimatum made Harry clench his fists in his lap. He hated being forced into situations where there truly was only one option left for him.

'The autumn equinox it is,' he said at last through gritted teeth.
After their discussion, Lord Voldemort settled himself in the study to peruse the titles and read up on the bonding ceremony. He invited Harry to make full use of the bathing amenities, which the teenager took him up on.

Standing under the cascading flow of water, Harry remembered with a jolt about what he had promised his contractor tonight.

Sex.

Would they still do it, even with the drama that night and the impending bonding ceremony?

Turning off the taps Harry stepped out into the warm, steamy room and reached for a fluffy white towel. As he dried off, the emerald-eyed boy absently searched for his clothes, which he had left on the counter.

They weren't there.

Pausing in his ministrations, Harry scoured the room with his eyes, desperately searching for his missing articles.

Damn.

The house elves must have already magicked the clothing away from the bathroom to be cleaned.

Which meant he was going to have to go back into the bedroom with only a towel for a shield.

Wrapping it tightly around his waist, Harry opened the door a crack and breathed a sigh of relief to find the room empty. Obviously the Dark Lord was still busy in the study.

Whilst Harry was ready to engage intimately with his contractor, he still felt a ridiculous amount of nervousness for someone of his profession. This partially stemmed from a fear that he wouldn't be good enough for the ruler of wizarding Britain.

Padding into the bedroom, Harry walked over to the dresser and opened the top drawer to peer inside. Luckily, the wardrobe had been stocked with a variety of clothes, and Harry happily pulled out a pair of boxers and a set of warm-looking pyjamas.

With one last glance around the room, just to be sure, Harry allowed the towel to drop from around his waist. Bending down to put the boxers on Harry nearly brained himself on the open drawer of the dresser when a lustful voice behind him said, 'Well that's a pleasant sight.'

Whirling around, quite forgetting about the fact that he was stark naked, Harry faced his contractor with a startled look on his face.

'The room was empty!' he accused, pointing a finger at the Dark Lord in outrage.

Then realising he was pointing a finger at the Dark Lord, Harry quickly allowed his hands to drop to his side, biting his lip and hoping he wouldn't be punished for being so forward. Then he remembered he was completely bare and hastened to cover his groin with a vivid blush staining his cheeks.

This had to be one of the most embarrassing situations he had ever been in.

To his surprise an amused light entered the Dark Lord's eyes and he moved forward slowly as though trying not to startle a frightened animal.
To Harry's credit he didn't run, didn't even flinch when Lord Voldemort moved to pull his hands aside, lifting them so that they were twined around the taller man's clothed body.

'You shouldn't cover yourself Harry. Not in front of me. You're beautiful,' the man said simply, in that tone of his that he used when something was the undeniable truth.

Heart clenching, Harry offered Lord Voldemort a timid smile and when nothing more happened, the teen realised that his contractor wasn't going to do anything until he was sure Harry wanted to go all the way tonight.

Ignoring his brain, which was advising careful caution, Harry rose up on his toes and pressed his lips to the Dark Lord's.

It was just as good as the last time they had done it.

When that familiar tongue traced his bottom lip, asking for permission to enter, Harry opened his mouth with a sigh of ecstasy. Plundering and claiming every inch of his mouth, Lord Voldemort's hand moved to Harry's raven hair like last time, pulling him closer so that their bodies were pressed tightly together.

It was messy, a battle of teeth and tongues that Harry was quickly losing as the last of his inhibitions finally fled him. The hardness he felt burning against him, that he reciprocated, sent shivers over Harry's body from where it touched.

When he felt the Dark Lord nudge him toward the bed he followed unresistingly, feeling the frame hit the back of his legs and cause him to fall onto the covers and break the kiss.

Breathing heavily, sprawled out on the bed with a steadily growing need in between his legs, Harry looked up at Lord Voldemort through lidded eyes. His contractor was hovering above him, blazing desire running rampart across his features, for once not set in a cool mask.

Feeling bold, Harry reached up to brush his fingers over the bulge apparent in the Dark Lord's pants, trailing teasingly over the swelling member constrained by his clothes. Experimentally he cupped the heat, a groan escaping his own mouth as Lord Voldemort ground against his hand.

'I feel I am overdressed,' the Dark Lord murmured as he crawled onto the bed, pinning Harry to the covers.

With a twitch of magic his clothes were banished.

Harry took a moment just to look at him.

He was…incredible.

The smooth, muscled planes of his chest and abdomen were highlighted in the torchlight of the chamber, starting to glisten slightly with sweat. Turning his attention downwards Harry's breath caught at the sight of the aroused member pointing his way.

A trickle of uncertainty flickered through Harry after seeing the size, wondering how exactly that was going to fit inside of him. He hastily shoved his worries aside, reminding himself to trust Lord Voldemort to take care of him.

That glorious body then pressed against him, a fiery presence that set every one of Harry's nerves alight with sheer passion.
'Please,' he whispered in a voice cracked with need.

It was as if that one word was the only invitation that Lord Voldemort needed, and he made a quiet, husky noise as he softly trailed kisses over Harry's face and neck, nuzzling at his jaw. Every movement was lustful but controlled as was the Dark Lord's nature.

The hot lap of his tongue over Harry's pulse made him jerk, head flung back and breath stuttering in his throat as a ragged moan tore itself free from his throat.

He whimpered then as the Dark Lord moved downwards, touching, tasting, ghosting along Harry's skin and leaving him a wanton mess. Instinct tugged at him, making him writhe hungrily into Lord Voldemort's hands, desperate for more.

His back arched as a hot tongue found one of his nipples, tracing a lazy spiral around the nub before moving on leaving Harry trembling with unanswered need.

In the space of one heartbeat, Lord Voldemort suddenly slid lower, nipping at Harry's stomach and making him jerk in response. As the Dark Lord's hands stroked down to grasp his hips, thumbs stroking at the angular bones in fascination, Harry's breaths became ragged and short. Lord Voldemort couldn't be in any doubt about how much Harry wanted him. His erection was hard against the other man's stomach, painfully pleasurable as he shifted ceaselessly under the Dark Lord's comfortable weight.

Harry screwed his eyes shut, frantically holding onto the last vestiges of his control. At the rate this was going, he would come before Lord Voldemort had a chance to penetrate him.

'Please,' he repeated once more, jerking his hips up insistently.

'Tell me what you want Harry,' the Dark Lord purred against his throat, resuming his languid lapping at the teen's pulse.

Shuddering under the older man's ministrations, slowly going insane with need Harry cried out in a mixture of a plea and a demand, 'Take me!'

With a smirk on his face Lord Voldemort summoned a tube of lube and unscrewed the top with deft fingers, watching as Harry twitched with impatience beneath him, all glistening rosy skin and huge begging green eyes.

'This won't last much longer if you continue to look at me like that Harry,' the Dark Lord murmured silkily, rewarded when Harry made a breathy noise at the back of his throat.

Coating a liberal amount over his fingers, Lord Voldemort sat back in between his Courtesan's legs, which helpfully spread open for him. He eyed the impatiently twitching pink hole with arousal, experimentally stroking the area with a single moistened finger.

For one faltering moment, Harry stiffened with fear as he remembered Smith doing something similar, his unwanted finger tracing his entrance about to-

'Harry, look at me,' the Dark Lord demanded, waiting for Harry to drag his eyes open before saying, 'If you want to stop, just say the word.' His shoulders were tense with iron-clad control as he paused away from Harry's naked body.

'No,' Harry began, making the Dark Lord freeze and begin to back away, at least until Harry's hands clutched him closer. 'No, I mean, keep going I trust you not to hurt me, so just...' He tugged him nearer, moving his legs apart even further to indicate his readiness to continue.
Slowly, Lord Voldemort returned, a finger resuming its gentle exploration of the rim of his entrance. When the finger finally slipped inside, Harry's body quivered and a moan broke free of his lips.

The digit began to move, stroking the velvet walls inside of Harry, coaxing yet more encouraging sounds from the teenager. When a second finger joined the first, Harry cringed slightly at the burn, unused to the feeling of being filled, but Lord Voldemort kissed him deeply, tongue erasing all thoughts of discontent.

For good measure the Dark Lord added a third digit, stretching and scissoring the muscles so that he wouldn't tear Harry when he entered. Harry whined unhappily at the intrusion, shifting slightly in discomfort.

But then Lord Voldemort's searching fingers found that little bundle of nerves inside of him, and with the single crook of a finger he had Harry screaming with pleasure, jerking downwards to impale that finger even more firmly on his prostrate.

When the fingers retreated Harry whimpered at the loss until he felt something even better pressing against his fluttering entrance. With a slow driving motion the Dark Lord entered Harry, sliding in smoothly to fill him in a movement of incredible pleasure.

There was a twinge of pain that was overridden by a flood of enjoyment. Harry was biting his lip hard enough to taste blood, and his back arched off the mattress as Lord Voldemort began to move, dragging and burning, hot and huge and he never thought it would be like this: like dying, like breathing, like living.

When those hips canted to just the right angle and brushed against his prostrate Harry keened desperately, hands moving up and down the smooth back above him, caressing and stroking the warm skin, almost not knowing what to do with himself as his brain dissolved into overwhelming pleasure.

As Lord Voldemort's hand grasped Harry's neglected cock in one sure motion, Harry knew he was lost. With only two short strokes his orgasm broke upon him like a wave, causing his muscles to clench down upon the Dark Lord.

As Harry lay sated upon the bed, covered in his own release, Lord Voldemort continued at a quicker pace as his own orgasm drew nearer, urged on by Harry's rippling muscles still twitching around his buried member.

Harry groaned when he felt warm wetness blossom inside of him as the Dark Lord released at last, continuing to slowly pump in and out as the last of his cum trickled into the emerald-eyed teen beneath him.

Lord Voldemort pulled out of him and then gathered his sleepy body up in his arms, moving to the head of the bed to pull back the covers and tuck Harry in under. He was a mess, but he was too tired to even think about another shower.

When the Dark Lord turned to leave Harry snagged his wrist and looked up imploringly with his green eyes. 'Aren't you going to stay…My Lord,' he added on at the end, almost forgetting about their places in society when they joined together intimately.

'I do not sleep; there is no reason for me to require a bed,' was the response from an expressionless face.

'Not to sleep…just to stay with me until I do,' Harry murmured, fearing he was once again being too
forward with his suggestions. But he couldn't bear being left alone after sex, like some toy to be used then cast aside.

He was shocked when the Dark Lord cocked his head to one side before climbing, still naked, into the bed beside Harry, encircling an arm around the younger male's body and drawing him close under the covers.

'Very well,' was the imperious statement.

Settling down in his contractor's arms, Harry closed his eyes and couldn't help a blissful sigh from escaping him. He could almost pretend they were a normal couple, which had just enjoyed brilliant sex and were now going to rest in each other's arms for the rest of the night until morning.

Just before he was lost to the darkness of sleep he clearly heard the Dark Lord say, dare he think it, softly, 'I do not see you as a toy to be used and cast aside. You mean more than that.'

That night Harry drifted to sleep with a smile on his lips.

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Chapter End Notes

Author note: Well, what did you think? :/

There is so much pressure when people have been waiting for a long time for something. I hope I haven't disappointed any of you.

Hmmm, it seems as though the Order's plans are starting to fall to pieces...but they can always adapt to the new situation, don't forget that...

Drops of Nightshade x
In a world where the Dark Lord won, ten year old Harry Potter is part of the servile caste, the lowest caste in the new society. Destined for the life of a Courtesan, Harry is resigned to his fate. But it seems his unusual gifts have drawn the attention of the Dark Lord and Harry finds himself becoming so much more than just another war-orphan of the new regime. Eventual LV/HP.

Chapter Twenty-One

Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry

1996

Fleur Delacour managed to maintain a façade of calm during the journey from the Champion's chamber to the Beauxbatons carriage, for the benefit of the watchful eyes upon her, but the second she was safely ensconced within the privacy of her cabin her face twisted with rage and she let out a frustrated scream.

Her plans, the Order's plans, were dissolving at an alarming pace.

It had been so beautifully simple.


Return home with the mission a success.

It was a plan riddled with flaws, but Fleur and the leaders of the Order had been certain those
concerns wouldn't arise until later on in the mission. They had never anticipated the Dark Lord being so heinous, so vile that he would rather tear Harry Potter's magic away from him than allow him to compete.

The boy was as good as dead.

Taking a few deep breaths to steady herself, chest heaving with her helpless fury, Fleur allowed her emotions to settle and put her intelligent mind to task.

There would be an investigation into the tampering of the Goblet; of that there was no doubt. But she had prepared for the eventuality, and was confident that no blame could be directed toward her.

The First Task was not until the twenty-fourth of November giving her a time frame of roughly two months to find another way of rescuing Harry Potter and getting him safely to the Order. However there was a great chance that the Dark Lord would act before then. If she really was going to pull off the mission, she needed to move quickly and decisively.

The Order medallions that had been gradually distributed over the past few years into both the servile and half-blood castes were just waiting to be activated. Charmed by Albus Dumbledore himself before his defeat at the hands of the Dark Lord, the coins would not only burn in the presence of another Order member, but when the time was right, they would be the key to rescuing the Order supporters trapped in Britain by Voldemort's society.

There was no chance of one such coin reaching Harry, as he was near constantly in the Dark Lord's presence and the Order had realised that although the medallions were veiled from hostile eyes, the sheer power of Voldemort would be able to detect it after a time in close contact. They would not only risk their entire operation by gifting the boy with a medallion, but Harry's life too would be in peril should the Dark Lord discover him with an Order coin on his person. Any other plan to spirit the boy away were futile, as he was either safely ensconced within the Hogwarts wards or the Citadel's wards.

Which had left them with the Tri-Wizard Tournament plan.

An image of Bill Weasley appeared in Fleur's mind and a frown marred the young woman's forehead as she considered the redhead clan and their fosterlings. The extensive wards around Hogwarts not only made it impossible for them to recover Harry Potter, but also negated the effects of the Order medallions.

If the Menial family wished to escape from Britain, they needed to find some method to slip away from Hogwarts to allow their coins to activate properly. Fleur knew that other Order members had been in contact with the family, to give them their coins and provide a rough estimate as to when the medallions would be triggered.

That had been before the original plan had been destroyed in the face of the Dark Lord's cruelty. The coins were meant to be activated a few hours after Harry Potter was whisked away by the Cup Portkey, at the end of the Third Task in June.

But now that Harry Potter was not to be competing, they would have to not only move forward their retrieval plan of the boy, but the rescuing of the Order supporters here in Britain as well.

Not for the first time, nor the last, Fleur wondered what made the boy so special that the Order were willing to risk everything to have him retrieved. She understood that he was the son of two deceased members, not to mention a fosterling of the Weasley clan, but to jeopardise the lives of every supporter trapped in Britain for one teenager just seemed…
Ludicrous. Foolhardy. Completely and utterly stupid.

There had to be something else, some other reason that made the higher ups so desperate to get their hands on him. But they kept their reasons to themselves, leaving Fleur and most of the Order in the dark as to why so much effort was being put into rescuing one boy.

It was infuriating.

But Fleur was still determined to see her mission through. The Order needed Harry Potter. She didn't know why they did, but her assignment had been perfectly clear. Retrieve Harry Potter and get him to France. Only then would the coins be activated and the rest of the Order's supporters would finally be rescued, once the higher ups were content that Harry was in their grasp.

That they were willing to postpone the triggering of the medallions for the boy made Fleur clench her fists in anger at the idiocy of such an act. Obviously they feared that should the Order supporters be retrieved before the boy was, security would tighten around him and make it impossible to get close enough to recover him.

So she would have to move quickly, not only for the sake of the operation, but for the sake of every Order supporter imprisoned by the Dark Lord's twisted society. If Harry Potter was not rescued, then neither would any other person be.

A phrase trickled ominously through Fleur's mind and she shuddered slightly.

It is for the greater good.

Whatever that greater good might be.

When Harry awoke it was to an aching body and an empty bed.

He knew he shouldn't feel disappointed that the Dark Lord hadn't remained for the whole night, but the dissatisfaction of the situation still lingered.

Tentatively stretching his sore body, hissing slightly as certain disused muscles twinged unpleasantly, Harry glanced around the master bedroom. A glass bottle caught his attention, sitting on the end table beside the bed.

Reaching over he picked it up, tilting the bottle so that he could read the label attached around the neck. It was a soothing potion for sore muscles. Underneath the list of ingredients was a style of writing that Harry had come to be familiar with.

After you drink the potion call one of the house elves to prepare your breakfast for you. I have matters to attend to today, but I expect you to make an appearance for at least the last two classes of the day.

Lord Voldemort

Groaning in annoyance at having to go to school today, if only for two classes, Harry uncorked the bottle after briefly checking its contents with his magic. It wasn't like he expected his contractor to poison the solution, but he could never know for certain if someone had tampered with it after it had left Lord Voldemort's keeping.

Once certain that it truly was nothing more than a muscle soother, Harry drank it down in one gulp and sighed in blissful relief as his body relaxed into the soft comfort of the bed. He was happy that
the Dark Lord had been considerate enough to remember to provide him with such a potion.

After languishing in bed for a while, Harry eventually dragged himself out, noting with pleasure that the aches he had been feeling were all but gone. Calling a house elf, he ordered a decently sized breakfast, hungry after his activities the night before.

Emerald eyes darkening slightly in desire as he remembered what had occurred, Harry moved over to the full length mirror in the corner of the room, the sheet from the bed wrapped loosely around his body.

For a few moments he stared at his reflection in shock.

Love bites littered his torso and shoulders, sneakily creeping up the slender column of his throat. They showed quite clearly against his light skin, unmistakable to those who knew what they were looking for.

Suddenly panicked, Harry cupped his neck as though to hide the marks. He was not ashamed of them; on the contrary they rather turned him on at the possessive gesture behind the action.

But he was genuinely worried about leaving the room with some the marks showing, no doubt being visible above the collar of his school robes.

Then the panic left as quickly as it came, Harry letting out a shaky laugh at his own stupidity. He was a wizard was he not? It was a simple matter to cast a glamour and hide the love bites upon his neck. He didn't even need his wand to cast such a simple spell.

Drawing on his magic, Harry waved his hand over his neck, watching as the love bites faded away under the charm's effects.

All but one.

Brows lowered in concentration, Harry hovered his hand over the one stubborn mark on the side of his neck, on his jugular. Channelling his magic he willed the love bite to disappear along with the rest.

But it stubbornly remained visible.

Staring incredulously at the single love bite resting on his skin in a rather smug fashion, Harry growled to himself and allowed his magic to surge forward once more. It was like the mark had a mind of its own.

His magic washed over his body and then bled out into the room when it found it could not complete the action of removing a simple hickey. The mirror shattered, showering fragments of glass onto the carpeted floor and the room's window smashed open allowing a gust of brisk autumn wind to blow in.

Staring in bafflement at the sudden carnage around him, Harry found a shard of glass still clinging to the wooden frame of the mirror and quickly checked his neck for the blasted love bite.

It was still there.

About to launch his magic in another attack, Harry hesitated as the love bite slowly began to fade. It didn't disappear entirely, but it paled so that it blended in better with the skin on his neck. Accepting the compromise, Harry waved his hand and repaired the mirror, simultaneously shutting the window with a flicker of magic.
Once the room was set to rights, Harry became aware of the stickiness between his legs and his clammy body from the night before. Deciding breakfast could wait, he left quickly to take a shower and get himself clean.

As he stood beneath the warm water, he allowed himself a moment to breathe a sigh of relief that there had been no severe repercussions from his decision to sleep with his contractor the night before. He hadn't been tossed aside and he had been able to indulge in his passion without risking revealing his true feelings for the Dark Lord.

He was satiated with that arrangement for now.

Harry's eyes suddenly widened as he remembered the proposed core bonding ceremony, in four days time. How could he have forgotten such a significant event?

Admittedly, it had been organised rather quickly, but that was no excuse to have all thought of it leave his mind. It was a ceremony that would undoubtedly change his life.

He was anxious about it, but at the same time he knew that he truly had no other option but to partake in the ritual. Part of the worry stemmed from his lack of knowledge about the ritual and the full outline of the effects the bonding would have on him.

Deciding to do some research in the Hogwarts library after school was finished for the day, Harry took a few deep breaths and allowed himself a small smile, thoughts shifting to his classes.

It would be good to see his friends again after his prolonged absence.

Before lunch began Harry found his way to the Menial quarters and was subjected to Mrs Weasley's smothering concern over the attack on him last week. The rest of his foster family managed to express their distress in a far less overbearing manner, but it still made Harry uncomfortable to see their upset eyes lingering on him.

Mrs Weasley had wanted him to stay for lunch, no doubt intending to fatten him up with a veritable feast, but Harry managed to manoeuvre himself out of staying. It wasn't that he didn't want to spend time with his foster family; he cared about them all very much.

But to see their concerned expressions and their cautious attitudes around him was tiring, and it felt like there was an invisible barrier stretching between them. They were stepping around him like he was fragile glass about to crack at the slightest provocation.

Ron had begun asking a question about Smith earlier and had been frantically hushed by his mother, as though the mere mention of Harry's attacker would cause the teen to have a complete emotional breakdown.

The twins were relatively normal around him but their true feelings were revealed in the tightness of their mouths and the slightly strained tone of their usually free laughter.

Harry knew he was being ungrateful for his adopted family's concern over him, but it was hard enough dealing with the knowledge of the attempted rape without his family drawing attention to it. He had been away for three years; he had forgotten how much Mrs Weasley could fuss, how tight-knit the family was.

He knew he was still accepted in the Weasley clan, but his absence had certainly driven a wedge between them. Harry had experienced things beyond their comprehension, and they knew that. It was why he and Ron were no longer very close, why he barely interacted with his older foster
siblings. It was sad, but it was the truth.

They would always be his family, would always be special people to him. But he would probably never share the level of familial bonds he once had before he was sent away to become a Courtesan.

Leaving the Menial quarters, Harry almost walked straight past the girl leaning casually against the stone wall outside of the main kitchen. Wheeling around in surprise, he was faced with Luna Lovegood offering him a serene smile as she pushed off of the wall and approached him.

'Hello Harry,' she said placidly.

'Luna, how are you?' he asked, eager to have someone distract him from his sad musings over his foster family.

'I am very well. I discovered a colony of Blibbering Humdingers in the abandoned classroom on the third floor yesterday,' she informed him happily.

Harry stared for a second, having no idea what 'Blibbering Humdingers' were. Brushing it aside as another one of the girl's eccentricities, Harry questioned her, 'What are you doing down here in the Menial quarters?'

'I had a feeling you would need someone to keep you company after seeing your family again,' she said without preamble, infinitely wise eyes peering at him.

Harry's mouth slipped open and he asked in shock, 'How did you-' before catching himself and twisting his lips in a wry grin. 'I shouldn't ask how you know these things. You just do.'

Suddenly Luna beamed and skipped forward to hook her arm around his own, pulling him down the corridor and away from the kitchens.

'Wha- Luna!' Harry cried out as he was tugged along beside the strange blonde-haired girl. 'What are you doing?'

'I know how to cheer you up,' she proclaimed boldly, giving his arm another insistent pull, almost tipping him over.

Knowing it was useless to resist, Harry allowed himself to be dragged through the labyrinth of corridors in the bowels of the castle. He knew the path they were taking; Luna was leading him outside into the Hogwarts grounds if he wasn't mistaken.

Sure enough, they reached an exit and abandoned the castle for the gently sloping and carefully manicured lawn. When Luna started making a beeline for the Beauxbatons carriage, Harry wondered briefly if she was going to take him to pet the extremely deadly winged horses that had brought the Beauxbatons students here. They appeared innocent enough until they revealed their teeth, though a more apt description would be fangs.

Fortunately, or perhaps unfortunately, Luna pulled her captive past the carriage and the grazing beasts in their makeshift pen and started making her way towards the Forbidden Forest. As the ominous trees loomed bigger and bigger in Harry's vision he managed to wrench his arm out of Luna's grasp.

'Stop Luna,' he commanded breathlessly, tired from his forced march from the Menial quarters to here. 'Where are we going?'

'Into the forest,' the girl responded calmly as though she wasn't suggesting they enter a notoriously
dangerous wood. It was called the Forbidden Forest for a reason.

'You've got to be kidding me,' Harry said flatly. He would always be the first one to leap to Luna's defence when someone was mocking the girl and her odd ways, but this was sheer madness.

'Do you want to be cheered up or not?' she asked playfully cocking her head to one side.

'What could there be in the Forbidden Forest that could possible raise my spirits?' Harry questioned, laying emphasis on the word 'forbidden,' to reinforce to the girl how dangerous the area was.

Luna gave him an impatient look and said softly, 'It's a surprise.'

Seeing Harry's obvious indecision she began backing into the outlying trees and called out, 'You can either come with me, or go back to the castle. It's up to you. But I've made up my mind.'

Offering him a cheeky grin she flitted away in between the trees, disappearing from sight. With an exasperated groan Harry made up his mind and plunged into the forest behind the younger girl. He could hardly leave her to face the dangers of the forest on her own.

It took no time to catch up to her and despite his better intentions, Harry continued to accompany the girl further into the shadowy domain. No words were exchanged between them, Harry privately sulking about being manipulated into entering the forest, and Luna simply enjoy the stillness of the trees around her.

The heavy canopy above them blocked out the majority of light, leaving the ground below in perpetual twilight, and the gnarled roots of the ancient trees rose from the earth in twisted shapes. The combination proved hazardous, the two teens finding themselves clambering over the rough contours as the forest swallowed them in deeper into its shadowy embrace.

It was significantly cooler within the trees, and Harry found himself drawing his Hogwarts robes closer around him. Shivering slightly, he turned to Luna and asked through clenched teeth to stop them from chattering, 'How much longer?'

He blinked in surprise as he saw the girl standing stock still, head tilted as though straining to hear something. A single hand was raised to hush her companion.

Fear started to coil in Harry's stomach as he wondered what Luna was listening for. Had she heard a beast stalking them? Was something approaching in the shadows?

Eyes roving nervously about, Harry took a stance in front of Luna to protect her from whatever might come for them. His magic would be able to keep them both safe.

Suddenly Luna's face broke into a smile and she eagerly beckoned Harry on as she made a sharp right and slipped in between two thick trunks. Stunned at the girl's abrupt move, Harry wasted a second to simply stare before his limbs kicked into action and he hurried after his guide.

Catching sight of her blonde hair whipping between a leafy screen formed by a bowed tree, Harry quickly followed, pushing branches out of the way and cracking branches underfoot making quite a bit of a racket.

Luna's head reappeared and she bore a look of annoyance on her face as she put a finger to her lips, the message clearly informing Harry to stop making so much noise.

Wincing in apology, he progressed more carefully, watching where he placed his feet and making his way over to where Luna waited with her head poking out of the leafy screen. When he finally made
it to her side, she placed her lips by his ear and murmured softly, 'Follow me and be very, very quiet. We don't want to startle them.'

Curious as to what she was referring to, Harry followed Luna through the green curtain and stepped carefully over more twisted roots, traveling around the thick trunk of the massive tree before him.

When he had finally circumnavigated the wide expanse, Harry took a moment to take in the scene before him, Luna at his side.

A soft gasp left his lips.

A unicorn rested in a small glade, a mare by the looks of it, her pristine white coat shimmering with an ethereal light. The single horn upon her head glimmered with equal beauty, a crown upon a queen's brow.

What made the scene breathtaking was the small and delicate creature pressed to the mare's side, heart-achingly innocent in sleep. It was a foal, with fragile newborn legs and a tiny bump upon its head where its horn would no doubt grow one day.

Harry wasn't aware he was crying until Luna's gentle fingers brushed his wet cheeks, wiping the moisture away. Her own cheeks were stained with salty kisses, her eyes bright with wonder.

For the first time in his life Harry felt pure and complete serenity like he had never experienced before, a moment so poignant that it had caused the tears to flow from his eyes.

As though sensing the humans for the first time, the mare lifted her noble head and surveyed the two intruders. Harry's breath caught in his throat and he felt as though his soul was being tugged from his chest and laid bare for the glorious creature's perusal.

After what felt like eons he was released from the strange power gripping him as the mare nudged her foal to its feet and turned to leave the glade. Feeling overwhelming sorrow grip his heart as the two disappeared into the trees to be lost from sight, Harry failed to notice the gifts the unicorn had left behind.

Luna however, had seen the mare leave two objects resting on the ground and moved forward slowly to kneel on the bed of leaves to reverently stroke the rare offerings.

Harry joined her on the ground, careless of the mud staining the knees of his pants as he stared down at the gleaming gifts the mare had bestowed upon the two humans.

'What are they?' he asked quietly, almost too afraid to break the silence of the forest.

'Talisman,' Luna responded simply, still in shock that the unicorn had decided to give them such an incredible gift.

Lifting up one of the objects, Luna traced the tear-shaped amulet watching as it shimmered like the unicorn's coat had with its own glimmering light. Harry had picked up his own identical talisman and was simply gripping it lightly in his hand, as though afraid it would break if he exerted too much force.

'Why…?' Harry trailed off, staring at the beautiful drop of moonlight in his hand. The power emanating off of the amulet was phenomenal.

'She deemed us worthy of her gift,' Luna explained. 'She looked into our souls and judged our merit, deciding to reward us for our actions in our lives. Unicorns are mysterious in that way.'
Remembering the feeling of having his soul bared, Harry shivered slightly but drew the talisman to his chest nonetheless, cupping it in his hands.

He could sense it was a powerful shielding charm, aimed at defending its bearer from any and all harm. He wasn't sure to what extent the talisman would guard him, but it was without a doubt a rare and potent gift.

'How do you feel Harry?' Luna asked unexpectedly.

'Pardon?' he responded, wondering where the question had come from.

'Have I managed to cheer you up?' the younger girl queried, a tiny smile creeping on her face.

'Yes Luna,' Harry responded softly, 'Yes you definitely have.'

Chapter End Notes

Author Note: I am terribly sorry about the random unicorn scene, but is does have actual relevance to the plot and was not me just procrastinating and adding useless aspects to the storyline. Those talismans will be very important later on. For both of them.

As you have probably all noticed, I have rapidly added around fifteen chapters all in one night. I have an account on FanFiction.net where I regularly post, but I have decided now to also frequently post here. So be expecting fortnightly updates for, 'The Courtesan,' on this site.

Comments would be greatly appreciated.

Thank you,

Drops of Nightshade
As Harry and Luna made their way back to the safety of the school grounds, they progressed in silence except for their laboured breathing as they traversed the twisted forest floor. The earlier event in the clearing had given them both plenty to think about, and as such they were each deep in their own thoughts.

Jumping down a steep incline, Harry held out his hand to Luna and helped support her on her descent. Just as the blonde's feet touched the leaf litter at the bottom of the slope, the duo became aware of a faint thudding noise in the distance. Standing very still they listened intently to the strange noise until Harry murmured, 'We should keep moving. The school is still a long way off.'

Luna nodded in agreement and allowed Harry to lead the way, as there was a faint path beneath their feet that would conduct them in the right direction. As they continued in this fashion the drumming noise grew louder.

Casting wary looks over his shoulder, monitoring the unknown sound that seemed to be echoing through the dark forest, Harry rubbed his arms as a dank chill settled into his bones. The thudding, now no longer distant, was like a static heartbeat.

'Centaurs,' Luna proclaimed suddenly.

'What?' Harry asked, twisting around to look at the younger girl.

'That noise we keep hearing- it must be centaurs. There is a herd of them living in the forest,' Luna explained calmly as she tilted her head to listen to the steady thudding.

'They're not particularly tolerant of humans,' Harry ventured cautiously.

'No, they're not,' Luna agreed easily. Sensing Harry's concern for both their welfares Luna assured him, 'The herd is moving in a different direction to us.'

Sure enough the thudding, now discernable as hoof beats, was gradually fading as though the supposed herd were turning towards a different part of the forest. Relaxing slightly but still on guard, Harry continued forward, his eyes roving over the dark trees and keeping a closer watch on his surroundings.

So focused on scouting the area ahead, Harry failed to react in time to Luna's warning shout before he was barrelled over.

Face pressed into the soil of the forest floor, Harry choked for breath as something, a rope perhaps, kept his arms pinned painfully tight to his chest. Twisting his body around, favouring his left wrist which had bent at an awkward angle, Harry's eyes frantically sought out Luna. His relief was immense when he saw her standing a short distance away, before he noticed the sharpened arrow pointed at her throat.
Luna was completely serene as she stared down her assailant, curiosity of all things evident on her face. Harry spared only a moment to marvel at the girl's courage before turning his attention on the creature that held the arrow so surely at his friend's throat.

It was a centaur, easily recognisable with its half human – half horse appearance, its bare chest indicating its gender to be male. The human half was rather intimidating, a stern face surrounded by a mane of tangled black hair. The centaur's equine parts were jet black and powerfully muscled, the hooves shifting restlessly even as its arms held the bow steady.

'What business do you have here, humans?' the creature suddenly spat, fury lacing its voice.

'We are merely passing through,' Luna replied softly before Harry could formulate a response.

'You are trespassing,' the centaur snarled, eyes flashing with fury.

Struggling to untangle the net-like contraption around his body that restricted the movement of his limbs, Harry kept one wary eye on the enraged creature.

'Forgive us. We were unaware that this part of the forest belongs to you and your herd,' Luna dipped her head slightly in deference. 'We will move on immediately.'

Shocked at the respect in the human girl's voice and her regard to him, the centaur allowed the nocked arrow to dip slightly so that it was no longer pointed at Luna's throat. Harry used this distraction to cut through the ropes binding him with a wandless and wordless severing charm, watching with satisfaction as they slid away to free his body.

The movement drew the attention of the centaur that let forth an angry bellow and aimed the arrow at Harry's head.

'Treachery! You planned to distract me and then have your accomplice attack me from behind!' the creature howled.

In one smooth movement he readied the arrow for firing whilst Harry prepared the *Protego* charm to shield against the weapon when the time came.

Just as the centaur allowed the arrow to fly loose, a shadowed figure crashed into its side, skilfully knocking the trajectory off so that the projectile swerved off into a tree trunk with a dull thud. Harry's unexpected saviour stepped closer as the centaur behind it lay still on the ground, most likely unconscious.

Surprisingly, it was yet another centaur, this time with palomino hindquarters and a shock of white-blonde hair on its head. Trotting over to pick up its fellow centaur's bow, the palomino slung it over its own chest and then turned to regard Harry with intelligent azure eyes.

'Greetings Harry Potter,' the newcomer murmured in a deep voice. Harry stared in open-mouthed shock at the centaur that had so aptly spoken his name. 'And greetings to you too, Seer.'

Harry turned sharply to look at Luna whom accepted this title with an ease that indicated she had already known of her gift. With a small smile playing about her lips the girl offered the centaur a short bow and said, 'It is an honour to be addressed by one such as you. I wonder how I did not foresee our meeting?'

'Some things cannot be foreseen,' the centaur replied cryptically before turning back to Harry.

'My name is Firenze. I will guide you and the Seer safely from the forest. It would not do for you to
perish before you have travelled down Fate's path. Your destiny is yet to be completed… Although, the planets have been read wrongly before now, even by centaurs,' Firenze mused.

Harry stared at the centaur incredulously and then glanced at Luna once more, noticing that she seemed to be gravely listening to the creature's peculiar words.

Returning to awareness, Firenze focused back on Harry and said, 'Come now Harry Potter, I will give you and the Seer a ride back to the forest edge.'

'I'm not sure, I've never-' Harry started spluttering.

He was cut off when Luna whipped out her wand and cast a levitating charm on him, placing him on top of the centaur's back. Suddenly very high up, Harry looked down on Luna as she gracefully swung herself on behind Harry without magical aid, curling her arms around his waist.

'Luna what…?'

'Do not fear Harry Potter. This is the quickest way to get you to safety. My companion will not remain unconscious for much longer and when he awakens his anger will be great.' There was amusement in the centaur's voice as he said this.

Awkwardly clinging to Firenze's human half, Harry tightened his grip as the centaur broke out into a blinding gallop, the trees turning into a green blur around them.

There were many questions Harry wanted answered, but he knew instinctively he would get nothing from the centaur.

Perhaps then Luna would enlighten him as to what Firenze had meant when he mentioned his destiny?

Firenze left the two teenagers a short distance from the school grounds, claiming that he could go no further. After both had thanked him, he returned into the depths of the forest, no doubt to deal with one enraged centaur.

A brief walk later found Harry and Luna free from the trees and hurriedly making their way towards the castle. Looking to the sky Harry muttered an oath as he realised it was almost dinnertime, and their jaunt into the forest had made him miss his last two classes for the day. But there were more pressing things to take care of.

Stopping Luna before they entered the castle, Harry placed his hands on her thin shoulders and asked seriously and slowly, taking care when choosing his words, 'What did Firenze mean when he spoke of my Fate and destiny?'

Luna's eyes grew distant and she was silent for a time as though instinctively appealing to some greater force. At last she sighed and her eyes came back into focus.

'I'm sorry Harry, but I cannot reveal anything to you.' Harry swallowed his frustration and turned to enter the castle but Luna stopped him. 'Wait! Let me explain myself.'

She tugged on her straggly blonde hair and appealed to him with her wide eyes. 'It is not that I will not explain what Firenze spoke of; it is that I can not explain. There are laws, Harry, ancient rules that bind Seers to silence on certain matters of the future. I can no more discuss your Fate with you than I can bring the dead back to life.'
Being reminded of Luna's Seer status drew Harry to his next question, 'How long have you known about your gift?'

'Since I was a small child. My mother was a Seer also, and she taught me as much as she could before her death,' Luna replied softly.

'Did she…?' Harry begun questioning before stopping himself.

'Did she know when she was going to die? No,' Luna said. She went on to explain, 'Seers do not foresee their own ends. We must enter death's embrace with no advantage over any other.'

Harry released a breath of relief at that, imaging what it would be like to know exactly when you would die. The thought sickened him.

Then Luna's next words froze his heart.

'I knew when she was going to die though.'

The younger girl's face was turned away from him and her shoulders were unnaturally stiff as though she were holding her emotions in check.

'I kept having these dreams…nightmares really…in which my mother died. When she told me I was a Seer, I never connected those fragmented visions with my power until the day she died. I always wonder…what would have happened if I had told her about my dreams? Would she still be alive?'

Luna turned around at last and Harry saw her eyes were filled with agony. No tears were shed, but Harry could see all the pain and guilt she was harbouring.

Pulling her into a tight hug he said gently but firmly, 'You said yourself Luna, there are laws binding you to silence. You would not have been able to warn her if even if you had realised the visions you were having were real. You are not to blame.'

Slowly, Luna's bony arms rose to embrace him back and she rested her head on his chest with a bone-weary sigh. No more was spoken between the pair, who remained in each other's arms even as a bell tolled somewhere deep in the school to announce dinner.

It was this scene that Lord Voldemort arrived to witness, having sensed the spell upon his Courtesan's collar tingling slightly, registering someone's intimacy to Harry if not necessarily spurred by sexual desires.

Wishing to investigate nonetheless, and having received word that Harry had disobeyed him and not attended his last two periods of the day, the Dark Lord had discovered his Courtesan cradling some silly bint in his arms as though she were something precious.

'Harry,' he began in a dangerously calm voice.

The teen jerked backwards from the blonde and spun around to face his contractor who looked none too pleased to have found his Courtesan in such a position with another.

'My Lord,' Harry gasped, bowing clumsily as he untangled himself from Luna. The younger girl gave the ruler of wizarding Britain a short curtsy that was more of a bob than anything.

'Imagine my displeasure when I learnt that you failed to make an appearance for the last two classes of the day as I had instructed you. Then I come to find you, only to see you dallying around with one of your…friends.'
Giving Luna a cold once-over, Lord Voldemort fixed his piercing crimson eyes on the emerald-eyed teen and said stonily, 'Perhaps you need to be reminded of the privileges you are receiving, because you seem to have forgotten. Come with me.'

Without waiting for any approval from his Courtesan, the Dark Lord grasped Harry tightly around the wrist and pulled him along in Side-Apparition, moving the Hogwarts wards around with the ease that he did the Citadel's enchantments.

Reappearing in the ambassador's suite Lord Voldemort tightened his grip even further around Harry's wrist, fully intending on taking out his jealousy and anger on the teen, but was distracted when his Courtesan cried out with pain before gritting his teeth as though trying to disguise the sound.

Letting go, Lord Voldemort tugged aside the teen's school robes to reveal a painfully bruised wrist that looked as though it had been landed on incorrectly. Catching sight of another bruise higher up, the Dark Lord carelessly shoved Harry's outer robe off entirely revealing his bare arms.

Identical red marks encircled the teen's upper arms, discernable as rope burns. Faint bruising was beginning to flourish around the raw chafing.

'Who did this to you?' Lord Voldemort hissed, red eyes flashing with fury. The wrist could be explained as an accidental fall, but the rope burns...someone had touched his Courtesan. And he wanted to know whom.

Seeing the murderous light in his contractor's eyes, Harry knew that there was absolutely no point in hiding the truth. Lord Voldemort would be able to delve into his mind regardless.

'A centaur attacked me,' Harry replied without preamble.

One dark eyebrow rose and the Dark Lord asked in a barely-controlled voice, 'And how, pray tell, did you come in contact with a centaur?'

'I was in the Forbidden Forest,' Harry mumbled, glancing guiltily up at his contractor through his bangs. He knew how dangerous the forest was, and yet he had still followed Luna in. The girl was only partially to blame; Harry could have forced her to turn back but he hadn't.

'That place is off-limits to students let alone my Courtesan,' Lord Voldemort spat, hands taking Harry's face in a strong hold. 'What possessed you to venture in there?'

There was no way that Harry was willing to implicate Luna in any way; she was already under suspicion for being caught in an intimate position with him. Mind working furiously, Harry responded carefully, 'I was curious about the Forest and I decided to go in just a bit. But then I lost my way and must have wandered in the wrong direction. The next thing I knew I was being attacked by a centaur...but then another one came and rescued me, guiding me back to the school grounds.'

At least part of it was the truth. Harry edited out any mention of the unicorn and the powerful talisman that was hidden in his pant's pocket. He wasn't sure why exactly he had done that, but he didn't want to think about his current thought processes too much currently.

'You're lying,' Lord Voldemort claimed surely, red eyes narrowing with anger.

Harry swallowed and cringed as his face was roughly jerked up, his eyes darting away from his contractor's as he desperately avoided the contact that was needed for his mind to be plundered of its secrets.

'You know that I could easily take the information from your mind,' the Dark Lord continued,
stroking the side of Harry's face in a light caress.

Letting out a shuddering breath Harry nodded curtly, gaze firmly fixed on his contractor's lips to avoid the searching crimson eyes that attempted to lock into his own emerald ones.

'However, I will not.'

Harry blinked in shock as his face was released and the Dark Lord stepped away slightly. 'Harry I trust you enough to tell me anything of true importance. To enter your mind now would be a violation of that confidence. You have edited the truth of your movements and motivations this afternoon but I can sense you are not hiding anything that could threaten either you nor I.'

Stunned at the admission, Harry felt that familiar warmth tingle in his chest, the knowledge that he was trusted bolstering his spirits. Then a twinge of guilt followed, that his contractor was ready and willing to put his faith in him and yet he was still not ready to return the same. Perhaps one day that time would come, but for now Harry simply could not trust the Dark Lord with his heart and his very being.

'Thank you, My Lord,' Harry said sincerely.

'Do not be so eager to thank me yet Harry. We have yet to discuss your involvement with that girl from earlier.' Lord Voldemort's voice dropped until it was icy and his hands inexplicably found themselves around his Courtesan's waist tugging him into his hold.

'She was upset, I was simply…simply giving her a hug to…to comfort…' Harry trailed off in a moan as his contractor's lips traced the curve of his neck, the teeth playfully nibbling at the hickey from earlier that had failed to completely vanish.

'I have no wish to see you in the arms of another, whether it is for comforting purposes or something else entirely. You are mine, Harry Potter,' the Dark Lord growled possessively.

His lips abandoned the teen's neck and found his mouth, kissing him deeply and passionately until all though of Luna fled from Harry's mind and the only thing filling it was a hot desperate need for more.

Boldly wrapping his arms around Lord Voldemort's neck and his legs around his waist, Harry all but shoved the older man into the bedroom door, which helpfully slammed open to allow them entrance.

Laid down on the bed Harry pulled the Dark Lord on top of his body and smirked as he felt a distinctive hardness pressing against him, that he undoubtedly returned. With a flick of wandless magic Harry unclothed himself and his contractor.

'Impatient are we?' Lord Voldemort questioned with a trace of huskiness in his voice as he gazed down on the naked teen beneath him.

'Very,' Harry replied before capturing the Dark Lord's lips once more.

Luna idly swung her feet as she sat perched on the edge of a desk in the abandoned classroom on the third floor. The Blubbering Humdingers were awfully quiet tonight but she hadn't specifically come here to enjoy their presence.

Instead she had chosen this quiet and dusty room to contemplate her friend, Harry Potter.

She hated being bound by the ancient rules surrounding Seers, feeling an overwhelming helplessness
at being unable to give Harry any warning as to his destiny or even guide him in the right direction.

The best she could do was remain a steadfast and loyal friend, someone Harry could trust enough to turn to when everything began to fall apart.

To be bound by prophecy…

Luna shuddered in sympathy for Harry, whose path was dictated by Fate and overshadowed by a prophecy he yet knew nothing about. The lives of those commanded by destiny were dark indeed.

She could only hope that in the end, Harry managed to find the happiness he deserved.
Chapter Twenty-Three

Chapter Summary

In the prejudiced world where the Dark Lord won, Harry Potter is part of the servile caste, the lowest caste in the new society. Resigned to a life of servitude as a Courtesan, Harry is instead drawn under the wing of the Dark Lord himself. Between the scheming Order and his powerful benefactor, Harry finds himself steadily drawn deeper into the growing conflict. Eventual LV/HP.

Chapter Notes

I managed to fit in some time to write! Also, I know that there are some issues with the format of 'The Courtesan' on AO3 and I just wanted to say that I am going to get onto it as soon as possible, but it is a time-consuming thing uploading everything again so it might not be for awhile. Sorry!

Please forgive any spelling or grammar mistakes.

Drops of Nightshade x

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter Twenty-Three

_Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry_

1996

On Thursday morning before breakfast was served in the Great Hall, Harry visited his common room to make a long-awaited appearance in front of his fellow sixth-year students. Not all were awake yet, but Harry was grateful for the respite of curious and penetrating gazes that would have otherwise overwhelmed him.

When Daphne caught sight of him entering through the portrait, she let out a muffled cry and strode forward to drag him into a forceful hug. It was startling, for the girl rarely touched Harry, let alone any other people around her.

Remembering Lord Voldemort's possessive words the night before about other people touching him, Harry squirmed uncomfortably in the pureblood's embrace, faint colour on his cheeks as he thought of the activities that had followed.

Sensing Harry's awkwardness, Daphne quickly released him. 'Welcome back to school,' she said with an easy grin.

It was one of the things Harry was coming to love about Daphne, how she put on a reserved and
cold front to the public eye as befitting of her pureblood status, but she was still able to act like a normal teenager in front of her classmates and friends. It was something that Draco had yet to learn.

The pureblood boy had risen from an armchair by the fire when Harry had entered and now moved forward to offer a polite greeting and a cool smile. It was as far as Draco would go to express his happiness that Harry had returned to them unharmed. But that was just Draco, and Harry knew instinctively that the other boy did genuinely like being in his company.

There were a few other greetings from the gathered students before Harry was accompanying them down to the Great Hall. He was relieved that the other sixth-years had the decency to not make any mention of his attack, to act like they normally would to make him feel at ease.

With a short wave offered to Luna who sat on the other end of the chamber, Harry took a seat himself and was joined by Daphne on one side and Draco on the other. As the hum of chatter rose over the table, Harry could almost pretend that nothing had happened, that the incident the week before had never occurred.

It was all so normal.

Although, the eyes staring at him from corners of the room, the hushed whispers that rose and fell reminded Harry that it had transpired and that he would never truly assimilate with his peers. His status assured that.

Pansy Parkinson was an unwelcome addition to the table shortly after the steaming food had appeared, her rather flat nose wrinkling with distaste at the sight of Harry. Seating herself next to Draco with a satisfied air at having claimed a prized spot, she acknowledged Harry's presence no further.

Daphne huffed with exasperation at the other girl's actions before sharing a derisive look with Millicent on her other side. The two girls were soon giggling quietly together, with Pansy obliviously nibbling at her toast.

Fighting down a smile, Harry served himself breakfast and ate quickly, wishing to leave early and collect his books before class. He had Charms first, followed by Transfiguration, and he knew he was going to have a lot of theory to catch up on.

Wincing already at the thought of the extra study he was going to have to complete, Harry finished his food and then bid his friends farewell until they would meet again for their Charms class.

Entering the foyer Harry jerked to a halt when he spotted a familiar massive snake lazily coiling on the marble floor. Eyes automatically darting about for the handsome man that would no doubt be accompanying the snake, he was disappointed when Lord Voldemort failed to make an appearance.

Nagini slithered over to him and circled around his feet, settling there before lifting her formidable head to survey him with coldly intelligent eyes.

Cursing his inability to communicate with her, Harry stared back, unsure of what she wanted.

'Did the Dark Lord send you?' Harry asked tentatively, feeling rather foolish.

Nagini nodded her head slowly, the human gesture roughly imitated and achieved with difficulty. Running his hand through his raven locks, Harry questioned wryly, 'You wouldn't happen to be able to tell me what he sent you for?'

Nagini began to slither up his body, her powerful coils tightening gently around his frame as she
finally rested her entire bulk upon him. Staggering slightly under the weight, Harry finally understood why his contractor had sent her.

'He sent you to watch over me, didn't he?'

Once more Nagini nodded, and Harry tried and failed to hide the brief smile that flickered on his face, at the confirmation that the Dark Lord had placed his most trusted companion in a position to guard Harry from harm.

Then the smile faded as Harry realised he was going to have to get through the day with a massive snake following him around, no doubt causing mass panic and hysteria. Groaning to himself, Harry said in a resigned tone, 'You had better get back on the ground, Nagini. It's going to be a long day.'

An exhausted Harry sat down in the library at the end of the day, Nagini sliding under the table he set his books on, eyes observing the other students in the vicinity with a watchful gaze.

Harry's day had been stressful to say the least.

The teachers had been more than accommodating of his situation, especially considering Nagini had been ordered to shadow him on the command of the Dark Lord himself. The students on the other hand…

Harry dropped his head into his hands and grimaced as he remembered the screams, shouts and general chaos that had followed him as he made his way through the school corridors in between classes.

He had done the smart thing and had attempted to cast a disguising charm on the huge snake before classes had begun, but his magic had slid uselessly off of Nagini's scales. Upon closer examination, Harry had discovered a stealthy web of charms upon the snake's outer body, powerful protective enchantments that repelled any spells that were cast upon her.

With no other alternative, Harry had been forced to allow Nagini to travel with him in all of her deadly glory, terrifying the students and creating havoc in the hallways as people scrambled to escape, thinking a snake was on the loose.

His friends had regretfully avoided him in classes; the snake coiling around Harry and the chair next to him during every lesson had made it impossible for them to sit with him, even if they had been able to muster up the courage.

Lord Voldemort's plan certainly had worked effectively. There was no way that anyone could harm Harry, not when a potential attacker couldn't get close enough to cast a spell on him. Nagini was both a blessing and an absolute curse.

Harry had come to the library to enjoy some respite, tucked away in a dark corner where not many ventured. The stack of books next to him contained information on the core bonding ritual, and he planned to do some research on the ceremony before it occurred in two days time.

Plucking the first tome off of the pile, he stifled a sneeze as a flurry of dust rose from the leathery volume. Pulling it open, the Courtesan began to read.

Two hours later Harry closed the last book and set it aside, a contemplative look on his face as he straightened the sheaf of notes that he had taken down.
There was far more to the core bonding ceremony than he had initially thought.

Whilst Lord Voldemort had covered the most important aspects of it, there were a multitude of effects it would have on he and his contractor that he had not expounded on.

What struck Harry immediately was the knowledge that in the month following the bonding the two persons involved were expected to remain in close vicinity with each other. Prolonged distance in the crucial early stages after the ritual would result in permanent harm to the bond and thus the magical cores involved.

After a month passed, the bond would be considered matured enough for the two bonded to begin spending more time and distance apart. However there were still restrictions on how long the two could spend away from each other, even with a connection that was fully-grown.

This meant that either Harry was going to have to be removed from Hogwarts for an entire month, or Lord Voldemort was going to have to temporarily set up residence in the ambassador suite. Harry could not imagine the Dark Lord abandoning his Citadel for Harry's convenience, no matter how much he favoured his Courtesan. It was far more likely he would resume his private tutoring of Harry for the month after they bonded. It disappointed Harry that he would very likely be leaving his friends and foster family once more, so soon after he had returned.

Furthermore, during this vital month of development, the books had all drawn attention to the 'bleeding effect.' Essentially, the two bonded would go through a stage where their very essences would mix and exchange information, preparing the two involved for their lives after the initial month when they would be able to sense each other's emotions and be in close synchronisation with one another.

During the bleeding effect, the two bonded would share not only feelings and impressions but also memories of their lives so far. It was highly personal and intimate, stripping both persons involved of their layers and facades and bearing them naked to the other.

Harry shivered at the thought of his contractor having that power over him, and yet at the same time he felt a surge of excitement at the thought of the control it would give him in return. None would know the Dark Lord better than he.

As for the ritual itself, he had found a detailed description of the ceremony involved, complete with the complicated spells and incantations that were to be spoken. However Harry read that neither of the intended were to speak the ancient bindings.

Someone else would have to be involved in the ritual then, someone who knew the complex ceremony enough to bind them successfully.

There were a few other aspects of the ritual but they were simple enough to complete, such as giving his blood to Lord Voldemort and receiving his contractor's blood in return. Harry was feeling confident now that he knew what to expect when Saturday came, and he had a greater understanding of the effects after the bonding itself.

He returned the books to their positions and left the library with Nagini slithering along at his side, heading towards the ambassador suite to meet with his contractor. Fortunately the corridors were mostly empty, as the students were currently in the Great Hall enjoying dinner.

Harry planned to summon a house elf to bring him some food, refusing to bring Nagini into the Great Hall with him where she would panic the people within.
As he walked along briskly, Harry fingered the unicorn's talisman hidden under his robes. He had magically created a silver chain to hang the tear-shaped amulet on and now wore it against his skin, close to his heart.

The talisman gently warmed the area it was touching, and the tingle of powerful magic was a comfort to Harry. He had thought that his contractor would sense the potent magic of the amulet, but had been surprised when the older man had not detected it. He deduced that it was the unique unicorn magic slipping beneath the awareness of the Dark Lord's power.

Arriving at the ambassador suite, Harry waited as the doors scanned his magical signature and recognised him. Allowed entrance, he strode into the small foyer and held the doors open for Nagini to slide in. The snake disappeared into the study, finally leaving Harry alone now that he was in the safety of the Dark Lord's chambers.

'My Lord I am back,' Harry called out for the man's sake.

'Come here, Harry,' was the response, the Dark Lord's voice floating from the study where Nagini had entered just previously. His tone was amiable enough, neither angry nor pleased but rather neutral.

Harry entered the study and bowed to Lord Voldemort who sat behind the desk with his elegant fingers steepled. Nagini lay twined around his chair, coils lazily wrapped around his torso and shoulders.

'I am sorry I did not come immediately after school finished, but I wished to do some research in the library on the core bonding ceremony,' Harry explained.

A hint of pride entered the Dark Lord's eyes and he gave Harry a pleased look, content that the teen had shown the initiative to go and do his own study on the matter. Harry also noted the slight relaxation of his body, as though he had been harbouring tension over his Courtesan's whereabouts, even with Nagini's excellent guarding. The thought sent a familiar warmth through him.

'That will save me time explaining the ritual and effects of the bonding in full detail no doubt. Do you have any further questions?' Lord Voldemort asked.

'No, the books I found explained the ceremony in excellent detail. Although I was wondering...who will oversee our bonding?' Harry asked curiously.

'Lucius Malfoy has already agreed to bind us on the Autumn Equinox; he is well versed in the incantations and enchantments required,' was the response.

'Will the ritual be performed at Malfoy Manor then?' Harry questioned.

'Yes, it is the more private location than the Citadel. I must stress to you the importance of this ritual remaining secret, Harry. Should my enemies discover what we have done, they will not hesitate to use you against me.' The Dark Lord was serious as he spoke, crimson eyes drilling holes into Harry with their intensity.

'Of course, My Lord,' Harry assured him, his own emerald eyes just as serious.

'We will depart for Malfoy Manor on the morning of the Equinox to have enough time to prepare for the ritual,' Lord Voldemort said, lightening the tense atmosphere. 'After the bonding it would be best for us to spend a few days acclimatising at the Manor. We can return to the Citadel after the bond has stabilised enough for us to move.'
'Where will we spend the month following the bonding?' Harry asked, the question pressing urgently against him.

'You understand of course that I cannot abandon the Citadel for an entire month. You will have to be temporarily removed from Hogwarts,' came the decisive response.

Harry had already anticipated this outcome, and so it came as no surprise to him when it was confirmed. He was confident the month would pass in the blink of an eye and he would be back before he knew it.

'As you wish, My Lord,' Harry replied, finger absently running across the delicate silver of his Courtesan collar. He had been doing this more frequently lately, especially since committing himself to serving his contractor in the true sense of a Courtesan.

Lord Voldemort's crimson eyes immediately dropped to the symbol of servitude and a look of consternation passed over his handsome features.

'Is your collar troubling you?'

Harry blinked in surprise and fixed his attention on his contractor, hands falling to his side as he became aware that he had been tracing the fine silver.

'I have felt no physical pain from wearing a collar since I was a young child,' Harry responded evenly, making no mention of the emotional pain it had inflicted on him.

The Dark Lord suddenly beckoned Harry closer, and without hesitation Harry approached him around the desk. Nagini seemed to sense something was going to occur and hurriedly uncoiled from her master, dropping to the study floor with a dull thump. She took her exit unnoticed by the two males, deeply absorbed with one another.

Harry stood at a polite distance from the Dark Lord; conscious of the fact that even he at his relatively short height would tower over the man should he stand too near.

This was entirely too unsatisfactory for Lord Voldemort, who wished for Harry to be unafraid around him, to cast aside social necessities and be his lover. As his eyes trailed over Harry's silver collar he felt a surge of discontent directed towards the symbol of the teen's subservience, that made him so reserved and careful around him.

The Dark Lord froze as something finally clicked into place. The niggling sense that he had been missing something crucial with his entire fascination with his Courtesan was stripped away as he finally understood.

It was the reason why he had wished to wait for the teen to feel ready before taking him, the reason why he gave Harry luxuries none other of his caste enjoyed, the reason why he felt the all-encompassing urge to protect the emerald-eyed boy from any and all harm.

It was the reason why he was willing to risk his own magic and life to bond his core with Harry's and spare him from the Tournament and his enemies' machinations.

He didn't want the teen to be his Courtesan; contracted to satisfy his every sexual want and desire. Somewhere, somehow along the way he had decided he wanted the boy to be his equal.

He wanted Harry Potter to be his Consort.
The boy in question was standing there awkwardly, worry in his beautiful eyes as he observed the Dark Lord sitting frozen in his chair.

Crimson eyes slid to the teen, mentally replacing his plain black school robes with ones made of the finest silk, his neck unadorned of any symbol of servitude. Imagining further, Lord Voldemort could picture Harry with the Gaunt family ring upon his finger, not only symbolising his pledge of faithfulness but of ultimate trust, giving Harry a piece of his own soul to cherish and protect.

Bonded, wedded and placed in the highest position that one could hope to gain in wizarding Britain.

Lord Consort.

The Dark Lord's only equal.

'My Lord?' Harry quested cautiously, uncertainty hovering around him like a thick cloud.

The sweet voice drew the Dark Lord out of his imaginings and he grabbed Harry around the waist, earning a shocked squeak from the teen. Pulling the Courtesan into his arms, he allowed himself a rare moment to enjoy holding another human body within his embrace without the intention to copulate, to allow the sense of contentedness to spread as he felt Harry's form pressed against his own.

Yes.

He had known from the first moment he had laid eyes on the teen, flinging the doors of Rabastan Lestrange's meeting room open and storming inside with his raven hair a black halo around his head, his emerald eyes blazing, that the younger male was something special.

That feeling had only grown as he had come to know Harry; his beautiful, unique magic and his impossibly pure nature.

How foolish he felt now, that he had not realised the truth behind his decisions to give Harry a wand, an education, a choice with when to be bedded.

Subconsciously he had been freeing Harry from his bonds of servitude, elevating him beyond his station.

'Harry,' he breathed, lacing the single word with lust, desire and something else entirely that rose from the fractured cavity that once housed his complete soul.

Gentle hands reached for his shoulders and the lithe body against him was pushed up into a sitting position, straddling him in the process.

'What- I don't…' Harry stuttered, completely at a loss as to what was happening.

The confusion and apprehension in the boy's green eyes snapped the Dark Lord out of his brief fit of madness that had followed his realisation that he wanted Harry as his Consort. Knowing he owed the teen some sort of explanation for his out of character behaviour, he smoothed a hand in a caress over Harry's cheek and murmured, 'Forgive me, but I have come to terms with something that I had not realised before. It was a revelation indeed.'

Harry's eyes widened as his contractor asked him for forgiveness of all things, before the confusion re-entered and he said, 'I only mentioned my collar and then…' he gesticulated with his hands helplessly.
The Dark Lord's face darkened at the mention of the device.

'I am having it removed.'

The words took a few seconds to register in Harry's brain, but when they did the teen became terribly still.

When he tugged at the hands caging him, the Dark Lord allowed him to stand up and take a few steps back, a blank and unreadable expression on his face.

'What did you just say?' Harry asked quietly, voice strained.

A sense of unease pervaded Lord Voldemort's contented bubble and he said carefully, 'I wish to release you from our contract.'

Expecting a powerful reaction, one riddled with shocked joy, he was stunned at Harry's next actions. The boy backed away a bit further, until he was standing in the doorway to the study.

His hands started to tremble.

'Harry-' the Dark Lord began saying with a sense of urgency about him, but Harry's next words silenced him.

'I don't understand... but if that it what you wish...My Lord.' His voice was emotionless but hidden under the carefully spoken words was a hurt so deep it threatened to fracture his mask.

'I had hoped that was what you had wished too,' Lord Voldemort said, rising from his chair. The unease had developed into dread. This was not how he had imagined Harry reacting. Not with this... blank horror.

An awful, bitter expression then grew on Harry's face and he muttered, 'You have no idea what I want. No idea.'

'Then tell me,' the Dark Lord said insistently, striding over to Harry where he was lingering in the doorway.

It hurt when the teen took a few hurried steps backwards, defiantly keeping space between them.

'Why don't you just rip the information from my mind? You've threatened to do it enough since I met you,' Harry spat, anger blossoming on his features.

'I promised that I would not do that to you Harry. Now tell me, what has brought this on?'

A humourless laugh emerged from Harry's throat, raspy and pained.

'You really do know nothing of how I feel. You said you trusted me. And now...this.'

Each word was spoken leadenly, his cold laughter dead.

The Dark Lord knew he had a deep well of patience when it came to Harry. But he was severely stretched to reign in his temper at the teen's behaviour.

'Are you so ungrateful to scorn the offer to be freed from your servitude?' he asked, the hiss in his words hinting at the fury that was rising, spurred on by not knowing the root of Harry's hurt.
The teen froze, hand flying to his throat as he stared uncomprehendingly at the Dark Lord.

‘Freed from my servitude?’ Harry asked wonderingly, as though not believing he had heard the words correctly.

Taken aback at the sudden switch from anger to awe tinged with a fragile hope, Lord Voldemort experienced a rare moment of hindsight.

A miscommunication.

This had all been a breakdown of understanding, the Dark Lord distracted by his new insight into his desires surrounding Harry.

He had simply said he would release Harry from his contract. He had never specified that the teen would be given full rights and freedom.

Harry had believed he was going to be auctioned off to the highest bidder, that Lord Voldemort had decided to sell his contract to another.

The lack of trust and faith that Harry had in him was something the Dark Lord was determined to remedy, if the boy was truly to become his equal. But first, he needed to console the teen whom was staring off at nothing, silent tears of shock and disbelief beginning to stream down his face as he processed what was happening.

‘I wish to free you Harry. When we bind our cores in two days time I desire to be bound to you, unburdened by servitude.’ As he was speaking Lord Voldemort moved closer to Harry and took his face in his hands.

He decided to refrain from bringing up the topic of Consortship, already having overwhelmed the other male with enough shocks for the day. There would be another opportunity for that in time to come.

Harry’s eyes finally focused on him and they were filled with incredulous hope, as though Harry thought it was some dream that he was about to wake up from.

Then he was leaning up to kiss his contractor, soon to be no more, arms twining around the taller male’s back.

In that moment, the Dark Lord felt peace for perhaps the first time in his life.

Chapter End Notes

I hope it didn't progress too quickly, but it really was a sudden lightning strike from the blue for Voldemort. As for the misunderstanding, it will be the stimulus for some relationship progression in later chapters. I really, really hope LV isn't too out of character? It was always going to happen (I mean come on, LV/HP? Of course both have to be a little bit OOC.)

Also, Lord Voldemort will not make Harry his Consort immediately; you should know by now with my writing that I don't simply write something and then leave loose ends. Harry still has a number of trials to complete before he can gain that position - for example, the purebloods would rightly demand proof of Harry's worth. Both magically,
socially and politically. Furthermore, Harry would be determined to see the servile caste released - imagine the ruckus this would cause. Finally, the Order are still very much a threat in all of this.

I am not sure when the next update will come, but hopefully I will find some more time before exams. They are in two weeks by the way, so if an update does not come by then, please do anticipate a wait.

Thank you for your support,

Drops of Nightshade x
Chapter Twenty-Four

Harry sat in the ambassador suite on Friday night behind the desk in the study, a blank sheet of parchment in front of him and a quill and inkwell at the ready. The pointed nib hovered over the white expanse below, a drop of ink on the tip threatening to land on the paper and stain it.

The emerald-eyed teen was staring intently at the parchment, as though if he gazed at it for long enough the letter would write itself. For the truth of the matter was that Harry had no idea where to start writing.

Biting his lip in concentration, Harry brought the quill to paper and wrote in his trademark messy scrawl:

Dear Hermione,

He paused then, head cocked to one side as he stared at the two words he had written on the page. With an exasperated sigh he vanished them, leaving the parchment blank once more.

He was back to square one.

Whilst he had kept up a communication with his foster sister through Hedwig, he had yet to reply to her last letter, which had arrived shortly before Smith had attacked him last week. Hermione would no doubt be frantic by now if she had been allowed to read the Daily Prophet. Not to mention hurt that Harry had failed to send her a response after a week had passed.

But how was Harry to communicate to her through paper his tumultuous emotions; his burgeoning affection for the Dark Lord, his horror over his near-rape, his sadness over his distance from their foster family? And what of his incredible news that he was going to be released from his contract—freed from the bonds of servitude?

Free.

The word felt unimaginably sweet in Harry's head.

He had yet to tell anyone about Lord Voldemort's promise to restore his full rights, unsure of how they would react. Although, Harry was confident his friends would be ecstatic, Daphne in particular. His worry lay in his foster family's reaction. They would be happy for him, but Harry feared that joy would be tinged with bitterness. He would be freed whilst they would remain essentially slaves.

Harry was planning on buying their contracts once he was released from his own, using the money he would gain from his new access to the Potter vault. But he wasn't sure he could handle having his foster family as his underlings, no matter how kind he was or how greatly he favoured them.
The issue would be resolved if he could simply purchase their contracts and then release them to live free lives, but there were conditions to freeing serviles. The only one exempt from the rules was Lord Voldemort, whom could free who he wanted, when he wanted.

Harry had thought of requesting the Dark Lord to give him permission to restore his family's full rights, including Hermione and Ginny training at Damara House, and Lavender contracted to a pureblood man, but then he had contemplated an even more ambitious idea.

Why bargain to release just his foster family, when he could potentially convince his soon to be ex-contractor to change the laws surrounding serviles? It was undoubtedly an over-reaching dream, but Harry couldn't get the images of Angelina, Katie, Alicia, Justin, Hannah, Colin and Dennis out of his head, trapped in their own bonds of servitude. Even the mystery male Courtesan he had seen at the Dark Lord's gala crossed his mind.

He hated the system with an avid loathing, and yet could still not bring himself to abhor the man that had instated it. Harry knew he was undoubtedly physically attracted to the Dark Lord; their passionate encounters confirmed that. But there was an incredibly huge division between lust and love, and Harry knew that desire alone was not enough to combat the hatred he should feel. So he knew instinctively that he felt more deeply for Lord Voldemort than a mere coveting of the flesh.

His revelations over the past few weeks about his developing feelings had been startling and confusing, and despite knowing better, Harry had plunged into an intimate relationship with the man. He had decided that he could push aside his worries for the future and focus on the present; give into his desires and ignore the longing for something more than just sex.

This longing for more, his traitorous emotions that craved for Lord Voldemort to return just as strongly his wish for a true relationship not dictated by society, to see him as more than a Courtesan…

What had caused it?

It had been hard in the early days after meeting the Dark Lord to connect the monster that had enslaved he and his family with the handsome and elegant benefactor that had given Harry so much. The same man who protected Harry and cared for him in his own aloof way, was the tyrannous dictator who had essentially stolen the rights of a third of the wizarding population.

Harry could not connect the Dark Lord with his brilliant, intelligent mind and his entrancing crimson eyes to the image of a cruel and oppressive tyrant. He had been detached from the beginning, and had thus been open to learning more about the Lord he served. The man was a complicated puzzle that begged solving, and Harry couldn't help but feel the urge to learn more about him. Little titbits of his personality and his habits had done nothing more than fuel Harry's curiosity.

Even though his own morals protested strongly at the entire concept of a caste-based hierarchy, because Harry had come to know the Dark Lord, in turn he understood why the man had done what he had.

He had needed a way of controlling the public, of ensuring the half bloods and Muggleborns would not rise against him in rebellion. In turn he was pleasing the purebloods by reinstating the system of the old days, when slaves existed to serve their masters and mistresses.

The Order of the Phoenix, or any other revolutionary group, could hardly take a foothold in Britain when a vast percentage of the wizarding population had no access to a wand. Revolutions such as the one required to overthrow Lord Voldemort relied on the people to rebel and rise up, and the Dark Lord's system effectively negated this ever happening.
The Dark Lord's actions were undoubtedly brilliant, but terrible.

It was because Harry understood the motivation behind his system, and the man who had introduced it, that it was so hard to blindly hate. Whenever he attempted to muster anger, drawing on his own childhood for ammunition, it only took one memory of the Dark Lord gazing at him warmly, one remembrance of a gentle caress that the hatred dissolved to be replaced by hollowness and longing.

Harry had come to realise that he simply could not abhor Lord Voldemort. It went against his very nature.

He was falling, whether into love or hell he wasn't yet sure.

What he was sure of was that once he was released from his servitude, he would have a future. With his full rights he would be able to claim the title of Lord Potter and all of the benefits that came with that, including a position in the second caste.

If he so wished it, he could apply for a Death Eater position once he had completed his seventh year at Hogwarts and serve Lord Voldemort in that fashion, earning himself a place in the first caste. However Harry felt oddly dissatisfied at that idea, to simply blend in with the loyal ranks. As a Courtesan he stood out; he was unique. Although he had no wish to continue in his position, that did not mean his desire for the Dark Lord had diminished in any way.

He would enjoy many privileges as the Dark Lord's lover, a position that he had been assured he would have after the passionate night that had followed the announcement of Harry's impending freedom. Even though the teen knew he would have to have a respectable job to serve his Lord for appearances sake, the nights would be theirs. The man had had no use for bedmates as he brought Britain under his iron fist, or in the years following as he created the new society, and so Harry would not be filling any pureblood man or woman's shoes. The title of the Dark Lord's lover would be his and his alone if Harry had anything to say about it.

That led Harry to think about the misunderstanding the afternoon before, when he had genuinely believed that his contractor was going to sell his contract to another. It was a painful reminder of the lack of trust Harry had in the Dark Lord.

And now that he was to be released, now that he would be the man's lover as opposed to essentially his paid whore, Harry might just be able to begin trusting him, returning that precious faith that Lord Voldemort had given him.

Deciding he had procrastinated long enough, Harry wet the nib of his quill once more and began scrawling out a message to Hermione.

His letter was admittedly short when he had finished, but it made up for its lack of length through the content within. He had promised Hermione, and Ginny through extension, that he was going to free them both before they graduated from Damara House.

His explanation was short, but he announced he was going to be freed by the Dark Lord himself and was to have all of his rights restored. Harry planned for his first act as a freed man to be rescuing Hermione and Ginny from their impending doom by buying their contracts. He would decide what to do from there once he had a better idea of how willing the Dark Lord was to allow Harry to free his entire foster family, including Lavender who was already under specific contract.

Once his foster family were hopefully emancipated or at least under his protection, he would perhaps approach the seemingly impossible task of convincing Lord Voldemort to at least consider changing or improving the laws surrounding serviles. Harry wasn't sure how he could convince him that
abolishing the caste system was for the best, seeing how useful and efficient it was in keeping the peace and order of the new society. He could hardly appeal to the man's morals, but perhaps he could find some logical reason to at least get the Dark Lord to consider releasing the serviles. Even just relieving the BIRTHERS and COURTESANS of their duties would be a massive ethical improvement, and a positive step in the right direction.

Sealing the letter, Harry whistled softly to Hedwig who fluttered over and allowed herself to be softly stroked before taking the message in her beak and leaving through the open window. Harry stood and watched her progress through the night sky until she blended into the low cloud cover.

He sensed the Dark Lord's entrance into the room with his unique power, but he remained standing at the window, gazing out over the school grounds, dappled black and white by the shifting clouds.

Harry reacted when he felt a pair of lips press against his temple and a warm body moving up against his back. Arms encircled him, gently supporting his weight without feeling oppressive.

Lord Voldemort had been remarkably more physical in his gestures around Harry ever since coming to the realisation that he wanted to free him. Harry didn't question this new level of intimacy that went into the realms of emotion. He was enjoying the feeling of being shown undeniably that he was cared for.

'I have stopped checking your mail,' Lord Voldemort remarked, lips having trailed down to Harry's ear.

The teen shivered at the pleasurable feeling of the other man's breath upon the side of his face, and tilted his head upwards slightly as though asking a question.

Knowing Harry's unspoken wish for an answer, he continued, 'I truly do mean it when I say I trust you. Your very nature prevents you from betraying me.'

Smiling wryly to himself that the Dark Lord knew him so well, knew that he felt no hatred or bitterness, only longing for him, Harry's small smile faded as he registered the reference to trust. In between the lines, Lord Voldemort was subtly reminding Harry that he himself was yet to place any faith in the man. The occurrence yesterday only confirmed how a simple miscommunication could shatter Harry's conviction.

'About yesterday…' Harry trailed off. What was he to say? Should he apologise for being so distrusting? Make a pledge to start placing faith in Lord Voldemort? That would be lying.

'Think nothing more of it for tonight. Tomorrow we shall bond our cores, and then perhaps you will find it in yourself to start placing faith in me.'

Harry relaxed against his Lord's frame, tiredness beginning to seep into his limbs. After failing to hide a yawn, the Dark Lord suggested he get some rest. Preparing to twist away to make his way alone to the bedroom, Harry was surprised when he was escorted there instead.

Cautious of Lord Voldemort's actions, and wary of his intentions, Harry nevertheless undressed, carefully hiding the unicorn talisman in the folds of his garments, and then collapsing into bed. He had taken to not wearing clothes at night, as more often than not he was engaging in certain activities that did not require clothing.

Harry suspicions were confirmed when the Dark Lord vanished his own clothes and approached the bed, his body never failing to awe Harry with its seeming perfection. But Harry wasn't feeling up to sex, he was exhausted from a busy day of school and his nervousness for the next day; the ritual that
could go very wrong and kill both he and Lord Voldemort.

When the Dark Lord gracefully lowered himself onto the bed and manoeuvred himself under the covers alongside Harry, the teen discreetly moved away. Arms tugged him to the powerful body lying beside him, and Harry struggled a little as he tried to formulate an explanation.

'I'm not really…I mean I know technically I am still your Courtesan, at least for tonight, but…' Harry blabbered, thoughts distracted by the warmth against his back.

'Go to sleep, Harry,' the Dark Lord said, a discreet trace of amusement in his voice.

Had Lord Voldemort been able to see Harry's face he would have seen an expression of dumbfounded shock.

'You just want to sleep with me? I mean sleep as in go to sleep, not-' 

'My body may not require rest, but yours certainly does. I recommend you at least attempt to sleep,' Lord Voldemort commented.

Harry paused before another question inadvertently came to mind. 'Then are you just going to lie there the whole night doing nothing? But-'

'Sleep,' the Dark Lord commanded, gently but firmly. Another time came to Harry's mind, after he had nearly been raped and half comatose. Vaguely he recalled hearing Lord Voldemort ordering him to sleep in that same tone. It was oddly comforting.

Settling down, Harry allowed his exhaustion creep over him and he relaxed fully into the embrace around him. He could hardly believe this was happening. Here he was, being held by the most powerful man in Britain, who was going to spend the night awake with nothing to do but watch him sleep.

Merlin, what if he started snoring? Or drooling? Or-

Then a hand started stroking his hair, moving in repetitive, soothing motions. Harry's eyes drooped with fatigue and he eventually succumbed to unconsciousness.

That night the Dark Lord lay beside his planned future Consort, crimson eyes showing rare emotion as he watched over the individual he intended to be his one and only equal.

The next day Harry was sitting in a bath in Malfoy Manor, completely naked and blushing horribly as Narcissa Malfoy was sitting in a chair beside the marble pool. The water had been purified through a ritual and was apparently cleansing Harry as he soaked within it, hands folded over his privates to have some semblance of modesty.

Harry could feel a faint tingling that he likened to exfoliation, moving across his skin as he sat submerged in the clear water. He had to undergo this to remove outside influences from his essence so it would not interfere with the ritual.

Narcissa's presence was embarrassing but necessary, as Harry knew from reading the books about the bonding ceremony. Before two individuals could be bonded, they had to be purified in specially prepared water as Harry was now experiencing. From this period onwards they were to be chaperoned as the delicate rules of the ceremony dictated. Harry was unclear on a few facts, but he remembered something about ensuring no harm came to the two intended before the ritual was complete, nor outside influences taint them. Lord Voldemort would be soaking in a bath of his own
right that minute somewhere in the manor, watched over by Lucius Malfoy.

Harry was not permitted to speak at all to Narcissa; indeed he was to be silent until prompted by the ceremony to confirm his decision to bond his magical core to the Dark Lord's. Thus there was a heavy silence in the bathing chamber, broken only by the faint lapping of the water against the sides of the bath.

Time passed, and Harry had no clue whether the designated three hours of bathing where anywhere near complete. Luckily there were ingredients in the water that prevented him from wrinkling or his skin reddening from the bath's warmth.

Due to the magical significance of the number three, Harry was to spend three hours being purified, three hours having his body painted with runes of bonding and then three hours of meditation as he calmed and opened his core for the ceremony. The ritual itself was rather short in comparison to the nine hours of preparation.

Harry would walk alone to a specially warded and prepared chamber after his meditation, along with Lord Voldemort who would be approaching similarly alone from a different direction. There, Lucius Malfoy would be waiting for them, to speak the activation spell that would cause the runes on both their bodies to begin the bonding itself.

Then he would ask them the questions required to bond their cores, almost like an official would ask a couple to make their wedding vows. With a final spell he would leave the room and seal them inside, with the hope that when he opened the chamber again he would find two healthily bonded males and not two corpses on the floor.

The event in between the final spell and the reopening of the bonding chamber was a mystery to Harry, even though it was the most crucial aspect of the entire ceremony. The books did not elaborate on what a couple went through as they actually bonded.

Harry was walking headfirst into the unknown.

A soft tap on his shoulder startled Harry and he looked around to see Narcissa gesturing for him to rise and leave the marble pool to proceed to the next room. Thankfully she averted her eyes, her demeanor dignified and cool as though Harry were not stark naked.

Climbing carefully from the bath, Harry followed Narcissa through to a small chamber that had been stripped of its adornments and cleansed with incense. As he entered, his body rapidly dried as the room's enchantments went to work.

The heady smell of rosemary permeated the air of the chamber, reminding Harry with a pang of the lamb roast Mrs Weasley always used to make when he was a child, cooked with rosemary.

Pushing aside that memory, Harry stepped into the centre of the chamber and allowed his hands to fall to the side, exposing himself. Narcissa was required to paint the bonding runes onto his bare skin, and he wasn't going to make it more difficult for the poised noblewoman.

She approached him carrying a bowl in one hand with dark black liquid inside, and a soft paintbrush that one might use for calligraphy in the other. Dipping the brush into the solution, she brought the tip to Harry's forehead and began to draw, blue eyes intent on her work.

Harry closed his eyes as the cool liquid was brushed across his skin, forming one of the runes of bonding that would be activated to join his core with the Dark Lord's. When Narcissa completed it, there was a faint shiver of magic that Harry felt before she moved on to another body part.
She worked efficiently through the entirely of the three hours, a tiny hourglass in the corner of the room magically measuring the time left.

Harry's body was soon adorned in black symbols, each signifying something of importance. The marks twined around his neck where his Courtesan collar still lay, to be removed later during the ceremony. They continued across his torso and unravelled over his shoulders and down his arms, a single rune painted on each of his palms.

Across the soft skin of his belly were lighter marks that spiralled down coyly around his groin. It had been incredibly uncomfortable having his friend's mother painting around his manhood, but if Narcissa could maintain her dignity, then so could he.

Coiling across the front of his thighs and descending over his shins and feet, the marks ceaselessly continued, two runes even being painted onto the soles of Harry's feet of all places.

Across his back the runes dripped in circular patterns, following the line of his spine and bravely painted onto his buttocks and the sensitive skin of his inner thighs.

If someone were to hold a mirror in front of Harry, he would not recognise the exotic creature staring back at him.

His body tingled, not unpleasantly, with the soft hum of the runes coating his skin and seeping into his core, stirring his magic. He barely registered it when Narcissa placed the now empty bowl onto the floor along with the painting brush and moved to open the door into the next prepared chamber.

The magic within the runes was already affecting Harry, bringing him into a state of calmness and yet awareness at the same time. Almost in a trance, Harry glided into the next room, as unadorned as the last one. Narcissa sealed the door shut behind him, leaving him alone for this stretch of the ceremony.

Sinking to the floor of the chamber, Harry crossed his rune-covered legs and placed his hands palm-up on top of his knees. He had thought that he would struggle to enter a meditative state, but the magic in the runes had practically done the work for him.

Taking slow, deep breaths, knowing instinctively that the runes would urge him when it was time to enter the final chamber, Harry allowed his mind to go blank and focus his attention inwards as he prepared his core for bonding.

Chapter End Notes

I know that a lot of this chapter was focused around Harry's thoughts and not so much action, but it is so important for me to develop my characters and make their actions and thought processes believable. Also, I apologise for ending half-way through the core bonding ceremony, but I want to have an entire chapter dedicated to the bonding itself, so some of the preparation had to be covered here.

Obviously in the next chapter you will all get to read about the bonding ceremony.

As for when that will come…I go on exams in a few days time and whilst I will set aside a bit of time to write, there probably won't be an update for a couple of weeks.
Please be patient, and I will hopefully be giving you more regular updates once my holidays start and exams are finished.

Drops of Nightshade x
Chapter Twenty-Five

Chapter Summary

In the prejudiced world where the Dark Lord won, Harry Potter is part of the servile caste, the lowest caste in the new society. Resigned to a life of servitude as a Courtesan, Harry is instead drawn under the wing of the Dark Lord himself. Between the scheming Order and his powerful benefactor, Harry finds himself steadily drawn deeper into the growing conflict. Eventual LV/HP.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Chapter Twenty-Five

Malfoy Manor

1996

It was the strangest feeling for Harry, being so focused inwards and yet acutely aware of his surroundings. As he placed one foot in front of the other, walking down a long corridor towards the ceremony, it felt as though he was able to pick up every tiny detail around him.

The cold flagstones beneath his feet, the faint haze of purifying incense, the familiar scent of rosemary permeating the air and the building power in the runes coating his smooth skin pressed upon his senses with startling clarity. It was as though the meditation had opened not only his magical core, but expanded his ability to take in the elements surrounding him.

The corridor took Harry closer and closer to the chamber where he would officially bond with the Dark Lord, and the feelings of apprehension and fear that the teen expected he would be experiencing were unusually absent. He was filled instead with a sense of absolute calm, his breathing deep and slow and his heart beating with rhythmic steadiness in his chest.

It was due in part to the runes upon his skin, preparing him for the ceremony, but also to the three hours of meditation Harry had completed, which seemed to have disconnected him from his emotions.

As the emerald-eyed male reached the end of the corridor, and stepped through a set of doors into a prepared chamber, he took in the new surroundings with detached interest.

The room was windowless, and of moderate size, with three sets of doors from which to enter or exit. Taking up a vast portion of the stone floor was an elaborate design of runes that had been painstakingly painted onto the ground in clear strokes. Harry recognised some the symbols on the floor that decorated his own body also. It was there that he and Lord Voldemort would stand, within the circle of runes, as Lucius Malfoy spoke the ritual words.

The silvery-blond haired man was standing before the design on the floor, dressed in a simple grey cotton robe. If Harry had been connected to his emotions, he would have maravelled at seeing the
pureblood man in such rough apparel.

Harry approached the man, noticing out of the corner of his eye that a similarly rune-covered figure was taking sure steps in the same direction. As Harry took up a position to Lucius' left, feeling the shiver of magic as he stepped inside the design on the ground, his future bond-mate claimed the space to Lucius' right.

Lucius murmured the activation spell beneath his breath, the words sharp and foreign to Harry's ears. Although he did not understand what the pureblood had said, he did know what the spell had done. The runes upon his skin started to glow, warming him from the inside out.

On the floor around him the design lit up likewise in a brilliant light, and the latent magic in the runes began to weave around Harry in an intricate web of power. Instinctively Harry turned to his companion, vaguely registering the other man's nakedness and glowing rune-covered body, before his eyes found burning crimson.

There they locked, green into red, emerald into ruby.

Lucius began speaking once more in the unfamiliar tongue; his words clear over the building hum of magical energy emanating from the ritual. As he paused, as though waiting for an answer, Harry found his mouth opening of its own accord and a single word came tumbling out.

Across from him, the Dark Lord simultaneously spoke.

'\textit{Volo}.'

Harry had never spoken this word before, nor had he ever come across it in any of the texts he had read. But he knew it was the right thing to say.

Lucius spoke again, each word like a lead weight settling in Harry's chest, the magical web tangling around him pressing tighter and stronger.

Once more the Dark Lord and Harry had their mouths prompted open, and the single solemn declaration emerged.

'\textit{Volo}.'

The magic of the ritual drew them closer.

Harry was able to sense Lord Voldemort now, fluttering along the edge of his conscious, his magical core a vast and inviting well of power. The temptation to sink within its ocean of strength, to lose himself within its embrace was very strong, but Harry had too much power of will to allow that to happen. His eyes never left his companion's however, lost in the crimson depths even as he struggled to avoid losing his sense of self as the ritual merged them.

Lucius said something short and commanding then, and carefully nudged two sharp knives and a single chalice into the circle of runes. The magic swept the implements in deeper, depositing them before the men in the centre of the design.

In perfect synchronisation, Harry and the Dark Lord sunk to their knees and each claimed a knife, the runes upon their skin directing their actions. Without hesitation, they each grasped the hilt of their respective knives tightly, and then pressed the pointed tips at the crooks of their right elbows.

With his eyes still drawn, as though magnetised, to all consuming crimson, Harry barely felt any pain as he drew a cut down the underside of his arm, from elbow to wrist.
The knife fell from his fingers with a clatter that was echoed across from him, and Harry reached out with his bleeding arm to grasp his partner's identically cut one. His scratch stung dully as it was pressed to the open wound beside it, but the vague pain was lost as the magic of the ritual charged itself with anticipation.

Beneath their clasped arms was the chalice, and as their blood mingled it fell into the waiting container. The runes that had been painted upon their palms activated and widened the shallow cuts, encouraging the blood to flow thicker and faster.

The chamber was silent but for the hum of magical energy and the faint dripping as Harry and Lord Voldemort's blood landed within the chalice below them.

Eventually the cup had been adequately filled, and another magical surge caused the wounds on the two male's arms to knit closed.

Lord Voldemort reached for the chalice first, raising it to Harry lips and feeding him the concoction. Harry ignored the unpleasant metallic tang and obediently swallowed the necessary amounts of mingled blood.

Sensing he had had enough, Harry curled his hands around the chalice himself and placed the rim at Lord Voldemort's lips. The man slipped his mouth open and Harry tilted the goblet for him, allowing the older man to take his fill of the blood.

When the chalice was empty but for a few dregs of blood, Harry replaced it on the ground and the ritual's magic swept it, and the knives, away from the two men and out of the design.

Both reached out for the other again, finding each other's hands and grasping them firmly, runes on their palms tingling with magic. Still kneeling upon the stone ground, hand entwined, they listened as Lucius spoke the final words needed.

The hum in the design around them increased ten fold, now a deafening roar as the runes began to move and swirl over their bodies in a complicated dance of shadows.

Lucius finished speaking and backed away from the design on the floor, waiting as the two men opened their lips for the third and final time.

'Volo,' they both whispered, and there was a moment of complete stillness and silence as the ritual registered the last declaration. Lucius took the opportunity to make a hasty exit, sealing all three doors shut as he went to safety.

The two males gripped each other tighter.

There was a breathless pause.

Then everything exploded.

Lord Voldemort struggled to consciousness with some difficulty, fighting through an oppressive cloak of fatigue to open his eyes and take in his surroundings.

Or lack there of.

There was an opaque nothingness beneath him, above him, around him.

He was naked, his skin unmarked by the black runes that Lucius had painted upon him earlier.
However he could still sense them hidden beneath his outer exterior, humming under his skin.

But a more important matter pressed upon him than his state of undress.

Where was Harry?

Rising to a standing position and taking a few steps forward, Lord Voldemort found that the nothingness was solid enough beneath his feet. He pivoted in a circle, seeing nothing but the same bleak non-existence around him.

Anger overtook him.

'Take me to Harry!' he yelled commandingly, painfully aware of his lack of clothes. He could hardly be particularly authoritative to anyone or anything as bare and vulnerable as he was. As though sensing his discontent about his state of undress, a dark shroud began forming around him. It draped over his limbs and morphed into a plain black robe.

Pleased at this new development, Lord Voldemort turned his attention back to working out where his lover was. Perhaps a more diplomatic approach would be successful in convincing whatever power was keeping him here to take him to Harry.

'I am looking for-' he began to say clearly into the opaqueness but broke off when he heard a voice.

'Harry! Sweetheart come here,' a kindly female voice echoed brokenly over the expanse of nothing.

The Dark Lord could not pinpoint where the noise had come from much to his frustration. He was distracted from his irritation when his surroundings began darkening and changing.

Colours began flooding the once opaque space and objects began forming around Lord Voldemort, rapidly creating a scene for the ruler of wizarding Britain. Flagstones appeared first, followed by sturdy walls and a cavernous ceiling. Floating candles blurred into existence, casting a warm glow over the large room that had formed.

The choked crying of a small child was all that could be heard, filled with misery and underlined with pain.

'Oh Harry…there you are,' the unknown woman's voice spoke again.

Suddenly she was there, a plump figure with a head of reddish-brown curls, chocolate eyes warm with love and concern that Lord Voldemort was so unfamiliar with. Following the direction of her gaze he saw a small male child tucked up in a dark corner, looking no more than four, tiny fists balled over his face as his little body shook with the force of his sobs.

The matronly woman approached the small child, then sunk to her knees, the folds of her grey dress creasing. Lord Voldemort noted that both she and the child were Menials, the iron collars around their throats confirming this.

The woman tugged the boy into her arms and pressed him to her in a comforting embrace. The Dark Lord saw a head of strangely familiar raven coloured hair over the woman's shoulder, as well as a pale face still characterised by lingering baby fat.

Then the child's eyes opened blearily through their tears.

Lord Voldemort froze.
A pair of unforgettable emerald eyes were staring his way.

Harry.

The child was Harry.

A four-year-old version, but still the same young man he had come to feel so strongly for.

'It-it hurts,' the little Harry whimpered, burying his face in the woman's shoulder and hiding his features from Lord Voldemort's intense gaze.

'I know sweetheart. But if you come with me, I can get you some cream for your pain. Would you like that?' the woman gently cajoled.

Harry took a shuddering breath in and then whispered quietly, 'O-ok.'

She rose to her feet, easily holding Harry on her hip. Rubbing her hand soothingly over his back she started walking away from Lord Voldemort, taking the scene with her as she moved, the surroundings blurring and fading until only the sharp figures of she and little Harry were still visible.

The Dark Lord wished to follow them, and yet his feet seemed to be fixed firmly in place, the nothingness beginning to seep around him once more. Looking up to see Harry again, he noted the red chafing around the boy's little neck and realised he must have just received his Menial collar. The sight of the painful abrasion around Harry's neck, those beautiful emerald eyes filled with misery and hurt, struck a chord deep within Lord Voldemort.

He knew instinctively that this was not a vision of his own making, nor something conjured to cause him torment.

This was Harry's earliest memory.

He was inside of Harry's mind, walking through his memory stream.

The realisation calmed his concerns for his lover somewhat, as he realised they were undergoing the bleeding effect, sharing their lives with one another. Harry would be inside the Dark Lord's own memory stream right now, bearing witness to the important events in his existence. It was uncomfortable thinking of someone treading through his life and his experiences, but there was no one he trusted more than Harry to be wandering within his head.

Lord Voldemort refocused on his surroundings to find them completely opaque once more, ready to receive the next memory. Staring more closely at the nothingness, the Dark Lord noticed that it was not as blank as he had initially thought.

There were irregularities that quickly gained clarity to form snowflakes, drifting from above which darkened until it resembled heavy grey clouds. Glancing back down from the newly formed sky, Lord Voldemort saw that the scene had rapidly developed while he had been distracted.

Snow covered grass stretched in every direction, broken only by the odd bare tree. Away in the distance was a looming structure that Lord Voldemort identified as Hogwarts, the lake frozen solid in the cold grip of winter.

'Attack!' came the abrupt battle cry and frozen missiles began flying.

It was fortunate that the Dark Lord was insubstantial; otherwise he would have found himself with a snowball in the face. Instead the projectile soared straight through him and ploughed into a tree.
From behind the trunk came a frightened squeak and a small head poked out to see where the snowball had come from.

Once again, the Dark Lord found himself gazing at Harry, this time looking to be roughly six years old. He had lost a great deal of baby fat and had put on a few inches of height. His emerald eyes were still the same, beautiful and large on his pale face.

Another snowball came flying from a different direction, too hard and fast for Harry to retract his head in time. Lord Voldemort found himself moving forward to shield Harry, before remembering this was nothing more than a memory and it had already occurred. Not to mention his insubstantial state.

He needn't have feared for Harry regardless, as the boy's hands rose and with a gleam in his green eyes he sent a surge of wandless and wordless magic toward the incoming projectile. The snowball froze in its path, before neatly turning and speeding off to find its thrower.

From behind a snow bank in the distance, there was a muffled yelp before a teenager's head appeared from his hiding place. He had a mop of blazing red hair and a freckled face, that was currently coated in snow.

'Harry! Using your magic is cheating!' he yelled accusingly before adding under his breath, 'I didn't even want to play this stupid game.'

Two more snowballs smashed into his face leaving him spluttering in indignation. 'Harry!' he howled.

'It wasn't me!' Harry shouted back playfully, a grin evident on his face.

Indeed, it hadn't been little Harry whom had thrown the missiles, but two identical redheads hiding adjacent to the boy. They smirked at each other for their accurate aim before baiting the teen, obviously a relation of some sort if the hair was any indication.

'You don't want to play anymore, Percy?' one asked mischievously.

'Well that's too bad!' the other cried and the twins charged from their hiding spot to tackle the teen. All three disappeared behind the snow bank, the sound of their scuffle echoing over the grounds.

Harry was laughing, the sound joyous and free. Lord Voldemort found his eyes drawn to the six-year-old, who commanded attention even at such a tender age. It was clear even now that he would grow up to be a stunning specimen.

The scene was fading, Harry disappearing like a wisp of smoke in a strong gust of wind. The nothingness soon reigned once more, even as Harry's ghostly laugh still lingered in the space.

The next memory came swift and fast on the coattails of the previous one, Lord Voldemort's surroundings darkening and forming a shadowy corridor. His eyes immediately sought out Harry, as this was his memory.

'Potter,' came a harsh voice and Harry appeared, standing up against the wall of the corridor. His hands were clasped in front of him, and his head was lowered demurely. He didn't look much older than he did in the other memory, perhaps a few months older.

Severus Snape came into existence, looming over him, black robes billowing as he stared down with hatred at the son of his school tormenter. The Dark Lord's crimson eyes narrowed at the scene, watching as Harry began to shake very slightly.
'Yes Headmaster?' Harry ventured, not daring to look up.

'How many times must I tell you to *not run in the corridors*. This is a school, not a playground, and you are nothing more than a servant here! Do I need to remind you of your station?' Severus asked, his voice a snarl. With each word he spoke, Harry turned a little more in on himself.

'No Headmaster. I apologise. I will not let this happen again,' Harry assured him quickly, voice quivering slightly.

'See that it doesn't,' Severus replied coldly, relishing in the power he had over the boy. 'You're just like your father. Arrogant and weak.' He swept away after those harsh words.

As soon as he was gone, Harry sank down to the stone floor, arms wrapping around his knees. He did not cry, but instead buried his face in the safety of his knees and held himself, alone in that dark corridor.

The Dark Lord stood helplessly to the side, caught between fury at his loyal follower and the strong urge to pull the Child-Harry into his arms and find some way to offer comfort. The compulsion to do so was unusual, but Lord Voldemort had already come to the realisation that Harry made him feel things he had never felt before about another person.

He understood now that it was fortunate that Harry had not had to begin his Occulemency lessons with the Headmaster. The teen would have been treated with the same cold disdain he was being shown here in this memory. Lord Voldemort knew of the history between Severus and James Potter, but the hatred his Death Eater had bestowed upon Harry was unacceptable. He would be speaking with the man once he was freed from the bleeding effect and he and Harry had been settled into their bonded life.

Harry was his planned future Consort, and he refused to have a man who held so much loathing for said Consort to be anywhere near him. If Severus could not let go of his anger and bitterness, then the Dark Lord was resolved to remove him from a position of authority.

Lord Voldemort continued to travel through Harry's memory stream.

As Harry got older the memories he was able to recall grew more and more frequent, making it impossible to focus solely on one scene.

The memories surrounded the Dark Lord, offering him glimpses into Harry's life. It became apparent that the teen's foster family had been an incredibly positive influence on his life, offering a system of support and love for Harry to turn to.

Through both positive and negative memories, Lord Voldemort did roam, all filled with a pair of gorgeous emerald eyes. As Harry entered his teen years, the Dark Lord grew wary as he realised he was fast approaching the time of Harry's training as a Courtesan.

There had been a memory of Rabastan Lestrange promising to keep an eye on Harry, and hoping that he would be a Courtesan so he could buy his contract. That had caused an insurmountable amount of fury in the Dark Lord. He had to remind himself that Harry was *his*, and although Rabastan did end up getting him, he would not keep him.

Suddenly Lord Voldemort was taken up with the vortex of Harry's memories of Aphrodite's House of Pleasure. They assaulted his senses, showing him brief flashes of Harry's training.

Witnessing Harry's experiences, both of a sexual and even a non-sexual nature, the Dark Lord did
grow angry, as he had expected. But as he saw glimpses of the Curse-Breaker, Harry's teacher, educate Harry in the ways to pleasure a man, he felt a surge of another emotion.

It was…sadness.

Sadness for the crying child with the chafed neck, for the laughing boy playing in the snow with his foster brothers, for the scared child sitting alone in a deserted corridor, for the smiling boy who helped his surrogate mother in the kitchen, for the terrified pre-teen shivering in his bed at night, for the miserable teen who tearfully hugged his foster-sister goodbye.

It was perhaps the first time the Dark Lord felt regret for someone, for a person whom he had indirectly harmed from his ambitions.

Because it was Harry.

He had now seen first-hand how Harry was affected by his station in life, the trials he had had to face because of it. And it gave him this emotion, this feeling.

Sadness.

Lord Voldemort's hand hovered over his chest, as though unsure how to deal with the tightness sitting there. There was a lingering puzzlement in his red eyes as he experienced the newly uncovered emotion.

It was impossible.

He had severed his soul too many times to have space in his heart for emotions such as that...then a theory came to him.

The bleeding effect.

It shared not only the memories of the bonded partners, but their emotions too.

He might be incapable of feeling emotions to an extent, but Harry was not. Beautiful, sweet Harry with an impossibly pure heart. Because he had bonded his magical core with Harry's he would now be able to feel again.

Sadness, regret, joy…all foreign things to the Dark Lord.

And what of love?

It was an inconceivable concept to Lord Voldemort, but when he considered it, only one person came to mind. But it was too soon to admit anything to himself, the bonding still fresh.

His emotions would not all come crashing back at once, nor did he believe they would ever truly hold sway over him. But because of Harry's influence, he would have them.

The Dark Lord was not yet sure whether to be pleased with this or not.

Time would tell.

The memories had slowed down, as their silent witness grew distracted with internal musings, but as Lord Voldemort returned his attention to the remainder of Harry's memories, they sped up once more.

He watched as Harry had his contract bought by Rabastan Lestrange, and forced himself to not turn
away from their copulation. It was punishment in a way.

He had given Harry this life, and so the least he could do was witness what Harry went through.

The Dark Lord experienced a brief moment of smugness when he acknowledged that whilst Harry enjoyed sex with Rabastan, he did not respond as well as he did with Lord Voldemort. This knowledge helped him to survive through the memories of Harry's intimacy with his previous contractor.

He knew he had reached the end of the memory stream he was to bear witness to, when he saw himself in Harry's memory. It was the first time they had laid eyes on one another, and the Dark Lord took a moment to admire Harry as he smashed the doors of Rabastan Lestrange's meeting room open and walked towards him with his green eyes on fire.

As soon as his other self and Harry touched, the memory dissolved, fragments brushing past Lord Voldemort and leaving him alone in the nothingness again.

He felt heavy with all he had seen in Harry's life, burdened now by another set of memories, the ones belonging to his bond-mate. The Dark Lord had seen Harry now at his best and his worst, had watched him experience extreme highs and crushing lows.

And of course there were the emotions now available to him.

They were faint, but they were there, gifted to him by Harry.

Lord Voldemort felt a flicker of consternation as he considered what Harry had just gone through. The teen would have been able to see his every mistake and triumph, his cruelty unmasked and the sadistic things he had done on his way to victory over the Light side.

But what really concerned the Dark Lord was the knowledge that Harry would now understand what he had done to ensure his immortality.

Harry would know that he had mutilated his soul.

It was as though his thoughts about the gorgeous teen had summoned him, because in near distance he saw a figure standing with his back turned to him. The slightly messy raven hair and a hastily conjured green robe were strong indicators.

'Harry,' he called, willing for the other male to turn around, to show him that whilst he had seen the terrible things he had done in his life, he would still accept him.

To his immense relief, Harry did turn around.

There was new wisdom in his green eyes as he locked gazes with his bond-mate, the knowledge of Lord Voldemort's own life at the forefront of his mind. The Dark Lord could not discern any particular emotions on his lover's features, as Harry had his Courtesan mask in place, disguising his true feelings.

Harry took a few steps forward, the opaque nothingness breaking around him to allow him passage to the Dark Lord. As Harry moved forward so too did Lord Voldemort, wanting to erase the distance between he and his bonded. The bleeding effect had kept them separate for too long.

When Harry paused a few steps away, the Dark Lord halted his progress forward and waited for Harry to make the next move.
Almost tentatively the teen approached, as one might step towards a dangerous beast. Lord Voldemort did not blame the emerald-eyed male for treating him with such caution. He had witnessed what he had done. He knew that the Dark Lord could be monstrous.

Feeling the urge to try and assure Harry in some way, desiring to erase that careful behaviour around him, Lord Voldemort said calmly, 'I would never harm you Harry. Not before the bonding ceremony and not after. Especially not after – you are my bonded now. If I hurt you I hurt myself.'

Harry cocked his head to one side and a flash of warmth shot through his emerald eyes. 'I know that.'

If Harry knew that, then why was he acting so cautious around him?

He found out why soon enough.

Harry stepped close enough to touch him, raising a hand to place it against his cheek. The feeling was indescribable. His core – no, their core – fluctuated, sending pleasant tingles through both their bodies.

Then Harry spoke, wonder tinging his tone as he brought up what had been burning within him since he had started traversing Lord Voldemort's memory stream.

'Your name…your real name…'

The Dark Lord froze.

'Tom Marvolo Riddle,' Harry breathed.

Chapter End Notes

Author Note: PLEASE READ! I have a few important things to clear up. Firstly, I know that Slughorn taught Riddle and thus would know that he is the Dark Lord, but obviously Lord Voldemort put precautions in place to prevent his true heritage from becoming known. He is a half-blood after all, registered as such in the school records. Slughorn can claim that he taught the Dark Lord, but if asked about his true name etc. he would be incapable of providing answers.

As for the whole thing with emotions, I assure you, the Dark Lord will not suddenly become a fuzzy kitten of joy. Even before he mutilated his soul, he was a reserved young man. Because of the bleeding effect, he will have all of his emotions returned to him, but they will not rule him nor his actions. Keep that in mind.

Some of you might say, "But I thought he already had emotions, feelings etc.?" and in response to that, I just want to reinforce the knowledge that he could 'feel' but only to an extent. Also, most of the emotions in his arsenal were negatively based, such as anger and jealousy. Being in Harry's presence alone would not have been enough to unlock deeper feelings. But now that he has bonded, he will be able to touch those emotions (love etc.)

I have not forgotten about Harry's Courtesan collar, and it will be gone by the next chapter.

If some of you are curious as to what 'Volo' means, it is Latin, and it translates to 'I do.'
In some weddings, the bride and groom actually use, 'Volo.' This doesn't mean that the bonding ceremony was a marriage ceremony! It was just the response needed to show that the couple agreed with what was happening to them.

Finally, I have gathered my notes together to write this, but how many of you want a detailed insight into Lord Voldemort's life? I could write in my next update of Harry's experiences in the Dark Lord's memory stream, but it would take me an entire chapter. Also, I cannot promise that it would even come soon, because I am obviously still on exams. I will touch on it of course (Harry will probably have dreams and/or flashbacks) but do the majority of my readers desire to read about Harry's experiences inside of the Dark Lord's memories in its entirety?

I am happy to write it, but again I must stress that the update would take much longer than usual to come, as it is a big job and I am still on exams.

So have a think about it, and write a response in your reviews.

Thanks,

Drops of Nightshade x
Chapter Twenty-Six

Chapter Summary

In the prejudiced world where the Dark Lord won, Harry Potter is part of the servile caste, the lowest caste in the new society. Resigned to a life of servitude as a Courtesan, Harry is instead drawn under the wing of the Dark Lord himself. Between the scheming Order and his powerful benefactor, Harry finds himself steadily drawn deeper into the growing conflict. Eventual LV/HP.

Chapter Notes

Author Note: I have decided to not do a detailed chapter on Harry's experience in Lord Voldemort's memory stream, as over the three sites I have posted this story on, the vast majority wanted the plot to continue. I am happy to write a one-shot after "The Courtesan" is done, in which you can read all about Harry's experience. Message me, or leave a review if you are interested. Thanks!

Drops of Nightshade x

Chapter Twenty-Six

Malfoy Manor

1996

The Dark Lord recovered almost immediately from the shock of hearing his true name emerge from the lips of his lover, stiffly removing Harry's hand from his face where it tentatively rested and taking a firm step backwards.

Harry swallowed and searched his bond-mate's face, reaching out hesitantly across their new bond to ascertain the depth of the man's anger.

'You, more than anyone, should know why I loathe that name,' the Dark Lord said in a clipped voice, raising shields around his side of the bond, to prevent Harry from being able to read his emotions or have any access to his mind.

'You were named after your Muggle father,' Harry began quietly. 'He...abandoned your mother and sentenced you to a childhood in an orphanage.'

'Yes. But you know more than that,' Lord Voldemort commented, crimson eyes fixated on his younger lover.

'The summer between your fifth and sixth year you managed to track down your uncle, Morfin
Gaunt. That's when you discovered who your father really was. And you... then you went and...

Harry trailed off, sadness in his green eyes.

'I murdered my father and my grandparents. Then framed my uncle for the killings, taking the Gaunt family ring for my own.' There was no remorse in his voice as he blandly described his part in erasing the last of his immediate family.

'You were angry... so angry, when you discovered who your father was. But you weren't planning on killing him or your grandparents initially were you? You were going to spare them,' Harry murmured.

'Then I was granted an audience with them. I was... recognised. My filthy Muggle father had known about my existence. He had been paying Mrs Cole at the orphanage to keep me there until my majority. It's the reason no one attempted to adopt me.' Lord Voldemort continued the tale, his face blank of emotion.

Harry's heart ached for the small child he had seen in his lover's memory stream, who had watched sullenly as the other children came and went, taken into loving families and given chances at happiness.

'He threatened your life,' Harry said, staring into the Dark Lord's crimson eyes, horror straining through his words. 'He had a small pistol in the drawer behind him. He pulled it out and aimed it at your head. Your grandparents sat there and watched, not interfering. They all thought you had come to demand money or perhaps recognition as the Riddle heir.'

'My magic retaliated. I know not what spell I cast that day, but when my power had settled all three were dead,' Lord Voldemort said, remorse still absent in his voice. He truly did not regret what had happened between he and his family.

'Then you framed your uncle,' Harry said with a note of disapproval in his voice.

'You saw him, Harry. He was a piece of scum, a terror on society. He deserved to return to Azkaban to rot,' Lord Voldemort spat with the surety of one that believed he was in the right.

'What of you? Did you not deserve to go to Azkaban? You murdered your father and grandparents, Tom, regardless of whether it was intentional or not. And what about all the other people who have died at your hands, or indirectly from your rise to power? Innocent men, women and childr-

A hand found its way to Harry's throat, not constricting his breathing but resting threateningly against his skin. 'Will you stand here and lay out all the atrocities I have committed in my lifetime? Shall you list every crime I have performed, every mistake I have made, every life that has been destroyed by my actions?' the Dark Lord hissed, beginning to slip into Parseltongue at the very thought of Harry doing such a thing.

Harry stared back at him calmly; even with the hand wrapped around his slender neck and a pair of blazing crimson eyes boring into his own green ones.

'Never,' Harry said quietly but with striking surety.

The hand around his throat loosened in surprise, before slipping away.

'I'm insulted that you would even think I would do such a thing,' Harry continued, quite boldly. 'The past is the past. Yes, you did awful things in your life. I have now witnessed you do those terrible acts. There is blood on your hands, Tom.' Harry stepped closer as he spoke, ignoring the flash of anger in his lover's eyes at his use of his true name. Reaching upwards, Harry placed his hand back
on the taller man's cheek, where it had been shrugged off before.

'But what would life be, if there was no chance for redemption? For forgiveness?' Harry asked urgently, eyes searching the other to find some acknowledgement that his words were sinking in.

'I cannot be redeemed,' Lord Voldemort said stiffly. 'I knew what the cost would be to rise to power – to truly become a Lord of the Dark. You say there is blood on my hands? Indeed, there is. And that blood can never be removed, can never be repaid.'

'It is true,' Harry intoned softly, 'that those who have died because of your goals can never be replaced. My own parents were killed by your followers, by your insatiable desire to eradicate any and all resistance.' Harry paused when the Dark Lord opened his mouth as though to accuse Harry of doing what he said he would not.

'But I am not asking for an apology, nor repentance for what has been lost. Nothing can right the wrong that occurred when I became an orphan. But I still believe you can find redemption. You just need to look in the right place,' Harry whispered.

'Where could I possibly find any sort of redemption?' the Dark Lord scoffed, scornful incredulity evident over his features.

Harry leaned upwards on his toes so that he could just press his forehead to his bond-mate's own. Almost subconsciously, Lord Voldemort dipped down so that they could touch with more ease. Once he was settled in place, Harry stared into crimson eyes and opened his mind, simultaneously reaching towards their shared magical core.

Reluctantly, the Dark Lord released the shields separating him from Harry and slid down his side of the bond to meet Harry in the middle, in their shared centre. The feeling of their essences mingling was indescribable.

And Harry…

Harry's soul burned in the space, so pure and untainted that Lord Voldemort felt the urge to hide his own mutilated one away in shame. But Harry would not let him, stubbornly dragging the Dark Lord's tattered remnants of a soul into the folds of his own, like he would welcome the other into his body during their passionate moments.

This however, was even more intimate.

There was no space between their souls, no division to keep them separate. It was overwhelming for Lord Voldemort, after having only a small shard of his main soul remaining to sustain his body, to suddenly have a full and completed one warming his being.

Suddenly Harry's voice echoed inside of their bonded core of power.

'You can find your redemption through me.'

His soul was suddenly awash with emotions being channelled from Harry's own, too many to name, and too fast to identify. The outpouring blurred together to create a sense of warmth, affection and joy that bathed his soul in soothing waves.

He was loved.

Harry loved him.
He could not identify the love exactly out of the flood from Harry's soul, but through his new connection with the teen he now knew what love felt like, that long-forgotten concept, shunned since his early days in the orphanage.

Although his own soul was weak and scarred, the energy from Harry's own was enough to coax a response from the torn fragment. From the shard a trickle of emotions slid into Harry's soul, mostly recently awoken feelings and impressions.

It was not much, but it was a start.

Lingering through the strained response, reaching almost tentatively for Harry's soul was the emotion the Dark Lord had not dared to admit he was capable of, if only for one person in his lifetime.

While he was not yet ready to acknowledge it, he knew instinctively that Harry sensed its presence. The sudden surge of hope and joy along their connection was evident enough.

After their exchange of emotions and feelings had been completed, both sensed that it was time for their souls to disengage from their tight embrace. Lord Voldemort found himself reluctant to leave the warmth and fullness of Harry's soul, but with a gentle nudge from said teen he worked up the strength to pull his own soul away.

Instantly he felt colder, realising just how much Harry's soul had affected his own. Steeling himself, drawing upon his near-limitless supply of determination, the Dark Lord retracted his consciousness from their shared magical core, where their souls lingered, and returned to the privacy of his own mind.

Upon opening his eyes, he found himself to be kneeling in the ritual chamber at Malfoy Manor, arms clasped with Harry's. The teen was also stirring, emerald eyes blinking blearily as he came to awareness of their surroundings.

Bones creaking with protest, they unclamped their grip on one another, each wincing slightly at the pain of moving their limbs after a full night of resting in the same position. With a wave of a stiff hand, the Dark Lord cast a minor healing spell on both he and his bond-mate.

Harry gave him an appreciative look as his muscles loosened and relaxed, the pain quickly fading away as Lord Voldemort's magic went to work. As Harry rubbed his naked limbs to further encourage life into them, he noted that the black runes upon his body had completely sunk beneath his skin, as they had in their shared consciousness.

Glancing towards the Dark Lord, he noted that the same could be said of the other man. A glimmer of lust shot through Harry at seeing him stretching his body languidly, firm skin rippling with the action as his muscles pulled taut.

Lord Voldemort paused as he received a hint of lust emanating from Harry's side of the connection, turning slightly to gaze at the younger man with a smirk fluttering across his lips.

'I think I am going to enjoy this connection,' he purred, sending Harry a surge of his own lust as he trailed his eyes over the teen's naked form.

His eyes paused at Harry's neck, a pleased and surprised expression on his face at seeing the younger male's throat unadorned of any symbol of oppression. There was not even marred skin to mark that it had ever rested around his neck, the ritual obviously removing any and all evidence. Looking around the circle of runes, Lord Voldemort found the twisted remnants of the Courtesan collar, lying not too far from Harry.
Following his Lord's gaze, as well as the emotion of satisfaction rippling down their bond, Harry startled when he saw his Courtesan collar lying broken on the stone floor of the ritual chamber. His hand flew to his throat, fingers frantically tracing the skin there, confirming that the collar was really and truly gone.

He was officially a free man.

Lucius Malfoy had been greatly relieved when he had unsealed the ritual chamber in the morning of the day after the ceremony to find two live males waiting for him, clothed in conjured black robes.

His grey eyes had noticed almost immediately the absence of a Courtesan collar on Harry's throat, but he had had a warning of some sort from his Lord the night previous and was not entirely shocked at the sight.

Bowing deeply to both, as Harry was in extension now a part of his Lord, he had announced that the Manor was at the duo's disposable for as long as it was of convenience to them, and offered to escort them immediately to a suite in order to rest and recover from their bonding.

That was where the pair could be found currently, however sleep was far from either's mind.

Harry was putting up no resistance as the Dark Lord harshly pinned him against the bedroom wall, holding his wrists above his head as he hungrily pressed his lips to Harry's own. Their fingers were intertwined, laced together as their kiss turned even more passionate. Lord Voldemort's free hand deftly travelled up and down Harry's body, enticing moans out of the smaller male that were muffled by the Dark Lord's lips. Their kiss ended all too soon, when their desire for air became unable to deny, leaving both panting lightly.

The second the kiss ended, Lord Voldemort immediately claimed Harry's neck, nipping at the skin only to soothe it with his tongue, working on leaving marks upon the other's clear complexion.

A needy moan escaped the smaller, much to the Dark Lord's satisfaction. Harry's entire body felt like it was a pool of molten fire as he melted into his bond-mate's searing hot kisses and gentle touches to his neck and collarbone. He felt his knees give way and he slowly slipped to the floor, forcefully dragging his lover down with him. Lord Voldemort freed Harry's wrists and wrapped his arm around the smaller male's waist pulling him closer. He gently guided them both to the floor, conscious of any lingering pain that might have remained after the ceremony.

Harry barely had time to breathe before he was once again pinned to the wall behind him, his wrists trapped above his head in one hand, while the Dark Lord held his chin in the other. Their eyes met in a moment of burning passion; fiery rubies blazed into passionate emerald orbs. Both burning with lust, affection and desire, their chests rising and falling as they panted.

'Harry,’ Lord Voldemort purred sensually, making the younger shiver at the sound. 'If we don't stop this now, or move to the bed, I'm going to end up taking you right here on the floor.'

Harry experimentally wriggled, testing the softness of the carpeted floor before tossing his lover a confident grin and saying huskily, 'Then it's a good thing the floor is so comfy.'

Burning lips found his again, as strong hands conducted him to said floor.

Impatient as ever, Harry whisked both their garments away with a surge of magic, causing the male hovering over him to smirk at the younger's youthful eagerness. Deciding to indulge him, Lord Voldemort quickly got to work distracting his bond-mate with another searing kiss while he swiftly conjured lube and coated his fingers in preparation.
Carefully stretching and oiling his lover's sensitive opening, continuing to engage in a duel of tongues with Harry that he was currently dominating, the Dark Lord reached down their connection, enticing Harry to do the same.

As he removed his fingers, his task of preparing the younger completed, Harry joined him again in their shared centre, souls brushing against one another.

'What are you-?' Harry began asking curiously, before being cut off as his bond-mate spoke from within.

'I want to experiment joining our essences at the same time as we join physically,' he explained.

Harry shivered in excitement at the very thought, legs wrapping around Lord Voldemort's waist as he urged him towards his ready entrance.

Lifting Harry's hips in order to gain a better angle, the Dark Lord leaned over his bond-mate and brushed his raven coloured hair from gorgeous eyes. Those shining emeralds locked with his own ruby as he pushed all the way in, wringing a gasp of pure ecstasy from both parties.

Simultaneously their essences met each other, mingling easily together in the shared space. It was like a shockwave of intense feeling, the ripples emanating from their magical core to travel into their bodies and set their nerves alight with pleasure.

The feeling was so intense, that both had to pause for a moment, to simply remember how to breathe, as the sensation of being joined in every possible way crashed over the duo with the force of an atomic bomb.

After realising the feeling was not fading in any way, Harry took the initiative to rock his hips, prodding the Dark Lord into movement. Slipping into a steady rhythm, Lord Voldemort plunged in and out, drawing blissful sounds from Harry's lips.

Stopping long enough to pull them both into a seated position, the Dark Lord began thrusting hard up into his lover's body as the teen pushed down on his swollen cock. One particularly hard thrust from the two of them suddenly sent Harry crying out as he hit his climax.

An unstoppable wave of pleasure smashed into the Dark Lord through his connection with Harry, as the younger orgasmed. The sheer power of the feeling caused Lord Voldemort to reach his peak in return.

It was Harry's turn to experience another's overwhelming orgasmic pleasure crashing into his side of the bond, causing him to dig his nails sharply into the older man's back and another cry was wrung from him as though having a second climax.

Long after they had both been sated, they remained in a seated position, the Dark Lord still buried in his younger lover as they rested against one another. Trembles continued to run through both their bodies, small aftershocks of pleasure rebounding from one male to the other.

It was Harry who broke the contented and awed silence, leaning back slightly to gaze at his lover and saying clearly, 'We are going to do that again.'

The response he received was to be hoisted up, still full of the other, and carried over the bed where their carnal activities resumed for the remainder of the day.

Draco Malfoy considered himself to be a brave young male, to an extent of course. One must
preserve their life after all.

That was why, as he awoke in an unknown location, his arms and legs bound with strong rope and his mouth magically gagged, he chose to stay very still and assess the situation.

Grey eyes quickly took in the room he currently resided in, from his vantage point lying uncomfortably on his side. The part of his body that was pressed to the ground was numb, indicating he had been lying unconscious there for some time.

The room, if it could be called that, was empty save for a splintered chair, resting near a boarded up window. The tatters of what was once a curtain drifted eerily in the chilly breeze that seeped through the cracked panes of glass.

A thick layer of dust coated the moulding floorboards, a set of footprints in the grime to mark the direction his captor had taken to bring him here.

Wherever "here" was.

As the heir to one of the most wealthy and influential families in Europe, Draco was no stranger to kidnap attempts. Many in the past had endeavoured to abduct the Malfoy heir, and hold him hostage in return for great sums of money. Always, either his parents or his protectors as a child would have been able to drive off the would-be kidnapper and bring them to justice.

This was the first time someone had actually succeeded.

The sheer impossibility of the situation the pureblood found himself in was pressing at the forefront of his mind. Brain working furiously, Draco retraced his memory as far as he could remember, to find some indication of who had taken him and where he was being held.

He had no way to know if it was even still Sunday, had no way to tell how long he had been held captive, unconscious.

Pushing that despondent thought away, Draco refocused on his mission.

Sunday morning he had travelled with Blaise and Daphne down to Hogsmeade, as it was one of the rare weekends when students could enjoy the small wizarding village. The three of them had gone to the Three Broomsticks and warmed themselves with a butterbeer, before Daphne had rushed off, explaining she wished to buy Harry a gift for finally returning to Hogwarts.

He and Blaise had perused shops on their own, before Blaise too had left in order to make a transaction at the local Gringotts. Draco had wondered whether or not to go with the Italian boy before deciding against it, unwilling to face a tedious wait as his friend negotiated with the goblins.

Alone, he had wandered further away from the busy main thoroughfare and along a well-worn track towards the infamous Shrieking Shack. He often liked to do this walk to the outer perimeter of the supposed haunted house, as it was quiet and peaceful compared to Hogsmeade itself.

He had reached the small clearing that was divided in two by the rickety fence that marked the border of the Shrieking Shack and had stopped to gaze at the ominous-looking structure in the distance.

And then…

And then nothing.
His captor, whoever they were, had probably either followed him from the village, or had been lying in wait. With barely any visiting the clearing, his captor could have easily spirited him away with none the wiser.

A suffocating sense of panic was beginning to fill Draco as he realised he was completely at the mercy of whomever had taken him. He didn't even know if their motives were monetary based. What if they didn't want to use him as a hostage? What if they were some sort of crazed rebel, wishing to take out their anger on a Death Eater's son?

Writhing helplessly in his restraints, Draco attempted to move his body across the grimy floor to the window, hoping that he would find the leverage to rise and take a look out at the surroundings of the room he was in.

There was a door too, but Draco decided he should try and get a look out of the window first in order to ascertain what environment he was going to be travelling across as he escaped.

That was, if he could find some way to remove the ropes constricting his limbs.

Letting out a soundless cry of frustration, the magical gag negating any noise emerging from his mouth, Draco gradually managed to worm his way over the window, cursing at how ungainly he knew he looked as he twisted and flailed to gain momentum to move.

Now resting under the window, completely out of breath, Draco attempted to regather his energy for the difficult process ahead of him. He was going to have to use all of his strength to work his way into a standing position, in order to look out of the window.

After a long agonising period of time, the pureblood had finally managed to get himself into a standing position. Muscles trembling with effort, Draco nudged the tattered curtain aside with his body and peered through a crack in the boards to look outside.

He saw barren grass that rolled unhindered until it reached a terribly familiar rickety fence and a grove of trees. Staring at the scene in disbelief, Draco had to eventually accept the fact that he was in the Shrieking Shack.

For a moment he entertained a stupid notion that perhaps the Shack was haunted after all, and he had been kidnapped by something supernatural that had not taken kindly to him frequenting the perimeter of the property.

Shoving that theory ruthlessly aside, mentally kicking himself for such a ridiculous notion, he blamed it entirely on the stress and panic of the situation he was in.

Now that he had confirmed his location, Draco awkwardly hobbled and hopped to the single door in the room, his fingers clumsily fiddling with the knob.

Which was undoubtedly locked.

With another soundless cry of annoyance, Draco hobbled over to the nearest available wall and leaned against it to carefully lower himself to the floor and into a half-comfortable sitting position.

Surely by now his absence had been noted, either Blaise or Daphne realising neither had seen him for some time. Who knew, days might have passed, and full search parties headed by his father could be combing the country as he sat here.

Content with that though, Draco allowed himself to slip into an uneasy sleep against the hard wall, exhaustion seeping over him and leeching his body of energy.
The door opened some time after Draco had fallen asleep, revealing Fleur Delacour who scrunched up her dainty nose as dust tickled her nostrils. Stepping cautiously into the room, waving her wand again to monitor the pureblood's status and ensure he was still deeply asleep, Fleur brought in a tray with a loaf of cut up bread upon it.

Placing it by the teen's side, so he would see it when he woke again, she loosened the ropes around his arms so he would be able to eat and then quickly left the grimy room and shut the door behind her. Ensuring the lock was secured, she leaned against the wood, not enjoying the twist of guilt in her stomach.

That she had lowered herself to kidnapping in order to succeed in her mission…

Self-disgust flowered across her features, and she tilted her head forwards sheltering her face with a screen of blonde hair.

This was her only chance of getting Harry out of Britain.

She had discovered through the Order of the Phoenix spy network that the Dark Lord had retired for a few days to Malfoy Manor with his Courtesan. Her chances of getting to Harry there were much higher than at Hogwarts or the Citadel.

She now had the Malfoy heir as a bargaining piece, hidden away just out of the school grounds in the abandoned building near Hogsmeade.

As for someone inevitably noting the teen's absence – well she wasn't chosen as the operative of this mission for nothing. Fleur Delacour always had a plan.

And this one was brilliant.

'Draco!' Daphne called, spotting her friend about to turn the corridor up ahead.

He paused as though shocked at hearing his name, before turning around and facing the girl running up to him.

'Where have you been all afternoon? Blaise and I met back up outside of the Three Broomsticks but we couldn't find you. Did you go back to castle early?' she asked curiously.

'Y-yes,' he stammered, rather uncharacteristically.

Daphne hesitated, looking over her friend carefully. Something was definitely off. Draco never slouched like he was now, nor did he avoid her gaze and allow his grey eyes to flick nervously about.

Was he coming down with something?

Concern now emerging, Daphne placed a motherly hand on his forehead, noting his surprised flinch.

'You don't have a temperature, Draco…but maybe go to Madame Pomfrey just to be sure?' Daphne suggested.

'I don't…I mean…yeah maybe,' he stuttered.

Daphne couldn't help but stare at him incredulously. That then morphed into something a little more suspicious. Did something happen to her friend that he didn't want to tell her about? Was that why he was so anxious?
Draco hurriedly set off – in the wrong direction to the infirmary.

'Draco,' Daphne called softly, now really worried. Draco spun around clumsily, and the girl bit her lip. 'The infirmary is the other way, remember?'

Draco blinked at her before blushing and mumbling, 'Of course,' and moving quickly past her in the right direction this time.

Daphne looked after him, half-contemplating following him just to make sure he made it to the right place. She eventually decided not to, remembering a Potions essay she had due the next day that she had neglected in favour of heading down to Hogsmeade with her friends.

Madame Pomfrey would know how to fix Draco up.

As Daphne wandered off to the sixth year common room, deep in thought, "Draco" let out a breath of relief that her cover was not blown.

Slipping into an abandoned classroom, Nymphadora Tonks allowed her disguise to melt off, returning to her favoured form of a pink-haired, violet-eyed woman. The shock of running into one of Draco's acquaintances had rattled her, and she needed a moment to collect herself.

Hand running over the gold bracelet of a retired Birther, that would not leave her arm no matter what form she morphed into, Tonks allowed her mind to flit briefly to her mission. If this ridiculous escapade worked, and Fleur was able to get Harry out of Britain, then all of the members trapped here would be free to use their coins to flee to the Order Headquarters in France.

She herself would remain behind, as she was invaluable with her Metamorphmagus gift. Not to mention her three children, one who was currently at Hogwarts. Her Calix was happy here, and Rabastan treated them all well.

The fact that she could be here, impersonating Draco Malfoy, attested to the amount of freedom she had. Rabastan was under the impression that she was residing at Damara House, preparing the newest batch of Birthers for their future lives. It was a bit risky, considering he could contact the House and realise the mother of his children was not actually there, but they did have one or two operatives monitoring messages in and out of the training house.

Sighing to herself, Tonks donned the disguise of Draco Malfoy once again, making sure her Birther armband was disguised by the cuff of the school robe before leaving the classroom and continuing the ruse that would aid in rescuing Harry Potter.
Chapter Twenty-Seven

Chapter Summary

In the prejudiced world where the Dark Lord won, Harry Potter is part of the servile caste, the lowest caste in the new society. Resigned to a life of servitude as a Courtesan, Harry is instead drawn under the wing of the Dark Lord himself. Between the scheming Order and his powerful benefactor, Harry finds himself steadily drawn deeper into the growing conflict. Eventual LV/HP.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Chapter Twenty-Seven

Malfyl Manor

1996

Harry wandered aimlessly through the opulent halls of Malfoy Manor on Tuesday morning, marvelling at the rich decorations and sheer wealth on display. If he hadn't already known the family was one of the most prosperous in Europe, he would have known now.

Lord Voldemort, or Tom as Harry had taken to referring to him in the privacy of his own mind, was engaged in an emergency meeting with his Inner Circle. It was being held in a private chamber in the west wing of the mansion, as the Dark Lord did not wish to relocate he and his newly bonded to the Citadel after only a short period since their bonding.

Harry was unsure of the exact details, but what he did know was that the Order had attacked Diagon Alley, taking innocent shoppers hostage as they set up a barricade in the heart of the shopping precinct. As of now, it was unknown how many were injured, although there had been no recorded causalities as yet. The condition of the hostages was undetermined.

Death Eaters were currently engaged with the rebels, but were locked in stalemate as far as Harry knew, attempting to negotiate the safe return of the hostages.

Running a hand through his raven coloured hair, Harry sighed and sent another wave of soothing calm towards his lover on the other side of their bond, the fury and stress rippling through their shared magical core causing Harry to feel agitated in return.

Narcissa was busy Firecalling close friends of the family in order to ascertain they had escaped the attack, but she had assured Harry that he was free to wander the Manor unattended. Taking her up on the generous offer, Harry had attempted to distract himself with the lavish surroundings he found himself in.

However all he could feel was his lover's fuelled emotions tumbling down their link, unsettling him greatly even as he tried to offer some sort of comfort in return.

He felt slightly exasperated that after only two days as a bonded couple, his lover had already been
pulled from his side to deal with a crisis. Hopefully this would all be resolved quickly, and the Dark Lord could finally return to Harry's side.

There were gilded family portraits decorating the walls of the corridor Harry was wandering down, expensively dressed aristocrats staring down their noses at the unknown male in their midst. Harry shivered slightly as he felt their painted eyes following him, assessing the quality of his robes and the way he carried himself. It was incredibly unnerving to say the least.

Wishing to escape the watching eyes Harry quickly strode towards the nearest door in the corridor, and in his haste to get inside the relative privacy of the room, he failed to notice the elaborate wards sealing the entrance shut.

It was only as he turned the knob and pushed the door open, that he realised his magic had automatically unravelled the extensive warding that had been protecting the room behind it.

Harry stood in shock for a moment in the open doorway, marveling at the increase of power his bonding had given him. He hadn't even noticed his magic taking down the wards.

Peering cautiously into the once-sealed room, Harry deduced it was a study due to the copious amount of books lining the walls, and the beautiful mahogany desk placed in the centre of the chamber. A fireplace stretched across the right wall, the grate cold and empty.

Curiosity and caution warred within Harry, before his natural inquisitiveness emerged dominant and he stepped into the room, quietly closing the door behind him. The meeting would no doubt be a long one; if the annoyance Harry felt filtering through the bond were any indication. His presence here would hopefully go undetected.

Harry browsed the books that covered the room from top to bottom, one eyebrow raised in appreciation as he took in the titles. Many of them were already in the possession of his lover, but there were a few ancient tomes that he had never laid eyes on before.

The teenager was itching to sneak one or two away, but he sensed that Lucius would quickly discover an absence of a book. The surfaces in the room were spotless of any dust or grime, a clear sign that this chamber was frequented quite often.

Sighing in disappointment, his gaze lingering over the rare books on display, Harry approached the large desk, running a hand over its silky surface. It had been polished recently, so well in fact, that Harry could see his own blurred reflection on the wood.

Leaning against the desk, Harry cast his eyes over the room again, looking for anything of interest. Whilst he understood Lucius' desire to keep his study warded against unwanted intruders, the complexity of those enchantments was far beyond what one would expect for a simple study.

Perhaps there were sensitive documents hidden away or this room led to another, secret one? If either of those were true, Harry had yet to find any evidence of such in his snooping.

Scanning the walls of the study with his magic, just to be sure there really wasn't a hidden door anywhere; Harry froze as his examination yielded a result.

Pushing off the desk, Harry moved swiftly to a section of the bookshelf to his left, carelessly pulling books off the shelves to reveal a patch of bare wall behind them. Brushing his hand experimentally over the cold stone, Harry used the direct contact to scan with his magic again.

Sure enough, the deeper examination revealed the same result, if not stronger with the closer contact.
Harry took a step backwards, suddenly wary at proceeding any further. He knew this was dangerous, incredibly so. Not to mention if Lucius discovered his presence here, he could potentially lose the trust and respect of the pureblood man.

But it was calling to him.

Seized with a sudden intense urge to find what he was looking for, Harry sent a surge of wandless and wordless magic at the bare patch of wall in front of him, shattering the enchantment around it. The wall shivered, before melting away like molten liquid, revealing a small dark space hewn into the mansion's foundation.

Breath quickening in anticipation, Harry approached the hole in the wall, arm shakily rising to reach inside and pull out what he had been searching for.

He knew he shouldn't be here.

He knew that the object lying in wait was extremely deadly.

But Harry found he couldn't muster the strength to heed his instincts and his mind, closing the gap between his arm and the dark recesses of the hole. His fingers brushed against the object within, before grasping it firmly and pulling it free into the light.

The black diary Horcrux his lover had created at the same age Harry was now, rested comfortably in his hands, pulsing with Dark magic and the lingering shard of soul that had been so carelessly torn free. The piece within the diary called out to Harry.

Holding the Horcrux after having searched fruitlessly for it was a triumphant moment for Harry, but now armed with the knowledge of what the diary actually was, there was also a great deal of anxiety. As full awareness returned to Harry, the stray Dark influence of the Horcrux fading away from his mind, he let out a horrified gasp as the full implications of what he was doing came to him.

Vaguely he sensed the Dark Lord forcefully reaching out to his side of the bond, pressing for answers as to the sudden spike of fear from Harry's emotions. Harry stood there numbly as realisation came to his lover, and his outrage crashed over the teenager, forcing him to his knees with the sheer power of the feeling.

But there really was nothing he could do.

It was too late, and he knew it.

The Horcrux within the diary shifted, before abruptly flinging itself at Harry, seeping into his skin and worming its way into his body's core.

Harry opened his mouth, and screamed.

'His condition remains unchanged, My Lord,' Narcissa Malfoy murmured as she waved her wand over Harry's unconscious body.

The teenager was lying in the guest suite at the Manor, tucked under thick bed covers with his black hair splayed over the silk pillows beneath him. He looked small and fragile laying against the stark white background, his ragged breathing the only indication that he was still alive.

Lord Voldemort tightened his fist in anger as he watched the unsteady rise and fall of Harry's chest, disbelieving that this could have happened. Lucius had assured him when the Horcrux was placed in
his keeping, that none would be able to find the precious soul fragment. Of course, Lucius had no idea of the true significance of the diary, but had faithfully hidden it away nonetheless.

Apparently not well enough.

Harry had found it, and held the diary long enough to give the Horcrux the opportunity to claim him as its new host. By the time the Dark Lord had abandoned his meeting and Apparated to the study, Harry had already been crumpled on the floor unconscious, the diary an empty shell.

The invasion of the Dark soul fragment had forced Harry's conscious mind far beyond the reach of Narcissa's expertise. Even Lord Voldemort, as Harry's bonded, could not locate the teenager's mind through their connection.

There was a Dark shield surrounding Harry's side of the bond, preventing him access to the emerald-eyed male entirely. Naturally their magical cores were still merged, however Harry's soul had retracted behind the Dark blockage.

Currently Lord Voldemort knew the Horcrux would be attempting to attach itself to Harry's own soul, to overwhelm it and take control of his lover's body. But Harry was strong, and was fighting the transition.

Thus, his current comatose state.

There was no way of knowing if the next time Harry opened his eyes, they would not be his normal green orbs, but a bloody crimson.

Narcissa watched her Lord discreetly from the corner of her vision, quietly assessing the concern apparent in his usually aloof red eyes. He obviously valued his ex-Courtesan greatly, perhaps more than she had initially thought.

Turning back to her patient, Narcissa was faced with confusion as she tried to understand what had happened to her son's friend. He was exhibiting the signs of a person exposed to a Dark artifact, and indeed this was the story she had been told. However there was no sign of his conscious mind. It was as though it had been locked away.

She had little to no knowledge of mind healing; it was an obscure practice that was best left to trained professionals. Narcissa wished to recommend to her Lord that Harry be taken to St. Mungo's Hospital immediately for treatment, but she doubted he would allow the teenager to leave his sight or the protection of the Manor's wards. She sensed that he knew exactly what was happening the boy, and was none too happy about it either.

Stepping away from Harry's side, the pureblood woman tucked her wand away and folded her hands in front of her.

'I am afraid I can do no more for him, My Lord. This is beyond my healing capabilities. However, I believe you would be averse to moving him to a proper treatment centre, and so might I recommend we summon a healer here?' Narcissa suggested quietly.

'No healer can help him now,' Lord Voldemort stated with no doubt in his voice.

Narcissa blanched, taking his admission as to mean that Harry was a lost cause.

'But surely…' she began tentatively.

'This is a battle that Harry must fight alone.'
The Dark Lord's eyes did not leave his lover lying so terribly still on the bed.

Narcissa backed down, casting her own blue eyes over her patient, angered that there was nothing anyone could do to help the young man. She loathed the feeling of helplessness that came whenever she encountered a person she could not heal.

They were interrupted when the door to the guest suite flew open, admitting the Lestrange trio, who offered swift bows to their Lord.

'Forgive the uncouth intrusion, My Lord,' Rabastan began, eyes moving inadvertently to Harry's unconscious form. There was sadness over his face as he laid eyes on his ex-Courtesan's still features.

'The Order have attacked again. This time it's the Ministry,' Bellatrix cut in, black eyes flashing with fury.

'They dare-' the Dark Lord thundered, before cutting himself off and slipping into contemplation. 'What is the current situation?' he asked in a clipped voice that demanded concise information.

'Three confirmed dead, and twenty-four injured. The rebels have proceeded no further than the foyer, but are pressing their advantage. Our forces are attempting to dismantle the wards keeping them from aiding the Ministry officials inside, but are under heavy fire' Rodolphus rattled off.

'There's more,' Rabastan interrupted, cobalt blue eyes flicking back to his Lord as he spoke. 'The Order are claiming that they will kill the hostages at Diagon Alley if our forces do not retreat and continue to dismantle the wards.'

'We have ordered a retreat,' Bellatrix muttered, looking none too pleased about this fact. 'The situation is getting dire. You need us in there.' The woman's black eyes were shining with battle-lust, and even her husband and brother-in-law straightened their backs and looked towards their Lord expectantly at the promise of a fight.

'Very well. The three of you shall take back Diagon Alley and recover the hostages. Bring one of the units with you for support.' The Dark Lord paused as the trio absorbed his commands. 'I want every hostage alive. As for the Order...kill them all.'

Identical grins lit their faces, and the trio bowed to their Lord once more before sweeping from the room to begin the assault. Lord Voldemort had no doubt they would succeed in their mission. They were truly formidable in battle, presenting a terrifying united front to their enemies.

With that handled, the Dark Lord turned back to face Narcissa.

'I must leave for the Ministry. Only I have the strength to dismantle those wards the Order have put in place.' It was said with firm surety.

Narcissa found herself pinned by her Lord's sharp gaze. 'You will remain here by Harry's side. Guard him from any and all harm.'

The pureblood woman may be a healer and the Lady Malfoy, but she was a Black also, and had been taught how to fight from a young age.

Nodding her ascent, Narcissa already started roving her eyes over the guest suite, locating weak points in the room's defence. She noticed the Dark Lord approaching Harry's side, a distinctive expression on his face that she could only identify as deep care.
'I will give you a few moments alone, My Lord,' she said knowingly.

Slipping from the room and closing the door behind her, she came face-to-face with her husband who caught her up in a tight embrace in the privacy of the empty hallway.

'The Dark Lord is planning to storm the Ministry,' Narcissa murmured against the fabric of Lucius' robes.

'I assumed as much. You know I must go with him. Severus also,' the pureblood man added.

Narcissa tensed, hating the mere thought of her husband and friend being in the direct line of fire.

'Stay safe,' she whispered, before pulling away and straightening her dress where it had been creased.

'Do your family name proud, and serve our Lord faithfully,' she said in a louder voice, her face a cool mask.

'Of course,' Lucius murmured in return.

The two shared a heated, loving glance before Narcissa turned and knocked gently on the door to the guest suite, stepping inside when she was admitted.

The Dark Lord was standing away from the teenager in the room, but Harry's tousled hair indicated a hand had run lovingly through his tresses.

'Are you ready to leave, My Lord?' Lucius asked with a polite bow.

With a last glance towards the ex-Courtesan lying in bed, Lord Voldemort turned towards his loyal follower and said, 'Let us be off. The sooner the insurgents are dealt with, the sooner we can move on from this disruption.'

After the two men had left, Narcissa took up a protective stance by the door, after ensuring the wards were back in place. No one would harm her charge while she was guarding him.

Fleur landed awkwardly after an uncomfortable Side-Apparition with her unwilling company. The blonde-haired brat had made their travel unnecessarily turbulent with his incessant squirming in his bonds.

Giving him a cold glare, which was returned in full force, Fleur hauled him up unceremoniously and took a long look around at her new surroundings.

The were in a thickly wooded forest, the trees bare from their leaves in the grip of Autumn. Using her wand to work out her co-ordinates, the Order agent confirmed that she had Apparated to the correct location.

Now it was just a matter of finding Malfoy Manor.

Giving a light kick to her hostage, who shot her a look of loathing before complying with her demand that he get up, Fleur cast a spell that would detect any wards nearby. Although the scan yielded no results, the young woman was not deterred.

Choosing a likely direction the Manor could be in, she prodded the pureblood boy into action, causing him to stumble slightly. She had kept his ankles tied in order to hobble him, as well as his wrists.
The young man could only shuffle awkwardly along as he was poked and pushed ahead, mentally cataloguing every detail of his captor so that when he was freed they would be hunted down with ease.

It was just unfortunate for the young Malfoy heir that the face he was seeing was one caused by Polyjuice potion. Little did he know that the unremarkable brown-eyed and brown-haired man that he had been captured by was in fact a beautiful part-Veela woman.

Fleur cast yet another charm to detect any wards, and was rewarded this time when the spell informed her that a large section was a hundred meters ahead of her. Pushing her hostage even harder, eager to reach the Manor, Fleur strained to see any sign of the elusive wards ahead.

Draco was mightily confused.

He hadn't thought his captor was so stupid as to take him back to his home, where his parents would be able to seize him with ease. Why wasn't he demanding a ransom from a safer location? Or maybe, his parents had already agreed to a ransom, and his captor was here to collect it?

He was a fool if he thought his parents would allow him to leave the Manor after kidnapping its heir.

Smug with that knowledge, Draco picked up the pace as much as he could with his fettered ankles, and the duo soon reached the edge of the Malfoy property.

The smugness disappeared all too soon from Draco when his captor pulled a sharp knife from a sheath at his belt and approached him. Squirming away in horror from the man who approached with a determined look on his plain features, Draco could do nothing as his sleeve was torn open and the pale skin of his arm was cut.

Fleur knew she needed the blood of a Malfoy to get into the Manor without permission. The wards would immediately allow she and her hostage entrance once she had provided it. Draco was her key to getting to Harry. The inhabitants of the Manor would not even be alerted to the breach.

Taking the now bloody knife, Fleur approached the wards and held the implement out, allowing a few drops of blood to land on the soil before the property's boundary.

A ripple ran through the wards, before they deactivated.

Quickly cleaning the knife, Fleur placed it back in its sheath before turning to the Malfoy heir and roughly bandaging his small wound. He stared at her with shock in his imperious grey eyes.

Grabbing him by his unhurt arm, she dragged him inside the wards. Immediately the Manor appeared before them, now that they were in the circle of the property boundary.

Fleur ignored the beautiful building and instead hefted her hostage over her shoulder, utilising the strength of the appearance she was wearing. She couldn't have her captive slipping away if she became engaged in a fight.

Although, Fleur was confident that the Dark Lord was not here.

The twin distractions at Diagon Alley and the Ministry would have no doubt summoned the Dark Lord away from the Manor, as well as most of the guards residing here.

With determined strides, Fleur Delacour approached the Manor, and the end of her mission.
For the third time in the past hour, Narcissa's head jerked to the wardrobe sitting innocently in the corner of the guest suite, where she could have sworn a glow had appeared. Glancing carefully over at Harry, who was still deeply asleep, she stepped over to the closet.

In a quick movement she flung open the doors, only to find it filled with clothes she and her husband had provided for their temporary guests. Shaking her head at her own paranoia, Narcissa made to shut the wardrobe.

Suddenly the glow appeared again, filtering from underneath a set of black robes that looked to belong to Harry. Lifting the material, the pureblood woman realised that the light was coming from the robe's pocket.

Had Harry left something in there? If so, what was it?

Reaching into the pocket cautiously, Narcissa brushed something cool and pulled it out. Her breath caught at the beauty of what she had found.

It was a talisman of some sort, shaped like a teardrop and emanating a soft, steady glow. Holding the item close she felt her heart immediately lighten and the stress roll away from her. As a healer, she could also sense the immense potential to cure in the small object.

Struck with an idea, Narcissa quickly shut the wardrobe and brought the talisman over to her unconscious charge, carefully raising Harry so that she could slip the chain around his neck.

As soon as it was settled around his throat, Narcissa knew she had done the right thing. Harry's breathing instantly evened out and his face lost the slightly strained expression it had been wearing. A look of calm settled over him.

Lowering Harry carefully back to the bed, Narcissa then tucked him back in under the covers with a motherly air that came instinctively. Smoothing his hair back from his now peaceful face, Narcissa smiled slightly, relieved that he was showing signs of improvement.

With her back turned to the entrance, distracted as she was by Harry's miraculous progression in health, the pureblood woman did not see the door soundlessly swing open, the wards already dismantled by the blood of the Malfoy heir.

Draco was propped up against the hallway wall, screaming silently behind his magical gag for his mother to turn around, and see the danger that so cowardly crept up behind her. His wound was freshly bleeding from the last nick of his captor's knife.

The back of Narcissa's neck suddenly prickled, and that was the only warning she had before a harsh voice shouted, 'Stupefy!'

With reflexes honed from a childhood of defence, Narcissa dropped and rolled to the side, skilfully pivoting on her foot and taking her wand from its holster.

A man stood in front of her, brown eyes revealing his annoyance at having missed his opportunity to quickly be done with her.

Before she could attack the intruder, he yelled, 'Accio, Draco Malfoy!' and to Narcissa's horror he son was dragged into the room, blood smearing the floor from a wound on his right arm, to be caught in the man's tight grip. A knife was place at his bared throat.

'Release my son,' she hissed in fury, wand trained unwaveringly on her adversary.
'Let me suggest a deal,' the man said with a smirk.

Narcissa felt the hate rise up in her, the Black battle-lust raging within her. This man had taken her son, had harmed him. He would die, screaming.

'Your son, in exchange for Harry Potter.'

Narcissa recoiled at the man's offer. Pouncing on the woman's indecision, the man gave her a cool smile and said reassuringly, 'I have no intention of harming Harry Potter. I simply wish to take him from this place. You son will be returned to you, isn't that what you want?'

Narcissa pretended to be actually considering the man's words, whilst she tried desperately to formulate a plan in her head. The man continued his smooth talking, saying, 'Why should your precious pureblood son have to suffer when all you have to do is hand over one measly Courtesan?'

'You're right,' Narcissa murmured, lowering her wand as though giving up. The man sneered at the pureblood woman's quick defeat, eyes darting to Harry's unconscious body on the bed.

She watched as he flinched in shock at seeing the boy's bare throat, no sign of any Courtesan collar in view.

'What-' he gasped.

Narcissa stared intently at her son who gritted his teeth in determination and flung himself away from his captor, who had allowed his hand holding the knife to relax at the shock of seeing the so-called 'measly Courtesan' with no collar.

With her son safely out of the way, Narcissa pointed her wand directly at the vile man in front her and said clearly, 'Sectumsempra.'

The man screamed in agony as deep cuts flourished all over his body, gushing blood and staining his clothes crimson. It was a useful little spell that Severus had invented while at school, and had shared with her.

Narcissa was unprepared when the man lunged, still heavily bleeding, at Harry.

She cast a quick Stupefy but it just missed the desperate man who clawed at Harry's body, pressing something round and glowing to his chest.

Whilst the talisman had, had a comforting sort of glow, this new object emanated a burning yellow aura that seared Narcissa's retinas and caused her to clench her eyes in pain at the sharp light.

There was a rush of air, before silence reigned and the light faded.

Once Narcissa had blinked the black spots from her vision, she was greeted with the sight of an empty bed.

The intruder had kidnapped Harry.

Chapter End Notes

Author Note: Sorry for leaving it there guys! As for the unicorn talisman, and why
Voldemort didn't know about it and use it, just remember they only shared their memories up until they met each other. He doesn't know it exists.

Harry was still under a Dark influence when he found the diary Horcrux, so don't blame him for doing something to stupid as taking it into his hands, even whilst knowing now exactly what it is.

I am not sure when the next update will come, down here in Australia our holidays are finished. We only get two weeks because it's our Winter break. I don't have another holiday until September, which is our Spring break. So it's back to school for me, which means homework and assignments and exams.

I will try and get a new chapter out to you sometime in the next fortnight, because leaving you on a cliff hanger is awful.

Until then,

Drops of Nightshade x
Chapter Twenty-Eight

Chapter Summary

In the prejudiced world where the Dark Lord won, Harry Potter is part of the servile caste, the lowest caste in the new society. Resigned to a life of servitude as a Courtesan, Harry is instead drawn under the wing of the Dark Lord himself. Between the scheming Order and his powerful benefactor, Harry finds himself steadily drawn deeper into the growing conflict. Eventual LV/HP.

Chapter Notes

Author Note: I apologise for the long wait with this chapter, but I have been incredibly busy with school, and this has been the first opportunity in a very long time for me to sit down and write.

I hope the update makes up for the delay, but I do know there's not very much Voldemort/Harry in this. But it's still important for me to write it. So, bear with me, and hopefully the next chapter will be more exciting!

Please forgive any spelling or grammar mistakes in here :) 

Drops of Nightshade x

Warning: This chapter contains violence that may be distressing to some people. Read at your own discretion.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter Twenty-Eight

Diagon Alley – Ministry of Magic – Order of the Phoenix Headquarters

1996

The bright flash of spells illuminated the cobbled laneways of Diagon Alley, where a vicious battle was being fought between two forces. Sheltered behind a makeshift barricade of rubble and furniture, stabilised with a complex network of enchantments, the Order of the Phoenix members were lurking.

Their hostages; innocent shoppers who had been going about their daily business, were bound and silenced, sitting in the foyer of Flourish and Blotts under guard.

As the Death Eater forces continued their new assault, the Order members guarding the captives exchanged uneasy glances, hands clenched tightly around their wands. If the opposition came any closer, they could be forced to act upon their threat of executing the hostages.
That did not sit right with any of them.

'What's the purpose of this mission anyway? What are we even accomplishing here?' one of the guards muttered mutinously, eyes darting about as though searching for a potential listener who would report on his words.

His friend, a young woman with hazel eyes, glanced his way and responded out of the corner of her mouth, 'Better keep those sort of thoughts to yourself, Jackson. Our superior is looking our way.'

As she spoke, her opinionated friend quickly snapped to attention, straightening his back and making a show of examining the prisoners. Only the slight trembling of his fingers gave away his apprehension at being singled out by their commander, assigned with carrying out the mission here in Diagon Alley.

Whatever that mission actually was.

'Jackson! Peters!' the man suddenly barked out, causing the two guards to flinch in shock and then stiffen immediately. Had their conversation been heard after all?

'Sir?' they inquired cautiously, not daring to look each other's way.

'I need the two of you to check the southern perimeter; one of our detection spells just went off. Nothing serious, probably just an animal, but I need you two to go and investigate. Take Murphy and Ericson with you as well, just in case,' he commanded.

Relieved at not being in trouble for speaking ill of their orders, the two saluted in military fashion and hurried to obey their superior. They found Murphy and Ericson, two male Order members and then made their way through the wreckage lining the street to the southern perimeter, where another barricade protected their forces from the rear. The rubble blocked the entrance from the Leaky Cauldron, preventing enemy access from that point.

Wands held carefully at the ready, the quartet not taking any chances in a battlefield, they progressed toward the southern barricade. Nothing looked out of place, and with a quick wave of her wand, Peters ascertained that none of the enchantments had been meddled with.

Fanning out, eyes vigilantly observing their surroundings, they cast spells of revealing and detection, searching for the cause of the disturbance.

At last, after nothing came from their investigation, Murphy lowered his wand and called out softly to the others, 'Probably was just a rat. Let's head back and-'

His voice was cut off with a gurgle as a sudden line of red blossomed across the pale skin of his neck, residue Dark magic lingering across the fresh wound. In dazed horror, the remaining three Order members watched as their comrade sunk to his knees, blood pouring freely from the gash.

As his companion's corpse crumpled to the ground, Jackson cried out, 'Peric-!' attempting to cast the Periculum charm that would release red sparks into the sky and warn their forces of a new danger. However before he could finish the spell, a band of Dark magic tightened around his throat and continued squeezing until he could no longer draw breath. Sinking to his knees, Jackson clawed at his neck, succeeding in only injuring his own skin with his frantic nails.

Peters and Ericson had reacted defensively when Murphy had fallen, taking shelter behind towers of rubble as they desperately searched for the source of the Dark magic. As Jackson thrashed upon the ground, Peters pointed her wand as calmly as she could and said clearly, 'Anapneo.'
Immediately her friend drew in a few deep lung-fulls of air, nearly sobbing in relief at being able to breathe. He began to scramble toward the nearest mound of debris, limbs clumsy from his lack of oxygen.

Peters cast a look over to Ericson, who was huddling behind his barrier with no intention of engaging their hidden enemy in a fight. Disgust welling in her, for her cowardly fellow member, Peters cast a quick *Protego* around the prone Jackson as he weakly crawled to safety.

It was just in time, as an Entrail-Expelling curse smashed into the erected barrier, causing it to shudder and then flicker out of existence.

Eyes wide in surprise at the strength of the curse, and it's concealed wielder, Peters quickly took the opportunity to shout out, *Periculum!*

Bright red sparks spewed into the sky, signalling that help was needed on the southern perimeter. Unfortunately, it also revealed Peters' location to the enemy, who cast a blasting charm on the tower of rubble shielding her. With a cry of shock, Peters staggered away as her protection turned into an immediate danger, heavy debris raining down, threatening to bury her.

Forced into the open, she spun left and right, attempting to identify the direction that the spells had been coming from.

Meanwhile, Jackson had found sanctuary in the alcove of a shop; bent over and breathing raggedly, he was obviously in no condition to aid Peters in any way. Ericson continued to shiver in fear behind his own shelter. Admittedly, it was the young man's first true battle, but his cowardice was of no use to his comrades.

Peters felt sweat trickle down her neck and she roved her gaze over the rooftops of Diagon Alley, searching for the enemy. They would have had to be incredibly powerful to have broken the charms surrounding their position, without detection. Her own charms had picked up no disturbance.

If only the back up would arrive, then she might just stand a chance and-

Peters knew her life was forfeit the second the cool steel of a knife graced her throat.

'That was rather unkind of you to send up that signal,' a silky voice purred in her ear.

Coarse black hair rubbed against her face, and a distinctly feminine body pressed up against her own.

'Don't play with your prey before you finish them, Bella,' a new voice reprimanded lightly.

The woman, 'Bella', laughed demonically before drawing Peters to her breast and spinning the two of them around. Peters saw two men standing before her now, both dressed in battle robes, their wands held confidently in their hands.

Each were incredibly handsome in their own right, brothers by the look of it.

"Dolphus you never let me have any fun," Bella mourned, the pout evident in her tone.

'Kill her and be done with it,' the same man from before said, a heavy frown on his face.

Bella sighed in disappointment before whispering in Peters' ear, 'Don't worry sweetheart, I'll make sure to have extra fun with your friends later on, yes?'

Peters trembled with rage and fear, hazel eyes glaring bravely at the two men staring back at her so
composedly. The blade ran teasingly across her throat, and Peters involuntarily let forth a strangled whimper.

'Bella,' the other man said this time, his voice sharp and impatient.

Before the sadistic woman could finish what she had started, at long last the Order forces arrived, quickly taking in the scene and aiming their wands at the trio who had her captive.

'Release her now, and drop your wands and other weapons. You are outnumbered,' the man in charge said commandingly.

Bella threw back her head and laughed, the sound of it causing shudders to ripple through the ranks of Order members. The two brothers relocated to her side, watched cautiously by their opponents, whose wands followed their steady movement.

'Why would I do that? We were having fun, weren't we sweetheart?' Bella asked, stroking a hand down the side of Peters' face and leaving a cold trail in its wake. Peters' skin was left crawling at the action.

'Get your hands off me,' Peters snarled, gathering her courage.

Bella seemed startled for a moment at the other woman's audacity before turning her so that Peters was facing her captor at long last.

The Order member took in the thick, wild black hair and the heavy dark eyes that flickered with sadistic amusement.

'The rose has thorns, how could I forget?' Bella murmured, terrifying eyes fixed on Peters' own with cold intensity.

'I will ask you one more time to release her,' the commander snapped, furious at being ignored and laughed at.

'Do what you will,' one of the brothers said calmly, face free of anxiety or fear.

Red in the face, the commander cried out, 'Take them down!'

Abruptly there was a tearing sound, as though a veil was being cast aside, and dozens of Death Eater troops poured forth from their hiding. They had been painstakingly concealed along the sides of the Alley, hidden under complex layers of enchantments, smuggled in with the powerful combined magic of their leaders.

In one organised wave they began attacking the stunned Order members, cutting down swathes of them before the others finally reacted.

Peters found herself looking into the eyes of her captor once more, who was ignoring the battle occurring around them. Bella stroked the skin of Peters' neck with the dagger and said in resignation, 'I would have loved to have had the chance to play with you some more.'

With a disappointed shrug of acceptance, the witch readjusted her knife and made to deliver a quick killing blow to Peters' defenceless neck.

Except as the blade came swiftly down, and Peters closed her eyes, there was a sudden shift in the atmosphere as though something powerful was humming into life.
Bellatrix Lestrange found her knife slicing into empty air.

Death Eaters all around her gaped in bewilderment at the empty battlefield, now absent of their opponents.

The Order had disappeared.

Lord Voldemort had found the wards erected around the Ministry compound impressive, but of no match to the strength of his magic. Drawing on he and Harry's shared magical core, he had not felt the drain as the wards had come tumbling down.

Death Eater forces had rushed in to aid the men and women fighting the insurrectionists inside, and the Dark Lord had calmly approached the battle being fought in the foyer, blasting aside anyone foolish enough to impede his path.

As he had calmly glided into the centre of the battle, silence had fallen at the appearance of the ruler of Britain's magical community. With the simplest wave of a hand he had, had the Order rebels bound and on their knees.

The battle for the Ministry was over.

Awed and frightened, the Order members had stayed where they had been forced, not fighting their bonds or making any attempts to escape.

That was where the Dark Lord found himself now, with a sneer lingering across his lips at the cowed appearance of his enemies. They had put up pathetic resistance to him.

It was disappointing, to say the least.

His own forces were reverential about his power, exchanging awed whispers as they went about their business in clearing the foyer and transporting the wounded Ministry officials to St. Mungo's for treatment.

Lucius Malfoy and Severus Snape watched their Lord with respect in their eyes, as well as a healthy dose of concern. Was it normal for one person to have so much raw power?

Unlike his friend Severus, Lucius knew of the core bonding ceremony his Lord had undertaken with the young ex-Courtesan, Harry Potter. He had known the boy had some degree of power, but enough to have amplified the Dark Lord's power to such heights…it was incredible.

'Lucius,' Lord Voldemort called softly, instantly summoning his Inner Circle Death Eater to his side.

'Yes, my Lord?' he asked respectfully.

'I want these rebels transported to Azkaban. Organise to have them tortured for information; any details discovered are to be reported to me immediately'.

The Order members closest to the pair paled dramatically at the mention of Azkaban and torture, horror evident in their eyes. Lucius felt a flicker of scorn for them, to allow their emotions to show so boldly on their faces.

They would not last long at the hands of the Dark Lord's torturers.

'Very well, my Lord, it shall be done.'
With an imperious click of his fingers, the pureblood summoned a house-elf from his Manor to his side in order to have a message quickly transported to the warden of Azkaban.

However, when the creature arrived, it was apparent it would be sending no message.

The small thing was quite dead.

Lucius stared in confusion and anger at the dead creature lying on the floor of the Ministry foyer, grey eyes coolly taking in the cutting hex, which had slit its throat with deadly precision.

'What is the meaning of this, Lucius?' the Dark Lord inquired coldly.

'There is an intruder at the Manor,' he said as steadily as he could. There was no other way the creature could have been slain.

'Harry,' came the whisper, so quiet that only Lucius was able to hear it breathed.

Suddenly there was a powerful hum in the air, and a magic painfully familiar to the Dark Lord soon pervaded his senses.

'Dumbledore,' he snarled, recognising the taste of the magic. The man was long dead, destroyed by his own hand, but this was residue of his power, perhaps a spell that had been lying in wait to be activated.

Before he could do anything to prevent it, the bound Order members disappeared as though they had never been there, their faces alight with victory and relief as they were rescued.

Even in death, the old fool continued to outmanoeuvre him.

Without waiting to see the repercussions of the Order's abrupt exit, the Dark Lord Apparated to Malfoy Manor, noting that the wards around the property had been disabled.

His magic lashing around him in fury, Lord Voldemort arrived in the guest room he had left his lover in.

He found Narcissa Malfoy on the floor beside her son, who was lying there fainted through blood loss, the crimson liquid staining his shirt. The pureblood woman stiffened at her Lord's presence, slowly raising her blue eyes to see burning red drilling holes into her.

The bed lay incriminatingly empty.

'Where is he?' the Dark Lord snarled, rage causing his agitated magic to peel strips of paint off the walls.

'He has been kidnapped,' Narcissa Malfoy stated clearly, her eyes filled with self-hatred and defeat.

'You failed me, Narcissa,' Lord Voldemort murmured dangerously.

The pureblood woman gently stroked her son's cheek, before rising to a standing position. Her dress was stained with Draco's blood.

'I did,' she agreed, even as she stubbornly locked her knees to stop their violent shaking.

'You know the punishment for a failure such as this,' the Dark Lord hissed, almost slipping into Parseltongue.
The proud woman raised her chin and said bravely, 'I will accept any punishment you deem fit, my Lord. I failed you. If you must take my life to right this wrong, then do so.'

Silence reigned between them.

'Very well...I have decided your punishment,' the Dark Lord said at last, crimson eyes watching the beautiful pureblood aristocrat.

Narcissa tilted her head, waiting for the death sentence that was surely to come. What would Lucius do when he discovered her body here? Would he retaliate against their Lord? And what of her son, her Draco? What would become of him without his mother to guide him?

'You shall retrieve Harry Potter.'

Narcissa froze at those words, incredulous blue eyes rising to meet her Lord's.

'Only once he is safely with me once more, will your failure be forgiven Narcissa Malfoy.'

Relief and renewed determination filled the woman at that. She had been given a second chance.

Seeing the purpose and willpower in his follower's eyes, Lord Voldemort felt satisfaction that this woman would stop at nothing to retrieve his lover from the Order's grasp.

'I will not fail you again, my Lord,' Narcissa promised with steely surety.

'See that you do not.'

Apparating from the room, the Dark Lord arrived in his private chambers in the Citadel.

With a shout of complete and utter fury he unleashed his magic that he had been restraining upon the room, feeling his Dark magic channel his ferocious wrath. The walls peeled, glass shattered, wood splintered, fabric tore and the very stones in the foundations rattled at his ire.

The Order had taken his lover, his bond-mate, his future Consort.

They would die for this.

And already, the Dark Lord could feel a slight pain growing in his chest, radiating through his body and causing him discomfort.

The effects of the separation between he and his bonded were just beginning…

Hermione Jane Granger landed awkwardly on hard marble, the Order medallion in her hand beginning to cool down as the spell that she had activated settled down.

Ginny was on the floor next to her, groaning as she gingerly rubbed her stomach, ill at ease from her first Portkey travelling experience.

Hermione noted the other people present with them in the large chamber; some still arriving in flashes of light, and others already starting to move about, finding people and crying with joy as they were reunited with loved ones.

Her quick cinnamon brown eyes scouted the foyer for any sign of the Weasley clan, but they had not yet arrived.
It was all so surreal, sitting here surrounded by so many strange faces, in what looked like the foyer of an opulent manor. The weight of the gold Birther collar around her neck was a reminder of where she had come from, but she was undoubtedly free. The Order had rescued she and her foster sister.

Thinking of family led her to thoughts of Harry, her beloved foster brother whom she had not seen in years. He had sent her an incredible letter a few days before, claiming that the Dark Lord had freed him, and that he was going to free their whole family from servitude as soon as he possibly could.

Hermione had barely believed the words written before her; it was incomprehensible that Lord Voldemort would do such a kindness to one of their caste.

But she had been confident in the knowledge that regardless of whether it was true or not, Harry would be rescued soon. That's what Tonks had told she and Ginny a while ago, when the woman had reminded them to say the code word, 'Sanctuary' when their medallions heated up. That had activated the spell on the coins, which in turn had turned them into Portkeys for she and her foster sister.

Laughter and crying echoed through the foyer as people continued to discover friends and family members for the first time in years. Seeing them reunite caused an ache to form in Hermione's chest. She would give anything to see Harry right now.

'-Potter is yet to awaken…'

Hermione's head snapped around to locate the voice, spotting two men walking together not too far from her. Lurching to her feet, ignoring Ginny's bewilderment, Hermione quickly hurried after the two males who were about to leave the foyer.

'Wait!' she cried, causing the two of them to look over toward her.

One was tall and dark-skinned, his face regal and kindly as he looked down on her. The other was far less pleasant; his features craggy and rough, one eye an electric blue prosthetic that made Hermione feel distinctly uncomfortable.

'Yes?' the intimidating man asked sharply, causing Hermione to flinch at his tone.

Giving a reprimanding glare to his companion, the dark-skinned man smiled at her and asked in a deep, melodious voice, 'What can we do for you, young lady?'

Looking at the two men steadily, Hermione said, 'I heard you mention the name Potter. You wouldn't be referring to Harry Potter would you be?'

It was as though she had said something taboo; the two men stiffened and even the kindly one gave her an assessing once-over, as though she could be a spy in disguise.

'What is Harry Potter to you?' the rougher man all but snarled, fake eye fixed unerringly on the teenager.

'He's my foster brother. We grew up together. If he's here somewhere, could you take me to him? I just want to make sure he's all right,' Hermione pleaded, suddenly desperate to see Harry, to have visible confirmation that he had been rescued.

The harsher man angrily opened his mouth, no doubt to contest her claims, when the other one laid a placating hand on his companion's arm. 'You grew up with the Weasley's?' he asked gently.

'Yes, I did,' Hermione affirmed.
'I don't see-'

'Alastor,' the dark-skinned man said warningly.

With a growl of frustration, muttering something about a 'security disaster,' he pulled out his wand and cast a few spells over Hermione, checking for anything dangerous or potentially harmful on her. When it came up negative, he grunted and said grudgingly to his taller companion, 'She's clean.'

'Then there is no issue with her being allowed to see her foster brother,' the man said with a charming smile in Hermione's direction.

Giving a tentative one in return, Hermione ignored the grumbling from 'Alastor' and followed the more amiable man, leaving the craggy faced male behind, his blue eye fixed on her back.

'My name is Kingsley Shacklebolt,' the man introduced himself, offering another smile over his shoulder at Hermione.

'I am Hermione Granger,' the teenager offered a little shyly, overwhelmed at being here, in this new place with so many different faces.

Shacklebolt took her down a few corridors before he stopped in front of a plain wooden door, opened the knob and ushered her inside. Hermione stepped into the room and her gaze was immediately drawn to the figure lying asleep on the four-poster bed in the middle of the room.

With a soft cry of joy, Hermione rushed to her foster-brother's side, careful not to wake him despite her desire to hug him close. Sitting in the chair placed by the bed, Hermione scooted forward as much as possible and took one of Harry's hands in her own. She frowned slightly at the feeling of the clammy appendage, before gently rubbing it in her own warm ones to encourage life into it.

'What's wrong with him?' she asked worriedly, as Harry remained unresponsive on the bed, only the steady rise and fall of his chest evidence that he was alive.

'We have reason to believe that a Dark spell was cast on him by Voldemort or one of his followers,' Shacklebolt answered gravely. When Hermione blanched in concern for her foster-brother, the dark-skinned man said soothingly, 'We have our finest healers and researchers looking for the counter-spell. Until then, he will sleep.'

They both gazed at the beautiful boy lying prone on the bed, his raven hair fanning about his face. There was a slight discomfort on his face, as though something within him was in pain.

Hermione stroked his hand in her own, feeling helplessness rise up within her.

There was nothing that she could do for her foster-brother except hope that he would awaken.

Unbeknownst to the two people in the room, a certain snake lay shrunken and concealed behind complicated Dark magic, lurking beneath the bed. Nagini had been placed in Harry's pocket by her master, who had instructed her to guard him while he was gone.

She had been unable to prevent the hatchling from being taken, but as long as she was by his side, he would be safe from harm.

It had been close when one of the healers undressed her master's mate in order to search for detection devices, Nagini having had to slither abruptly out of the way and beneath the bed to avoid being uncovered.
But she knew it was going to be worth the discomfit in the end, when her master and his beloved mate were together once more. When the time came, she would gladly bite everyone in this place and kill them for taking her master's treasure.

She just needed to be patient, and lie in wait.

Chapter End Notes

Author note: If you have any questions/queries/concerns about this chapter, please do write a review. You know the drill :)

Sorry for the OC's in this chapter. I don't really like OC's, but there is a distinct lack of characters I can draw from to be in the Order.

As for when the next update will come, I have no idea unfortunately. I will write when I can, but don't be expecting a chapter in less than two weeks. I am super busy :( 

Sorry again,

Drops of Nightshade x
Chapter Twenty-Nine

Chapter Summary

In the prejudiced world where the Dark Lord won, Harry Potter is part of the servile caste, the lowest caste in the new society. Resigned to a life of servitude as a Courtesan, Harry is instead drawn under the wing of the Dark Lord himself. Between the scheming Order and his powerful benefactor, Harry finds himself steadily drawn deeper into the growing conflict. Eventual LV/HP.

Chapter Notes

Author Note: Forgive the delay (yet again); I did say in the previous update that I would struggle to adhere to the two-week target. I've been completely overwhelmed with work.

The good news is that my school term is coming to an end, and my spring break is on the horizon (I live in Australia so it's spring over here.) I should be able to update in a more regular fashion soon!

Anyway, I hope you enjoy the chapter!

Drops of Nightshade x

PS: Please point out any obvious grammar mistakes, and I will be quick to edit them. I was rushed to get this out to you all!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Chapter Twenty-Nine

Order of the Phoenix Headquarters – Lestrange Residence – Malfoy Manor

1996

Three days passed with no change in Harry's condition.

Hermione spent almost every waking moment at his bedside, only taking breaks to visit the bathroom or snatch a few hours of sleep in the room she was given.

Mrs Weasley, who had arrived with the rest of the extended Weasley clan a few hours after Ginny and Hermione had, fretted both over her unconscious foster son and her stubborn foster daughter, who refused to relent and leave Harry's side, if only to care for her own basic needs.

For Hermione, the utter joy of being reunited with her family was diluted with the knowledge of Harry lying in the throes of some Dark curse. Not even having her Birther collar removed, through a complicated spell, could lift her spirits.
She sat in the same chair she had claimed when she had first entered her foster brother's room, fingers absently stroking the new bare skin of neck as her sharp cinnamon brown eyes focused on the still figure lying on the bed.

Harry's own neck was bare, a fact that Hermione had noted with awe and a good deal of confusion after the initial panic of seeing her foster brother in such a bad condition. Lord Voldemort really had released Harry from his contract. The implications of this unsettled Hermione; for they challenged the image she had built up of the monster who had created the servile laws. Why had he released Harry?

Her foster brother had been so vague on the details when he had sent her the short missive, outlying the Dark Lord's apparent plan for him, and Hermione had barely dared believe it. But with this undeniable truth before her, Hermione decided to reserve her judgement until Harry finally woke up and could explain everything to her in person.

For the past three days, various healers had come and gone, none of them remotely successful in their attempts to cure Harry of whatever was ailing him. Her foster brother's condition had steadily deteriorated, the light of every new day revealing yet another decline in health. Harry's room had become a still tomb of silence, broken only by the sound of his laboured breathing and the hushed whispers of the Order members who came to peer into the room, hoping for some sign that Harry was improving.

Occasionally one of the Weasley's would make an appearance, engaging her in stilted conversation before leaving again. She had heard the tale of their escape from Hogwarts, how Nymphadora Tonks, disguised as Draco Malfoy, had escorted them in small groups to the edge of the wards. There they had easily slipped out and allowed the Order medallions to Portkey them away.

When Hermione had inquired about what had happened to Tonks, who could surely not keep up the ruse of being Draco Malfoy for much longer, she had been concerned when no answer could be provided. Judging by the grim looks on the Order's faces, they truly did not know what would become of the foolishly brave Metamorphmagus. There was hope that she could blend back into her position, with her suspicious and coincidental absence being unnoticed, but Hermione feared the kind woman would not be so lucky.

Then there was Lavender.

It was fortunate that an Order medallion had been smuggled into the teenager's possession, but the emotional and mental damage of having been used for sex had harmed the bright girl, had tarnished her perhaps irreversibly.

Almost every night, she crept into Ginny's room and slept beside the familiar warmth of her foster sister, unwilling to face the night alone. Ginny had offered numerous times to have another bed moved into her room for Lavender to use, but the other girl still clung to a few shreds of dignity and pride.

It crushed Hermione, and the entire Weasley clan, to see how destructive the system was first-hand, evident through the haunted and sleep-deprived eyes of Lavender Brown.

Seeing the lingering fear in her foster-sister's eyes, knowing that not all Courtesans, or Birthers for that matter, were fortunate to have a fair contractor, cut Hermione deeply. This was the fate she and Ginny had escaped, the fate that Harry had suffered.

But she could not label Harry as a victim.

Through all the letters they had passed to one another, she had never once sensed a cry for help in his
words, had not detected fear or suffering from the tone of his writing. Harry always wrote in a contented fashion, sharing with Hermione the events of his past week, the books he had read or the humorous occurrences that had happened.

How was Harry so happy, so pleased with his lot in life? Hermione was gladdened that her foster brother had, had an experience free from suffering, but why was that so?

Even if he had been masking said negative emotions, Hermione knew her foster brother well enough to be able to read between the lines and realise he was in distress.

Which led her back to the ultimate question; why had Lord Voldemort released Harry?

Groaning at the mental strain of too much complicated thinking with so little sleep to supply her, Hermione buried her face in her hands and took a few deep and calming breaths. Lifting her head once more, and smoothing her slightly greasy hair back from her face, she whispered tiredly, 'Wake up Harry. I have so many questions for you to answer.'

But Harry did not wake up.

And Hermione's questions remained unanswered.

Remus Lupin sat in one of the many studies in the French chateau the Order had made their headquarters, fingers toying with the beautiful talisman wrapped gently around his wrist.

When the healers had undressed Harry to check for wounds to treat, they had discovered this glowing amulet around his neck. Whilst it had not reacted to a Dark detection spell, and the healers had expressed an interest in keeping it around Harry's neck, Moody had had the final say in the matter. He ordered the talisman, along with any other material Harry possessed at the time, to be disposed of lest the Dark Lord somehow find a way to infiltrate the headquarters through a cursed object.

Remus, whom had been present at the time, had been given the talisman to destroy, on Moody's orders. However the werewolf could not and would not bring himself to dispose of the beautiful amulet, which was clearly harmless. The wolf within him, the creature he had accepted a long time ago when he had stopped taking the Wolfsbane potion, was inherently a being of the forest. This talisman reeked of woodland magic, and something so pure and powerful that Remus' inner wolf snarled at the very thought of harming the talisman.

No, Remus very much so wanted to give the amulet back to his best friend's son, to place it around Harry's neck where he sensed it truly belonged. However that would be directly disobeying his superior's orders.

Thus, he was torn.

Hearing approaching footsteps, his enhanced hearing from his werewolf blood picking up the faint tap against smooth hardwood floor, Remus tugged his robes down over the talisman, hiding it from view. Quickly picking up a book, he adopted a pose of nonchalance as the footsteps drew nearer and slowed down when they reached the door to the study he was sitting in.

There was a gentle rap on the door to which Remus responded with, 'Come in.'

He was relieved to see Kingsley Shacklebolt enter the study, and not Alastor Moody, whose magical eye would no doubt pick up on Remus' attempt at hiding the amulet that he had been instructed to destroy.
Kinsley looked exhausted, his forehead furrowed with lines caused by stress and his eyes bloodshot. Remus could emphasise with the man's current plight; he too was suffering from insomnia and a good deal of anxiety for Harry's wellbeing.

However Kingsley's fatigued state was more attributed to the long process of sorting through the evacuees from Britain, organising accommodation and providing counselling and treatment to those who needed it. There was also the matter of the agents left in Britain, namely Sirius Black and Nymphadora Tonks, both in rather precarious positions.

Being the Order's link to the French Ministry and international politics, Kingsley was under a huge amount of strain. Lord Voldemort had wasted no time in demanding that the French Ministry take action against the Order insurgents, whom had not only illegally kidnapped his people but also openly attacked he and his forces.

There was great debate occurring in the Ministry over whether they should continue to provide asylum for the Order of the Phoenix, or give them up to appease the Dark Lord. No threats had yet been issued to France and its magical community regarding their position, but they would inevitably come should the Ministry continue to remain obstinate about sheltering the Order and their escapees.

'How is Miss Delacour?' Remus asked before his friend and leader could speak. The werewolf had been in the foyer of the chateau when a Polyjuiced Fleur Delacour had landed on the hard marble, Harry unconscious and pressed to her side.

There had been so much blood; for a second Remus' inner wolf had sunken into a blind rage thinking that the blood was Harry's. He had subconsciously accepted baby Harry as part of his pack, the pack that was not his family by blood, but were his family and loved ones nonetheless. To see that crimson liquid staining the foyer, to see Harry lying prone, caused Remus to have a moment of collapse in his usually steely control.

It had taken a swift and precise stunner from Minerva, whom had later profusely apologised, to contain him before he leaped to conclusions. When it became clear that it was Fleur that was the source of the huge blood loss, she had been whisked away to the small emergency ward that was in the headquarters, kept in handy if missions went awry. Last Remus had heard, she was in a critical condition, but was still alive and breathing.

Kingsley looked like he wanted to change the subject to what he had come to speak about, before sighing and admitting, 'She's stable currently. The healers say she briefly regained consciousness, but didn't say anything before slipping back into sleep. There is hope for a full recovery, however we are not confident in that assessment.'

Nodding in relief at hearing the young woman had a strong chance of survival from the Dark spell that had created multiple life-threatening gashes on her body; Remus became alert as Kingsley readied himself for what he had originally come to say before Remus had side-tracked him.

Judging by the tightening of the man's mouth, it wasn't good news.

'I've just returned from the French Ministry, and they have deemed to inform me of a current development in the negotiations with Britain.' Kingsley spoke with a hint of venom in his voice, uncharacteristic of the smooth-talking man.

Remus stiffened slightly, not liking where this was going. If France revoked its protection from them...

'The French Minister for Magic, Valcroix, has agreed to host a delegation from Britain, in order to
discuss the situation and reach a decision on what is to be done.'

Remus calmed slightly and said, 'He had no choice but to agree to this negotiation Kingsley, lest he face a declaration of war from the Dark Lord. Valcroix is good at what he does, he will have those diplomats dancing around him for months before the topic of our Order is even breached.'

Despite Remus' words of confidence, Kingsley's jaw clenched and he admitted, 'I too, reached that logical conclusion. Until that point I had full confidence in Valcroix and his advisers to keep the visiting dignitaries on their toes. Today, however, I was informed of who exactly was coming to France to negotiate an agreement.'

Remus froze and looked carefully at Kingsley, who was unable to hide the faint aura of fear from the werewolf.

'No,' Remus choked as his mind flashed to the one person that could make the great Kingsley Shacklebolt feel a flicker of fear.

'The Dark Lord himself has announced he will be attending the negotiations.'

Remus pushed away the panic that clamoured in his chest, thinking immediately of Harry still lying unconscious and steadily deteriorating. 'How soon will he be here?'

'No later than a week from today.'

The two men gave each other a look, both thinking and knowing the same thing.

They didn't have enough time.

Rabastan Lestrange considered himself to be a ruthless man at times, but it was necessary being one of the Dark Lord's Inner Circle. He had, had his share of fighting and blood-shedding, not always in the heat of battle.

But as he held a wand to the head of Nymphadora Tonks, the mother of his children, his companion for more than a decade, he felt only sadness.

When the Dark Lord had assigned him the mission of tracking down the persons involved in the kidnap and harm of Draco Malfoy, he had been determined to succeed for his Lord at any cost. In his current foul mood, the Dark Lord was liable to lose control of his impressive power and kill the next person who displeased him in any way.

Most of the Death Eaters and their Reaper subordinates blamed the terrifying mood on the obvious escape of the Order and a large number of the servile caste. Only those close to Lord Voldemort knew the true reason driving him into a rage was the kidnapping of one Harry James Potter.

His ex-Courtesan.

Rabastan had discovered that fact before Harry was taken, and had been both shocked and strangely pleased that the beautiful and powerful young man would be free to an extent, to do as he desired and enjoy having full rights.

So Rabastan had thrown himself into the investigation, knowing that it was clear that someone had been impersonating Draco at Hogwarts. When Rabastan had arrived with armed forces, the imposter was already long gone.
But he had been assigned this mission for a reason.

Rabastan was not only well versed in the art of Duelling, but of Tracking also. His Lord had used him on numerous occasions to hunt down and eliminate various undesirables. He had never failed to find his prey in a hunt.

It was no surprise therefore that he had quickly picked up on the different magical signature to the students and teachers of Hogwarts. His job was made easier because he taught at Hogwarts and was familiar with the many flavours of magic that pervaded the castle walls.

When he had correctly read the magical signature, Rabastan had been filled with a mixture of fury, betrayal and sadness. For the identity of the imposter was undoubtedly his retired Birther, Nymphadora. With her unique ability she was ideal for a task such as that. At this point he had dismissed the forces aiding him and had continued in pursuit of the wayward woman alone.

Nymphadora had returned to the townhouse she lived in with their two youngest, Theodore and Andromeda, settling back into her routine.

When Rabastan arrived, he dismissed the one Menial woman on duty, which was not entirely irregular. Sometimes when he visited, he preferred to be alone with his children and Nymphadora.

The minute he stepped into the nursery where Nymphadora was sitting in a rocking chair, gently singing Andromeda to sleep, the woman's head raised and she locked eyes with him.

She knew.

As her lullaby faded away, Nymphadora gently rose, careful not to disturb the sleeping babe in her arms, before taking her daughter to the crib in the corner of the room and placing her within.

She slowly turned and faced Rabastan who carefully raised his wand to point it at her head, his face unreadable.

'Please, don't do this here,' Nymphadora murmured so as not to wake their child.

Nodding his assent, Rabastan gestured for his ex-Birther to go first so he could keep his wand trained on her.

Once they had left the nursery he directed her towards the music room, which was across the hall. He couldn't help but notice Nymphadora was shaking very slightly, and yet she kept her chin held high. She wasn't repentant of what she had done.

Rabastan allowed this thought to steel him as he took aim of his companion's head, the Killing Curse ready to leave his lips. He would give her this clean death, far better than what she would receive at the hands of the Dark Lord's torturers.

Then, he hesitated.

Nymphadora was staring at him with a terrible calmness. Her hair was a bright bubble-gum pink as ever, almost defiant of what was to come, but her usually violet eyes revealed her fear in their dull grey sheen.

What would he tell the children? How was he to explain to Calix, to Theodore? To his precious Andromeda when she grew up and asked where her mother was?

'Take care of our children,' Nymphadora said gently.
It was as though she had read his thoughts. Then again, he had always been an open book to her.

'I will.'

There was nothing more to be said. Neither would apologise for what they had done and for what they still had to do.

It was time.

'Mummy? Daddy?' a small, confused voice cut through the tension.

Rabastan stilled like he had been turned to stone. Nymphadora's eyes filled with tears and she looked imploringly to Rabastan. The message was clear; take him away, don't let him see this.

Theodore stood uncertainly in the doorway to the music room, a stuffed toy dragon in his fist. His appearance had changed to reflect his apprehension, his hair a dull brown and his eyes dark black.

And suddenly Rabastan couldn't do it.

Nymphadora watched as her ex-contractor tucked his wand away and bent down so his son could run into his arms. Theodore's hair and eyes gradually lightened as his father hugged him, assuring the young boy that everything was alright.

Picking the boy up and placing him on his hip, Rabastan turned to face Nymphadora and said clearly and firmly, 'You are going to leave Britain. Contact your people and have them arrange some means for you to get to safety.'

'No,' Nymphadora said straight away, face set in a familiar stubbornness.

Rabastan glared at his obstinate ex-Birther and said coolly so as not to frighten his son in his arms, watching their conversation with wide eyes, 'I am offering you a chance to escape.'

'And I am not taking it. I will not be separated from my children.'

Nymphadora's eyes were blazing with a mother's protectiveness for her offspring, her eyes turning into a steel gunmetal colour to show her unwavering stance on the matter.

'You can't make mummy leave!' Theodore cried, catching onto the drift of the conversation. He clutched his father's robes in his fists and pinned the man with deep, sad, blue eyes.

There is one thing that can be confirmed about Rabastan Lestrange, Inner Circle Death Eater.

His one weakness was his children.

Glancing over to Nymphadora he said reluctantly, 'I am willing to compromise.'

The he began to reveal his plan.

This way, he would not be betraying his Lord, nor would he be depriving his children of their mother. He had to hope that his scheme did not fail, because then it would not only be Nymphadora's head on the line.

Narcissa stood in the foyer of Malfoy Manor, her luggage stacked neatly and prepared for her departure to France. It was merely a screen for her true mission, but she had to make it appear authentic.
It had been difficult organising an international Portkey to France, considering the tense situation between the country and Britain, however Narcissa was nothing if not the Lady Malfoy. She had many friends, in many places.

Thus, she was in possession of a means to get swiftly to France. Her alibi for visiting the country was in order to visit her old friend Lady Angeline Beaumont, whose daughter had recently become engaged and was celebrating with a long line-up of festivities at the family manor. It provided the perfect excuse for such an impromptu visit, and it was fortunate that the Lady Beaumont and her circle were staunch supporters of the Dark Lord and his aims and were prepared to help in any way possible.

Narcissa had been unsurprised when her Lord had informed her that whilst she would lead the actual retrieval of Harry Potter, he would also be present in France. The Dark Lord planned to disband all negotiations with France when Harry was confirmed to be safely out of the Order's clutches.

The Dark Lord's presence would hopefully draw the Order's attention away from the Lady Malfoy, giving her greater flexibility to scheme and develop ways to rescue Harry. They would attack on two fronts; the Dark Lord distracting the French Ministry and attract the Order's full notice whilst Narcissa would launch a covert campaign to retrieve Harry.

She knew that the Dark Lord had many plans set in place should one fail, and was confident should anything go wrong, another strategy could be undertaken.

Feeling arms wrap around her, and the comforting scent of Lucius' cologne brushing her senses, Narcissa relaxed into her husband's embrace and allowed him to take this reassurance in the privacy of their home. He was concerned for her safety and resentful of his Lord for asking this mission of his wife, despite knowing Narcissa was extremely fortunate to have been spared a far greater punishment. Furthermore, he was not to be accompanying his Lord to France, meaning there was no way he could be there for Narcissa if she encountered trouble.

'Remember, the Dark Lord needs you here in Britain managing his affairs and cleaning up after the Order debacle,' Narcissa reminded him for good measure, leaning her head back against his shoulder and closing her eyes.

'I am well aware, my dear. It does not mean I will loathe being separated from you any less.'

Silence fell between them, as they each took and offered comfort in return. Narcissa broke the easy stillness of the moment by asking, 'How is our Lord faring?'

Her husband knew instantly from the tone of her voice that Narcissa was not referring to the Dark Lord's violent moods nor his burning rage. They were currently the only two followers of their Lord who knew of his magical bonding with Harry Potter, and the subsequent consequences of the two being separated.

It had been three days, and whilst their Lord kept his façade in place, his Inner Circle could tell there was something terribly wrong. Yet it was Narcissa and Lucius who knew the true cause of his unsettled magic and at-times pained demeanour.

Newly bonded such as their Lord and Harry Potter had to be in each other's presence for a month after the ceremony, lest their shared magical core break down and deteriorate entirely. A life as a squib, or even death awaited the two should they not come into contact with one another soon.

Due to the sheer power of the Dark Lord and his ex-Courtesan, they still had a couple of weeks before the damage in their magic was past the point of recovery. Thus, the Dark Lord was making
his visit to France in a week’s time, the earliest such a trip could be made. It would ease the pain by being in the same country; perhaps give them both more time before it was too late.

Not for the first time, did Narcissa wonder why her Lord decided to bond with his ex-Courtesan. Yes, Harry was undoubtedly a strong wizard, with some unique abilities, but that did not justify the Dark Lord placing his own continued survival in the hands of fate. There was always a chance of something separating the two, or of Harry being killed. And it had happened; Harry was now a country’s distance away and in the hands of their sworn enemy. Furthermore, he had been ill to begin with, his body and mind fighting off some unknown affliction that Narcissa had been unable to treat. She was not an arrogant woman, but Narcissa knew her own capabilities in the healing arts. If she was unable to aid Harry, then she highly doubted anyone the Order could produce would be able to help Harry either. She could only hope they had left the talisman in place, which had been doing more good than Narcissa was able to do.

‘He is as strong in appearance as ever. But…the cracks are beginning to become apparent, especially to Severus and Bellatrix.’

Lucius seemed troubled regarding his best friend and his sister-in-law, who were both brilliantly talented people. If they started digging too deep, they might discover the truth, as far-fetched as it seemed. Lucius did not want to consider how the Dark Lord would react in his current foul state, should two of his closest and most loyal followers decide to delve into his business behind his back, despite their good intentions.

‘Lucius you must keep them from the truth as best as possible,’ Narcissa told him urgently, turning around so she could look her husband in the eye.

‘Of course. They will know in good time, when our Lord is ready for them to have the truth.’

Relaxing at her husband’s confident assurance, Narcissa peeled away in order to say one last goodbye to her son. Draco was staying in his bed at the Malfoy Manor under his mother's strict instruction, until he was completely healed from his ordeal. He would be returning to Hogwarts on Monday in order to resume his classes, despite Narcissa's protective instincts screaming at her to keep him hidden away within the walls of their mansion. Then again, the Manor's wards had done little good when their unknown assailant had come in and kidnapped Harry.

Knowing her lips had adopted a strained twist at the reminder of her failure, Narcissa nevertheless faced her husband and said determinedly, 'I am not going to fail this time.'

Lucius’ face softened slightly and he reached over to stroke his wife's cheek with a gentleness that was never seen outside of the privacy of their small family.

'I know you will not.'

Harry was in the dark.

His oppressive black surroundings pressed against his heart and mind, attempting to trickle through his defences and taint him irreversibly. Some instinctive part of Harry was all that kept him fighting against the black ocean of power that smothered and restrained him.

But he was so tired.

It was tempting to allow the darkness to crash over him, to release his grip on his defences and disappear into sweet nothingness. But he refused to give himself up, to relinquish his mind and body to the darkness. Still Harry Potter fought.
There had been a time of grey, when the blackness had retreated from him and given him opportunity to rest and breath. He had been supported gently in the lightening miasma, his defences built up and fortified from the occasional black tendrils that reached for him.

Then the black had returned with a vengeance, and Harry knew that something had changed, for the darkness was all the worse. There was now a hole in his very being, a horrific gap that allowed the shadows to tighten over him all the more. Something important had been separated from him, and he knew it was not just the object that had protected him from the darkness in the time of grey.

Alone, desperate and exhausted Harry Potter remained locked in a battle with the shadows.

Standing over his best friend's son, his pack member and loved one, Remus came to a decision.

Hermione Granger, Harry's foster sister, was asleep in the chair beside the bed, the poor child finally allowing herself a rest from her watchful overseeing.

It was fortunate then, that Remus would have no one asking him questions about what he was about to do. He had reached this decision after his talk with Kingsley, realising with the Dark Lord on his way, Harry needed to reach his full strength by any means possible.

Gently unwinding the talisman from his wrist, Remus lifted Harry's head from the pillow beneath him in order to get the chain of the amulet around his neck. Feeling the slightly sweat-matted hair, and the clammy skin, Remus reminded himself of what was at stake should this go wrong.

Carefully, the talisman was placed around Harry's neck, and his head was lowered back to his pillow with steady hands.

Remus pulled away, watching with a held breath as he awaited Harry's reaction to the amulet being placed once more upon his person.

The grey had returned.

Harry could have cried in relief as the darkness retracted from him, to be replaced with the soothing, comforting grey.

He knew he could simply relax into this state, allow the grey to strengthen him and attempt to fill the hole inside of him where he had lost something important, but he was filled with new hope and determination.

Harry refused to wait for the moment when the black would return, to suffer the crushing helplessness as the shadows suffocated him once more.

Now was the time to escape.

Arming himself with the grey, allowing it to seep within him and bolster his defences, Harry left the relative safety of the area he had made his fortress. Immediately the dark attempted to assail him, but Harry's shield of grey deflected every attack.

Onwards he walked through the darkness, feeling the rage of the shadows as the grey thwarted its every try at overwhelming him.

He was almost free; he could taste the light and life up ahead, where the darkness still desperately swarmed as it tried to keep him locked away.
It was the hole within him that drove him on, his desire to find whatever was meant to fill it.

He had to be whole.

With strength Harry never really knew he had, he sent a wave of grey at the last stretch of black in front of him, shattering it completely. As the darkness bled away, screaming in fury, the grey lightened until it was a pure, blinding white.

It wrapped around Harry like a comforting blanket, cleansing his soul of the shadows that had tried to taint it. Gently nudging him, Harry knew that the light would lead him back where he belonged. He allowed it to guide him far away from the dark space that now existed irrevocably in his being. However, it would never again own him.

It would take awhile for the darkness to forgive him for escaping and denying it his body and mind, but he knew the shadows would come to forgive and protect him, now a permanent fixture of his existence.

The barriers around him melted away under the light around Harry, and he finally felt the brush of what he was missing. He understood now, what he had been taken from and where he needed to go.

As Harry James Potter opened his eyes after a three-day battle, he was oblivious to the exclamation of joy and shock from the amber-eyed man leaning over him.

He opened his mouth, and registered vaguely that the other person in the room leaned forward to hear what he had to say.

'What have you done?'

Remus Lupin found himself pinned by piercing emerald, so much like sweet Lily's that he felt his breath hitch. And as those strained, accusing words left Harry's mouth, the werewolf started to wonder if what the Order had done was right.

Chapter End Notes

Author Note: Okay, again I am sorry that this had no LV/HP interaction in it. You have to understand that I need to keep my plot going etc. There should be something either next chapter or the one after, I am still unsure.

I hope you enjoyed it regardless, and remember if you have any questions or concerns about this chapter just contact me and I will get back to you as soon as possible.

Thank you for your wonderful patience and support, I really do appreciate it.

Next update should be in 1-2 weeks, depending on how much holiday work I receive from my teachers. Now that I finally have time to write, you should be seeing more regular updates!

Thanks again,

Drops of Nightshade x
Chapter Thirty

Chapter Summary

In the prejudiced world where the Dark Lord won, Harry Potter is part of the servile caste, the lowest caste in the new society. Resigned to a life of servitude as a Courtesan, Harry is instead drawn under the wing of the Dark Lord himself. Between the scheming Order and his powerful benefactor, Harry finds himself steadily drawn deeper into the growing conflict. Eventual LV/HP.

Chapter Notes

Author Note: I found some time and motivation to update! I hope you all enjoy the chapter. Please forgive any grammar mistakes, and make sure to point them out to me if they are glaringly obvious.

Thanks,

Drops of Nightshade x

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter Thirty

Order of the Phoenix Headquarters – The Citadel

1996

Harry Potter was being…uncooperative.

He sat with his arms folded defensively, brilliant emerald eyes flashing with annoyance as the people before him attempted to get him to speak.

Sitting behind a large oak desk was Minerva McGonagall, leader of the Order, and flanking her on either side were her two deputies, Alastor Moody and Kingsley Shacklebolt. All three were caught between bewilderment, frustration and anger as Harry refused to communicate with them.

'Mr Potter, you are naturally feeling a great deal of confusion and perhaps misguided resentment toward-' Minerva tried gently but firmly, only to be abruptly cut off.

'You have no idea what I feel, as is evident from your actions in kidnapping me.' Harry's voice was clipped and harsh as he glowered at the trio of leaders before him.

A three were taken aback at this admission, exchanging subtly worried glances with one another.

'Don't be ridiculous Potter,' Moody growled. He had never been a tactful man. 'Our agent rescued you.'
Harry's fury rose at that claim, and he spat venomously, 'Who said I wanted to be rescued?'

'You were being used as the Dark Lord's whore,' Moody rebutted before either Minerva or Kingsley could come up with a more careful approach.

Harry paled and his eyes widened at the man's audacity. Then an angry red hue bled into his cheeks, revealing just how enraged he was. The Horcrux within him stirred in interest. Forcefully reigning in his self-restraint, Harry fought down the dark shifting in the corner of his mind and concentrated on the matter at hand. He had, had to learn this quickly after waking from his coma, the Horcrux always hovering on the edge of his senses whenever his emotions were heightened.

'How- how dare you! How dare you drag me here and throw such accusations at me! You- you don't know anything!' Harry cried out, stammering in sheer shock at the nerve of the craggy-faced man.

Minerva pinned her deputy with a disappointed and reprimanding glare, to which Moody shrugged off irritably and announced, 'It's clear Potter's head has been tampered with. Call me back when the boy's ready for training, and not spewing nonsense.'

With that, Alastor Moody strode from the room without a backwards glance and allowed the door to slam shut on his way out.

Minerva massaged her temples, feeling a migraine developing.

She gazed tiredly at Harry, who was sitting stiff with rage in his seat. 'Mr Potter,' she said in a calm and even voice. 'I apologise for Alastor's rudeness. But you must understand; we are in the dark with your situation. You must tell us what you have experienced so we know how to help you.'

'Exactly,' Harry murmured, beginning to retract into his stubborn shell once more. 'You went into this blind. You kidnapped me without knowing my own wishes.'

Realising they would end up talking in circles for the rest of the afternoon, Kingsley intervened in the conversation for the first time. 'You must be still recovering from your illness Mr Potter. You only regained consciousness yesterday after all. Perhaps we should adjourn this meeting and allow you to retire to your room?'

Seeing the escape this offered, Harry was quick to stand and give both people present a jerky nod in farewell.

Once the door had closed, Minerva passed her hand over her eyes, and gathered her impressive reigns of strength and control. Healers would need to be contacted to cleanse Harry's mind of the Dark Lord's taint, and should it not be magically founded, then the best psychologists had to be tracked down to aid the young man. Through it all, she knew Harry would protest every step of the way.

It was unfortunately clear that measures would have to be put in place to contain Harry, and protect him from himself. A guard would need to be put on watch outside of his room; perhaps even restriction to the chateau itself would have to be implemented…

This was not at all how Minerva expected James and Lily's son to have been welcomed into the Order.

'Hermione asked her foster brother tentatively as he entered her room, slamming the door shut behind him.
Harry flopped himself down on Hermione's bed without saying anything, face buried in her pillows so as not to show how upset and angry the meeting had made him.

Biting her lip, Hermione moved over to sit beside Harry, placing a soothing hand on his back.

'Harry? Talk to me.'

'I hate it. I hate them. I hate being here.'

The poisonous words spilled out of Harry's mouth causing his foster sister to flinch. A flicker of hurt grew in Hermione's chest.

'But you're with our family again, with me. Doesn't that make you happy?'

Harry heard the note of upset in Hermione's voice and was quick to sit up, drawing his foster sister into a strong embrace.

'Of course it makes me happy Hermione, you're family and I love you all.' He drew away so he could meet her cinnamon brown eyes with his own green ones. 'But you know how I feel about the Dark Lord. You know what he...means to me. And they took me away from him.'

Hermione nodded her head reluctantly, still finding it difficult to accept that Harry cared for Lord Voldemort. But she trusted him, and his judgment. Hermione believed he truly meant what he said about Lord Voldemort, as hard as it was to accept that without having seen visible confirmation.

They had spoken together, after Harry had woken up. It had been an awkward conversation due to Harry's unwillingness to talk of emotions and feelings, but by the end of it, Hermione had felt disappointment in herself that she had ever endorsed the Order in their decision to take Harry. It was evident Harry wanted nothing more than to return to the Dark Lord's side.

Harry had not shared the truth of his feelings towards Lord Voldemort with anyone else besides Hermione, sensing that the rest of their extended family would not be as understanding and accepting as his foster sister, who had always been his staunchest ally.

Furthermore, he was currently at odds with the Weasley matriarch, whom had informed the Order that Harry was capable of performing wandless magic and was able to see it also. Molly had done it with good intentions, wishing to offer as much information as possible to help her foster son as he lay unconscious, but the repercussions were clear.

Escape would be a thousand times more difficult, now that they knew and were prepared.

There were always eyes watching him, people there to "guide" him when he stuck his nose where it shouldn't be. Harry knew he still would be able to escape, but he would have to wait for an opportune moment.

'Harry you know I will help you as best I can. When the time does come,' Hermione promised him, a small smile on her face. She had seen the look on his face, and had known he was contemplating his escape.

A surge of gratefulness rose up within Harry, that his foster sister had not only accepted his feelings towards Lord Voldemort, but would even go so far as to pledge to help him escape. He knew Hermione would not go with him, not while she had a chance to be completely free here. Harry did not wish to drag her into a dangerous scheme regardless, and so he was accepting of the fact that he would soon say farewell to his foster sister yet again.
But not indeterminately.

'Thank you Hermione.'

They embraced once more, both relishing in finally being able to do this, after so long apart. Any thought of future separation was pushed aside for the time being.

A gentle knock interrupted their tender moment, causing the two to draw apart. A scowl appeared on Harry's face, already anticipating one of the Order members having tracked him down to his foster sister's room.

Giving Harry a warning look to not be overtly rude, but understanding his instinctive negative attitude around the people who had taken him, Hermione invited the unknown person to enter.

Remus Lupin, the first person Harry had seen after awakening, entered the girl's room, amber eyes quickly focusing on Harry sitting perched on the bed in the centre of the chamber. His eyes drifted to the glowing amulet resting around Harry's neck, that he himself had placed there.

Moody had been furious when he discovered that Remus had disobeyed orders, but the obvious success of the talisman was enough to guarantee Harry would be allowed to keep it. Remus had escaped from punishment, but was now facing the mistrust of Alastor Moody, a position that left him under unnerving surveillance.

Seeing where the werewolf's attention was drawn, Harry tucked the amulet into his shirt, eyes narrowing slightly in defence. Although Remus had not yet done him any personal wrong, he was still inevitably an Order member. Furthermore, the talisman was the only thing keeping him healthy and on his feet after being taken from his bonded. Without it, he knew he would be bed-ridden. Thus, Harry was protective of the amulet.

The werewolf barely flinched at the distrustful gesture, merely offering the two teenagers a tired smile and saying quietly, 'Sorry to interrupt, but I was wondering if I could borrow Harry?'

There was a hopeful note in his voice and a glint of eagerness in his amber eyes.

Hermione glanced at Harry from the corner of her eye and saw him already retreating into his mask that he wore around Order members. Feeling a surge of pity for Remus, who was most certainly one of the more tolerable and kind people present in the headquarters, Hermione caught Harry's eye.

Her foster brother returned her gaze and lifted a single eyebrow, as though challenging her to tell him he couldn't refuse the man's wish. Hermione rolled her eyes at this action before lifting a brow of her own, clearly stating to her foster brother her stance in the situation.

Knowing he'd never hear the end of it from Hermione if he rudely sent the man away, Harry turned to the amber-eyed werewolf and said as politely as he could, 'I was actually going to go to my room to rest.'

Feeling Hermione's reprimanding stare on him, Harry nevertheless maintained a calm and detached manner as he observed Remus.

The werewolf's face fell minutely before he offered, 'Could I perhaps escort you back to your room then? I can say what I need to on the way there.'

It was a reasonable suggestion, and Harry knew he had no choice but to agree. Giving a strained smile in the werewolf's direction, he said, 'Of course.'
Turning to Hermione added, 'I'll come see you later after my rest.'

He left her room accompanied by Remus, making his way toward his own chamber. If Remus noticed his fast pace, he didn't comment on it. Instead, the man quickly got to the point of what he had wanted to discuss.

'I am unsure of how much you know, but I was a very close friend of your parents,' Remus began without preamble.

Harry's steps faltered and he stared at the werewolf in surprise. That surprise quickly faded to be replaced with resentment; here was yet another person who had abandoned him to the life of a servile.

Seeing the growing bitterness on the teenager's face, Remus grabbed Harry's shoulder to bring him to a halt, stooping so he could look Harry directly in his eyes. Before the boy could begin struggling, Remus said clearly, 'If I could have been in a position to rescue you I would have done it in a heartbeat, Harry. I loved your mother and father, they were my family, part of my pack.' As the man spoke his amber eyes deepened in colour, became more feral as the wolf neared the surface.

'I petitioned for years to organise a team to retrieve you, and your extended family. But it was never the right time. Sirius Black, who I believe you have been in contact with-'

'Did nothing during his years in Britain. He never visited me at Hogwarts, never stopped me from being sent to the school for pleasure, and never prevented me from being contracted,' Harry rattled off emotionlessly.

'Sirius was as helpless as I to assist you,' Remus explained desperately. 'He was and still is under near constant surveillance. He was restricted from Hogwarts to begin with, and even if it had been in his power to buy your contract, you would have been confiscated due to his relation to your parents.'

Harry listened as Remus defended his friend, Harry's apparent godfather, and felt the stirrings of reluctant understanding emerge. He had been so angry when the Dark Lord had pointed out that Sirius had done nothing whilst living in Britain, that he had been blinded by his resentment and hurt. He had been unwilling to even spare a thought towards the man after deciding he wanted nothing to do with him.

Sensing Harry's hesitation, Remus pressed his point home. 'It killed Sirius being so close to you and yet unable to aid you. It wasn't until Minerva deciphered Albus' last message and learnt the truth that we were able to progress with our plans at long last.'

Harry looked up sharply and asked, 'Learnt what truth?'

It was Remus' turn to hesitate, the man staring at his best friend's son with conflicted eyes.

Harry had a right to know the truth, he knew that indisputably. It was the reason he had been taken from Britain, the reason why the Order had put off rescuing its members until Harry was secured.

Albus Dumbledore had discovered something extraordinary before his destruction at the hands of the Dark Lord, and had left the truth in Minerva's hands, encrypted for safety. It had taken the woman many years to sift through the code and uncover what Albus had learnt.

Almost immediately after, plans had been put into development to retrieve the Order supporters trapped in Britain, but more specifically, Harry Potter.

Both Remus and Sirius had felt disgruntled that the Order were only rescuing its supporters as well
as Harry, now that they had a promise for success in the future and a use for them, but they understood that the Order could not afford to make hasty decisions.

While Remus faltered, Harry's mind was whirring. His instincts were telling him that whatever this 'truth' was, it could very well be what had spurred the Order to kidnap him. Cold anger swelled in him at the thought of the Order blindly believing in some alleged truth. For the second time that day the Horcrux shifted in his mind, and Harry rushed to concentrate on the matter at hand.

'Lupin,' Harry called determinedly. The man focused on the teenager, seeing the stubborn light in the male's eyes. It was exactly how Lily would get when she refused to give up on something. 'What did McGonagall discover? Tell me, please.'

Harry perseverance on the matter, and his plea for the truth, were enough for Remus' resolve to begin to crumble. He and Sirius had a vague idea of the nature of what Minerva had discovered, but even with the little knowledge he had, he had been ordered to keep his silence. Harry was supposedly to learn the truth when the time was right, and the Dark Lord's alleged taint had been fully removed from his mind.

But seeing the determination in Harry's eyes, the stubborn clench of his jaw, it was clear he would not relent until he was given answers. It would not cause any harm for Harry to know as much as Remus did. They just couldn't do it here.

'I will tell you what I know,' Remus said, lowering his voice to avoid unwanted ears picking up on their conversation. 'But we need to speak in privacy.'

Harry's eyes flashed in triumph, before he carefully folded his expression into one of neutrality, nodding in agreement.

Finally, he would be getting answers for the first time since coming to this place.

The Dark Lord did not require human necessities such as eating, drinking or sleeping, but he did rarely indulge when it suited him. Thus, it was disconcerting for him to be experiencing the fatigue that currently plagued him, and had forced him to retire early to his chambers.

Lying on the bed that was usually more for decoration than use, Lord Voldemort allowed himself to slip into the meditative state that he experienced when humouring a desire to sleep. In this fashion he would be able to restore his strength, depleted from his struggle to stay functioning after his bonded had been taken from him.

For a moment at that thought the Dark Lord's composure slipped and he lost his grip on his calm trance-like state as anger flourished in its place. Crimson eyes snapped open, glaring intensely at the roof above them.

He knew Narcissa was already settling into place in France as he lay here, preparing her plans to infiltrate the Order and rescue Harry, but that did nothing to ease his wrath that his lover had been taken even whilst sheltered behind layers of wards.

When Harry was retrieved, the Dark Lord was resolved to never let the younger male out of his sight again, or the sights of those he trusted.

Knowing he would not be able to return to a restful state, not while thoughts of Harry pressed against his mind, Lord Voldemort immersed himself in his shared magical core. Through their connection he had known when Harry had awakened, the minute it occurred, and had been both proud and relieved that his ex-Courtesan had managed to tame his Horcrux.
Hypothetically he should be able to communicate telepathically with Harry, as he now possessed a shard of his soul, but as neither of them had had a chance to experiment with their new connection, it was currently a dead-end.

However he had had the opportunity to trial his bond with Nagini, whom he had been with for many years now. It was this connection the Dark Lord reached for, sending a pulse through the link to inform Nagini that he wished to communicate.

He felt the brush of her mind against his own, clear and strong even with the great distance between them.

'Master,' came the delighted hiss through his head, as Nagini focused her attention on him.

'Nagini, I wish for a full report on Harry. What have his movements been? How is his health?' The Dark Lord was aware he was being overtly concerned, but in the privacy of his mind with one of his Horcrux bearers, he did not face accusation of being emotional.

'He wanders the rat-nest.' Nagini began, using the term she had selected that she felt best described the location her master's mate had been brought to. 'When he comes to sleep, I cannot speak with him because the rats are always watching.' Nagini's mental voice was full of derision.

Annoyed at this revelation, but expecting no less from the Order, Lord Voldemort felt a spark of gratitude nonetheless that when the time came, Harry would be able to understand Nagini. With their shared magical core, Harry now possessed the Parseltongue ability.

'And his health, Nagini?'

'The hatchling wears a glowing charm, Master. It keeps him strong, keeps the darkness away,' Nagini explained.

'Glowing charm? Show me,' he demanded imperiously.

Mustering her concentration, Nagini sent a blurred memory-image of Harry standing in a doorway, talking with someone whose face was at the wrong angle to see their identity. Pushing away his hungry delight at seeing an image of Harry, no matter that it wasn't in person, the Dark Lord drew his gaze to the light emanating from Harry's chest.

It was difficult to see from Nagini's awkward position on the ground, no doubt under a bed or perhaps a dresser, but it seemed that Harry was wearing a teardrop shaped talisman. The memory-image faded all too quickly, Nagini struggling to maintain it.

Contemplating what he had seen, the Dark Lord allowed Nagini to recover from the exertion she had undergone in producing a memory-image for him. Harry had been healthy, as far as he could confirm, certainly better off than himself. He was lacking the shadows under his eyes that the Dark Lord had, as well as the pinched and fatigued expression that sometimes slipped into appearance.

As for the talisman, despite having no idea where it had come from, Lord Voldemort decided it was only doing good for now, and therefore there was no reason for him to command Nagini to find a way to remove it.

He would be able to question Harry on it when he was safely with him once more.

'Nagini you must find a way to come in contact with Harry. He needs to be told that he is soon to be retrieved and that I myself will be arriving in less than a week's time. His rescue should
coincide with my arrival, if all goes to plan.'

'Of course, Master, I will do everything in my power to speak with the hatchling without the rats observing.' Nagini's mental voice was tired and strained.

'Rest now my sweet, I will be in contact again in a few days time for another report.'

Nagini gratefully retracted her mind at the dismissal, and the Dark Lord moved into his own head once more.

Bone-numbing fatigue washed over him, alien and unsettling.

Closing his eyes for a moment, letting the waves of exhaustion envelope him, the Dark Lord gritted his teeth and vowed that he would have Harry by his side soon.

Any alternative was simply not an option.

Chapter End Notes

Author Note: So I managed to include some Voldemort, but I am afraid the LV/HP interaction simply didn't happen. Sorry!

Next chapter: Narcissa's plans move forward, Remus provides answers, Harry loses it, and the Order start to finally understand they have done something terribly wrong (at last.)

See you next update!

Drops of Nightshade x
Chapter Thirty-One

Chapter Summary

In the prejudiced world where the Dark Lord won, Harry Potter is part of the servile caste, the lowest caste in the new society. Resigned to a life of servitude as a Courtesan, Harry is instead drawn under the wing of the Dark Lord himself. Between the scheming Order and his powerful benefactor, Harry finds himself steadily drawn deeper into the growing conflict. Eventual LV/HP.

Chapter Notes

Author Note: Who is amazing? I am amazing! Here is another chapter my lovely readers. I have updated twice in a row, so if you haven't read chapter thirty then please go back and do so.

As per usual, if you see any obvious grammar mistakes then point them out to me. There might be more than usual in here, because I typed this in a bit of a rush.

Thanks,

Drops of Nightshade x

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Chapter Thirty-One

Beaumont Manor – Order of the Phoenix Headquarters

1996

The restrained laughter of well-bred young women resonated across the immaculately manicured grounds of the elegant Beaumont Manor. Sitting beneath a pavilion, sheltered from the bright rays of the autumn sun, a congregation of pureblood females had gathered.

The pleasant lilt of their French rose and fell as they discussed the impending wedding of the heiress to the Beaumont family fortune, Lady Monique. Her mother, the vivacious Lady Angeline Beaumont had raised a formidable daughter, one that rivalled any male heir that could have been produced. It was a surprise to many that despite the absence of the late Lord Beaumont, it was the duo of mother and daughter that handled all affairs of the estate, including the arrangement of a good marriage for Monique.

Despite the bride-to-be being seated in the heart of the pavilion, it was Angeline who was the queen residing over her court, engaging the women around her in light banter, her sharp brown eyes the only indication that her benevolent attitude was a mask for a brilliantly dangerous mind.
Seated to Angeline's right was Narcissa Malfoy whom had arrived three days ago to participate in the wedding festivities. Occasionally she would converse in perfect French for a few sentences with her neighbours before lapsing into silence. She clearly had other things on her mind than gossiping with the pureblood women gathered here today. Her eyes constantly flickered back toward the graceful manor that sprawled across the grounds. The men were enjoying conversation inside, whilst their women-folk enjoyed the last vestiges of sunshine as the days grew colder.

Angeline cast her old friend a shrewd glance before summoning a house elf with the click of her fingers. She conversed in quiet, rapid French with the creature before a satisfied expression crossed her face and she rose to her feet, gently clapping her hands to draw the attention of the other females.

She noticed her Monique raising an eyebrow in question, a glimmer of interest in the brown eyes she had inherited from her mother. Her clever girl knew why Narcissa Malfoy was here after all, and had guessed her mother had just received confirmation from her house elf that everything was going according to plan.

Narcissa barely paid attention as Angeline addressed the other women, thanking them for coming to celebrate the joyous occasion. It was only when the French woman suggested they retire inside that Narcissa's concentration snapped to her old friend.

As the women rose in a wave of rustled dresses, light chatter springing up between them, Angeline gave Narcissa a sly wink. Clicking her fingers, the woman summoned the same house elf to her side once more, the Beaumont family coat of arms imprinted on its clean yellow tunic.

'Prinny will guide you to ze powder room, Narcissa dear,' she said in impeccable English and loud enough for a few women around them to hear for good measure. Then lowering her voice so only Narcissa could hear, she murmured, 'Ze arrangements 'ave been made and our friend is waiting for you.'

'Thank you, Angeline,' Narcissa said, her words laden with double meaning. She understood now what her friend had done, and was extremely grateful for it. Monique watched on approvingly from a distance, a cat-like grin on her face. She had realised what her mother had done.

'Prinny will guide you Mistress Malfoy,' the house elf squeaked. It's bulbous green eyes were glinting, and Narcissa realised that this particular house elf was involved in the scheme as well.

Accepting the frail hand offered, Narcissa allowed the elf to Apparate her away from the beautiful grounds, supposedly to the powder room. But she knew she would not be going anywhere near there.

Sure enough, Narcissa arrived in the dungeons of Beaumont Manor. Carefully lifting the hem of her chiffon outer gown so the dust upon the cold flagstones would not sully it, Narcissa turned to face the rest of the chamber.

Sitting against the farthest wall and chained with manacles was a man with wiry black hair and panicked grey eyes that were currently focused on Narcissa in wide-eyed terror. His clothes were dishevelled, the plain blue robes marking him as a French Ministry official. The spectacles he was wearing were half-dislodged with one side hanging comically off his ear.

He was magically gagged, his wand confiscated.

'Does Mistress Malfoy need Prinny to stay and help?' the house elf asked, green eyes narrowed on the man chained to the wall.
At the house elf’s decidedly dangerous glare, the Ministry official all but cowered. It was the house elf that had captured him after all. He had been invited to the prestigious Beaumont Manor to celebrate the announcement of its heiress’ impending wedding. When he had arrived he had been led by this particular elf into a room where he was ambushed and stripped of his wand.

Then he had been taken into the dungeons.

'No Prinny, you are free to leave,' Narcissa said pleasantly.

Bowing to the Lady Malfoy, the elf shot the Ministry official another scowl, causing the man to flinch, before Apparating away.

Narcissa pulled a vial from the inside of her gown. She had had this prepared since Angeline had informed her she had invited Monsieur Durant to her daughter's wedding festivities. The man was an important Ministry official, notoriously known for being involved with the Order of the Phoenix.

And, if Narcissa was correct, then he might be one of the few who knew where the headquarters were hidden.

'Good afternoon,' Narcissa began amiably as she unscrewed the vial.

The man couldn't make a noise, but judging by the look on his face, if he hadn't been gagged he would have only whimpered.

'You're going to answer a few questions for me,' Narcissa continued sweetly, approaching the man with the vial at the ready.

Monsieur Durant began thrashing, causing the Lady Malfoy to click her tongue in annoyance. 'I'll have none of that. I simply want a little chat.' Waving her wand, she immobilised him completely.

Leaning down the pureblood woman pried open the man's jaws and tipped his head back to ensure the contents of the vial would go down properly. Without further ado, Narcissa poured the substance within the vial down the man's throat.

Only once the last few drops had been involuntarily consumed did Narcissa carefully place the empty vial back in her gown's pocket and release the man from his paralysis. He choked and spluttered for a bit, hacking as some of the vial's contents had gone down his airway.

'What is your name?' Narcissa asked abruptly, moving away in disgust as the man continued to cough.

It was as though a switch had been flicked, for the man stiffened and replied in a monotonous and robotic voice, 'Jean Pierre Dormant.'

'Are you married Monsieur Dormant?' Narcissa asked.

'No,' came the droned response.

'What is your date of birth?'

'The third of March nineteen-fifty-five.'

A pleased smile stretched across Narcissa's face.

The Veritaserum was a success. Not that she would ever doubt Severus Snape's fine potion work.
'Well done Monsieur Dormant. You are now going to answer some questions for me about the Order of the Phoenix. Let us begin.'

Harry entered the Order’s infirmary, watching with relief as the member who had escorted him here turned and left, closing the door behind him. The man had been an unpleasant surprise at Harry’s door, and had said nothing other than he was required at the infirmary. Harry assumed he had been requested here to be checked up, seeing as it was now four days since he had awoken.

Taking a seat on one of the beds in the healing room, uncaring that he was creasing the crisp white linen, Harry took the opportunity to think about what Remus had told him three days ago, as he often did when he had a spare moment.

Clutching his fists and gritting his teeth Harry assured himself it couldn't be true. Remus must have been misinformed, told lies to be more amiable to the Order's decision in kidnapping him.

Nevertheless, the knot of anxiety in Harry's stomach that had been present ever since the werewolf had revealed what he knew refused to go away. Even now as the raven-haired teen thought about it, the knot tightened.

Because if what Remus claimed was true…

No.

It couldn't be true because Harry refused for it to be true.

The door to the infirmary swung open and Harry lifted his head expecting the Order's on-call healer to enter. Instead he was surprised to find Bill Weasley at the door, staring back at Harry with an equally startled expression written across his face.

That look melted away to be replaced with an easy grin that came naturally to Bill. 'Hey Harry, I didn't expect to see you here. Just getting a check up?'

'Yeah, I guess,' Harry responded, giving his foster-brother an awkward smile.

Things had been uncomfortable between he and the rest of his family, exacerbated by Molly's choice in telling the Order about Harry's unique abilities and Harry's own negative attitude toward the Order members. It was clear he wanted to be back in Britain with Lord Voldemort, and his family simply couldn’t comprehend why.

The atmosphere between the two foster-brothers grew strained and a heavy silence settled between them. Harry took to plucking at a loose string on the green sweater he had been given to wear so as not to meet Bill's gaze.

Searching desperately for something to say, Harry settled on, 'So what are you doing here?'

To his shock Bill's face flushed a brilliant red hue and his blue eyes grew shifty in embarrassment.

'W-well I heard that Fleur Delacour had woken up…and she had been moved here and I suppose I wanted to…wish her well?' Bill explained haltingly, ending in a question as though he was wondering himself what he was doing here.

At the mention of his kidnapper, Harry stiffened and his face became closed. 'Oh. She's somewhere in here?'
His green eyes, unusually cold, roamed the infirmary, searching for an occupied bed.

Bill frowned at Harry's icy reaction, and feeling defensive of the woman he had fallen for he asked, 'Why so cold?'

Harry pinned his older foster-brother with a downright chilling look and said in a deadly calm voice, 'She kidnapped me from my home against my will. Forgive me if I am a little bit cold.'

Bill flinched at Harry's words, confusion and righteous anger on Fleur's behalf blooming in his chest. 'But she rescu-'

'Don't you dare say she rescued me!' Harry roared violently. He was standing now, chest heaving with ire, and eyes like shards of chipped green ice. Bill could only stare in horrified silence as his usually sweet-tempered foster-brother turned aggressive. 'If one more person in this place tells me that I was rescued from my terrible plight then they will find themselves without a tongue!'

Seeing the seriousness on Harry's face, Bill felt a shiver roll down his spine as he realised Harry was sincere in his threat. Swallowing heavily, coming to terms with the fact that he really didn't know the young man before him any more, Bill could only stare, words lost to him.

At last he attempted to reason with his foster-brother. 'Harry you have to understand…'

'No Bill.'

Both Harry and Bill swung around to see Fleur Delacour leaning heavily against the doorframe to the private room she had emerged from. Her blonde hair hung lank around her face, her skin pale from blood loss. The infirmary pyjamas she wore hung off her frame revealing a slightly too malnourished body.

'How long have you been listening?' Harry spat. He knew who this was, despite only having heard of her. The description of the part-Veela was identifying enough.

Fleur fixed cool blue eyes on the angry teen and replied, 'Since you started yelling loud enough to wake me up.'

Harry crossed his arms defensively across his chest, jutted his chin forward and asked, 'Well? Aren't you going to demand a thank you from me? Make me admit that what you did was right?'

'No,' the woman said tiredly. Harry paused in surprise at the single word, so heavily laden with fatigue. 'I followed orders. My duty was wrongly placed, and it 'as impacted negatively on your life, but I was doing what I thought was right at ze time.'

Harry was stunned into silence. He had never expected this from the woman who had stolen him away.

Fleur fixed her blue eyes on Harry's own green ones and said, 'I can't change what I 'ave done. But I can say zis. She steeled herself and pushed away her pride. 'I am sorry. I know I will never have your forgiveness, but know that I regret what I 'ave done. I should 'ave known the moment I saw you without your Courtesan collar zat your circumstances 'ad changed. I was blind, and now you 'ave paid the price.'

Fleur turned laboriously to return to her bed, but Harry's voice stopped her. 'I can't forgive you.'

Fleur turned slightly and nodded in understanding. Before she could move back into her room, Harry continued, 'But I understand your motives. And I think you've paid the price too for your blindness.'
He gestured toward the parts of her body heavily bandaged, where healers even now were struggling to repair the damage and give the woman full mobility again.

Fleur observed him for a moment before tilting her head in acceptance of his words. Then she turned to Bill, who had been silently absorbing their conversation. 'Come Bill. 'Elp me to my bed.'

Bill flushed bright red at the woman's choice of words. Fleur raised a single pale eyebrow.

'O-of course!' he stammered.

Before going to aid the beautiful part-Veela, he knew he needed to say something to his foster-brother, lest they part on a negative note. 'I think I understand now.'

Harry observed him, before a small smile appeared on his face. It disappeared all too quickly however. 'You know I will do anything in my power to get back home.'

'I know. The twins will be devastated, Ron too, but they'll understand one day.'

Harry nodded in agreement, pushing away his sadness that he couldn't express himself to his extended family, couldn't tell them how he felt about the Dark Lord.

'Well…I'll see you around little brother,' Bill said, in a determinedly bright voice.

With that he took Fleur's arm and escorted the weakened woman back to her room, allowing the door to click shut behind them and leave Harry alone in the main infirmary area again. However he was only alone for a minute before the door to the healing chamber opened and an unfamiliar healer swept in. At the unknown man's heels were McGonagall, Moody and Shacklebolt.

Harry's face had already slipped into its mask the minute someone unknown entered, and as the trio of leaders who had been the overarching orchestrators of his kidnap also arrived his eyes had grown calculating and defensive.

'Forgive the delay Mr Potter, we had to brief Mr Cordell on your situation before coming here,' McGonagall explained in her usual brisk voice.

'What are you doing here?' Harry asked bluntly.

'Watch your tone, boy,' Moody growled threateningly, before forcibly restraining himself after McGonagall sent him a ferocious glare to behave himself. 'The sooner the healer sees to him, the better.'

Already suspicious of the situation, Moody's words helped everything click for Harry. This wasn't an ordinary physical check up. The Order's on-call healer would have been present.

Subtly edging to the door on the pretence of moving to the bed he had recently vacated, Harry judged the distance to escape. He wasn't going to stay still and allow a healer to poke and prod him and do who knew what.

Abruptly Moody pulled out his wand and shot a stunner at the unsuspecting teen, causing Harry to stiffen and fall to the ground.

'Alastor!' McGonagall crowed angrily.

'The boy was trying to work out how to escape. It was all in his eyes. Besides, it will be easier to get him to be still for the procedure this way,' Moody said dismissively, as he levitated Harry's frozen
body to the nearest bed.

McGonagall pursed her lips but said nothing else.

Meanwhile Harry was experiencing an uncomfortable reminder of his experience at the hands of Zacharias Smith; being restrained and helpless to stop what was going to happen. Panic set into his body, making it difficult to concentrate.

There was no Dark Lord at the ready to save him now.

The healer moved to Harry's side, and perhaps seeing the horror in the teen's eyes, took pity and assured him, 'I am a fully-trained mind healer, Mr Potter. I promise you the procedure will be painless and quick.' He attempted a comforting smile, but it came off as a grimace.

A mind healer. They were convinced the Dark Lord had placed a spell on his mind.

'We apologise for having to do this to you Mr Potter,' Shacklebolt murmured, his face sombre.

Harry wished he could glare, for if it was possible he would be burning holes into the man's head. None of them were regretting this, not really. They were desperate.

'I am ready to begin,' the mind healer, Mr Cordell announced.

The panic in Harry sky-rocketed.

He knew he didn't have a mind-controlling spell on him, nor any Dark magic that affected his thinking patterns. But he did have a freshly implanted Horcrux lurking in his head. Something that powerfully Dark would be difficult for the mind healer to miss when he was traipsing around in Harry's body.

'Here we go,' the man muttered, before placing his hands on either side of Harry's temples.

There was a strong pressure on Harry's mind, and he cursed never being given those Occulemency lessons. Then every thought faded from his mind as blackness took over.

'…very sorry about this situation…'

'…nothing that can be done?'

'…connection has already…only option…'

Fragmented speech was the first thing Harry heard as he came to, his head throbbing.

For a while he lay there on the soft surface of the bed beneath him, struggling to remember how he had come to be here, and why in Merlin's name it felt like someone had taken a hammer to his head.

As awareness returned to him, Harry flinched as he remembered being paralysed by Moody's spell and being forced to endure an apparent mind healing procedure. It explained his agonising headache.

Not wishing the people in the room to know he was awake, Harry focused intently on what was being said around him. They had been talking about a connection…

'Alastor we cannot kill him,' McGonagall said. The words made Harry's heart turn to ice.

'Don't tell me you're letting an opportunity like this get away. If what Mr Cordell says is true-'
'I assure you it is true,' Mr Cordell's voice cut in imperiously, insulted at his integrity being questioned.

'As I said, if what the healer says is true then if we kill the boy the Dark Lord will be nothing more than a squib. The war will be ours,' Moody said impatiently.

Harry felt sick down to his stomach, and it wasn't entirely due to his pounding head. The mind healer had discovered something far worse than the Horcrux in Harry's mind.

He had noticed Harry's shared magical core.

And it was clear the trio of leaders knew exactly whom Harry had bonded with.

'But Albus…' McGonagall started weakly.

'Albus was still right, in a fashion. Potter will bring about the downfall of the Dark Lord, just not in the way we imagined,' Moody explained, eager to convince the woman to see his way.

There was a brief silence before Shacklebolt interrupted and said in his deep and soothing voice, 'We do not need to come to a decision yet. Indeed, it would be incredibly hasty to proceed without a second confirmation and thorough research into the magically bonded.'

'Every second we waste the Dark Lord continues his tyranny,' Moody snarled.

'We are talking about ending a young man's life,' McGonagall snapped. 'I hardly think any time is being wasted while we discuss this!'

'Let us adjourn for the day,' Shacklebolt suggested. 'Have Mr Potter be placed in an induced sleep so he does not awaken before we come to a decision. Mr Cordell if you will?'

Harry heard the rustle of the mind healer's robes as he walked over to put Harry into a deep sleep. The teen knew that if he allowed this to happen, then he probably wouldn't be waking up ever again. Despite McGonagall and Shacklebolt's hesitance, they simply wouldn't allow an opportunity like this to go past.

But Harry wasn't going to lie down anymore.

Reaching for his impressive magical core, Harry drew on his magic and waited for the perfect moment to strike. Just as Mr Cordell's hands reached for his temples to send him into oblivion, Harry lashed out with a wave of pure power.

Rolling to his feet, he waited as his head throbbed and his vision swam at the pain, before observing his handiwork. Instinctively he had directed the worst of his magic at Moody, who was lying crumpled in the corner of the room, a trickle of blood running from his nose and mouth from the impact of his magic.

Shacklebolt and Mr Cordell were the next worse affected, but that was only because they had been the closest standing to him at the time. McGonagall had only received a moderate blast and was currently stirring.

A small part of Harry had preserved the woman from the worst of his anger, because he somewhat respected her, perhaps a tiny bit. This one woman had reassembled a crumbling Order, established a strong political presence on a foreign field and set about trying to make a difference in the world, even though she was misguided.
'Harry…' she whispered weakly.

Harry glanced down in surprise to see her with her eyes open, grey hair dishevelled and falling out of her bun.

'Harry you need to know the truth of why you were brought here, why we need you,' she told him desperately.

'The prophecy,' Harry responded calmly.

If McGonagall's face had been white before, it was now ivory from shock. 'How did you- Remus,' she quickly realised. Her eyes closed in helpless anger before they opened again, a steely light in them.

'Then you know you are destined to vanquish the Dark Lord.'

'I'm not destined to do anything,' Harry spat. 'I decide my own fate. And guess what I've decided? I am not vanquishing Lord Voldemort. He is my Lord and my lover.'

McGonagall's face was anguished as she tried to reason with the emerald-eyed teen. 'A prophecy is a prophecy Harry Potter! This one was made by a descendant of Cassandra herself! Albus was present when she made they foretelling, and captured the memory. He left it to me to decipher. It took me many years, but I eventually unlocked the memory. It is a true prophecy. You cannot deny fate.'

'Prove it to me,' Harry said quietly, green eyes calm. 'If you are so firm in your belief that the prophecy is true, then show me the memory.'

McGonagall was quiet for a few seconds before nodding in consent and saying, 'You will have to aid me there, I am afraid Mr Potter. You did quite a number on me.'

Harry felt a flash of guilt before crushing it ruthlessly. Directing his magic, he used it to help the older woman to her feet, subtly pushing her wand to the other side of the room.

'Where is the memory?'

'My office of course,' the woman responded primly, sounding so much like a teacher that Harry was put off for a moment.

Keeping his magic supporting the woman, Harry made her walk ahead of him so as to keep an eye on her. Before he left the room, he gazed at the three unconscious men in the room before intoning carefully, 'Obliviate.'

McGonagall gasped in shock, but Harry's magic was very precise and would simply erase their memories of the past twenty-four hours. None of them would know about his shared magical core any more.

Satisfied that his secret was safe, besides McGonagall who could be just as easily dealt with, Harry gestured for the woman to lead the way to her office. Casting one last look at the Obliviated men, McGonagall straightened her spine as best she could and started walking.

Harry cast his magic out in a net to detect any Order members approaching from the other direction and wove a careful web of charms around he and McGonagall so that if they did encounter anyone, they would be ignored.

Fortunately it nearing dinner and most of the Order members were gathering at the communal dining
hall to eat. The duo arrived all too soon at McGonagall's office, and Harry dismantled the wards around her door with ease.

The woman gave him a shocked glance at having removed her spell work so easily, but then pushed it aside, as Harry had already proven he was quite an extraordinary wizard.

'Go and get the memory,' Harry commanded, feeling a thrill of power as the Order's leader did his bidding. It was unusual for him to feel a rush such as that, but he blamed it on Lord Voldemort's influence.

Watching carefully to make sure McGonagall did not turn on him, Harry observed as she moved the rug on the floor aside. Pointing to a spot on the flagstones she said, 'There's a secret compartment under the flagstones here. The memory is in a vial, stored in a wooden box.'

The hiding place was unoriginal, but effective for concealing something. 'I assume I need to break down more wards?'

'It shouldn't be difficult, Mr Potter,' McGonagall said dryly.

Sure enough, with a single wave of his hand the wards were dismantled and Harry opened the floor with a simple flick of his wrist. Suspicious of the elder woman, Harry used his magic to levitate the nondescript box from its dark hiding place and then opened the lid from a safe distance. A single glass vial rested on a velvet bed, the contents a swirling silvery mist.

Summoning the vial to him, and allowing the box to drift back to the ground, Harry finally held the answer to his questions in his hand at long last.

'I have a Pensieve in the corner for you to—'

'There is no need for that. My Lord taught me how to view a memory such as this without the aid of a Pensieve.' Harry purposely referred to Lord Voldemort as his liege, to reinforce to the woman before him of where his loyalties lay. Whilst it would be easier to use a Pensieve, Harry had no desire to leave himself vulnerable to McGonagall while he was viewing the memory. Furthermore, by using this method he didn't even have to sit through the whole memory. He could simply isolate the so-called prophecy.

Concentrating on the vial in his hands, Harry channelled his magic toward it, screening the contents of the memory. Broken fragments rose up to greet him; a long white beard, a benevolent wrinkled face, twinkling blue eyes behind crescent-moon glasses. Harry realised he was seeing Albus Dumbledore for the first time.

Disinterested in lingering on a man who was deceased, Harry sifted through more fragments seeing wild brown hair, wide eyes magnified behind bottle-glasses before he finally sensed he was at the right place.

Isolating the one particular spot in the memory that Harry believed to be the prophecy itself, his magical instincts confirming that he was in the right position, Harry opened his mind and listened.

"The one with the power to vanquish the Dark Lord approaches ... born to those who have thrice defied him, born as the seventh month dies ... and the Dark Lord will mark him as his equal, but he will have power the Dark Lord knows not ... and either must die at the hand of the other for neither can live while the other survives ... the one with the power to vanquish the Dark Lord will be born as the seventh month dies ..."

Jerking himself from the memory, Harry stared down at the vial in his hands, face expressionless.
McGonagall watched him from the corner of her office, a grim look on her face. Surely now Harry would understand and accept the truth and his destiny?

'A child born as the seventh month dies could be applied to many children,’ Harry said carefully.

'In actual fact, there were only two couples expecting a child that this applied to. Your parents, and Alice and Frank Longbottom.’

'Longbottom?' Harry asked sharply.

'Yes, Longbottom, the boy you grew up alongside. He too was a potential candidate for the prophecy.’

Harry could hardly believe that the sensitive, clumsy and sweet boy he knew could possibly be considered a vanquisher of the Dark Lord. It was absurd.

'Then why didn't you go after him?' Harry asked, irritation seeping into his voice. 'Surely he was more accessible than myself?'

'You are correct. But you see, Mr Potter, Albus told me before he left to duel with Voldemort that all hope rested with the Potter's child. Of course at the time, I did not fully understand how a newborn babe could be the harbinger of hope, but after I gained access to the memory it all made sense.'

'Yes, but how did Dumbledore know that I was the one?' Harry persisted.

'Dumbledore was a great man, a brilliant mind. He visited you shortly after you were born and sensed the power in you. It made him realise you were a far more likely candidate for the prophecy than Mr Longbottom.'

'But there is still no definite proof that it is me that the prophecy is talking about?' Harry pressed. 'It seems like it wasn't fate, rather it was a choice made out of my own hands.'

McGonagall's face darkened with frustration and she responded with, 'That may be true Mr Potter, but the choice was made nonetheless. The prophecy still stands.'

'No.'

McGonagall started at Harry's cold rejection of her statement.

'I refuse to accept a decision that was made out of my hands. I refuse to bow down to a fate I do not want. I refuse to kill the man I love, all because a dead man from the past said I was destined to do it!'

With each refusal, Harry's magic rose in a cocoon around him, causing his eyes to glow an eerie, blazing emerald.

McGonagall began to back away, the other's magic forcing her against her office wall. The sheer power beginning to radiate off of the teenager was phenomenal.

Then Harry spoke.

'I, Harry James Potter, do hereby swear upon my magic and my life that I will never raise a hand to kill one, Tom Marvolo Riddle. This I do solemnly vow.'

With a flash of light the promise was sealed.
The vial containing the memory shattered.

The prophecy was destroyed.

Chapter End Notes

Author Note: I just want to make an announcement that including an epilogue there is probably only 2-3 chapters left! I am both excited and upset about this, because it has been such a joy writing this.

I really do love reading your reviews.

We still have a few loose ends to tie up, (namely Harry and Voldemort!) but I feel like the story is coming to a close. Tell me what you think of this chapter, and as ever, any questions or concerns please do contact me.

I would also like to make a note that the reason why Fleur did not hear the brief fight even whilst being in the next room over is because she is on heavy sleep medication for her injuries. Therefore, she slept through it! Bill was already gone by that point, leaving at some point between Harry losing consciousness and then waking up. Just wanted to clear that up.

Thank you all so much,

Drops of Nightshade x
Chapter Thirty-Two

Order of the Phoenix Headquarters – The Citadel

1996

Harry had only a brief moment to relish in the triumph of liberating himself from the prophecy, which dared dictate to him the path of his future, before a shrill alarm sounded echoing across the Order headquarters.

His gaze snapped to McGonagall whose hand rested on a button on the corner of her office desk. She had activated some sort of emergency warning system.

Before Harry could gather his magic, the door to McGonagall's office burst open and a handful of Order members tumbled in, wands at the ready. They quickly assessed the situation, seeing their leader disarmed and dishevelled, and Harry Potter standing in the centre of the room menacingly.

Taking advantage of their pause as they evaluated what was going on, and why the alarm system had been activated, Harry threw his magic out. Much in the same way as he did earlier in the infirmary, he knocked the people present unconscious and watched in satisfaction as their bodies dropped to the floor.

Before he could make his escape from the office, another squadron of Order members came pounding down the corridor, catching Harry unawares as he stepped over the room's threshold. A rapid *Stupefy* from one of the more agile members came speeding at Harry, before his talisman flared to life, creating a barrier before him.
Further attacks from the Order resulted in the same silvery-grey barrier forming in defence. The amulet had had enough of its bearer being target practice.

Awed at the power of the unicorn's gift, Harry gathered his magic to knock this group of Order members out as well. He couldn't help but notice the power came to him with more difficulty this time, strained from his exertions today. It took a lot of power and concentration to knock out one person let alone a whole group of them.

Before he could unleash the power, one of the members in the back of the group let out a yelp as she toppled forward, black cords binding her arms to her torso. Some of the Order members spun around, searching for the cause of the attack.

A man with wiry black hair, calculating grey eyes and thin wire spectacles stood at the end of the corridor, wand at the ready. His blue robes marked him as a French Ministry official.

The Order members seemed to realise this at the same time as Harry, one of them crying out, 'What are you doing Dormant? You just brought down one of our own!'

'That was the idea,' the man responded with a smirk, lifting his wand to fire another spell.

Confused and betrayed, the Order split to face the danger on two fronts, a handful facing the turncoat Ministry worker and the others cautiously approaching Harry. The alarm system continued to wail, no doubt drawing more members to their location.

The man who was apparently on Harry's side, Dormant, wasted not time in attacking, rapidly dodging any spells fired at him in return. Harry quickly scrambled to gather the power he had allowed to trickle away, grateful for the unicorn talisman that protected him in the mean time from any attacks.

Blasting with his magic, focusing on those immediately before him to preserve his power, Harry managed to knock a few members unconscious. Some, however, managed to jump back on their feet after being pushed to the ground.

Regathering his power for another attack, feeling the drain on his energy reserves and knowing he didn't have that much left in him, Harry was shocked when one of the Order members lunged at him, realising that the talisman wasn't going to let any magical attacks in.

The man was burly and thickly muscled, tackling Harry with ease and causing him to lose his grip on the magic he had gathered. The man's meaty hands took a hold of the talisman's chain, preparing to pull it taut and snap it off of Harry's neck.

'Harry!' a voice cried out, and both the teenager and the man pinning him to the ground twisted their heads to see Remus and Hermione standing at the other end of the corridor. It was Hermione who had yelled, starting forward to aid her foster brother.

Remus grabbed her as gently as he could, tugging her behind his back before levelling his wand at the Order member on top of his best friend's son.

'Get off,' he said dangerously, his voice firm.

'It's the only way to bring down the brat!' the man pinning Harry argued, tugging at the talisman to make his point. As Harry choked in pain, Remus' eyes flared amber and with a feral snarl he shot a spell at the man, blasting him away.

Free from the weight pressing him down, Harry scrambled away, rubbing his throat where the
amulet's chain had cut into his windpipe. As Remus engaged the remaining members in the corridor, working in unison with the Ministry official, Hermione ran to her foster brother's side.

'Harry, are you okay?' she asked, hands fluttering over his body as though she couldn't decide where to check first for injuries.

'Fine,' Harry rasped in response, wincing as his throat burned.

'Come on, I'm getting you out of here,' Hermione said firmly, helping Harry to his feet.

With his foster sister holding his hand tightly and tugging him toward safety, Harry realised suddenly that this was it. This was his opportunity to escape.

Hermione seemed to be thinking along the same lines, muttering to him, 'There are wards surrounding the chateau, but I think you might be able to break through them. I've only been out of the wards once, and all I know is that we are surrounded by woodland.'

Harry frowned at that, the thought of having to navigate a forest certainly not appealing to him.

'Maybe you could ask Remus to guide you? He and his pack have been living in these woods for years,' Hermione informed him.

But Harry was already shaking his head. 'I don't want to get him in more trouble that he already is. He turned on his Order, Hermione.'

'He did it for you Harry, because he considers you pack and he loves you as he loved your parents,' Hermione said quietly. 'You can see it in the way he looks at you. He would do anything to protect you, even if that means betraying the Order.'

Conflicted, Harry attempted to come to a decision about whether to drag Remus or his pack even further into his escape scheme.

'Let's not think about it yet,' Hermione suggested. 'Our first priority is getting out of the chateau and breaking the wards.'

'Our?' Harry asked, picking up on his foster sister's choice of words.

Hermione hesitated and faced him even as she continued to hurry them both forward. 'I've been thinking…and I've decided to come with you back to Britain.'

'Hermione…' Harry began gently, ready to persuade her otherwise.

'I don't care if I get sent back to Damara House, Harry I refuse to be a country away from you and unable to help you. With the amount of trouble you find yourself in, you're going to need all the allies you can find.' There was a wry smile on Hermione's lips as she spoke.

'You won't ever be going back to Damara House,' Harry protested vehemently. 'I am a certified freed man, and I have the power to clear you. I'm sure you would be allowed to stay in the Citadel, maybe work in the library,' Harry said, thinking everything through.

Hermione smiled beatifically and whispered, 'I think I would like that very much.'

'Potter!' came an enraged growl from up ahead.

So caught up in their plans, the two teenagers had failed to pay attention to their surroundings.
Alastor Moody, looking terrifying with dried blood crusted to his face from when Harry had attacked him, blocked their way.

Harry moved in front of his foster sister, shielding her from the man's gaze. He knew the man wouldn't have stayed unconsciousness for a long time, but he had hoped that he would have escaped by the time Moody came to. Thankfully the man would have no recollection of Harry's bond with the Dark Lord.

'We should have killed you when you first came here,' the man snarled, raising his wand to point it at Harry's head.

Despite not knowing about the magical bonding between Harry and the Dark Lord, it was clear Moody still couldn't stand the teen's mere presence.

'It was your fault for kidnapping me,' Harry replied calmly, knowing that the talisman would protect him.

Hermione's hands were fisted into his green sweater, furious that the man before them could talk so callously about killing her foster brother.

'Ah yes, so eager to return to your master and warm his bed?' Moody sneered in disgust.

'I am eager to return to my lover and assist him in organising your downfall, if that is what you mean,' Harry said, cocking his head to the side in mock questioning.

'You're nothing but a whore, Potter, a waste of breath.'

'You will die for insulting my Master's mate!' came an enraged hiss.

Harry had barely any time to register that the words had been hissed before a very familiar snake barreled into Moody, fangs latching onto the man's unprotected throat and making a bloody mess of it.

Hermione muffled a scream in Harry's sweater as Moody gurgled wetly, his lifeblood draining onto the flagstones beneath him. Harry watched on coldly as the man had his comeuppance, caught in death throes.

Then he was still.

Nagini, for despite the snake being magically smaller it was still undoubtedly her, slithered off of the body, flicking the craggy face with the end of her tail in disgust at the human she had just killed.

'Are you unharmed, hatchling?' Nagini questioned, sliding along the ground to reach Harry's feet. She lifted her head high so she could meet his gaze. Hermione trembled slightly behind him, but she made no other sound.

Marvelling at being able to understand the snake, Harry wondered how he could speak Parseltongue in return. Should he just give it a go? Concentrating on communicating, Harry cleared his throat and began tentatively, 'Yes I am unharmed, Nagini.' Sensing he was doing it right, Harry continued, 'Thank you for disposing of him for us.'

'It was a pleasure to do. He was questioning your honour, and therefore my Master's honour,' Nagini responded indignantly. Harry was surprised that a snake knew a human concept such as honour, but Nagini was no ordinary snake.
'Harry?' Hermione ventured. Her foster brother had spoken in a string of hissed words, to which the snake had responded.

'Forgive me Hermione, I was merely thanking Nagini for dealing with Moody,' Harry explained, turning his head to smile reassuringly at Hermione.

Smiling cautiously in return, having had no idea her foster brother was a Parselmouth, Hermione suggested, 'I think we should keep moving. The sooner we get out of here, the sooner we can talk.' By talk, Harry knew it would entail Hermione asking him how exactly he had learnt how to speak to snakes, and how long he had known about it without telling her. He knew her too well.

'Nagini do you want me to unshrink you, or are you happy to stay that way?' Harry asked.

'I would prefer to be returned to my proper size, but it is more convenient for me to be in this form.' To prove her point she slid up Harry's body and settled around his neck, tongue curiously tasting the air around his talisman.

'Let's go,' Harry said, taking Hermione's hand this time and doing a quick Point-Me spell to ascertain which way they needed to travel to get outside. He vaguely remembered an eastern entrance somewhere nearby.

They found the exit and ran out onto the grounds, Harry taking care not to jostle Nagini too much as he made his way to the wards. He could see the barrier with his unique ability, strong and impenetrable looking at a first glance.

But as Harry expertly ran his eyes over the shimmering shield of magic he began picking out weak points that had not yet been updated and strengthened.

'Will you be able break it?' Hermione asked, nervously casting glances back to the chateau. She was keeping an eye out for any attackers coming their way.

'I should be able to,' Harry said, before laboriously dragging up his magic. He felt the draw and struggled to channel his power.

Nagini suddenly stiffened for a few moments, momentarily distracting Harry. Then she relaxed and hissed, 'Master says that he can help you.'

Harry processed those words in shock before asking Nagini desperately, 'Master? Do you mean Lord Voldemort? He can communicate with you?'

'Yes hatchling, I am his Horcrux and as such can speak telepathically with him. He has felt the draw on your shared magical core and wants to help you channel your power.'

'But I am his Horcrux too, aren't I? Why can't I speak with him?' Harry registered distantly that he was whining slightly, but he couldn't help the lonely pit in his heart that wouldn't be healed until he was back with his lover.

'You will learn in time hatchling,' Nagini hissed affectionately. 'Now, Master wants you to allow him to guide the flow of magic in your core.'

Harry eagerly focused on his inner core, delight pulsing through him when he felt the brush of the Dark Lord's essence against his own. With both of them intensely focusing on their shared core, they could now feel each other.
He sensed Lord Voldemort gently nudging his magic, directing him in a particular pattern. With the ease that came with being in synch with another person, Harry fell into place where he was guided.

Suddenly the magic came easily to him, and with a grin of triumph and a flash of thankful gratitude to his lover Harry set about breaking down the wards.

They shivered, attempting to repel his attack, before the combined force of he and the Dark Lord's magic forced the wards to shatter. Harry knew this area would soon be covered in Order members and so regretfully withdrew from his lover, vowing that soon he would be seeing him in person.

When he came into focus he saw that Hermione had been joined by Remus and the Ministry official from the corridor. They were all watching in awe as the wards dissolved under the onslaught of Harry's magic.

Realising Harry had come back to himself, Remus moved forward instinctively to draw the teen into a hug, before restraining himself as he realised what he had gone to do. Harry sighed, before opening his arms, Hermione's words at the forefront of his mind.

Remus' face lit up, and he was quick to crush the emerald-eyed boy to his chest, breathing in his scent deeply and reassuring his inner wolf that his pack member was unharmed and safe for the time being.

'We need to move,' the French official said firmly, interrupting the moment between the werewolf and the teenager.

'Who are you?' Harry asked, not harshly but certainly with a good deal of suspicion as he pulled away from Remus. The Ministry worker had randomly turned up after all.

The official turned to Harry, and the teen noticed that one of the man's grey eyes had bled into an icy blue, and there were streaks of blonde starting to appear in his wiry black hair.

'You've been Polyjuiced,' Harry realised.

The man smiled, and Harry saw his mouth blurring and softening, becoming more feminine. Sure enough the "man's" voice was distinctly higher when he replied with, 'Indeed I am. Monsieur Dormant was both useful for giving me the coordinates to the Order headquarters and his image to allow me access.'

'Did...did the Dark Lord send you?' Harry asked hopefully.

The Polyjuiced person, a woman undoubtedly, shivered as another change rolled over her. Her features blurred even further and Harry realised with a shock that he knew who this was.

'Lady Malfoy?' he asked in bewilderment.

Now with her eyes and hair restored, and her face gradually returning to its elegant beauty, Narcissa Malfoy was quite unmistakable.

'Correct on both counts Harry Potter,' Narcissa said, slightly breathless from the last vestiges of her change.

There were shouts from the chateau and suddenly Order members were spilling onto the grounds.

'Come, I will take you to my pack's settlement,' Remus decided. 'We can discuss what to do next while we're safe there.'
'You don't think I came prepared?' Narcissa sniffed, pulling a satin ribbon from her pocket. She drew out her wand and tapped the red fabric saying clearly, 'Portus.'

The ribbon glowed brightly and started to hum. Narcissa tucked her wand away and offered the ribbon to Harry to take a hold of also. The pureblood woman glanced at Remus and Hermione and added, 'If you wish to escape, now is the time to take a hold of the Portkey.'

Hermione quickly grasped it beside her foster brother and he wrapped an arm around her waist. They both looked to Remus, whose face was regretful. 'I can't abandon my pack; I am their alpha and I refuse to leave them to face punishment from the Order.'

Narcissa inclined her head regally in acceptance before looking the man up and down shrewdly. 'I believe my Lord will be in contact with you soon. He will wish to reward you for aiding in Harry's rescue.'

Remus looked shocked at this admission before the Portkey flared. He backed away, raising his hand in farewell as the trio were tugged away from the headquarters.

The last thing Harry saw before he was lost in a whirlwind of colour were Remus' amber eyes watching him affectionately, before the man turned and sprinted into the forest, disappearing into the foliage.

Harry's knees jarred painfully as he landed, the ribbon slithering out of his hand.

Offering a disgruntled Nagini a quick apology, Harry made sure Hermione and the Lady Malfoy were both unharmed. Despite looking dishevelled, both women appeared intact and unscathed from their Portkey travel.

Glancing around at their surroundings, Harry confirmed they were in a wizarding precinct due to the robed people milling about, casting the trio startled glances. Their whispered French indicated that they were still in France.

'Where are we?' Hermione asked as she stood, dusting off her jeans and shirt.

'Ve are in Avenue des Ternes,' Narcissa answered, transfiguring her Ministry robe she was wearing into a simple but elegant blue gown. She refused to traipse around in it any longer.

The avenue was beautiful, lined with trees and cobbled underfoot. Shops in lovely pastel colours gave the area a gentle, peaceful feel. The witches and wizards wandering the streets certainly looked serene as they went about their daily business.

'Come along,' Narcissa said, beginning to walk towards a bright, white building that looked slightly out of place amongst the neutral tones that painted the avenue.

Hermione and Harry were quick to hurry after the woman, falling into step behind her and she mounted the steps to the entrance of the impressive building.

Harry realised almost immediately that this was a branch of Gringotts as he noticed the goblins standing guard on either side of the entrance doors. Their beady black eyes followed the trio as they entered.

Sure enough, inside the main foyer there were dozens of goblins moving to and fro, carrying precious jewels to be scrutinised or official looking documents to be stamped and sealed. The gentle clinking of coins and the hushed talking was so reminiscent of Diagon Alley's Gringotts branch that
Harry felt a wave of homesickness.

Narcissa seemed to be searching the foyer for someone in particular, her blue eyes sharp.

'Harry?'

Feeling an overwhelming experience of déjà vu, Harry turned in disbelief to find Demetrius Talbot approaching him. It was so much like their previous encounter that Harry couldn't find any words to say as the handsome older man strode up to him.

'What are you doing here?' he asked Harry, noting how the two females with him moved the flank the teen in protection. Raising an eyebrow at the other male's escort, Demetrius waited for an answer.

'What are you doing here?' Harry rebutted.

Demetrius didn't look impressed as he replied, 'Your possessive contractor had me transferred to this branch after he realised my past involvement with you.'

Inwardly rolling his eyes at his lover's domineering personality, and deeming the whole situation decidedly dramatic, Harry could only offer Demetrius an apologetic grin. The other's man's sullen expression lightened before he repeated, 'What are you doing here?' Suddenly his eyes noticed Harry's bare neck and they all but bugged out of his head. 'Your collar- where did – what?'

Taking pity Harry explained, 'The Dark Lord released me from my contract. I'm a free man.'

Demetrius face grew joyous as he got over his shock and he said reverently, 'I am so glad, Harry. You always were meant for more than the life of a Courtesan.'

Smiling at the man from his past, Harry realised he was being rude to his two female companions, whom had never met Demetrius before.

'Hermione, Lady Malfoy, this is Demetrius Talbot, one of my teachers during my schooling.'

After both women had greeted the man, Narcissa stepped forward and asked imperiously as ever, 'Might you be able to point us in the direction of Ragnold? I believe he is the administrator of the Beaumont family accounts.'

'Of course, my Lady,' Demetrius said politely and proceeded to escort them through a number of doors and down a few corridors until he reached a particular door with the name "Ragnold" engraved on a gold plaque on the frame.

'Is there anything else you require, my Lady?' Demetrius asked.

'That is all, thank you for assistance Mr Talbot.'

Realising he might not get a chance to see Demetrius again, Harry surprised the man by giving him a quick hug. He had been giving out more than usual today.

'Come and visit me sometime, okay?' Demetrius said.

Harry knew it was highly unlikely the Dark Lord would let him out of his sight for many months to come, but he was sure with time his lover would give him a little more freedom to do as he wished.

'One day, I'll come back and we'll talk about Quidditch like we used to,' Harry promised with a grin.

Demetrius smiled in return and offered the females a wave before strolling away.
Watching the back of Demetrius disappear around a corner, Harry knew it wasn't permanent, and was comforted by it. Even though he was from a closed chapter of Harry's life, he knew Demetrius was still important to him, as a friend if nothing else.

The trio entered the office after being granted entrance, and were greeted by a wizened goblin, Ragnold apparently. After giving the proper respectful address when opening business with a goblin, Narcissa got straight to the point.

'I believe the Lady Angeline Beaumont has been in contact with you, regarding my situation?'

The goblin grinning in a shark-like fashion and said, 'Indeed, she has requested my assistance on your behalf and I am pleased to inform you all arrangements have been made.'

Narcissa's face was satisfied and she said, 'You have my gratitude Mr Ragnold. I am sure Lady Beaumont has already paid you for your services, but rest assured the Malfoy estate will certainly be rewarding your assistance handsomely as well.'

At that, the goblin's grin grew all the more sharp, and he offered the Lady Malfoy a rare bow.

'Now if you are ready for the transfer?'

Narcissa nodded in confirmation, gesturing for Harry and Hermione to follow the goblin, taking up the rear of the group. Confused, the teenagers nevertheless obeyed the pureblood woman and proceeded after the goblin.

He led them into the next room over where a fireplace stretched across the far wall. As the goblin hobbled over and reached for a pot of Floo powder, Harry realised with a thrill that this was how Narcissa had planned on getting him out.

Seeing the light of understanding on Harry's face, Narcissa explained, 'Gringotts is above Ministerial law in many matters. That includes use of international Floo systems.'

With enough influence and money, Harry realised there wasn't really much you couldn't get away with, as evident from Narcissa being able to smuggle both he and Hermione out of the country without the French Ministry being any wiser.

'Who shall go first?' the goblin asked, sharp nails tapping the Floo pot.

'Harry,' Narcissa said without preamble, and Harry found himself pinned by the beady eyes of Ragnold.

The goblin offered the boy the Floo powder, which Harry took tentatively before stepping toward the fireplace.

'Where am I going?' he asked Narcissa.

'This fireplace connects directly with any Gringotts branch. Simply say Diagon Alley and then Britain,' the goblin answered before Narcissa could.

Nodding in understanding, feeling a cacophony of excitement in him at being so close to home, to the Dark Lord, Harry hunched his shoulders and entered into the low space of the grate.

'Diagon Alley, Britain!' he stated carefully and clearly, throwing down the Floo power and being sucked away.
The Dark Lord was waiting with Lucius Malfoy by his side in the foyer of the Diagon Alley branch of Gringotts. Nagini had been keeping him updated with Harry's movements, and when Narcissa had contacted him with her plan to retrieve Harry, he had given her full permission to proceed.

He had planned to have Harry's rescue coincide with his negotiations with France, but things never seemed to turn out how they should when Harry Potter was involved.

Nevertheless the Dark Lord was glad his lover was coming home.

The foyer had been cleared of clients for the reception of the escapees, with only the goblins permitted to remain and go about their business.

Suddenly the fireplace built into an alcove in the corner of the foyer, where Lucius and his Lord were waiting, flared to life.

Harry Potter exited, stumbling as he attempted to recover from his dizziness after travelling through the Floo system. He hated this method of travel.

A strong pair of arms caught him and Harry's breath hitched as he realised who was standing before him, now pressing him to a chest.

'Harry,' the painfully familiar silkily voice murmured and the raven-haired teen responded by boldly locking his arms around the Dark Lord's neck and pressing a kiss to his lips.

The kiss was returned with hungry passion, the two lost in their own world as their bond thrummed with brilliant joy at being close to one another again. For Lord Voldemort, it was as though the pain and fatigue of the past week simply faded away as Harry's lips helped him forget.

The two vaguely registered further arrivals through the Floo system, the reunion of Narcissa and Lucius from the corner of their eyes, a soft understanding dawning on Hermione Granger's face as she saw her foster brother completed at last.

Pulling away for air Harry leaned up on his toes so he could press his forehead against Lord Voldemort's and say, 'I don't ever want to go through that again.'

'You never will. I promise you, you will never go through the pain of being separated from me again.' The words were laden with promise and sincerity, the burning anger behind the vow subdued now that Harry was in his arms again.

There was so much more the pair wished to say to one another, things that Harry was aching to discuss, things left unsaid between each other. But they could not talk until in the privacy of their chambers, where masks could fall and desires could be brought out into the open without fear of repercussions.

Feeling the Dark Lord's hand resting against his cheek, the strong contours of the chest he was pressed to against his own, the arms around him offering a haven for the teen, Harry Potter was finally content.

Later, after Hermione had been settled into a room in the Citadel, and the Inner Circle had been debriefed, did the two lovers have a chance to find solitude with one another.

In the Dark Lord's private chambers, it was like time had halted, leaving the two men on the bed in a pocket of space all of their own, made of nothing but heat and friction and skin. There were desperate, clutching fingers that traced lines of fire across each other's bodies, as they were
reacquainted with what they had lost.

It was hard to tell where Harry Potter ended and the Dark Lord began and vice versa. Both of them were letting instinct drive them, becoming one being in a tangled epiphany of flesh. Their world was narrowed down to the presence of the other, feeling whole and complete and a part of something incredible.

'I love you,' Harry admitted after coming down from his high, curled into the circle of his lover's arms. His green eyes were luminous in the dark of the room.

'I know,' the Dark Lord murmured.

Harry settled more comfortably in his lover's arms, not expecting anything in return. He never would.

'You are the most important thing in the world to me,' Lord Voldemort spoke, stroking a hand through Harry's soft hair.

Satisfied with that response, Harry smiled up at his lover and allowed his eyes to close in contentedness.

'I love you.'

Harry's eyes shot open and he stared uncomprehendingly at his lover, whom had just admitted to something astonishing, something supposedly impossible. Sincere crimson eyes gazed back at him, emotion, still so very new swirling in their depths.

The Dark Lord had learned to love.

'I wish to make you my Consort, Harry. Do you accept?'

It was all so much, so quickly, that Harry had to forcibly restrain himself from agreeing blindly in the heat and passion of the moment.

'You do not need to give me an answer immediately,' the Dark Lord assured him.

'I accept on one condition,' Harry suddenly announced.

It was Lord Voldemort's turn to be shocked, at Harry's decisive decision to become his Consort, his equal in status and influence.

'What would that condition be?' the Dark Lord asked, even though he knew what was going to emerge from Harry's lips.

'Abolish the servile caste. That is my one request if I am to accept and become your Consort.'

Silence passed between the two.

Harry knew that his condition might definitely be refused, or at the very least a compromise suggested, but he had put forth his desire and it was time to see if the Dark Lord truly had the ability to grow and change.

'I accept your condition.'

Harry felt like his heart was going to leap out of his chest.

'Change will be slow. But as my future Consort I will expect you to be at the forefront, leading that
A subtle transformation seemed to come over Harry. Determination grew in his emerald eyes, his chin lifted slightly and he looked his lover, and now his equal, in the eye.

'I will undertake this mission, and I will succeed.' Those hard eyes softened and Harry leaned up to press a gentle kiss to the Dark Lord's mouth. 'But you are going to have to help me do it.'

'Together then,' Lord Voldemort responded, entangling his fingers with Harry's.

Out there, beyond the door to their chambers, there was a world of conflict, pain, difficult questions and terrible uncertainties.

Yet here, in the arms of one another, there was peace.

Chapter End Notes

Author Note: Wow, corny ending I know. There is only an epilogue left to go.

I know there are a few things left to be tied up, namely the Order, Remus and his pack, Tonks, Sirius and of course Smith (who you may have forgotten about!) The issues surrounding these will be addressed in the epilogue. The fact that McGonagall still knows about the bonding will be addressed.

Some of you have brought it up in your reviews about a potential sequel, and whilst I am definitely taking a break from writing, I will be leaving the epilogue open to go either way. When I have had a chance to rest and do some serious planning, there is a strong chance I will come back to write a sequel. It would be called 'The Consort', to stick with the title theme. The epilogue is definitely being set up for the possibility of a new plot line, especially with McGonagall knowing about the bonding.

Thank you so much for sticking with me to the (almost) end.

Keep an eye out for the epilogue,

Drops of Nightshade x
Epilogue

Chapter Summary

In the prejudiced world where the Dark Lord won, Harry Potter is part of the servile caste, the lowest caste in the new society. Resigned to a life of servitude as a Courtesan, Harry is instead drawn under the wing of the Dark Lord himself. Between the scheming Order and his powerful benefactor, Harry finds himself steadily drawn deeper into the growing conflict. Eventual LV/HP.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Epilogue

One Month Later

A thin veil of clouds obscured the night sky, hiding the stars from view and casting dappled light upon the forest below. Only the moon remained unshrugged, gleaming with acute sharpness through the dark of the cold autumn night. The trees of the forest creaked and groaned as the icy wind from the west blew in, causing a cacophony of sound on this sacred night.

A shrill scream broke the melody of the natural world, echoing harshly through the woods and disturbing the creatures that roamed when the sun descended. They did not flinch nor were they drawn to the sound of dying prey.

They knew what night this was.

Harry Potter watched with a carefully masked face as Zacharias Smith was prepared for the Samhain sacrifice. His would-be rapist had been stripped bare and painted in the blood of animals sacrificed earlier on that day.

Runes were currently being gouged into his skin, causing the once-arrogant young man to scream in pain, the sound reverberating around the clearing they were in and beyond. The werewolves completing the process wore sadistic grins, pressing their knives into the teenager's skin even harder to produce more delicious noises.

It was not a full moon, and so the werewolves present were in their human forms, but the atmosphere of the night had their inner wolves close to the surface and baying for blood.

Swallowing heavily, Harry was forced to look away as one of the werewolves moved to pry Smith's jaws open, with the intent to remove the young man's tongue.

To his right Bellatrix watch on hungrily, pleasure evident in her onyx black eyes. Flanking her on either side were Rabastan and Rodolphus, who did not look away from the gruesome preparation for the ceremony, but were much more stoic than the sadistic woman in between them. Severus Snape and Bartemius Crouch were deep in conversation, paying no attention to the agonised screams of the disowned pureblood.
The only member of the Inner Circle whom was not present was Lucius, who had chosen to celebrate Samhain with his wife and son. It was traditionally an event to be conducted with family, honouring past ancestors and reconnecting with deceased loved ones.

A warm body pressed up against Harry's own, and strong arms moved to encircle his frame. With a sigh, Harry leaned back against the support offered, tilting his head to view his lover.

'Must it be so messy?' the emerald-eyed teenager asked.

The Dark Lord smirked, crimson eyes flashing with satisfaction as he replied, 'Not always. I believe Fenrir is paying a tribute to my future Consort, by ensuring maximum pain for the man that attacked him.'

Harry raised an eyebrow, still not used to being offered the respect he now mustered from not only the Inner Circle, but the Dark Lord's supporters as a whole. He had not even been officially inducted into the position yet.

Both he and his lover had agreed that they would wait until Harry had reached his majority and graduated from Hogwarts before formally holding the ceremony. It would not only give Harry time to prove himself to the Dark supporters as a worthy Consort, but it would create a better image for the couple.

In the past month Britain's magical community had been undergoing some drastic changes, widely and legally recognised as the Servile Rectification Act, or the SRA for short. It was publically acknowledged as the future Dark Consort's first political exploit, and had been met with mixed reactions in the extremes.

All three ranks of the servile caste had been abolished, with Aphrodite's House of Pleasure and Damara House being shut down. Rehabilitation centres had been set up to deal with the newly freed Birthers and Courtesans, with accommodation facilities being arranged to deal with the influx of Menials without lodgings.

Those Birthers who had had children by their contractors were protected under the SRA, with the fathers expected to not only provide housing for the women, but to pay for any and all needs of the subsequent children from their intimacy. Family plans were currently underway to ensure both parents had equal rights to their offspring, and were being met with general success in most cases.

As for the issue of Muggleborns, Harry had recently begun campaigning his Muggleborn Protection Act, in which they were to be given equal rights as half-bloods and purebloods, who were now on even standing with one another.

He had had to compromise with his lover in regards to the removal of Muggleborns from their Muggle parents; the Dark Lord had refused to change the system in which such children were taken and their parents Obliviated. He had been adamant that magical children must grow up in magical communities.

Harry knew that there would be opportunities in the future to argue about this, and so settled for ensuring his Muggleborn Protection Act gave these children appropriate accommodation and services when they arrived in the wizarding world. Already many children and teenagers alike were finding new homes through the adoption plans being implemented.

Hogwarts was another topic Harry and his future spouse had argued over, but Harry had eventually come to realise the value that came from allowing Hogwarts to remain an elitist school. Not only would it keep the purebloods appeased, who were highly disgruntled from the abolishment of the
servile caste and the equalising of the law in regards to those of differing blood, but it allowed the curriculum to remain rigorous and tailored to more skilled adolescents.

Other education facilities were currently being built, not only creating new paid jobs for ex-serviles, but producing magical schools for those who did not pass the entrance exams into Hogwarts. As for those entrance exams, under the Muggleborn Protection Act, Muggleborns were now able to take the exam for an opportunity at the elitist school. Furthermore, purebloods were now required to take exams to enter the school, equalising the rights of all children wanting to attend Hogwarts.

With his intelligent foster sister in mind, Harry had advocated under the Muggleborn Protection Act to set up special education facilities for young people who had missed out on a magical education due to their servile status.

It had been a success, with many seeing the value of having young people trained and given opportunities to join the workforce in later years, rather than just leeching off the system under benefit schemes.

Hermione was currently attending one of these advanced courses, learning to wield the wand she had been given. She was apparently at the top of her class. Harry was ecstatic to note that Angelina, Katie and Alicia were also in one of these programs.

So much progress had occurred in the short month that had passed since Harry had returned to his lover's side, and yet there was still a long way to go until many of the issues in the magical community were resolved. But any change was positive, and Harry had become somewhat of a beloved champion of the Muggleborns and half bloods.

The main problem he had was with the purebloods, who would never completely accept him until he had proven himself. So far he had only made their lives more difficult, and had not shown that he would support their traditions and unique culture, as was an essential part of being the Dark Consort.

Lord Voldemort had assured his anxious lover that they would come to love and respect him in time, once they saw his dedication to the magical arts and his power. Harry was determined that he would earn their loyalty and devotion; would prove that he would not only campaign for those of lesser blood, but would support and defend pureblood rights and customs also.

Another loud scream drew Harry out of his thoughts, and with a barely perceptible wince he turned further into his lover's arms, on the pretence of an embrace. He knew he couldn't fool the Dark Lord, who pulled away slightly to look Harry in the eye.

'It is important that you watch this ceremony, that you are here to oversee it conducted. There may come a time as my Consort when you will need to be present for a public execution. If that time comes, you must be able to stomach it, must not show any weakness.'

Harry's face was terribly conflicted, and Lord Voldemort sensed it was not entirely to do with Smith and his impending execution.

'What if the person being executed is someone I love?' Harry asked quietly.

Suddenly the Dark Lord knew what was bothering his beautiful lover.

'You are worried about your family and their continued absence,' he guessed quickly.

Harry's face fell, and he nodded slightly.

Despite Hermione returning to Britain with him, the Weasley's had not only decided to not come
back, but had chosen to continue to support the Order of the Phoenix.

Any person who had been evacuated in the Order's medallion scheme had been invited back to Britain with amnesty. Whilst most had returned to start new lives, many had chosen to disappear with the rest of the Order, fleeing from France and holing themselves up Merlin knows where. The Weasley family had made their choice, and were now out of Harry's help, perhaps for good.

Remus and his pack had also been offered amnesty by the Dark Lord, in exchange for Remus' actions in assisting in Harry's escape. As a further reward, Remus had been granted a house in Britain to live in. Despite selecting to remain in France with his pack, Remus had accepted the lodgings in Britain, in order to have a place to stay when he visited Harry, as he had done about a fortnight ago.

As for Sirius Black, any charges against the man had been dropped on Harry's request, but he was still under close surveillance. Recently Harry had been paying him supervised visits, simply talking with him and giving the man a chance to know his godson. They were by no means close, but were slowly starting to know one another.

In contrast the Weasley family, along with any other known fugitives, were wanted dead or alive by the British magical government, and faced death or imprisonment if they were captured. Harry knew there was a possibility that one of his foster family members would be caught, brought to Britain, tried and then executed. As Lord Consort, he would need to be present, would have to watch as one of his loved ones was killed before him.

He was so unbearably angry, and yet he knew the Weasley's had had the opportunity to return home like any other involved. They would all have to live with that decision.

'Has there been any news on the Order?' Harry questioned his lover.

Their best spies were scouring Europe for any sightings of the rebel organisation, who were now more than ever a danger. In the heat of escape Harry had had no chance to *Obliviate* Minerva McGonagall of the knowledge that he and the Dark Lord were bonded.

The woman had that extremely sensitive information in her arsenal, and as such knew that if she could simply kill Harry, the weaker target, then she would destroy the Dark Lord's power. Security around the pair was tighter than ever, and after Lord Voldemort had told his trusted Inner Circle of his bonding, they had gladly extended their protection to cover Harry.

'There has been no news. Wherever they are, they are well-hidden.'

Feeling the unpleasant burn of helplessness, the knowledge that he could do nothing but wait for the Order to rear its head and attempt to strike, frustrated Harry beyond belief.

Glancing at Rabastan Lestrange from the corner of his eye, Harry wondered if now would be the time to propose to the man his plan that he had developed. Seeing the direction of his lover's gaze, the Dark Lord asked Harry calmly, 'Are you contemplating offering Rabastan your proposition?'

Roughly a week ago, when the Inner Circle, the Dark Lord and Harry had been present in Lestrange Manor, Harry had caught sight of something extraordinarily strange.

He had seen an innocent enough servant woman from the corner of his eye, passing dishes into the room for their luncheon. However it soon became clear that there was something suspicious about the female, as the shimmer of magic upon her skin had caught Harry's eye.

He had realised, as he ate his lunch and only half-listened to the talk around him, that the woman was
in fact wearing the face of another, and had transformed from her true body. She was a Metamorphmagus.

There was only four Metamorphmagus’ registered in Britain. Three of them were Rabastan’s children, and Harry could tell instinctively that the magical signature of the person in the corner was that of an adult.

Therefore, the only possible identity of the servant woman was Nymphadora Tonks, Rabastan’s retired Birther.

Harry had already been informed of what had happened to his friend Draco Malfoy, how the boy had been kidnapped and impersonated at Hogwarts by none other than Nymphadora Tonks. As the report made by Rabastan went, he had tracked his traitorous ex-Birther to one of their residences, only to discover she had fled to France.

The search was underway for the Metamorphmagus, who was under charge of aiding in the kidnap of both Draco Malfoy and Harry himself.

Therefore, Harry was naturally confused as to how the woman was in hiding in Lestrange Manor. He knew about Rabastan's ability in sensing magical signatures, and knew that there was no way Tonks could have remained here without Rabastan knowing.

It had occurred to Harry as he quietly ate his lunch, that Rabastan Lestrange had betrayed the Dark Lord.

Later that night, as he and his lover lay entwined in bed, Harry had told the truth of what he had uncovered. Despite his past relations with Rabastan, despite any lingering attachment to the man, Harry felt he owed his first loyalty to the Dark Lord.

His lover had been furious, but Harry had had time to deliberate on how to best deal with the situation. When he had proposed his plan, the Dark Lord had completely changed his mindset. He still insisted on being the one to decide on Rabastan's punishment for going behind his back, but had agreed that as his future Consort, Harry should have a say in what happened to Nymphadora Tonks.

Now standing in the middle of a forest, in the dead of night on Samhain, Harry decided that it was time to give Rabastan his proposition. Turning up to look at his lover, Harry said quietly, 'I am going to speak with him now. I promise we will be back in time for the ceremony.'

With a brief kiss to his lover's lips, Harry left the warm circle of his arms and approached the Lestrange trio. When he came before them, they all bowed their heads, offering him the respect that was rightfully his as the Dark Lord's future Consort.

'May I speak with you in privacy Rabastan?' Harry asked after the trio had given him their proper greetings.

Rabastan's eyes immediately went to his Lord, worried that the man would think he was attempting to seduce his Consort-to-be if he accompanied Harry into the privacy of the trees. Before he had a chance to work out if Lord Voldemort had approved of this private conversation, Harry discreetly rolled his eyes and said meaningfully, 'The Dark Lord has given me full permission to speak with you alone.'

Looking mildly embarrassed, trying to ignore the snickers of his brother and sister-in-law, Rabastan gestured for Harry to lead the way. They disappeared into the trees, followed by watchful crimson eyes that held a hint of pride. His Harry was exercising his power as Lord Consort, was learning
how to deal with situations such as these.

Once Harry had swept the trees with his magic and ascertained that there was no one within hearing distance he turned to Rabastan and decided there was no use in dodging around the issue.

'I know about Nymphadora Tonks, and how you are harbouring her in your Manor.'

Rabastan froze in horror, staring uncomprehendingly at Harry whilst the green-eyed boy simply looked back straight-faced.

'My Lord Consort…' Rabastan begun.

The Inner Circle had begun referring to him in that manner, because it pleased the Dark Lord to hear his lover be paid the proper respect and deference.

'There is nothing you can say that can prove me otherwise. I saw her with my own eyes Rabastan.'

Rabastan clenched his jaw, cobalt blue eyes revealing his mind calculating as he tried to work out how to handle this situation.

'Does the Dark Lord know?' he asked at last, eyes not quite meeting Harry's. He was ashamed.

'Yes. I told him the night I discovered her presence in your Manor,' Harry responded promptly.

Rabastan seemed to fold in on in himself as he questioned in a voice barely above a whisper, 'How long have you known? How long has my Lord known?'

'For about a week. It was during that luncheon that was held in your Manor.'

Slowly, Rabastan straightened his spine and set his shoulders back, regathering his pureblood pride. Finally looking Harry in the eye, he said with quiet determination, 'Then there truly is nothing I can say in my defence, other than I did not have the strength to turn her in. But that is no excuse.'

Harry felt pity rise in him, understanding his ex-contractor's attachment to the woman who had birthed his children. But he had to push it away, and remain strong for what was coming.

Rabastan continued to speak, his voice strong even as he said, 'I accept any punishment my Lord sees fit, as is his right. But I must ask…why is he not speaking with me now? With all due respect, should he not be the one handing down punishment?'

At this, Harry had the opportunity to raise his proposal.

'You are right of course, and the Dark Lord will be issuing your punishment to you in due time. However I am speaking to you tonight, because I have come up with a solution to our problem.'

Rabastan searched Harry's face, looking for some indication of whether this 'solution' would result in his ex-Birther's execution.

'Tonks is a known, and accepted member of the Order of the Phoenix. I am sure they would welcome their agent back to them with open arms, should she return to them.'

Rabastan watched Harry as he spoke, noting the intelligence and charisma behind his words. Then Harry turned to him, face hard as he said, 'My Lord and I have decided on two options to be offered to Nymphadora Tonks. The first is death by public execution. The second is for her to swear an Unbreakable Vow of loyalty to the Dark Lord and return to the Order as our secret agent.'
Rabastan was stunned at the simple brilliance of what Harry was suggesting, knowing that Tonks would undoubtedly choose the second option, not wishing to put her children through the pain of losing their mother.

'I will bring these two proposals of action to my ex-Birther, and return to you with her answer,' Rabastan said after a short pause.

'You have twenty four hours to do so,' Harry responded coolly, before turning to leave. Another thought hit him, and he looked back at Rabastan saying in a gentler tone of voice, 'The Dark Lord values your long service and otherwise unwavering loyalty to him, and will keep this in mind when deciding on your punishment.'

With the slightest quirk of his lips Harry added, 'Good luck.'

Then the future Lord Consort was gone, returning to the clearing and to his lover, to witness the execution of Zacharias Smith.

As Harry strolled through the trees, wrapping his fur cloak tighter against the icy wind blowing toward him, he wore a subtle smile on his face.

This was his new life, the position he would be stepping up to. He was not only doing this for his lover, but for himself also. He wanted the chance to make a mark on the world, to close the chapter of his life in which he had been a Courtesan.

He didn't want to bury it in the past, for it played a part in making him who he was today. But he would create new memories to combat the unpleasant ones, would move on from that time in his life.

He would do this with his lover by his side, and the motley collection of friends and supporters he had made through his journey to this point.

Harry Potter was ready for the future, and whatever was waiting in store.

**FIN**

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**Chapter End Notes**

Author Note: I can't believe it's actually finished. It's been almost a year since I started writing this story, and I never expected either writing this much, or having so many wonderful people enjoy what I wrote.

Thank you all so much for making this so much fun to write, your reviews gave me motivation to keep going.

I will be taking a break, as I mentioned in the previous update, in order to focus on my studies and have a chance to recover from writing. Hopefully, after my rest, I will be ready to leap into a sequel for you all. I will be posting another chapter on this story informing you when, if everything goes according to plan, that the sequel is up.

So remember to watch this space!

Goodbye for now (but definitely not forever)
Drops of Nightshade x

Works inspired by this one: Worth It by Arualiaa

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!