Expecting the Unexpected

by Phoenixstrike

HP/DM slash. Harry just wanted one normal year at Hogwarts. He should have known that 'normal' is for other people, not him. And this time it's not even his fault. What's an eighteen-year-old boy, who also happens to be a virgin, to do when he suddenly discovers he's pregnant? Warnings for mPreg, slash, and adult language.

Notes

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This story is (obviously) mPreg. But it's set in a world where wizards can't fall pregnant just because they're wizards. This is an astronomically rare occurrence in Harry's world.
He bit down on the boy’s neck, causing him to cry out in a combination of pain and unadulterated pleasure. He knew he shouldn’t be doing this but it felt too amazing to stop. He thrust deeply, wildly, as every ounce of self-control he possessed snapped. He was getting close now; he could feel the tingling begin to spread through his body, the familiar sensation of his balls tightening, as his body prepared for orgasm. With a final deep thrust into the other boy, he stiffened, releasing a hoarse cry as he came, spilling himself into the tight channel.

He felt strong hands weave themselves into his hair and then he was being pulled into a kiss, one that was both soft and passionate. A sense of contentment that had been all too rare recently washed over him. Far sooner than he’d have liked, the kiss ended. He slipped out of the other boy, and still panting hard, climbed off the bed and began searching for his clothes.

Now fully dressed, he turned to his lover, ready to declare how utterly fantastic that had been, but the words died on his lips. Instead he simply gaped in horror, the euphoria he was feeling draining away instantly. “No….”

His bed partner just laughed; it was an unpleasant sound full of taunting. The expression contorted into a sneer.

“Surprise.”

* * *

“I’m sorry, Madam Pomfrey, but did you just say Harry is pregnant?” Hermione squeaked. The Hogwarts matron surveyed the scene in front of her. Harry was laying on the examining table in the Hospital Wing, his ever-present best friends either side of him. Ron Weasley was white-faced, which emphasised the freckles on his face horribly, as his blue eyes bulged slightly with shock. He was holding onto the headboard of the bed, as if in need of the physical support. Hermione Granger, hair as bushy as ever, cheeks flushed, and her face holding the expression anyone familiar with the girl had come to associate with pre-exam nerves, was holding Harry’s hand in her own, a grip so tight that her knuckles were chalk-white.

And then there was Harry himself. He was propped up in the bed with pillows, looking faintly green- a combination, no doubt, of the recent constant vomiting and the news he had just received, looking as if Voldemort himself had suddenly returned from the dead and broken into the school. He suddenly startled everyone by bursting out laughing.

“Hysterical, Madam Pomfrey,” he said, the incredulity he was currently feeling laced into every syllable, “but it’s still months until April Fools’ Day, you know.”

“I’m deadly serious, Mister Potter,” she replied sternly. Harry scanned her face, looking for a hint of a lie. He wondered who had put her up to this. Was it George? Of course not, Harry reminded himself. George hadn’t been the same since the Battle of Hogwarts and the loss of Fred.

“I need to congratulate you on your completely accurate diagnosis then,” he said drily. “Pregnancy is clearly the obvious conclusion. I really should have suspected it myself. Except for two tiny little details. For one, I’m a virgin. And for another, I’m male.”

“It is not something I’ve ever come across in all my years of practising Healing,” Madam Pomfrey said, “but there is no doubt whatsoever, Mister Potter. You’re pregnant. I’ve performed the
diagnostic spell three times as I didn’t believe it myself, and each time it’s displayed a positive result for pregnancy.”

“Then there’s something wrong with your charm!” Harry yelled, feeling his cheeks flush. “I’m a bloke! I have, er, bloke parts! And I highly doubt that if God wanted to send the next Messiah to Earth he’d choose me to carry it! So, how the bloody hell did I get pregnant?”

“I honestly don’t know,” Madam Pomfrey replied. Harry noticed she looked as agitated as he’d ever seen the usually unflappable matron. “But there is certainly nothing wrong with my charm work. You’re with child, Harry. I need to speak to the headmistress. But before I do that I would like to perform two specific diagnostic spells designed for pregnancy, if you’re agreeable?”

“Sure, why not,” Harry sighed. “It’s not like they’re going to reveal anything, because I. Am. Not. Pregnant.” Harry knew he sounded rude, but he was getting irritated now. Irritated with Madam Pomfrey for actually believing he could be carrying a baby. Of all the stupid things he’d ever heard… Okay, so he’d heard pregnant women were sick in early pregnancy, and he’d been feeling grotty for weeks now with nausea and extreme tiredness, but people had to have had sex and have girl bits for pregnancy. He met neither of those criteria.

Madam Pomfrey pointed her wand at Harry’s bare abdomen and uttered, “Repertum Gravida.” Harry watched in morbid fascination as his stomach emitted a periwinkle blue colour that was intensely bright. His stomach felt feverishly hot, then suddenly ice-cold, before the light faded from him completely. But instead of disappearing, it formed a cloud that hovered mid-air. Harry blinked a few times and realised the cloud was forming words. He felt himself gape in blank shock.

Detection of viable pregnancy: positive. Number of foetuses: one.

The matron waved her wand again. “Tempus Gravida.” More periwinkle light, that in any other circumstance Harry would have described as beautiful. However at the moment the light was nothing except terrifying.


“I don’t… I can’t… how did… oh fuck,” Harry babbled, barely noticing Hermione’s grip on his hand had intensified so much she was now crushing it. “I don’t understand,” he whispered. Disbelief was flooding through him. He realised he was shaking violently.

“I’ll leave you for a few moments, Harry,” Madam Pomfrey said kindly. “I’ll go and speak to Headmistress McGonagall. With your permission, of course. But I think she really needs to know about this.” Harry simply nodded, too dumfounded to speak further. “OK, then. I’ll be a few minutes.”

“I don’t know how this happened. I’ve never done anything, with anyone. I swear I’m telling the truth!” Harry said desperately, once the door to the Hospital Wing closed. He realised his eyes were brimming with unshed tears.

“We believe you, mate, don’t we, Hermione?” Ron said. Hermione nodded her head vigorously.

“Of course we do, Harry! And there’s bound to be a logical reason for this. I remember reading in Healing Through the Ages that there have been three other documented cases of male pregnancy in the last seven hundred years. Hang on, I’ll just run to the-”

“If the end of that sentence was ‘library’ then, please, don’t bother,” Harry said wearily. “Even if
there have been a few freak cases, it doesn’t explain how I’ve ended up pregnant.” Pregnant. He was pregnant. There was a baby growing inside him. Bile rose up in his throat with alarming speed and his stomach churned. “Oh, oh! Pass me that kidney dish, Ron.”

Ron got the metal dish under Harry’s chin just in time before Harry was sick into it. This was all too much to take in. His head was spinning with the information he’d received in the last half an hour.

“I’m going to have a baby,” he said aloud as he wiped his mouth on a corner of his blanket whilst Hermione Vanished the contents of the kidney dish, “oh god.”

“You know we’ll be there with you every step of the way, Harry,” Ron said sincerely, gripping Harry’s shoulder in a supportive way. “You’re not going to do this alone. You’ll always have me and Hermione, and Ginny, and Mum and Dad will help loads too. You know how Mum is around babies. She’s going to adore this.”

Harry forced a weak smile that was fooling no one.

Just then the door to the Hospital Wing was flung open and Professor McGonagall, thin-lipped and her hair pulled tightly back into a bun, strode into the ward.

“Oh, Potter,” she said as soon as she saw Harry, and her voice was gentle, sympathetic. “Why do these things always happen to you?” Then she strode around the bed and stood at his side, and did the last thing Harry was expecting; she took him into her arms. “Don’t worry, Potter. You’ll have the support of the school. I’ll personally ensure that.”

Madam Pomfrey cleared her throat. “Harry, if it’s OK with you, I’d like to perform a paternity test. To find out who the foetus’ other parent is.”

“Other parent?” Harry repeated. Madam Pomfrey smiled. Harry thought the smile was slightly patronising, which didn’t help improve his current mood one single iota.

“Yes. You know, it takes two people to make a child, Mister Potter.”

“I know that!” Harry shouted. “Which, aside from me being a boy, is why I can’t understand how this has happened. As I’ve said, I’ve never had sex with anyone, or even- you know, um, been naked with anyone else-” Harry’s cheeks where burning with embarrassment now- “so how can there possibly be another parent?”

“Actually, Potter, I have a theory about how you came to be in this situation,” Professor McGonagall said. “This is an exceptionally rare situation to the point where it’s not been seen in a few centuries, but it’s not unprecedented. And If I’m right then there is another parent involved.”

“Fine,” Harry said, and screwed his eyes tightly shut. If he concentrated hard enough then maybe he could pretend he was in Gryffindor Tower, in his own bed, that he had just had the strangest and most ludicrous dream, and hadn’t woken up yet. “Just go ahead. Do whatever you like.”

“Harry.” Madam Pomfrey’s voice forced him to abandon that idea. “As you may know, Muggles determine paternity after the birth of a child, through testing of DNA. But we don’t have to wait until the birth. There is a charm that will reveal the parents of a child whilst he or she is still in utero. I can do that right now. And then, we’ll take it from there, once they’re identified.”

For the third time that hour she pointed her wand at Harry’s stomach. “Paternitas.”

More coloured light. More gentle this time though, Harry thought, like a warm glow, rather than a dazzling bolt. It was a soft lilac, and its wispy consistency reminded him of memories just before they
were dropped into a Pensieve.

After a couple of minutes, the smoke rose into the air, as before, and began to form letters.

*Parent one: Harry James Potter.*

“Well, the child is definitely biologically yours, Harry,” Madam Pomfrey said. Harry was barely listening. He was too busy focussing on the smoke, which was rearranging itself once more to form more letters.

A collective gasp filled the room. Hermione let out a small scream, whilst Ron groaned and flung his hands over his face, shaking his head almost violently in evident disbelief. Madam Pomfrey and Professor McGonagall began talking very rapidly and urgently in whispers. But Harry was paying them no mind. He was struggling to comprehend what he was reading. It simply wasn’t true. He took his glasses off and rubbed his eyes, hoping against hope that when he replaced them on his face he would see a different name. But no such luck. There, in three-foot-high letters of lilac smoke was written, perfectly clearly, the last name he’d wanted to see:

*Parent two: Draco Malfoy.*
“Please, please tell me that Malfoy and I aren’t having a child together,” Harry said weakly, for what was perhaps the twentieth time in the last hour. He felt faint, and more than a little sick. If he had anything left in him to bring up, he was in no doubt he would have done so several minutes ago. “In fact, please tell me this is all some hideous trick and Noel Edmonds is about to pop out at any second and yell, ‘Gotcha!’.”

“Unfortunately this is definitely no trick,” Professor McGonagall said, “and who is Noel Edmonds?” Harry didn’t answer her. He was sitting in the headmistress’ office, alone except for Professor McGonagall; Ron and Hermione had been ordered back to the Gryffindor common room. Madam Pomfrey had gone to the dungeons to collect Draco Malfoy. The other parent, Harry’s brain helpfully supplied.

Harry thought back to this morning, and was suddenly desperate for a Time-Turner, to go back to a time where he just blissfully thought he was ill, rather than- Merlin, he couldn’t even think the word. Pregnant. Hermione and Ron had practically frogmarched him down to the Hospital Wing after Ron had found Harry passed out on the floor of the boys’ toilets, white-faced and dripping in sweat, having evidently just thrown his guts up. It wasn’t by a long shot the only time Harry had been sick in the past three weeks, but it was the first time he’d not managed to hide it from his friends. Hermione had revived him, and she and Ron had both ignored Harry’s protests that he didn’t need Madam Pomfrey. The matron performed her diagnostic spells, frowned, and- instead of the Pepperup Harry was expecting to receive- dropped the bombshell of the century on him. Yes, life was much easier this morning.

He jumped slightly and looked up as Madam Pomfrey, accompanying a confused and nervous-looking Draco Malfoy, entered McGonagall’s office.

“Professor,” Malfoy began, “Madam Pomfrey said you needed to speak to me urgently. Is this about my mother? Is she well?”

“As far as I’m aware, Mister Malfoy, your mother is fine,” Professor McGonagall replied, not unkindly. “However there is a matter of supreme urgency I need to discuss with you.” She gestured with her hands to sit down, and Malfoy did. Only then did he seem to spot Harry, already seated. He started slightly, his confusion evidently growing.

“Potter? What…” he said, but Professor McGonagall held up a hand to silence him. Harry looked away, suddenly finding it impossible to fix his gaze on the boy in front of him.

“Mister Malfoy. Can you please tell me what your relationship with Mister Potter has been like since term started six weeks ago?”

Harry spluttered at the word ‘relationship’. He chanced a glance at Draco; his arms were folded and he was staring at the floor. He had the appearance of a person who would rather be anywhere than where he was currently.

“Potter and I haven’t even spoken to one another since term began,” he said, and it was the perfect truth; there had been none of the heated animosity each held for the other during their early years at Hogwarts since they had arrived for the start of their ‘eighth year’, as some of the teachers called it. Instead, both Harry and Draco had come to an unsaid agreement for each of them to just leave the other well alone. “I don’t understand what any problem Potter has includes me, or vice-versa, Professor.” Harry noticed Malfoy was deliberately avoiding his gaze. Good, he thought. Let the git
feel uncomfortable.

“That tallies with what Potter has told me,” said Professor McGonagall, “which means what I have to tell you will come as an even greater shock. There’s really no gentle way to break this to you, so I’ll just say it. Mister Malfoy, as unbelievable as this may sound, Harry is pregnant. And spells have determined that you are the child’s biological father.”

Harry hadn’t thought it possible that Malfoy’s porcelain skin could pale any further, but he was wrong. Every drop of blood drained instantly from his face, leaving him looking deathly ill and sallow. Harry noticed he was gripping the arms of his chair incredibly tightly. Harry wondered if Malfoy was about to throw up. He was perfectly still. In fact, Harry thought, he looked every inch that he was carved from marble.

“What do you mean, ‘pregnant’?” Malfoy said in barely more than a whisper. Harry, suddenly furious, found his voice.

“You know, Malfoy. Pregnant. Knocked up. With child. Up the duff. In the family way. Bun in the oven. Expecting. Is that enough euphemisms for you, or would you like me to continue?” Harry didn’t know why he felt so venomous when this was clearly as much of a shock to Malfoy as it was to him, but all he knew was this was all somehow Malfoy’s doing, and Harry hated him at that particular moment.

“I know what the word means, you idiot,” Malfoy replied. “I was just… you know what? Never mind. What do you mean, Professor, that Potter is pregnant, and with my child? That’s absolutely impossible! I’ve never so much as hugged him, let alone anything else, and he’s a boy!”

“Thanks for pointing out the bloody obvious. Ten points to Slytherin,” Harry drawled. Malfoy was still refusing to meet his eye and this was making Harry extremely angry. “Look, I don’t know how this happened, and I’m not exactly delighted by it myself, OK?”

“It’s impossible,” Malfoy repeated.

“When it comes to Potter, Mister Malfoy, we should all know by now that the ‘impossible’ is achievable,” Professor McGonagall said. “It should have been impossible to survive the Killing Curse once, let alone twice. Robbing Gringotts is supposed to be impossible. Defeating the most evil Dark wizard who has ever lived with a simple Disarming Charm learnt well before OWL level should not have been possible. Yet Potter has achieved all those.”

“Yeah, and that makes me feel so precious and special,” Harry said sarcastically. “But this time, I’m not the one who’s done anything! I don’t know how you did this, Malfoy, but you’ve done something, and now we’re having a baby together! This is your fault!”

“I haven’t done anything!” Malfoy protested. Professor McGonagall cleared her throat.

“Actually, Mister Malfoy, if my theory is correct, then this is down to certain, er, behaviour on your part,” she said, silencing Harry with a look as he opened his mouth to say something at that. “Although there is no way you could have been expected to foresee this happening, so to say it’s your fault per se is perhaps unfair. I’m going to have to ask you some deeply personal questions, I’m afraid, and I require the absolute truth.”

“Truth and Malfoy are incompatible,” Harry muttered under his breath. Both Malfoy and his headmistress gave him a look, and Harry shut up.

“Malfoy- Draco- I’m sorry to ask you this,” Professor McGonagall continued as if Harry hadn’t
spoken, “but have you had sexual contact with any students since the start of the school year?”

Malfoy’s face, which had been so white from shock, flooded with colour and he looked deeply uncomfortable now.

“Does Potter have to be here, Professor? I’d much rather he left before I answered this,” Draco said.

“Mister Potter will be staying,” Professor McGonagall replied sternly, before Harry got a chance to speak. “This matter, after all, greatly concerns him, and he has a right to hear it. Now, please answer the question.”

“Fine,” Draco said, incredibly quietly. “Yes. Once.” He threw his face into his hands but Harry could still see the blush seeping out from behind his fingers. He was clearly mortified.

“And was there Polyjuice involved in this encounter?” Professor McGonagall asked. Harry’s head snapped up.

“Yes,” Draco replied, and his voice was barely audible now. He was still refusing to look at anyone. Harry gaped at him in disbelief, as did Madam Pomfrey, whilst Professor McGonagall looked as if this was exactly what she suspected to hear. “Although I didn’t know that until after we’d, er, finished.”

“Perhaps, Draco, you should start from the beginning,” Professor McGonagall said.

*

Six weeks earlier

“Malfoy!”

Draco froze but didn’t turn instantly around. He knew that voice. Of course he did. It belonged to the person he’d thought more about than anyone since the Battle of Hogwarts. He took a deep breath and turned round slowly.

“Potter. What do you want?”

“To talk.” Potter’s expression was unreadable, his green eyes boring into Draco. He turned and walked away, heading for the stairs that led up to the seventh floor. There was no question Draco wouldn’t follow.

He caught up to Potter as he was pacing in front of an all-too familiar wall. He suddenly felt dizzy and realised his palms were sweating.

“I can’t… Potter, you cannot seriously want to talk in the Room of Requirement? I mean, after, well, you know… does it still even work?”

The appearing door answered that question, and Draco was loath to appear frightened of the room if Potter wasn’t. Apparently saving each other’s lives hadn’t quelled some of the competition that existed between them. He took a deep breath and followed Potter into the Room.

It could have been any of the four houses’ common rooms, although the colouring and décor were neutral enough to as not distinguish which. It was small, but incredibly homely, Draco thought. There were comfy, squashy armchairs, a large, roaring fire, and a shaggy cream-coloured rug laid out on the wooden floor. It couldn’t have less resembled the Room of Hidden Things, for which Draco was extremely grateful. He felt himself relax, although not fully. This was still the Room in which he
nearly died just four months’ previously, where Crabbe, idiot that he was, did lose his life. And he was still here with Potter.

“What did you want to discuss, Potter?” he asked. Potter’s mouth drew up into a crooked smile.

“Oh, you know, little of this, little of that,” he said, and licked his bottom lip. Draco’s eyes widened. Did Potter just- is he flirting with me?

“What the fuck are you-” Draco began, but Potter forcibly shoved him against the wall and crushed his mouth onto Draco’s. Draco meant to push Potter away. He meant to punch him in his stupid ugly face and storm out of the Room and Requirement. He meant to do both of those. He certainly didn’t mean to moan, feel himself growing hard, and begin to kiss Potter back.

“Like that, do you?” Potter purred in his ear, as his hand snaked down to the growing bulge in Draco’s school robes. “This is a much more productive way to work out some of that, ah, tension between us, don’t you think?” The he sank to his knees, unfastened Draco’s robes, and took Draco into his mouth.

Up until that point Draco had still meant to end this. But he was an eighteen-year-old boy full of hormones, who hadn’t had sex with anyone except himself since sixth year, and Potter was surprisingly talented with his mouth. He surrendered almost instantaneously. What was one shag between former enemies? He had passed the point of caring who was doing it, and focussed instead on the fact that it was happening. He could feel himself getting close….

Potter pulled off and stood up abruptly, leaving Draco feeling very frustrated. “Not yet,” Potter whispered. “I want you to fuck me.”

Draco simply groaned in response, as his hands began to fumble with Potter’s clothing, as fingers began working on his. Clothes were discarded haphazardly around the Room and the two fell onto the shaggy rug by the fire. It was every bit as soft as it looked, Draco’s brain had time to process, before Potter was doing delightfully lewd things to him and he was no longer thinking at all…

It was after he had got himself dressed that he realised something was very, very wrong. The sex had been fantastic and he was still on a post-orgasmic high. A strong sense of calm had overcome him; the sensation was so alien to him that it took him a while to acknowledge it for what it was. He turned, silly grin plastered on his face, to Potter, and felt every drop of calm drain from him.

For, lying on the rug, stark-naked and smirking, wasn’t Potter, but Pansy Parkinson.

“No…” Draco said, tears pricking his eyes. She simply laughed, as if taunting him.

“Surprise,” she mocked.

“What…” Draco said. His brain was struggling to process just what was happening.

“Oh don’t look so shocked, darling,” Pansy smirked. “I’d always wondered what there was between you and that Mudblood-loving freak. Ooh, just wait until the rest of our house hears that you have a thing for Potter! I’m sure Theo and Greg in particular will be just delighted to know you wanted to fuck the boy who’s responsible for landing their fathers in Azkaban. I’ll make you regret ever having betrayed us, Draco.”

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“You had sex with Pansy Parkinson, thinking it was me, and she was doing it for some kind of sick revenge against you?” Harry yelled. “What the hell were you thinking? Malfoy, I don’t even know
where to start with just how twisted this is!” He ran a hand over his face. “Did you seriously think I’d drag you into the Room of Requirement for sex? I’m not even gay! And even if I was, do you really think I’d choose you as the ideal person for a quickie in between classes?!” He realised that Malfoy was extremely close to tears. He was staring at the floor, very white, and biting hard on his lip. Harry found he didn’t care. “OK, so you slept with Parkinson, who was Polyjuiced as me. We’ll deal with that later. Professor, this still doesn’t explain how I managed to get pregnant.”

“As to that, Harry, I believe I know,” Professor McGonagall said. “However I will ask that you’re both quiet and refrain from interruptions whilst I explain. Harry, Draco, as you both know, the change that happens when a dose of Polyjuice is consumed is not an instant one. It is a continuous change over a short space of time. The reverse is also true; once Polyjuice begins to wear off, a person returns to themself in stages, rather than immediately.”

Harry thought back to the numerous occasions when he’d taken Polyjuice. Each time he’d noticed his own features returning through the disguise- a return of his own messy hair, or maybe his eyes returning to their own colour. He remembered Ron in their second year, disguised as Crabbe but with his own red hair returning, whilst in the Slytherin common room. He understood what McGonagall meant. “In this case, which is one of extreme unlikeliness, Miss Parkinson’s body was in the process of shifting from male back to female when she conceived. Parts of her had returned to her female self enough to conceive, yet she was still in the body of Harry. The fertilised egg, therefore, contained Harry’s DNA, not hers.”

Harry couldn’t help thinking that this was perhaps the most fucked-up thing he’d heard since Dumbledore had revealed the existence of Voldemort’s Horcruxes to him two years ago. Malfoy had had sex with what he thought was Harry, got the girl pregnant during the effect of the Polyjuice wearing off, and then-

“Um, Professor, how did I end up pregnant? Why not Parkinson, as she’s the one who actually conceived?” Harry asked, thoroughly confused.

“Ah, Mister Potter, and there lies the magic of the Room of Requirement,” Professor McGonagall said. “Had this, ah, copulation occurred anywhere else in the castle, pregnancy would have been impossible due to how the human body is designed. The particular act Malfoy and Miss Parkinson engaged in cannot, and does not, ever result in pregnancy in either heterosexual or homosexual relations. Except in an extremely rare situation such as this. Miss Parkinson, obviously feeling particularly vindictive towards Draco at that moment, was wishing to hurt Draco and make his life complicated as much as she could, and the Room apparently obliged her.”

She paused and reached for a glass of water on her desk. Harry had a very uncomfortable feeling in his stomach. He knew very well what the Room of Requirement was capable of. He looked at his Professor as she took a sip of water before continuing.

“It ensured Miss Parkinson conceived. After all, becoming a parent at eighteen will be extremely difficult. However once Miss Parkinson began to return to herself, the conception faced a very real, critical threat. You see, once Miss Parkinson was completely back to normal, her DNA would have interwoven with that of yours and Draco’s in the embryo, which would have resulted in a spontaneous abortion. So the Room removed it from her and placed it in you, Harry, as the true natural parent. I suppose one could say it took on a form of Apparition, if you will. I daresay Mister Malfoy and yourself both being male confused the Room as it was unsure who make the transfer to, but I suspect that as Mister Malfoy was the one to impregnate Miss Parkinson in the first place, it selected you as the carrier.”

“Merlin on a broomstick,” Harry said, fully deciding in that moment that sometimes magic was a
meddlesome force that should keep its big fat nose out of other people’s lives.

“Would Pansy have known this?” Malfoy said, and Harry noticed he was shaking violently. He also had a tear track running down his left cheek, and was still refusing to even glance at Harry. “Did she do this on purpose?”

“Get pregnant, you mean? Almost certainly not,” Professor McGonagall replied. “It’s far more likely she just wanted to play a very vicious trick on you. It’s not something that’s been documented. I myself am only aware of this because Albus told me about a case here at Hogwarts two hundred years ago, which troubled the headmaster of the time deeply. But I take it your relationship with Miss Parkinson is still not a good one, Draco?”

Malfoy shook his head, and Harry thought there were only two times he’d ever seen him look worse: the night of Dumbledore’s death, and when Harry saved him from the Fiendfyre. He looked worse now than he had when the headmistress had informed Draco that Harry was pregnant with his child. “Pansy cooked it up with the other Slytherins,” Malfoy said. “She apparently thought it would be a hysterical joke and teach me a lesson. Blaise told me about it afterwards. She got one of Potter’s hairs from somewhere, snuck a spare set of Gryffindor robes out of the laundry, and, well, you know the rest. And since then I’ve been—” Malfoy paused and took a deep breath. “You know what? It doesn’t matter.” It was at this point Harry felt an unwanted but nonetheless real pang of sympathy. Draco was being tormented by his house for his family’s last-minute defection from Voldemort; a decision which had landed many of the students’ parents in Azkaban whilst keeping the Malfoys out of it. And Parkinson had given them the perfect tools with which to carry out their torment. Merlin, he detested that bitch. By the look on Professor McGonagall’s face it was clear she, too, was feeling sympathetic.

“If you’re still experiencing problems with your house, Draco,” she said kindly, “I can have you removed from the dungeons by nightfall. There is a private room on the fifth floor next to the portrait of Eris and Dysnomia. I’ll have the house-elves move your belongings shortly.”

“Thank you, Professor,” Draco replied, and Harry could hear the sheer relief in his voice.

Madam Pomfrey cleared her voice nervously. “There is something I need to discuss you,” she said. “I can perform a termination and end the pregnancy. Obviously it’s something you’ll need to talk about and agree upon, but we can abort if you wish—”

“No,” Harry and Draco both interrupted at the same time. Harry looked over at Malfoy quickly. It was the first time since they’d entered the room that Malfoy was looking directly at him. He offered the other boy the smallest hint of a smile, which was returned.

“Then I suggest we leave it for today. This has come as a major shock to you both, and I need to speak with Pansy Parkinson—don’t worry, I will not be revealing the consequences of her actions to her,” Professor McGonagall said, in response to an alarmed look from both boys. “I will, however, say this to you both. You’re having a child together, something that will connect you both for the rest of your lives. You need to be able to be in the same room with one another and be able to be civil towards one another without resorting to name-calling and duelling. You’re dismissed.”

Harry had just reached the bottom of the spiral staircase when he heard Malfoy calling his name.

“Can… can we talk? Please?” Malfoy asked. His voice was soft, dead, as if he’d given up.

“Not now,” Harry replied, only slightly surprised to hear that defeat echoed in his own voice. “I’m exhausted, I feel sick, and I’ve had the shock of a lifetime thrown on me. It’s been an extremely eventful few hours and I think holding a polite conversation with you right now would be the icing
on the Cake of Weirdness, and probably cause the universe to implode on itself or something. I’m just going to go up to Gryffindor Tower and crawl into bed. We’ll talk later.”

Draco looked as if he was about to argue, but he shut his mouth and simply nodded. “Tomorrow then?”

“Tomorrow,” agreed Harry.

“And, Potter?” Harry turned round again.

“I’m really fucking sorry.”

“Tomorrow, Malfoy,” Harry said, ignoring the apology, and turned once more and headed for the stairs. Only once he was completely alone in the corridor did he allow the emotion that had been threatening to overcome him for the last couple of hours surface. All he’d wanted was one year. Just one year at Hogwarts where he could be a normal eighteen-year-old boy; study, maybe have a few dates, land himself in detention, and spend time with his friends. Yet once again he was as far removed from normal as it was possible to be. He blinked angry tears from his eyes, cast a Silencing Charm around himself, and let out an almighty scream of fury.
Harry returned to the common room, headed straight for his dormitory, and was followed instantly by a very worried-looking Ron and Hermione. He saw Ginny, sitting on the sofa, cuddled into Neville and giving him a concerned look and wished, not for the first time, that things had worked out differently between them. But they had been apart for a year, and Ginny had grown close to Neville during Snape’s reign and their reformation of the DA. Besides, he thought bitterly, she’d hardly want a boyfriend knocked up with the spawn of Draco Malfoy, would she? They were still close, but they had a familial, rather than romantic, relationship now.

No sooner had Ron closed the dormitory door behind him and checked that Seamus and Dean weren’t there, he and Hermione pounced on Harry. He wearily curled up on his bed and retold the story, about what Pansy Parkinson had done, how the Room of Requirement had worked its magic, and how Draco had taken the news.

“Madam Pomfrey offered us the chance to terminate,” Harry said. “She said we’d have to talk it over and come to a mutual decision. But Malfoy and I both want to continue with the, er, pregnancy.” He smiled- the sort of smile that was merely rueful and not one of happiness. “I think it’s the first thing we’ve ever unanimously agreed upon in our lives.”

“Well, this explains Parkinson’s bizarre behaviour on the Hogwarts Express, mate,” Ron said, and Harry felt his eyes widen. Of course- he should have thought of that before. But then again, he had had rather a lot of other things to think about in the last few hours.

On the journey to school, Pansy had burst into the compartment Harry was sitting in with his friends, thrown her arms around Harry and begged for forgiveness for trying to sell him out to Voldemort, before planting a huge kiss on his mouth and winding her hands into his hair. He’d thrown her off straight away and sent a Stinging Jinx at her but not, apparently, before she’d managed to yank out a few hairs from his head. For the Polyjuice, obviously.

“And Malfoy really thought he was with you?” Hermione spluttered. She, of the three of them, was the calmest about Harry’s pregnancy, but the method of conception had left her absolutely enraged.

“Eugh! Harry, I’ve just realised something- that means Malfoy’s seen you naked! He’s seen your, you know,” Ron said, helpfully indicating the vague area of Harry’s groin with an open hand. “I mean, I know it’s not you you, but it was your body, right?” He let out a shudder, Hermione turned tomato red, and Harry groaned loudly and covered his face with his hands.

“Great,” Harry drawled. “I’ll just add that to the list of Reasons Harry Potter Is Never Leaving His Bed Again, shall I?”

“Are you coming down for dinner, Harry?” Hermione asked. Harry shook his head. “I just said I’m never leaving my bed.” Hermione gave him a stern look. “Sorry, Hermione. I’m not hungry. I just want sleep. And I’ll hex the first person who says I have to eat for the sake of the baby,” he said, and Hermione quickly shut her mouth, evidently having just opened it to utter those exact words. He closed his eyes, and felt Hermione remove his glasses and run her fingers through his hair once in a tender manner, before placing his blanket over him. Ron patted him on the shoulder and muttered something about bringing Harry up some food in case he changed his mind later, and then the room fell silent as his friends left. Despite the events of the day giving his brain enough to think about for hours, and the fact it was only early evening, Harry found he was so tired he fell straight asleep, where he didn’t so much as stir until the following morning.
Harry woke up late the following morning. He’d fully intended to miss breakfast and take a long, soothing shower, but he hadn’t eaten since the previous morning (and what he’d consumed then had all been thrown up), and the food Ron had brought up for him the previous evening was no longer edible. Reluctantly, he hauled himself out of bed, washed and dressed quickly, and followed Ron down to the common room, where a flustered-looking Hermione was already waiting for them.

“I’m glad you’re coming down for breakfast, Harry,” she said warmly, her face breaking into a smile when she saw him. Harry realised that she was genuinely worried about him, and vowed to make an effort to eat properly in future. To stop her nagging him constantly, if nothing else.

The trio made their way to the Great Hall, where Harry noticed Malfoy was looking at him. He was sat at the end of the Slytherin table with the first-years, evidently given up all pretence that all was well in Slytherin now that Harry and the headmistress knew what was going on. Harry turned away from his gaze quickly, and reached for a couple of slices of toast. He actually felt hungry, and was grateful for the sensation.

He was buttering his second slice of toast when Pansy Parkinson, tears streaming down her pug-ugly face, marched into the Hall, strode over to Draco, and began yelling at him at the top of her lungs.

“Traitor! And on top of that, you’re a snitch as well! You’ll pay for this, Draco!” she shrieked. “McGonagall expelled me last night, ‘cause you can’t keep your treacherous mouth closed! I hope you’re happy with yourself, Draco, because I swear, it’ll be the last time you are!” With that she turned on her heels and stormed out of the Great Hall, as excited chatter speculating as to what on earth the bint could have done to earn expulsion broke out amongst the four house tables. Malfoy looked supremely unconcerned with his ex-girlfriend’s public display, Harry noted, but underneath he knew the Slytherin would be affected. He wore his Malfoy Mask too well, sometimes.

Aside from the earlier excitement, breakfast was as normal for Harry, until the inevitable happened.

“Hey, Seamus, can you pass me the scrambled egg, please?” Neville asked innocently. Seamus handed them over, holding them in front of Harry for the briefest of seconds as he did so. But it was enough. Harry felt his stomach lurch in an extremely unpleasant manner as the smell of the eggs reached his nostrils and he threw his hand over his mouth.

“Are you OK, Harry?” Ron asked, clearly worried. Harry closed his eyes and shook his head, hoping the absence of the eggs, which were now several feet away from him, would stave off the nausea. But he knew it wasn’t going to be enough. Leaving all his school things and his cloak behind, he left his seat and dashed out of the Great Hall at a run, Ron closely on his heels whilst Hermione paused and collected up his belongings before following them. None of them noticed a concerned pair of grey eyes following them, as he, too, stood from his seat and left.

Harry just made it in time. He flung open the door of the nearest cubicle and threw up every last bit of his breakfast noisily into the toilet bowl.

“Mental note. Keep eggs away from me from now on,” he said rather breathlessly, as Ron handed him a wad of toilet paper to wipe his mouth on. Ron gave a nervous chuckle that didn’t really contain any humour.

“Noted. Look, Harry, shall we go and see Madam Pomfrey again? There must be a potion or something you can take that will help with the sickness.”

Ron helped Harry stand, who was surprised to find he was rather shaky, and Harry pulled the chain
on the toilet before the pair left the bathroom. He was unsurprised to find Hermione waiting anxiously outside. He was surprised, however, to find Draco, looking just as anxious.

“Potter, are you alright?” he asked, as he handed Harry a bottle of water that he had collected from the Slytherin table for him. Harry reached out and took the water, pulled off the lid and took a huge drink, feeling dehydrated from all the vomiting.

“Yeah. No thanks to you,” he replied as he replaced the cap on the bottle, and pointedly patted his abdomen, but his voice lacked venom. “If I’m going to do that every meal time it’s not going to take people long to work out there’s something up, is it?”

“Well, mate, soon you’ll, you know, be all fat and stuff, and they’ll all work it out then anyway,” Ron helpfully supplied. Both Harry and Malfoy stared at him, slightly open-mouthed, whilst Hermione grabbed hold of Ron’s arm and dragged him off to Charms with a loud, “Honestly, Ronald, have you no tact?” leaving Harry, still recovering from his vomiting bout, alone with Malfoy.

“So, er, Parkinson’s been expelled then,” Harry said, choosing to completely bypass Ron’s insightful interjection.

“Good,” Draco replied, but didn’t elaborate. They began walking towards Charms together, in silence.

“Look, Malfoy, we’d better not walk into class together,” Harry said. “This whole situation is so deep into Bizarro World as it is, without everyone thinking we’re friends or something.”

“‘Bizarro World’?” Malfoy repeated, mildly amused.

“Never mind,” Harry said quickly. “My point is… well, you get it. I’ve got a free period after lunch, can we talk then? If I haven’t died from puking my guts up by then.”

“Sure. Where shall we meet?”

“Anywhere but the Room of Requirement,” Harry said drily, gratified to see a huge flush of mortification creep up Malfoy’s face. “You’ve got your own room now, haven’t you? Behind the portrait of Eris and Dysnomia, right? I’ll meet you there.”

“Fine,” said Malfoy. “And, Potter, if there’s anything I can do…”

“Unless you happen to have a Time-Turner and can go back in time and not have sex with Parkinson in the first place, then no there isn’t,” Harry replied curtly, and turned without a backwards glance and strode into the Charms classroom and took his seat beside Hermione, leaving Malfoy slightly stunned-looking, standing alone in the corridor.

* 

Harry finished lunch (thankfully a non-offensive meal of roasted ham, mashed potatoes and vegetables that he devoured- and kept down, much to the relief of his stomach) and made his way to the fifth floor. He found the painting easily and sat down on the floor, waiting for Malfoy to finish lunch and join him.

He didn’t have a long wait; five minutes later Malfoy appeared. He held out a hand to help Harry off the floor. Harry looked at it, laughed, and got himself up with ease, ignoring the offered support.

“I’m pregnant, not an invalid,” he said, noticing Malfoy’s slight wince at the word ‘pregnant.’
Draco whispered the password to the portrait and it swung open. He stepped inside and Harry followed.

The room was basic but homely. It was neutral in décor, giving no indication as to its inhabitant’s house. There was a comfortable-looking bed, an armchair, a wardrobe and set of drawers, and a desk and chair in the corner- the former of which was already covered in sheets of parchment and textbooks. A large window on the far wall revealed a clear view of Hagrid’s hut and the Forbidden Forest. The room was meticulously clean and tidy, but still carried a slight smell that indicated it had not been used in many years. A small door on the other side led to what must be a bathroom, Harry assumed. Overall he thought the room was rather lovely. He sat down in the armchair, resting his head on the beck. He still felt very tired, despite sleeping for fourteen hours straight the previous night. He wondered when he wouldn’t feel tired again, with seven months of pregnancy left, and then a newborn. He quickly banished that rather unpleasant thought from his mind.

Malfoy sat down at the chair by his desk, and was looking incredibly awkward. Harry noticed he was struggling for eye contact again.

“I meant it yesterday,” he said, after a period of uncomfortable silence, “when I said I was sorry.”

“Thanks, but that doesn’t really make me feel a whole lot better, to be honest,” Harry replied. “Malfoy, what the fuck did you think you were doing?” He realised he was starting to get angry. “To do- what you did- were you thinking at all? Why on earth would you think I’d want to sleep with you? We hate each other, for Merlin’s sake!”

“Yes, Potter, you’ve made it perfectly clear you find me repulsive,” Draco snapped. “I wasn’t thinking, OK? Look, since May, everyone hates me. Your side hates me because my family chose to side with the Dark Lord and I have this fucking thing on my arm-” Draco rolled up his left sleeve, revealing the Dark Mark- not as black as it once was but still obvious- “and my father’s side hates me for what they see as a betrayal. We’ve been spat at, hexed, we’ve received death threats and numerous Howlers, and, to be frank, no one would cast Aguamenti on us if we were on fire. For ten crazy minutes someone wanted me. Or, at least I thought they did. It didn’t matter who that person was. I got carried away. It wasn’t my brightest idea, alright?”

And there was that uncomfortable, unwanted pang of sympathy in Harry’s chest again. Lucius he had very little sympathy for, but Malfoy and his mother… that was different.

“Okay,” he said finally. “Okay. Look, it’s happened, and I’m really pissed off that you did that, and let’s not even pretend it’s not completely weird. But there are other things we need to discuss. The fact that two people who don’t like each other are somehow going to have to learn to get along because they’re having a bloody child together, being Priority Number One.”

“I don’t hate you,” Draco almost whispered. Harry blinked.

“What-” he began, but Draco put up a hand to quieten him.

“I can’t hate you, Potter. You saved my life. The Room was burning, I was about to die, and you came back for me. I’d never been so glad to see anyone in my life ever as I was when I saw you on that broomstick. You spoke up for my mother and me at our trial and kept us out of Azkaban. You were the one to finally rid us all of the Dark Lord. I wish I could go back to hating you. I wish I could take delight in the fact that I’ve well and truly stuffed up your life. But I can’t. I’m amazingly grateful to you, if truth be told.”

Harry just stared at Malfoy. That was by far the most candid he’d ever seen him be. The annoying pang of sympathy he felt was growing.
“You’ve not ‘stuffed up my life’,” he said finally. “It’s not like I never wanted kids. It’s just that it in my head I was going to have them at twenty-five, once I was a qualified Auror, Ginny, who would have been my wife by then, was going to be their mother, and I most certainly wasn’t going to be the one pregnant with them! And I wasn’t ever expecting to end up as a single dad at eighteen. And I certainly never expected to have a child with you. Harry Potter’s Grand Life Plan has disappeared as abruptly as if someone cast Reducto at it.”

Well, I just need you to know I really am truly sorry,” Draco said, with obvious sincerity.

“I know,” replied Harry.

“This isn’t how I imagined ever having children either,” Draco said. “I expected to be married off to some pure-blood witch- probably some Beauxbatons girl from an old family who’d had nothing to do with the war that Father chose for me. We’d be married after a brief courtship, I’d have the obligatory heir- a son, naturally- and follow Father into his business dealings, or maybe open my own apothecary or something, whilst she spent her days lunching and spending the contents of the Malfoy vault. I wasn’t supposed to have a child with the half-blood vanquisher of my father’s master, who is also male.”

“I guess your father won’t be hearing about this,” Harry said, unable to stop himself. The corners of Draco’s mouth turned up in amusement.

“He’ll have to know eventually, I guess,” he replied. “After all, this is his grandchild. But, no, for the time being, er, ‘mum’s the word’.”

“If you say so, Malfoy,” Harry said, experiencing a hideous jolt when the words ‘Lucius Malfoy’ and ‘grandchild’ were uttered in the same sentence. He checked his watch. “Shit! I’ve got Herbology in ten minutes; I really need to get going.” He bent down and grabbed his school stuff, letting out a small gasp of discomfort as the movement caused a sharp twinge low down in his abdomen. “I’m alright,” he said quickly, noticing Draco looked as worried as he had that morning when Harry was throwing up. “Madam Pomfrey said I might get ligament pain. All normal, apparently.” He swung his bag over his shoulder.

“It’s going to take a long time to put our history behind us,” he added. “But I’m willing to try if you are. For the baby, if nothing else.” He couldn’t yet say ‘our’ baby; that was just far too strange. He offered Malfoy a small smile and held out his hand. Draco looked at the outstretched and quirked an eyebrow. He nonetheless took Harry’s hand.

“We’ll try to get along,” Draco agreed. “For the baby.”

“See you,” Harry said, and, realising he was late, made his way quickly out of Draco’s room and began heading towards the greenhouses.

* 

“Are you OK, Harry?” Ginny asked, as she approached him. Harry was sat by the lake, enjoying the fresh autumnal chill against his skin- the coolness washing over his face was combating some of the nausea he had been feeling since dinner. The sun was very low in the sky now, casting a pink and gold glow over the Hogwarts grounds. The sky above it was a dark navy blue, the hint of the stars contained within it just beginning to peep through. Ginny shivered slightly and wrapped her cloak around herself tightly. “Hermione said you wanted to be alone for a bit, but Ron said you were down here and that I should talk to you. Do you mind if I sit down?”

Harry smiled at his ex-girlfriend and patted the ground next to him. Ginny sat down. “Harry, is there
“Something wrong with you?” she blurted out, and Harry could hear the worry in her voice. “You’ve been quiet and pale for weeks. You missed lunch and dinner yesterday and returned to the common room yesterday afternoon looking like death, you dashed out of the Great Hall this morning at breakfast and were obviously being sick, and then you ate nothing at dinner this evening. What’s going on?”

“Nothing, Gin,” Harry lied. He’d never been good at lying, particularly to those we was closest to, so he didn’t really know why he’d expected Ginny to believe him. She very clearly didn’t. Instead she snorted in contempt.

“I suppose ‘nothing’ is the reason you spent all day in the Hospital Wing yesterday, and why Ron and Hermione took you there after dinner, too, Harry?” she said, and Harry didn’t know what her voice contained more of: bitterness, sadness or fear. “Yes, I saw you going in there. I even called your name but I don’t think you heard me. I know I’m not your girlfriend anymore, but I still care about you, you know. And I thought we were still close.”

“We are, Gin,” Harry replied. He reached out for her hand, but she snatched it away.

“Then tell me! Harry, if you’re ill then you need your friends! Please, Harry, I’m worried about you.”

Harry thought back to what Ron had said that morning. People were going to have to know eventually. And Ginny wasn’t just ‘people’. She was someone he loved. He took a deep breath.

“OK. You’re right. Um, Gin, I’m pregnant.”

Ginny’s eyes narrowed and her lips became extremely thin. “Fine,” she said coolly. “If you don’t want to tell me what’s wrong that’s your business, but there’s no excuse for poking fun at me, you know.” She stood up and made to walk back to the castle, but Harry grabbed her arm.

“Ginny, please, I’m serious. Look, sit back down and I’ll explain the entire joke that is now my life to you.” There must have been something in his voice, or his face, or both, that was resigned and open, because Ginny’s own face suddenly softened, her mouth opening in shock, and she instantly sat back down.

“You’re really pregnant?” she whispered in disbelief.

“Yes. And you want to hear the punch line? Draco Malfoy is the other father.”

“Malfoy!” Ginny spluttered. Harry noticed she had turned extremely white. “How did you get… I mean, did you and he have… Are you…”

“I’ll tell you in a minute, no we didn’t, and no I’m not. Gay, I mean,” Harry said. “That is what you’re asking, right?” Ginny nodded. Harry tried not to think about the reasons why his ex was so ready to believe he might Seek for the other team. “Remember when Parkinson burst into our carriage and kissed me on the way to school? Well, that was the beginning of all this.”

He talked for the best part of an hour explaining exactly what had happened, with Ginny listening intently to every word. The sun had completely set by now, and the temperature dropped significantly. Ginny snuggled into Harry, shivering noticeably now, and he wrapped his cloak around them both, as they lit their wands to combat the sheet of darkness that had fallen. Moonlight was reflecting off the lake, giving the immediate surrounding area an ethereal glow. In fact, it was every inch the picture of a romantic scene: the boy and the girl, cuddled together in the moonlight—except for the fact that the boy was telling the girl he was knocked up with the spawn of a Malfoy,
and the girl was going to return to the castle later and cuddle with a Longbottom.

“And that’s why I went to see Madam Pomfrey after dinner,” Harry said. “Morning sickness- which, by the way, is a stupid name for it as it should really be called ‘morning, afternoon and evening sickness’- apparently gets worse from about seven or eight weeks, which is why I’m really struggling at the moment. I just feel queasy most of the time, even if I’m not physically sick. McGonagall has informed the staff of what’s going on, so if I have to dash out of a lesson they know why, and Pomfrey gave me a potion this evening which contains an infusion of ginger, peppermint and chamomile which is supposed to help with the sickness. It’s taken the edge off I guess, but sadly an Anti-Sickness Potion can’t be taken in pregnancy because the foxglove is dangerous to the baby. Apparently it eases off after about twelve weeks.”

“Why is it when something like this happens, it always happens to you?” Ginny asked. Harry laughed. A sardonic laugh without much amusement.

“McGonagall said pretty much the same yesterday. I guess I’m just destined not to ever be normal.” His hand began stroking the grass, and he absently started plucking it from its roots, twirling the blades between his fingers until he was sure his hands were going to be covered in grass stains. “I was stupid to think I could ever have what everyone else had. I’m glad you’re with Neville now, Gin. He’s not a complete freak. I mean, even if we had got back together, you wouldn’t want me now, expecting Draco Malfoy’s baby, would you?”

“Don’t say that,” Ginny chastised. Harry noticed her voice was unsteady. “You’re not a freak, never think that.” She sniffed loudly, and Harry suspected she was crying. He instantly felt guilty. “I am really sorry we didn’t work out.”

“It was no one’s fault,” he replied. “That year apart changed everything. It changed us. I guess we just weren’t meant to be.”

“I do love you, Harry,” Ginny said. Harry smiled at her. She was bathed in moonlight too now, making her look like she was carved from the most expensive marble. She was beautiful. Truly beautiful. And yet, for the first time in two years, Harry realised the monster in his chest that he felt every time he saw, or thought of, Ginny was missing. They really were over. For good. And he felt okay about that. He suddenly felt a lot calmer, as if one worry had been lifted.

“I love you too, Ginny,” he replied, and kissed the top of her head. And he did love her. He loved her as he loved Ron, and Hermione, and the other Weasleys. And it was enough.

They sat together for a long time, in comfortable silence. The hoot of a nearby owl jolted Harry from his thoughts, alerting him to just how late it was. He aimed his wand at his watch and was surprised to see it was nearly ten. He’d been sitting by the lake for nearly four hours.

“We’d better head back before Hermione sends out a search party,” Harry said, “c’mon.” They both stood up and brushed the earth from their clothes, and headed towards the castle.

Life doesn’t always work out how you think it will, Harry thought as he walked, and maybe that’s OK. He was alive, something he’d never thought he’d be this time last year, had wonderful, supportive friends he loved and who loved him. And the baby he was carrying, whilst still not seeming at all real and still the biggest shock he’d ever received, well, maybe that, too, was a gift. It was his family, his blood. Perhaps things would work out all right after all.
Harry’s new-found philosophical optimism lasted until lunchtime the following day, when he could be found hurling up his lunch into the rose bushes in the Hogwarts grounds, after he mistakenly thought some fresh air might ward off the imminent sickness he felt after tucking into a large slice of treacle tart. The revelation that he would no longer be able to eat his favourite dessert for the rest of the pregnancy was the last straw as far as he was concerned, and he spent the rest of the day in bed in a cross between sulking and feeling sorry for himself.

The second unpleasant piece of news of the weekend came the following morning when Professor McGonagall informed him that it was no longer safe for him to play Quidditch, and he would have to surrender his captaincy and resign from the Gryffindor team. At that he simply gritted his teeth and walked away from her, his hands balled into fists.

This pattern of anger, upset and self-moping continued for the next two weeks. Harry alternated between snapping at Ron, Hermione and Ginny over very minor things (with Hermione rushing around reassuring Ron and Ginny that, “Harry doesn’t mean it; it’s the pregnancy hormones,” which just made him snap at them more), and apologising tearfully to them. He even found himself apologising to Malfoy, who was on the receiving end of Harry’s particularly venomous tongue frequently. It was testament of their truce (and no doubt the fact that Harry was carrying Draco’s baby), that Draco took everything Harry flung at him and never raised his voice (or his wand) in retaliation. And in Harry’s calmer moments, the two of them were managing to get along with each other fairly well. Malfoy had even taken over brewing Harry’s pregnancy-approved potion to calm his sickness, not that Harry thought it helped much.

Harry’s roommates couldn’t fail but to notice that Harry was out of sorts. So he took the decision to tell them what was going on, about a week after he had told Ginny by the lake. Although he refused to reveal who the other father was, he made it clear it was a Polyjuice incident cock-up and, for once, he actually wasn’t involved. They were obviously shocked, but once the initial surprise had worn off they were very supportive. Neville especially (whom Harry privately thought probably felt guilty about Ginny, even though he had no reason to) became particularly protective of Harry, which Harry appreciated.

In between the hormonal rages and bouts of sickness, Harry did find himself beginning to feel excited about becoming a dad. Hermione would sometimes catch him sitting in his favourite tatty armchair by the fire in the common room long after the other Gryffindors had gone to bed, textbook in his lap which he was paying no attention to whatsoever, hand subconsciously placed on his abdomen, and with a contented small smile playing at the corners of his mouth whilst his eyes had the faraway expression of one experiencing a particularly wonderful daydream. She never told him she’d seen him, but the sight warmed her heart. Despite the circumstances of the baby’s conception, and the fact Harry was only eighteen, it was obvious he was going to be a natural father.

Hermione did, however, suggest to Harry that he kept a journal, writing to the baby in which he could express his private thoughts. Harry scoffed at this, calling Hermione ‘ridiculous’, yet that night, after a Halloween Feast he just wasn’t in the mood at all for, he slipped a sheet of parchment out of his schoolbag, Transfigured it into a diary, and began to write.

*
31st October 1998. I am ten weeks and three days pregnant.

Dear Baby,


I’ve known about you for exactly a fortnight now. And the shock has worn off, even if the nausea hasn’t. I wonder if I made my mum this sick when she was expecting me? I wish she was around for me to ask. I’ve been thinking about my mum and dad a lot since I found out I was going to be a parent myself. I wonder what they’d have thought of their son being pregnant! And at eighteen, to boot. Not to mention me making them grandparents before they reached their forties. Wherever they are now, I hope they’re looking forward to meeting you, like I am.

Oh, whilst we’re on the subject of your granny and grandad, today is Halloween. It’s seventeen years today since Voldemort killed them. They died to save me, you know. And although you make me throw up, and I can’t play Quidditch any more, or eat treacle tart, I would do anything to keep you safe, too, little one. Don’t tell Ron I said that. He’d call me a sentimental sap, probably.

I had a check-up yesterday. Madam Pomfrey has called in a Healer from St Mungo’s to take over my care. She’s dealt with a few teenage pregnancies in her time here as matron (it’s inevitable it’ll happen occasionally in a boarding school), but never in a male, so she wanted someone whose speciality is in magical pregnancy. The Healer is really nice, and she’s taken an Unbreakable Vow to not reveal anything about me or my pregnancy to anyone. Anyway, she checked me over and said there’s no natural way for you to come out, which I’m quite glad about really. I didn’t want to grow girl bits in addition to carrying you! Ron joked about you coming out of my, well I won’t pollute your innocent ears with what he said, but let’s just say I’m ecstatic that won’t happen. But it does mean I’ve got to go into hospital for you to be born as they’re going to have to perform a caesarean.

But hey, what’s another scar, huh? At least this one will be for a brilliant reason!

Your dad- your other dad, I should say- is being quite nice to me. That makes me nervous. Draco Malfoy isn’t nice to anyone. Maybe he really has changed. Or maybe he does feel genuinely guilty. Or grateful I saved him, or whatever. Either way he’s being surprisingly supportive. I think he’s secretly excited about meeting you too, but he’d rather die than admit that.

I’ll write to you again soon,

Love from Daddy (Wow - that’s the first time I’ve written that and it feels very, very odd).

“Today, class, we’re going to be brewing the Draught of Peace,” Slughorn informed them all as he strode, belly-first, into the Potions classroom. Harry let out a sigh and slid lower in his seat. “However, in order for it to reach N.E.W.T level Potions requirements, we will be substituting the powdered porcupine quills for dragon scales. Can anyone explain to me what effect this would cause in the drinker?”

To no one’s surprise, Hermione’s hand flew into the air.

“In some drinkers,” she began, in that voice that always sounded like she was quoting from a textbook, “the porcupine quills have the tendency to send them into a slumber rather than simply
calm them, as they can have a narcotic effect when it’s consumed. It’s more common in those who are very old or young, or who are pregnant.” Harry deliberately didn’t meet her eye—“who naturally require more sleep anyway. The effect can be countered by adding dragon scales which still allow the Draught to induce peace in the drinker, but without sending them to sleep as they’re more volatile than porcupine quills, so it is ideal when a person needs to be calm but remain alert.”

“Perfect, Miss Granger! Ten points to Gryffindor,” Slughorn said, and Hermione beamed. “Now, what are the potential problems with using dragon scales in this potion?”

“They’re highly temperamental,” Malfoy said gently, without any arrogance. Harry looked at his housemates—no one was sitting with him—even Blaise, with whom Draco was still on speaking terms as he was neutral in the war. They were all glaring at him. “Even the smallest miscalculation in the amount can result in an unstable potion, which runs the risk of releasing noxious gas, or, in extreme cases, explosion.”

*Marvellous*, Harry thought to himself. *A potentially lethal potion. Just what I need to be brewing today.*

“Exactly right, Mister Malfoy, take ten points for Slytherin, too,” Slughorn gushed. Draco shrugged his shoulders, not looking at all bothered about his house-points win. “For this reason the Draught must be brewed in pairs, and you both must check and double-check you have the quantities correct. Please find yourself a partner and turn to page forty-three in your textbooks. Begin.” Ron automatically shifted closer next to Harry, but Harry shook his head.

“You go and work with Hermione,” he said. “I’m gonna work with Malfoy.” Ron’s eyebrows disappeared into his hairline. “C’mon, Ron, no one else will work with him!”

“Yeah, and we all know why, don’t we?” Ron said, but it wasn’t without heat; instead he gathered up his stuff and went to join his girlfriend at her workstation. Harry stood and made his way towards Draco. The blond looked up in mild surprise when he saw Harry approaching.

“Ron wants to work with Hermione,” Harry lied, with faked nonchalance. “And everyone else has partnered up. So I guess you’re stuck with me.” He knew Draco wasn’t fooled for a second, but he also knew there was no way he’d turn Harry away. And indeed, there was the hint of a smile on Draco’s face as he shifted along to make room for him.

Harry lit the fire under their cauldron whilst Draco went to the supply cupboard to gather the ingredients. They began to make the Draught, and after several steps Harry was pleased to note it was the exact shade of turquoise it should be by the time the the syrup of hellebore was added. Working was Malfoy wasn’t so bad, Harry mused. At least he knew what he was doing. Harry remembered the last time he’d tried to brew this (with porcupine quills) and had received a zero for his efforts from Snape. He checked the instructions in his copy of *Advanced Potion Making* (Not the Prince’s version, Harry thought sadly) and double-checked the amount of dragon scales required. He measured out exactly three quarters of an ounce, which Malfoy confirmed as accurate.

*Whoosh.* Harry felt a cold breeze wash over him, and turned around quickly, but nothing was amiss. Nott and Bulstrode were busy with their Draught behind them, and everyone else was deeply engrossed in their task.

“Did you feel that?” he asked Draco. Draco nodded, but, like Harry, clearly didn’t know where it had come from. Harry decided to ignore it and returned to the Draught. He checked the quantity of dragon scales again.

“It’s not right,” Harry said to Draco. “We’re an eighth of an ounce short.”
“You’re right, well spotted, Potter,” Draco replied, and added another small amount to the scales. “There. Perfect.”

Harry picked up the small dish containing the scales and tipped them into their potion, leant over the cauldron and stirred the mixture vigorously.

The effect was instantaneous. A thick, black smoke rose violently from the cauldron, blasting Harry in the face causing both him and Draco to throw their arms in front of their mouths and noses and splutter. It was a hot smoke, like inhaling ash, and left Harry with a bitter taste in his mouth and struggling for breath. He was desperate to get away, but found he couldn’t move.

He could hear laughter from behind him, and heard Malfoy yelling something to Nott and Bulstrode. He thought he heard the words ‘Confundus Charm’. Harry was beginning to see red spots in front of his eyes as he felt strong hands- Ron’s, no doubt- pulling him away from the wreck of their Draught.

“You! Potter! Harry!” The voice was Draco’s and it sounded terrified. “Can you hear me?”

Harry could make out the commotion and panic in the classroom, could hear Hermione and Slughorn Vanishing the smoke, but there was no doubts he’d inhaled far too much; it had been him that was leaning over the cauldron when the smoke first appeared and he’d taken the brunt of it. Ron and Draco were both desperately calling his name, begging him to answer. But why? Harry thought. So much easier to just lie here and sleep.

“You fucking bastards!” he heard Draco yell at Nott and Bulstrode. “Don’t worry, Harry, we’ll get Pomfrey to check you and the baby over. If anything has happened to them, I will kill you, Nott!”

Harry’s last thought before he finally passed into unconsciousness was that Malfoy had just revealed far more than he’d intended to, to their entire Potions class.

*

Harry awoke in the Hospital Wing and found Ron, Hermione and Draco huddled around his bed. He had a pounding headache, his throat felt dry and parched, and he wanted to fall back against the pillows and go back to sleep. However he groaned and sat up. His glasses were placed in his hands by Hermione, and he popped them onto his face. Draco handed him a Pain Relieving Potion. Harry drank it gratefully, and felt a huge rush of relief as it instantly removed the pounding pain from inside his skull.

“Thanks,” he said groggily. As soon as he was more lucid, the morning’s events rushed back to him. Potions. Dragon scales. Nott and Bulstrode and what seemed to be a Confundus Charm apiece causing him and Draco to inadvertently sabotage their own Draught. The blast of smoke, choking and spluttering him, then Draco revealing all to a class of N.E.W.T students…

“Damn you, Malfoy!” Harry yelled, but that was as far as he got before Madam Pomfrey hurried towards him, wand in hand, ushering Harry’s friends away from his bed and beginning to perform a number of spells.

“Headmistress McGonagall has contacted your Healer, Harry,” she said, once she’d concluded her spell-casting, “and she will be arriving by Floo shortly to give the baby a thorough check-up. Although I can say now from my preliminary spell-casting I’m confident you’re both fine.” Harry released a breath he wasn’t aware he was holding at this. Madam Pomfrey turned her attention to Ron and Hermione. “Now, she’ll want only the parents here, so I’m going to have to ask you two to
return to your lesson.” Hermione looked ready to argue, but Harry met her eyes and shook his head. She closed her mouth again. They both said their goodbyes to Harry, along with promises to return as soon as double Potions was over. Ron took her by the hand and they walked reluctantly out of the Hospital Wing, Ron’s whispered concerns about leaving Harry alone with ‘the Ferret’ carrying easily in the large stone room.

“Potter,” Draco began, “thank Merlin you’re both OK. I was really worried.” He moved his hand from the side of the bed and went to put it on Harry’s shoulders. “If Nott and Millicent hurt you or the baby, I’d-”

“Don’t,” Harry snarled, and jerked his shoulder out of the way of Draco’s hand. “Malfour, perhaps it’s best if we say nothing to each other until they’ve checked me and the baby over, OK?”

Draco looked shocked, confused and rather pale, even for him, he thought, but Harry was spared his reply by the arrival of the Healer, who said a quick hello to them both and set to work.

“Is this about what I said? Back in the Potions classroom?” Draco said quietly. Harry suddenly felt his temper escalate to full-blown fury. Ignoring the Healer, who was insisting he calmed down, he whipped his head round to Draco.

“Yes it’s fucking well about that!” Harry yelled. “Malfour, you just revealed to the entire class that I’m pregnant! And by your reaction it won’t take a genius to work out who the other father is! It’ll be round the entire school by dinner time, and how long after that until the Prophet gets wind of it?”

Draco made to put his hand on Harry’s shoulder again, and once more, Harry flinched from the touch. “Don’t even think about touching me! Do you realise what you’ve done?”

“I’m sorry! But it wasn’t just you who was hit with a Confundus Charm, you know. I was-”

“Save you apologies, Malfoy! I don’t want to hear them!” Harry continued. “Thanks to you, I’m yet again the school freak! So take your ‘I’m sorry’ and shove it up your arse!”

The Healer had stopped what she was doing, clearly waiting for Harry and Draco to stop their fight. She was giving both of them a most disapproving look, which neither of them noticed in the slightest.

“I was Confunded, plus I’d inhaled a load of that smoke too, you know,” Draco said, and this time his voice was raised too. “I wasn’t thinking properly. You know I’d never tell everyone like that on purpose to hurt you! Believe it or not, I was actually worried about you.”

“Fuck you,” Harry replied, clearly out of reasonable argument. Draco sighed deeply, his lips thin, and he stood up.

“All I’ve done is apologise to you for things the last two weeks- things that were not even my fault,” he said, and he suddenly sounded exhausted. “I’ve crept on eggshells around you in case I upset you in one of your bitchy hormonal moments. And you’ve been a complete shit to me. That spell today affected us both. I was confused and didn’t fully know what I was saying, and you have no idea how much I wish I could take it back. If you can’t accept that, and accept my apology, then we have nothing else to say to one another.”

“I don’t need you, Malfoy. I can do this alone,” Harry replied nastily, as the Healer, clearly fed up with waiting for them to stop rowing, applied some cold jelly-like substance to his abdomen, and switched on a hand-held device that made a cackling sound like a radio being tuned in.

“Fine. Then you’re on your own,” Draco replied sadly. He began walking to the door. “Do this all
by yourself, Potter. I quit.”

He’d just reached the hospital door when he heard a regular beat like a tattoo, the thumping noise echoing off the walls. He turned and looked at Harry, who was staring, wide-eyed with a look of pure astonishment on his face, which was alive with excitement. The Healer had the weird crackling plastic wand thing pressed against Harry’s stomach.

“A hundred and sixty beats a minute, strong, healthy and regular,” she said.

“That’s… is that the baby’s heartbeat?” Draco replied, and Harry noticed his voice was full of the emotion he was currently feeling himself. The Healer just smiled and nodded, and Harry beamed at Draco; a true, open and completely delighted expression.

“That’s our baby,” he said softly to Draco, and Draco beamed back, walking as quickly as he could whilst still looking somewhat dignified back towards Harry. As soon as he reached Harry he perched on the bed and grabbed Harry’s hand in his own.

“Yeah,” he said, slightly dazed, as Harry squeezed his hand tightly in response. “That’s our baby.”

“Did you just see him?”

“Do you think it’s really true?”

“Malfoy himself said it was.”

“Explains why Ron Weasley has taken over the Gryffindor team captaincy.”

“Do you think Malfoy’s the other dad?”

“Ew! Do you reckon Potter bent over for him?”

“Does that mean Potter’s queer?”

“The Saviour and the Death Eater? It’s kind of romantic, like Romeo and Juliet.”

Harry gritted his teeth and snarled, causing several of the gossipers to jump and pull back in fright.

“Ignore them, mate,” Ron said, grabbing Harry by the arm and steering him in the opposite direction. “Let’s just go to the Great Hall. Come on, I’m starving.”

It had been four days since the Potions Incident, as Harry was calling it, and as he had predicted, it appeared the whole school knew, or at least were speculating, about the pregnancy. Harry didn’t blame Draco anymore, not after he’d calmed down (hearing the heartbeat, the most wonderful sound he’d ever heard in his life, had helped majorly with that) he had apologised and accepted that it hadn’t been Draco’s fault, not really. This whole situation kept being Malfoy’s-Fault-Except-It-Isn’t-Really.

Hermione, Ron and Ginny had appointed themselves Harry’s unofficial bodyguards. Ginny had sent her infamous Bat-Bogey Hex at more than a few gossipers, abruptly ending their whispered chatter, and for once, Harry was grateful not to have to do it alone.

Theo Nott and Millicent Bulstrode had both been given detention every evening until the Christmas
holidays and banned from Hogsmeade for the entire school year for their nasty trick on Harry and Draco. However it didn’t seem to stop them from sneaking up to Draco and whispering in his ear, Harry noticed. And whatever they were saying caused Draco to look a little bit ill afterwards. But Draco would never tell him what was said.

There had, thankfully, been nothing in the *Prophet* yet. However it would only be a matter of time. Because of this, Harry had owled Mrs Weasley a letter telling her what had happened and received a wonderful, supportive reply plus an offer of parenting lessons, which Harry appreciated greatly. Even the news that Draco Malfoy- the boy responsible for the near-deaths of two of her children- was the other father hadn’t fazed her. The line, ‘*A new baby, a new life, to end a year of great sadness and loss is what our family needs, Harry. What a wonderful gift. Thank you,*’ had actually made him cry. He blamed it on hormones.

On the plus side, Harry noticed his nausea beginning to ease slightly, now he was over eleven weeks pregnant, and thanks to Mrs Weasley’s tip to nibble on raw ginger root when he felt unwell. Whilst he still couldn’t stand the smell of certain foods- eggs, curry and fish mainly- he was managing to keep down pretty much everything he ate now, although there were still periods when he felt atrocious. But this breakfast time wasn’t one of those mornings; even the gossiping students who were blatantly whispering about him and openly pointing as he made his way to the Hall couldn’t dampen his appetite. He slid in to a vacant seat between Hermione and Ginny, and began to load his plate with bacon, sausage and toast, whilst his friends made sure all traces of eggs and kippers were kept well away from him.

“It’s lovely to see you have your appetite back, Harry,” Hermione said as she added raisins to her bowl of porridge. Harry smiled at her and turned his head to the Slytherin table, as he did every morning. Draco was, as usual, sat alone, meticulously spreading butter on a slice of toast, before picking it and and taking an unenthusiastic bite. The talking and whispering Harry was receiving was nothing compared to what Draco was going through, with over half the school convinced he’d either Imperiused Harry or used some other illegal Dark magic in order to get Harry to sleep with him, despite Harry’s angry declarations to the contrary. Draco looked up at that moment and caught Harry’s eye; he offered Harry a small smile, which Harry returned, before returning to his breakfast.

Just then the owls arrived with the post. Harry received an obscene amount of post since the end of the War, and never bothered to open it at the table. With a lazy flick of his wand, the post stacked itself into a neat pile, a Transfigured ribbon tied itself around the bundle, and it slipped tidily into Harry’s bag, where he would sort through it later back in the Gryffindor common room.

He looked up just in time to see a large back eagle owl deliver a scarlet envelope to Draco, before the bird nipped his finger and took off back out of the window. Harry saw Draco’s eyes widen in shock as he realised that the bird- no doubt the Malfoy family bird, Harry thought, given its regal stature, had just delivered him a Howler. Harry caught Draco’s eyes and in that moment realised he was exactly right. He felt cold dread run through him.

Obviously resigned to his fate, Draco opened the envelope and suddenly the magically-enhanced voice of Draco’s father filled the Great Hall. He didn’t yell, or scream; in fact the voice was very calm. Icily so, Harry thought. But it was obvious the man was livid.

*Draco,* the voice said, *disturbing news has reached me. Be prepared to explain yourself. I will be in The Hog’s Head at eight sharp on Sunday night. Do not disobey me.* Then the letter burst into flame.

Draco had gone deathly white, and seemed rooted to the spot. Harry’s earlier appetite had all but diminished. Because it was obvious from the Howler what the man was referring to. Lucius Malfoy knew about the pregnancy.
Lucius Malfoy and Other Events

Malfoy,

Please let me come with you tomorrow night to speak with your dad. I know you’ve already refused but I really don’t want you to go alone. How about I come, but wear my Invisibility Cloak?

-Harry

*

Potter,

It is obvious I cannot talk you out of this, oh noble (read- idiotic) Gryffindor that you are. So, fine. Come, if you insist. Just make sure you wear that damned Cloak, okay?

Now stop owling me. I’ve got an Arithmancy essay to write. I’ll see you tomorrow, okay?

And, Potter? Thank you.

-Draco

*

Harry arrived in the entrance hall, and found Draco waiting for him, at exactly half past seven, as arranged. McGonagall (who had obviously heard the Howler along with the majority of the rest of the school) had given both of them permission to be outside the school grounds after curfew. Harry was dressed in layers; he unable to wear a travelling cloak due to the need for his Invisibility Cloak later on, and the weather was especially cold, even for November. He greeted Draco as he approached, noticing that Draco looked exhausted.

“You don’t have to come, you know,” Draco said. “He’s my father, Potter. He’s not going to hurt me.”

“I know I don’t have to,” Harry replied, “but given you’re discussing our child, I kind of want to be there. You know, just in case. Besides, you look like you could use a friend.”

Harry hadn’t expected the transformation on Draco’s face that those simple words would cause; instantly Draco’s eyes shone a little brighter, more alive. A small smile played at the corners of his mouth, and his whole posture relaxed slightly. And in that moment, Harry realised it was perfectly true- over the last few weeks they had, as absurd as it would have seemed at the beginning of their school year, formed a tentative but albeit real friendship. Ron and Hermione spent a lot of time on their own nowadays, and as much as they tried to include Harry, he felt they deserved time alone. They were a couple, after all, and didn’t need a third wheel all the time. Not that they ever made him feel that way. But it did mean he’d found himself spending a lot of time with Draco recently.

The pair made their way across the school grounds and exited through the gates. Harry could see his breath; he shivered. A frost was already beginning to settle, despite the relatively early hour. It sparkled under the light from the moon and their wands, making it look like fragile glass; sharp and severe, and gave a slight crunch underfoot.

“Wish we could Apparate,” he said wistfully.
“Me too,” Draco agreed. “But you know what Pomfrey said. Apparition in pregnancy should only be used in an absolute emergency as it can Splinch the baby, and, anyway, I had my licence revoked, didn’t I? Part of my probation, remember?” He began to count out the conditions of his probation on a gloved finger. “I have to be traceable, I have to complete my final year at school, I’m not allowed to leave the country at all during the probation period and my family had to pay a huge reparations sum.” He smiled wryly at Harry. “I don’t fancy Azkaban just ‘cause I didn’t want a walk in the cold.”

“No, I guess you don’t,” Harry replied drily.

The pair made their way as quickly as they could to the Hog’s Head. The temperature had dropped sharply under the cloudless sky, and Harry felt almost violently cold now. As they approached Hogsmeade, Harry pulled his Invisibility Cloak out of his pocket and slipped it on- both for additional warmth and for disguise.

“This is weird,” Draco said, turning his head towards where Harry was. “It’s like I’m talking to myself.”

“You’ll get used to it. Ron and Hermione did,” Harry’s voice said, as they finally reached the pub’s entrance.

Harry stepped inside, and noted that even though Aberforth no longer owned it (choosing to take retirement after the Battle of Hogwarts), the pub was still as gloomy and filthy as it ever was. However it was warm, with a small fire lit in the grate, and Harry sighed in relief as feeling began to return to his fingers. The relief lasted only a few seconds, however; Draco had stiffened next to him, and Harry followed his gaze. Sat at one of the tables, nursing a shot of Firewhisky, was Lucius. He reached up and touched Draco on the shoulder with an invisible hand in a supportive gesture.

“Good evening, Father,” Draco said as he greeted Lucius. Lucius looked up. His eyes narrowed as he surveyed his son, his face cold and emotionless. He checked his watch.

“Draco. Punctual, I see. Very good.” He knocked back the remaining Firewhisky and stood from the table. “I have procured a private room in which I wish to speak to you. Follow me.” He turned and began to walk out of the main bar. Draco followed, with Harry- still invisible- hot on their heels.

Lucius pushed open the heavy oak door and slipped inside. He kept his back to the door as he crossed the small room and lit a fire in the fireplace, allowing Harry to slip in completely undetected. The door closed behind him with a loud slam. Lucius reached for the bottle of mead on the table and poured himself and Draco a generous glassful. He handed it to Draco, who took it without a word of thanks.

“I am surprised you felt the need for such privacy,” Draco began, his voice laced with sarcasm, “given your little public message to me that arrived at breakfast. A Howler, Father? Really? I’d have thought such a public display of outrage was beneath you.”

Lucius gave his son a smile; not the type a father usually gave his son- the type Arthur Weasley would give to Ron- but the one a tiger may have given to an antelope just before he went for its jugular.

“Yes,” he said, in a tone of voice that almost sounded amused and made Harry want to hex him, “I thought my little letter would unsettle you rather more than a simple handwritten note requesting an audience with you could have. And it appears, mission accomplished. That said, I’d rather discuss the, ah, finer points, shall we say, alone. I have no more desire to discuss our family’s business in public than you do, Draco.”
“Fine. Then let’s get on with it,” Draco replied coolly. Harry had to admit he was impressed. Draco was standing his ground, he thought. Clearly the days where Draco idolised his father were over; gone was the spoilt brat who could convince his father to buy his way onto the Quidditch team for him with seven fancy broomsticks. In his place stood a young man, who had made some extremely poor decisions, but was trying to atone for them. The man who was finally thinking for himself and becoming his own person.

“As you wish, Draco. I’ll ‘get on with it’ then,” Lucius said. “I shall cut to the chase. Tell me all about your disgusting little tryst with Potter that, if my sources are correct- and don’t even think of pretending to me that they’re not- has somehow left the boy pregnant with your child.”

“I didn’t have a ‘tryst’ with Harry,” Draco said, clearly using Harry’s given name both to irritate his father and as a mark of their confirmed friendship. “I admit I thought I was, at the time, but none of this is his fault.”

Draco retold the tale- about Pansy, and the Polyjuice, and the Room of Requirement and its bloody magic. Lucius, Harry noted, grew paler as Draco talked, looking thoroughly appalled.

“Draco, when you first told your mother and me about your perversion, I made it perfectly clear that you were to be discreet. This is as far from discreet as possible, Draco! Thanks to your inability to control yourself, you have tainted our pure-blood line. A half-blood carrying a Malfoy child? A male half-blood, who also happens to be the most famous wizard in our world? You have disgraced us all.”

“I think you’ll find, Father, that if anyone disgraced our family then it was you,” Draco said, and Harry mentally applauded him. “If it wasn’t for him and his testimonies, we’d all be rotting in Azkaban right now. And I am gay, not a pervert. Mother has accepted me for who I am, is it too much to expect my father to as well?”

“What is your relationship with the Potter boy now?” Lucius pressed, ignoring Draco’s question.

“We’re friends,” Draco replied honestly. “He was angry with me when he found out what had happened, but we’ve worked through it. And first we just worked on being civil for the sake of the baby-” Lucius visibly flinched, which Draco ignored- “but now it’s actually a proper friendship. It may be seven years after I first offered him my hand on the Hogwarts Express, but he’s finally accepted it.”

“And do you want more from him than friendship?” Lucius asked. Harry noticed with a jolt to his stomach that Draco flushed at the question.

“That’s none of your business,” he snapped. Harry swallowed. Surely if Draco felt nothing but friendship he’d have just said it? He noticed his palms were sweating; suddenly the Cloak felt far too hot over his head. Harry had never considered the possibility that Draco might actually like him despite what had happened with him and Pansy. Lucius seemed to have reached the same conclusion.

“I see,” he said, his lips curling in obvious distaste. “Draco, you will desist your… friendship with Potter, and distance yourself from his child. Regardless of his role in keeping our family out of prison, I will not have my son playing happy families with a half-blood.”

“And if I refuse?” said Draco, and Harry realised he was holding his breath.

“Then you’ll lose the Malfoy millions. The Manor. Everything,” Lucius replied, and Draco paled rapidly. Harry had to force himself to keep still and quiet; the surest way to make Lucius even more
enraged right now would be to reveal he’d been present the entire time. A large period of silence fell over the room.

Eventually, Draco spoke. Harry was staring at him, his eyes boring into Draco. If he chose his father, if he rejected their baby…

“I always respected you, Father,” he said. “You ensured I had the best of everything. The best education, the finest food, designer clothing, luxury holidays. Even when I was fifteen and it became apparent I would be expected to follow in your footsteps and serve the Dark Lord eventually, I still respected and loved you. I took the Mark for you at just sixteen.

“But I am a man now- not that young boy who wanted nothing more than to be like you when I grew up. And I have seen what a lack of love can destroy. A true father- one who loved his child unconditionally- would never ask his son to walk away from his own flesh and blood, because he himself would know that such a request was impossible to grant- not for all the money in the world. So, Father dearest, take your millions, and your Manor, and anything else that you believe makes you so fucking superior to the rest of us, and kindly shove them up your arse.”

Harry wanted to cheer. He wanted to grasp Draco in a bear-hug and not let go. Draco had just given up everything he knew, for their baby. The realisation was almost overwhelming. He didn’t know how he managed to remain still and silent. He wished he had a camera. Lucius’ face was a picture; he couldn’t have looked more shocked if McGonagall had suddenly appeared in front of him and performed a striptease.

“Draco-” he began, and took a step closer to him. Draco folded his arms in front of him, clearly telling Lucius to back off, which he did.

“We have nothing else to say to one another,” Draco said. “I shall owl Mother in due course, to inform her I obviously will not be home-sorry, I mean, visiting your Manor- for Christmas.” He downed the rest of the mead in the glass he was still holding, calmly returned the empty glass to the table, turned away from Lucius and began heading for the door. Harry scrambled to his feet, and quickly followed Draco out of the room.

Only once they were both clear of the Hog’s Head did Harry remove the Invisibility Cloak. He realised Draco was shaking violently, and not from the cold this time. Harry hadn’t known how he was going to react to the events of the last half an hour or so, but Draco looked so lost, so devastated, that his actions came naturally to him.

“Hey,” he said gently, “come here.” He pulled Draco into a tight hug, which was instantly returned. He could hear Draco’s uneven breathing as he clearly fought for some control over his emotions.

“Fuck,” Draco said into Harry’s shoulder eventually, as Harry rubbed soothing circles into his back.

“Yeah, fuck,” Harry replied.

They made the journey back to Hogwarts in relative silence. Draco clearly didn’t want to talk, and Harry respected his wishes. Once they were on the castle’s grounds, he sent his Patronus to McGonagall informing her they were both back safely (using the memory of hearing the baby’s heartbeat for the first time in order to produce it). He turned to Draco.

“Want some company for a bit?” he asked. Draco nodded, and he and Harry made their way to the fifth floor, where Draco’s room was located. Draco said the password, and they entered the room.
“I’m glad you came with me,” Draco said eventually. It was the first words he’d spoken since those shortly after they’d left Hogsmeade. Harry was extremely grateful he’d pestered Draco to be allowed to come; the idea that Draco- and he was Draco in Harry’s mind now, not Malfoy- would have had to go through that alone had he not been there was horrible.

“I’m sorry,” Harry said. Draco offered him a small, sad smile.

“Not your fault,” he replied. Harry noticed he still looked incredibly pale, and he was shivering despite the warmth of the room. Shock, then, Harry thought to himself. He stood and pulled the blanket from Draco’s bed, wrapping the blond snugly within.

“I’ll nip down to the kitchens for some warm milk for you,” he said.

“Aren’t I supposed to be the one looking after you?” Draco asked.

“I’m not the one who’s just had a very nasty shock,” Harry said firmly, and left before Draco could argue.

Once Harry left, he had an idea. Draco really shouldn’t be left on his own that night, he thought. He quickly changed direction and headed for the stairs that led up to Gryffindor Tower, whispered the password, and stepped through.

It wasn’t late and the common room was still full of students- some doing homework, or playing Exploding Snap, or having a game of wizard chess. His housemates, at least, had accepted the news of Harry’s pregnancy without name-calling and whispering behind his back, and no one gave him an odd look as he entered. He spotted Ron and Hermione curled up together in Harry’s favourite armchair, got their attention, and indicated that they should follow him. By the time Ron and Hermione had entered the eighth-year dormitory, Harry was already packing his bag, with school robes and his textbooks for the following morning.

“All okay, mate?” Ron asked. Harry took a deep breath.

“No,” he replied. “I’m going to spend the night in Draco’s room. Lucius Malfoy is the world’s biggest cunt- sorry, Hermione,” he added quickly, in reply to Hermione’s glare at Harry for his foul language. “But you’ll agree with me when you hear what he’s done to Draco.”

He explained what Lucius had threatened Draco with, and Draco’s choice, as he packed. By the time he was finished, Ron looked sick and Hermione looked horrified.

“I never thought I’d feel sorry for the Ferret,” Ron said. “Lucius really is a complete cu-”

“You finish that word, Ronald Weasley, and you’ll be getting very acquainted with your right hand for the next month because you’ll be coming nowhere near me,” Hermione snapped. Both Ron and Harry’s cheeks flamed.

“Right. Um. I’m going to go away now,” Harry said. “Bye.” He left rather sharpish, bag slung over his shoulder not turning back to look at his friends.

He took a long detour via the kitchens for milk, and grabbed a plate of chocolate biscuits as well, and carried it all back up to Draco’s room. He gave the password and entered.

“I thought you weren’t coming back,” Draco said, “you were gone ages.”

“Didn’t mean to worry you,” Harry replied. “I popped up to Gryffindor Tower to grab my stuff and explain things to Ron and Hermione. I’m staying here with you tonight, if you like.” He placed the
milk and chocolate biscuits on Draco’s desk and let his back drop off his shoulder onto the floor.

They both took a biscuit and began to eat. Harry because he genuinely felt hungry (and slightly lightheaded), but Draco, Harry suspected, merely for something to do.

“I’m really sorry,” Harry said eventually. “That I’ve caused you so many problems with your mum and dad. I never meant to.”

“I think we’ve established, Harry, that none of this is your fault. The only one at blame here is my father. If I’m still allowed to call him that,” Draco said, taking a large drink of his milk.

“That’s the second time you’ve called me ‘Harry’ this evening,” Harry replied. Draco let out a small laugh.

“We’re having a baby together. Surely that qualifies us to use each other’s first names?” he replied. Harry grinned.

“I guess so,” he said. He felt exhausted, despite it still being before ten in the evening. Damn early pregnancy. He tried to stifle a yawn, but was unsuccessful.

“Tired?” Draco asked.

“Yeah,” Harry said. “Do you mind if I go to sleep? I can’t keep my eyes open. Erm, I’ll take your armchair. It’s OK.”

“You will not,” Draco said. “You’re having my child. The least I can do is give up my bed for you.”

Harry knew it was a bad idea, especially as he was beginning to think Draco’s feelings ran deeper than friendship. So he almost surprised himself when he heard himself say, “It’s a big bed. We’ll share.” Draco gave him an unreadable look, but nodded slightly. Harry slipped into the bathroom, dressed for bed, and emerged back into Draco’s room. He’d already changed for bed in Harry’s absence. Harry crawled into bed and laid on his back, eyes closed and hands on his lower abdomen, which had become habit. His stomach had a slight convex to it already which was noticeable through the thin material of the T-shirt he was sleeping in; on anyone who was not as thin as he, it would not have been obvious at all, but on Harry it was. Draco noticed.

“You have a little bump,” he said, almost in awe. “He’s growing.”

“’He’?” Harry repeated, sounding extremely sleepy.

“Yes. There’s not been a female born with the Malfoy name in over twelve generations,” Draco replied. “It’s a boy.”

“I’m good at defying the odds,” Harry quipped. “Fifty Galleons says we’re having a girl. Night, Draco.”

He heard Draco utter a reply, but his brain was already switching off and he missed the actual words; he noticed the lights were extinguished with a spell. With a final yawn, Harry fell into a deep slumber.

When Harry awoke the following morning, his first thought was how warm and comfortable he was. His second, slightly incredulous, thought was that he was snuggled up in bed with Draco Malfoy. He checked his watch; it was only just after six. Desperate to avoid an Uncomfortable Moment should
Draco woke whilst Harry was still in the bed and they were virtually cuddling. He got up, crept across the room, grabbed his schoolbag from the floor, and headed to the bathroom. He switched on Draco’s shower, stripped, and stepped in.

The hot water was extremely pleasant on Harry’s skin. He showered slowly, enjoying the rare luxury of not having to rush because there was a queue of Gryffindor boys waiting to use it. He picked up a few of Draco’s fancy bottles from inside the shower. He read the label on the two closest ones, held close to his face so he could read the words: extract of avocado and coconut oil in one bottle that appeared to be for hair, and a mint-scented body scrub containing crushed Brazil nut shells for exfoliation in another. He laughed, grabbed a third bottle that smelt of soap, and washed his hair and body, wondering what was wrong with the ‘two in one’ shampoo and body wash he used that he’d grabbed from a Muggle supermarket before term began.

He rinsed under the spray, shut off the water, and stepped out of the shower. Five minutes later he was dry, his damp hair as messy as ever, and he was dressed in his school uniform. He felt slightly sick this morning. Perhaps he just needed some breakfast.

He stepped back into Draco’s room, and jumped. Draco was awake, up, and dressed.

“Thank Merlin you’re out of the bathroom,” he said. “I’m desperate for a piss.” He dashed past Harry and closed the door. Harry busied himself by repacking his school bag, adding the previous day’s clothes to it, and by the time he was finished, Draco had emerged from the bathroom again.

“Shall we go down to breakfast?” Draco asked, and then his face fell slightly. “Unless, I mean, you don’t want to walk with me, in case it looks, I don’t know, suspicious or something.”

“I honestly couldn’t give a shit what anyone has to say anymore,” Harry replied. “And after last night I’m certainly not ashamed to be seen with you. Let’s go.”

They made their way to the Great Hall together, ignoring the whispered chatter, mainly from Hufflepuffs, that followed them. As they reached the entrance, Harry cleared his throat.

“Look, why don’t you come and sit on the Gryffindor table with me this morning?” he said. “You look fed up on your own at the Slytherin table.”

“Thanks, but no,” Draco replied. “I’ve already been driven from my dorm and my common room. I won’t be driven from my house table as well. I am still a Slytherin, and I’m proud of my house. That’s where I’ll sit.”

He made his way to his usual spot, by the first years. Harry saw Ron and Hermione enter the Hall, and made a split decision.

“Morning. Look, I’m going to sit with Draco for breakfast, OK? I’ll see you both in Transfiguration.” Without waiting for their response he dashed after Draco, sliding into the seat next to him. Draco looked up, surprised.

“I was almost Sorted into Slytherin,” Harry said. “I can eat one meal here.”

“You were almost Sorted here?” Draco asked, eyebrows raised.

“Long story. I’ll tell you some other time,” Harry replied, taking a bowl and filling it with cereal.

The owls arrived with the post. As usual, Harry received a lot of letters; he performed the usual spells to bundle them up to sort through later, but one caught his eye. It had the St Mungo’s crest on it. Harry withdrew it from the pile and slid it open.
Dear Mr Potter,

An appointment has been made for you in-clinic for Wednesday 18th November at 4pm for an ultrasound scan. During the examination the Healer will check the foetus via ultrasound image. This is a Muggle technique which magic is yet to emulate. Please ensure you have a full bladder for the examination, as this helps the Healer get a good view of your baby.

The Department of Magical Pregnancy and Birth is located on our sixth floor, via pre-arranged Floo access only. I have arranged with Headmistress McGonagall for her to use the Floo in her office on the date of your scan. Please be prompt. You may bring one other person with you for the examination.

Yours sincerely,

Healer Moore, Healer-in Charge, Department of Magical Pregnancy and Births.

“Draco, look,” Harry began, but realised that Draco had received a letter of his own and stopped talking; the now-familiar black eagle owl belonging to the Malfoys had just dropped a (thankfully not red) envelope in front of Draco and taken flight. “Open it, Draco. It’s like ripping off a plaster. Sooner you do it, sooner it’ll be over.”

“What’s a plaster?” Draco asked, but he seemed to have got the gist of Harry’s analogy, for he was sliding the envelope open and removing a sheet of parchment. Harry watched Draco’s face carefully as he unfolded the parchment and began to read, noticing that as Draco did so, his face became more and more relaxed and the colour was returning.

“It’s okay,” he said when he finished reading. “It’s from my mother. Here.” He and Harry swapped letters, and Harry began to read the letter from Narcissa Malfoy,

Draco, darling,

I am beyond furious with your father. He had no right to make such demands of you, my love. But please know that am proud of the decision you made last night. It is the decision I would have made- would still make- if someone made me choose between my riches and you.

I will deposit a sizeable sum of Galleons in your personal vault today. The money is your birth-right and Lucius cannot control what I do with my own money.

He also informed me you feel unable to return for Christmas. I had already arranged to visit Andromeda, with whom, as you you know, I’ve been making amends now for several months. I have rescinded the invitation to your father, and request you join me there. You’re my son and nothing you could do would stop me loving you, Draco. Lucius can spend Yule alone in the Manor that is so precious to him.

So, please, come to Andromeda’s for Christmas. We’ll talk properly then. And remember I love you.

All my love,

Mother.

“Well, that’s good!” Harry said. He noticed Draco still looked slightly troubled. “Isn’t it?”

“Of course,” Draco replied. “I didn’t really think Mother would reject me- I mean, she lied to the Dark Lord to keep me safe. I know she loves me. And it’s wonderful I’m going to get to spend Christmas with her and Aunt Andromeda.” He still looked a bit distracted. “Um, Harry, about this
‘other person’ you’re allowed to bring to the scan thing… well, I mean, I really hope you’ll…”

“Yes, you stupid git, you’re coming,” Harry said. Draco brightened considerably after that.

“That’s good,” he said, and tucked into his breakfast, looking happier than he had in days, Harry thought.

“What are you doing for Christmas?” Harry asked Ron, his hands covered in dragon dung. Ron handed him the Venomous Tentacula, and Harry quickly replanted it. He wiped his hands on his protective robes.

“Going to The Burrow, as normal, mate,” Ron replied, a look of genuine confusion that he could be spending it elsewhere on his face. “Hermione obviously wants to spend it with her mum and dad, as they’ve only just come back from Australia. She wanted to me to come too, but I didn’t want to leave Mum, what with it being the first Christmas without Fred-” he suddenly looked sad- “so Mum and Dad have invited Mr and Mrs Granger over for Christmas Dinner. We’ve never had Muggles at The Burrow before. Dad is so excited.” There was a long pause. “I just assumed you’d be coming too, Harry.”

“Two minutes left!” called Professor Sprout. Ron swore loudly and reached for another Tentacula plant whilst Harry quickly grabbed another handful of dung and began mixing it with the soil.

“I’ve been thinking, actually,” Harry said. “I might spend Christmas with Andromeda. You know, she’s having her first Christmas without her husband and daughter, and I’ve not seen Teddy since August, and—”

“And Malfoy’s going?” Ron said pointedly. In response to Harry’s confused gaze he added, “Lucky guess. You two are certainly spending a lot of time together recently. I mean, I’m glad you’re not at each other’s throats constantly, as it makes it easier for you, what with the baby and everything, but this whole you-being-friends thing is just plain weird.”

“He has no one, Ron,” Harry reminded him. “All his friends have turned their back on him people try and hex him in the corridors every day, and now even his own father has all but disowned him. I feel bad for him, to be honest, plus he’s not so bad when he’s not acting like a prat. His mum owled him yesterday saying she was going to Andromeda’s for Christmas, and invited him. Apparently she’s about as happy with Lucius as I am.”

Ron placed the Tentacula in the soil, covered the roots, and he and Harry began to clean up their workstation. “Mum’s going to be disappointed,” he said eventually. But he gave Harry a supportive smile that let Harry know Ron wasn’t pissed off. “She was really looking forward to fussing over her ‘poor pregnant Harry’.”

“Then I’ll come over on Boxing Day,” Harry said. “And, Ron? Thanks.”

“No probs, mate,” Ron replied.

Harry couldn’t help grinning as he made his way over to the sinks and began to scrub dragon shit off his hands. That went much better than he thought it would have.

“I’m already desperate for the loo,” Harry said as he and Draco made his way to Professor McGonagall’s office. “Asking a pregnant person to have a full bladder is completely unreasonable,
in my opinion. I hope we’re seen on time.”

They made their way up the spiral staircase and knocked on the Headmistress’ door, which opened.

“Afternoon, Potter, Malfoy. The Floo is ready for you,” McGonagall said. Harry thanked her, said a quick ‘hello’ to Dumbledore’s portrait, and grabbed a handful of Floo powder. He tossed it into the flames and stepped in.

A quick shout of the required destination, and Harry was suddenly hurtling through the Floo Network. He felt incredibly unwell and just wished for solid ground, which he suddenly received. He stumbled dizzily out of the fire at St Mungo’s and promptly threw up on the floor.

“Merlin! Sorry,” he said to the Healer who was there to greet them. The Healer lazily Vanished the sick with a flick of her wand.

“Happens all the time, Mr Potter, I assure you. Pregnancy does make one more susceptible to Floo sickness,” she replied. Just then Draco arrived through the Floo as well. The bastard stepped through with elegance, grace, and with only the merest hint of soot on his robes, looking thoroughly unruffled. Harry was eternally grateful he’d gone first and Draco had missed his little performance upon arriving.

“Shall we begin?” Healer Moore asked. She led them both down the corridor (where Harry could hear a woman in labour, making him incredibly glad that he was going to have a caesarean), to a room with a sign that said simply, ‘Ultrasound’ on it. “The room is heavily warded,” the Healer explained. “Otherwise the magical energy would prevent the equipment from working. It’s Muggle, you see. I must ask you both to perform no magic whilst you’re in here.”

They entered the room and the Healer erected the wards. The light was low. There was a small bed which Harry lay on when instructed, whilst Draco sat in the chair next to him. There was a machine with what looked like a small TV screen atop; Harry could see his name written on the screen.

“Magic is sufficient to determine foetal health in nearly all pregnancies here,” the Healer explained. “But for high-risk or unusual pregnancies, such as yours, it is on occasion necessary to get a look at the foetus. And we simply don’t have charms for looking inside the human body. Hence the use of the Muggle method.”

She lifted Harry’s T-shirt up and pulled his trousers down slightly, tucked some tissue paper into the elastic waistband, and applied a cold jelly to his abdomen. She took a probe- thing in her hand and pressed it quite firmly into Harry’s stomach. After a minute she smiled and turned the screen to Harry and Draco. Harry’s breath hitched and he heard Draco’s do the same.

There was their baby. A very tiny, but perfectly formed little person.

Harry felt Draco’s hand slip into his own, but didn’t for a second take his eyes from the screen. The Healer spent time pointing out all the features and taking measurements. He vaguely heard her mentioning medical terms such as, “Fully-functioning placenta,” which he guessed was a good thing, but he barely heard her now. For he was looking, for the first time in seventeen years, at at his own flesh and blood (not including the Dursleys, which Harry didn’t), alive and healthy. He tried to say something but found he had a lump in his throat and was unable to speak.

“Stunning,” he heard Draco say. “Just… Merlin, Harry, the Muggles have really come up trumps on this one.”

The Healer ended the scan then, and handed Harry some tissue to wipe of the ultrasound gel. “No
“magic,” she reminded him. He cleaned up quickly with the tissue and stood up. “All looks perfectly healthy, Mr Potter. Everything is measuring perfect for thirteen weeks,” she said. “Congratulations.” She handed Harry a piece of photographic paper, and Harry grinned widely when he saw it was a picture of the baby.

She handed one to Draco, too, who looked thrilled.

Harry barely remembered the return journey through the Floo (other than he didn’t throw up this time). He excitedly greeted Professor McGonagall, who had a rare display of affection over the scan image, and was desperate to find Ron and Hermione to show it them. At the bottom of the spiral staircase, however, Draco grabbed him in a fierce bear-hug.

“Amazing, Harry,” he said. He pulled away slightly from the hug but didn’t let Harry go. “Thank you.”

Harry swallowed. Draco was looking at him weirdly. He suddenly realised what Draco was going to do a second before he tried- Draco began to lean in for a kiss.

“I need to find Ron and Hermione,” Harry said, ducking gently out of Draco’s hold, and not quite catching his eye. His heart was pounding. “I’ll see you later.”

He quickly headed for the stairs, not looking back at where he knew Draco was still standing, hoping he’d catch his friends in Gryffindor Tower before they went down for dinner. He had a huge amount to think through- the scan, mainly, which had been one of the best moments of his life. But also the niggling feeling that he was trying to ignore. The feeling that part of him, even if it was small, that had really wanted to let Draco kiss him just a moment ago.

_A/N. Hope you liked the chapter. The scan pic is mine, from my 2nd pregnancy :D_
Confusion and Questioning

“Oh, Harry, it’s gorgeous,” Hermione gushed.

“They have your nose,” Ginny cooed.

“Blimey, it’s a baby,” Ron said, as if he’d only just realised.

Harry beamed at his friends. “It was amazing,” he said, taking the scan picture back from Hermione. “I really wish you all could have come, but I was only allowed to bring one person, and Draco’s the dad, and I couldn’t have chosen between you guys anyway, and-”

“Harry, it’s okay,” Hermione cut in. “We understand. But I’m so happy to see this. And don’t think for a second I’ve not noticed you have a bump! Oh, this is so exciting!”

“I didn’t notice your bump, mate,” Ron said, as they made their way out of the dorm in order to head down to dinner, whilst Hermione and Ginny walked on ahead, happily discussing baby names.

“It makes me very pleased that you’re not staring at my stomach,” Harry replied with a grin.

All in all, Harry thought he’d been rather successful at banishing Inappropriate Draco Thoughts. For five minutes, at least.

* *

The next few weeks passed relatively easily for Harry. The sickness was all but gone now he was in his second trimester, but in its place was a definitely growing bump, that meant he could no longer button up his trousers or school shirts, and had to have Hermione magically alter them. It was also a lot more noticeable- he clearly had a defined lump jutting out from his school robes now. Even Ron noticed it now.

The inevitable had happened about a week after Harry’s ultrasound, and the Prophet had published an article about the pregnancy, but even that surprised Harry- the piece had actually been rather complimentary; Harry supposed that defeating Voldemort six-and-a-half months previously still carried some respect in the media. More surprisingly was that the paper had kept Draco’s name out of the report. Harry wondered if Lucius had paid someone off in order to keep the Malfoy name from attracting yet more unwanted attention. It had meant an increase in post, however, so McGonagall arranged to have all mail from contacts Harry hadn’t pre-approved delivered straight to the Owlery, rather than have it hound the Gryffindor table at breakfast, which was actually an improvement on the previous situation.

The school had finally got bored with gossiping about him, and had moved on to a supposed love affair between Flitwick and McGonagall, which no one really believed yet still enjoyed discussing. He was enjoying his new-founded peace and quiet.

Yes, life would have been rather great, if it wasn’t for Harry’s growing confusion as to the nature of his feelings for Draco.

It wasn’t as it he’d ever thought of Draco- or any man, for that matter- in a sexual way, before Draco tried to kiss him after the scan three weeks previously. And whilst neither he nor Draco had mentioned it, and Draco had certainly not tried to kiss him again since, Harry often caught himself daydreaming about threading his fingers through that white blond hair and pressing his lips to Draco’s. He just didn’t understand it.
Wednesday 9th December 1998. I am 16 weeks pregnant.

Hey, baby. You’re getting quite big in there now, you know! And I still have 24 weeks-ish- to go. How far can my belly stretch? I wonder if it’ll end up like a scene from Alien and you’ll explode out of my stomach? Eugh, I hope not. That would just be too gross.

Draco- that’s your other daddy, remember- (Although I expect you’ll have to call him ‘Father’ or ‘Papa’ knowing him) is still convinced you’re a boy. I’m not so sure. Something just tells me you’re going to be a little girl. And my instincts usually turn out right.

I think I have felt you move, but I’m not sure so I’ve not told Draco. But it feels like there are little Snitches fluttering in my tummy, or bubbles popping. I think it’s you. Either that or I have a really bad case of trapped wind! But I like the idea of it being you far better.

About Draco. Yeah, I just had to go and make this even more complicated than it was already, didn’t I? And I don’t know what to think or feel now. What if I do something reckless, like actually kiss him, and it turns out the feelings were all in my head and I hate it? And I totally balls up our friendship?

We watched Quidditch together last weekend. Gryffindor Vs Slytherin. I obviously can’t play at the moment. Draco isn’t playing either. The Slytherin team didn’t exactly want him back this year. It was weird just watching, but Auntie Ginny is a great Seeker and Gryffindor won 210-50. I can’t wait to take you flying for the first time. I got my first broom when I was one- from Sirius. You’ll be the same age, no doubt.

It’s Christmas in a couple of weeks. I’m going to Andromeda’s. My godson, Teddy, lives there. He’s only 8 months old. I’m going to spend a lot of time with him. Lots of practice I guess for May!

Love you, baby.

All my love, Daddy xx

“Harry. Harry. Harry!”

Harry finally came back to himself with a jump. “Sorry, Hermione, I was miles away,” he said. He’d been thinking about Draco again- a moment three days ago when Harry had told Draco the story of setting the snake on Dudley at the zoo, and Draco had roared with laughter. It was the first time he’d ever seen Draco laugh- proper belly-laugh, and he had looked gorgeous, just letting go like that. Harry switched off that particular train of thought and switched his mind back to his breakfast. He realised he was stirring a spoonful of salt into his tea. “Oh, bugger. Pour me another cuppa would you, Ron?”

Ron dutifully poured out another cup of tea and handed it to Harry, who received it with thanks and stirred sugar into it this time.

“I was just going to ask you if you needed help on your Transfiguration essay this afternoon,” Hermione said. “It’s due in tomorrow.”

“Oh! Um, yeah, thanks,” Harry said, taking a sip of his too-hot tea. He chanced a glance at the Slytherin table. Blaise was sat with Draco this morning. He was saying something clearly meant for Draco’s ears only, and Draco was smiling slightly. Harry didn’t care. Honestly. And he certainly
didn’t feel jealous. No, definitely not.

“Harry, what did that piece of toast ever do to you?” Dean asked suddenly from the other side of the table, and Harry looked down at his plate, surprised to find a small pile of shredded toast there, with the remainder of the slice tightly bound in his clenched fist.

“Ah. Um. Nothing?” Harry said. He looked at the Slytherin table for the fifth time since breakfast had begun. Blaise was whispering something in Draco’s ear now, and Dráco’s cheeks pinked slightly. Harry felt the stirrings of the monster in his chest, awakening after its months-long hibernation, and swallowed quickly. “Right. I’m going.”

He stood up abruptly, threw his coat over his weekend outfit of stretchy tracksuit bottoms and woolly jumper, and all but marched out of the Great Hall. He didn’t get very far before he heard Ginny calling his name.

“Wait up,” she said, and jogged to catch him up. When she reached him she linked her arm through his. “Right, we’re going to talk,” she said. She all but dragged Harry to the main entrance and the pair entered the snowy Hogwarts grounds.

Harry really didn’t want to sit out in the freezing cold snow, but thankfully it became apparent that Ginny didn’t intend to. They made their way to Hagrid’s hut, and Harry suddenly remembered that Hagrid was spending the weekend in France with Madame Maxime. Ginny opened the door, lit the fire in the grate with a quick *Incendio*, and busied herself with the kettle on the stove. “Tea? You barely touched yours at breakfast.”

“Ta, Gin,” Harry said, and sat down.

“So, are you going to tell me about it?” Ginny asked, sliding a steaming mug of tea towards Harry. He took it from her, nursing it between his chilly hands, revelling in the warmth it radiated to his slightly numb fingers.

“Tell you about what?” Harry replied.

“About what’s going on with you and Malfoy,” Ginny said bluntly. Harry choked on the large gulp of tea he’d just taken. “Oh for Merlin’s sake, Harry. *Anapneo.*”

“No, Gin,” Harry drawled. “Now a serious answer?”

“Fine,” said Ginny. “I didn’t actually think you were gay, as such, but I’d be lying if I said it hadn’t crossed my mind. Do you remember that Saturday we spent in your dorm, the weekend everyone else was out by the Great Lake with that picnic? A few days before Dumbledore died?”

Harry’s cheeks flushed. He remembered it well. He wasn’t able to go to the Lake with everyone else as he had to serve detention with Snape for almost slicing Dráco in half with that vile Sectumsempra spell. It had finished around two. Once it was over, Ginny had come and found him and they’d spent
the remainder of the afternoon in bed—clothes on—doing very little except snogging and some over-the-clothes exploration of each other’s bodies. It had been great. He nodded.

“Can you remember what I wanted you to do, Harry?” Ginny continued.

“Of course I can. You wanted me to take your virginity,” Harry answered promptly. Ginny nodded.

“And you refused.”

“And that was why you thought I could possibly fancy blokes?” Harry replied, incredulous. “Because I wouldn’t sleep with you? Gin, I told you at the time why I wouldn’t. You were only fifteen. That’s why.”

“Most sixteen-year-old boys, when in bed with their girlfriend, wouldn’t turn down sex when it was offered,” Ginny said, “just because it was still a whole two months until she turned sixteen. I figured you either had the morals of a saint, or you were gay.”

“That’s a massive leap to make, from one incident,” Harry said, feeling slightly offended. Of course he remembered the day clearly. He’d been so tempted. He’d nearly agreed. But it just hadn’t seemed right at the time.

“But was it a wrong leap to make?” Ginny probed. Harry took off his glasses, buried his face in his hands and let out a huge sigh.

“I don’t know,” he said eventually, through his fingers. Ginny reached out her hand and pulled Harry’s hands away. “I’ve never had any feelings for men, ever. And I genuinely was attracted to you, Gin, and you’re wrong about that afternoon. I was extremely tempted. But the last couple of weeks, I…”

“Have developed feelings for Malfoy?” Ginny asked. “C’mon, Harry, I saw you staring at him this morning, murdering your toast because he and Zabini were all chummy-chummy. And it’s not the first time; you’re either sat at the Slytherin table or staring at it.”

“You’ve noticed?” Harry said. Ginny laughed.

“Harry, the Giant Squid would have noticed.” Harry glared at her. “Well, OK, not quite—but I have, and I’m pretty sure Hermione has. So, why don’t you start from the beginning and we’ll work through this whole sexual identity crisis together.”

Harry took a deep breath, took another gulp of rapidly-cooling tea, and began to speak. About how Draco had all but admitted he had feelings for Harry, then tried to kiss him days afterwards. How Harry had dodged the kiss but realised afterwards there was a part of him that was disappointed it hadn’t happened. And that ever since he’d found himself growing steadily more and more attracted to Draco. It felt good, he realised, to be sharing this. He’d bottled it up inside for the best part of a month. He felt oddly liberated, like he was no longer carrying round a dirty little secret.

“And if I go for it and hate it, I could ruin our friendship,” Harry continued. “I can’t do that, Ginny. I really can’t. I’m just so confused. For all I know, I could be feeling the way I do ‘cause he’s the other father of my baby and we have a bond—of sorts—for life, and it might not be about sex at all.”

“Well,” Ginny said. “How does the idea of touching his cock sound to you?” Harry turned absolutely scarlet.

“Ginny!” he exclaimed. Ginny ignored him.
“Well, how does it?”

Beyond mortified, Harry replied, “I don’t know. But I… I think I, um, yeah. It sounds kind of, er, nice.” He ran his right hand through his hair, fought back the image of a naked Draco that was threatening to form in his mind, and then downed the rest of his tea, which was now stone cold and revolting.

“Like, ‘wank to the idea of’ nice?”

“I’m not fucking answering that.”

Ginny laughed. “Look, Harry, it’s perfectly normal for gay men to be attracted to, and have relationships with, the opposite sex in their adolescence, and only realise their sexuality once they reach adulthood. Some men don’t realise it until they’re in their twenties or older and they’re married to women. Charlie says he didn’t discover he was gay until he was twenty-three, met Rasvan on a night out in Bucharest, and fell head-over-heels for him. And if you’re having genuine sexual feelings for Malfoy, then I’m quite certain we can rule heterosexuality out for you and it’s not just a ‘phase,’ or to do with the pregnancy.” She checked her watch. “Oh, fuck! I was supposed to meet Nev twenty minutes ago. Sorry, Harry.” She stood up, grabbed her winter cloak from the back of Hagrid’s chair, and gave Harry a kiss on the cheek. “Be true to yourself, okay? We’ll all still love you, you know.” She ran her hand down his arm, gave him a small smile, then left.

Harry watched her go, then quickly washed up the mugs and kettle before leaving himself. On the walk back to the castle, Harry had to concede Ginny was probably right. Straight men didn’t dream about the things he had recently. He cast his mind back to one awkward moment six nights previously, where Ron had woken him from sleep, quite convinced Harry was having a nightmare due to the thrashing and mumbling Harry was doing. Harry- thankful that the darkness was hiding several things at that moment he’d much rather Ron couldn’t see- had reassured him it was ‘only a bad dream’ and he was fine, and Ron had returned to his own bed and fell almost instantly back to sleep. Harry, however, was wide awake- well, at least a part of him was. He’d slipped his hand into his pyjamas and quickly finished the job that Dream Draco had begun, cursing pregnancy hormones and the stupid vivid sexual dreams they caused (and wondering how he was going to survive another almost-six months of it).

He entered the castle again in a relatively good mood; it really had helped to talk to Ginny and work through a few things. So he was startled when he saw Hermione, white-faced and slightly manic-looking, rushing towards him.

“Thank God you’re back,” she said, somewhat breathlessly. “I was just coming to get you. We just saw Ginny and she said you were down at Hagrid’s hut. Harry- it’s Draco. He’s been attacked.”

Harry took off at as much of a sprint as he could manage. Being sixteen- nearly seventeen- weeks pregnant with a somewhat sizable bump did rather restrict Harry’s movement, yet he still made it to the Hospital Wing before Hermione could catch him up. He threw open the doors to the Hospital Wing, and scanned the room. He quickly spotted Blaise Zabini, looking rather shocked standing over a bed that must have been Draco’s. Heart thumping madly, Harry made his way over.

Madam Pomfrey was casting healing spells as he approached.

“No major damage, Draco,” she said with a small smile, pocketing her wand, and Harry felt a huge surge of relief course through him. “You’ll live. I’ll just fetch some potions for you.” She said a quick hello to Harry, then left. Harry instantly took the seat next to Draco’s bed.
Draco looked bruised and bloodied, but the damage seemed to be superficial—cuts and lacerations to the skin mainly, plus a huge black eye. Harry noticed the pot of Bruise Removal Paste on the table next to the bed, and recognised the strong smell of Arnica.

“Hey,” Draco croaked. Harry grabbed his hand, not giving a flying fuck that Zabini was watching.


“Nott and Goyle happened,” Draco said, his face twisted into a grimace. “Both followed me up to my room after breakfast, and started on about how their fathers were in prison whilst mine walked from the Wizengamot scot-free. Then Goyle started on about how it was my fault that Crabbe died, that their families had only served the Dark Lord because my family had, and if it wasn’t for us then Crabbe would still be alive. When I pointed out that Crabbe was the one who conjured the Fiendfyre, not me, Goyle lost it and… well, you know how burly he is. Thankfully Blaise turned up and Stunned him and Nott before they got a chance to really hurt me though.”

Boiling hatred surged through Harry. He was going to kill them. He clenched his fists into tight balls so his nails dug into his palms and gritted his teeth.

“If you’re alright now, Draco, I’m going to go and meet Daphne,” Blaise said. “We’re supposed to be going to Hogsmeade together today.” Harry’s heart lightened somewhat—the way Blaise said that left no doubt that Daphne was his girlfriend. He wasn’t flirting with Draco this morning. He said a cheerful goodbye to Blaise as he left, thanking him for his help.

“He might not be so lucky next time. Look after him, Potter,” Blaise called back once he reached the door.

“Blaise is right, you know,” Harry said, once the door had closed and they were fully alone. “I don’t want you left vulnerable again.”

“What do you propose we do, oh mighty Saviour?” Draco drawled. Harry grinned. Draco wasn’t that badly injured if he was still making sarcastic jokes. “I’m serious, Harry. You can’t be with me all the time.”

“I’ll move in with you,” Harry said. Even as the words left his mouth he was wondering if it was the most ridiculous idea he’d ever had. “We break up for Christmas on Friday, but after that I’ll stay in your room.” Draco laughed.

“Like McGonagall would allow that,” he said.

“I wasn’t planning on asking for her permission,” Harry replied. “And we have Transfiguration, Potions, Defence and Charms together, and Hermione will walk with you to Ancient Runes and Arithmancy.”

Just then Madam Pomfrey returned with an armful of potions.

“Healing Draught, Blood-Replenishing Potion, and Sleeping Draught,” she said. “You’ve not lost a huge amount of blood but it won’t hurt to take this. And you need to rest, so make sure you take this one,” she said, indicating the small phial containing a purple potion. The matron dashed off once more then, busying herself with an unknown patient behind the curtains at the far end of the ward.

Draco dutifully swallowed all his potions, and his eyes began to droop. “I’m glad you’re here,” he said sleepily. Harry wiped some of the blood, which was beginning to dry onto his skin, away from Draco’s bottom lip with his thumb, lingering for a second longer than he probably should have. Draco hummed gently and smiled slightly, then fell asleep. He looked so young and peaceful when
asleep, slightly violet eyelids shut revealing long eyelashes. The bruises had virtually gone now. The Bruise Removal Paste had done its job. In place of the bruises was perfectly pale, unmarked skin.

Harry couldn’t stop himself. He leant over and placed a soft, gentle kiss on Draco’s cheek. It was over almost as soon as it began, but it was enough. Harry sat back in his chair, lips tingling, his pulse quickening. He felt as if he’d just received a very small, let albeit real, electric shock. Suddenly, there was no confusion as to his feelings whatsoever. Everything was suddenly incredibly clear.

Harry had fallen for Draco.

Draco was released from the Hospital Wing the following morning, in time for lessons. As arranged, Harry was already waiting for him to escort him to the dungeon for Potions. Harry was delighted to see that a day of rest, potions, and charms had restored Draco to normal. It was impossible to tell just by looking at the blond that anything amiss had taken place the previous morning.

“You look well,” Harry said, with a yawn. He’d sat with Draco all the previous day, refusing to leave until Pomfrey kicked him out of the Hospital Wing at around eleven. He’d told his friends how he was doing, Ginny shot him an annoying knowing look more commonly seen on the face of Hermione, and he fell into bed.

“Better than you,” Draco said. “Did you sleep at all last night?”

“Course,” Harry said vaguely. “Um, shall we get going? I can’t wait to see what potentially lethal concoction Slughorn wants us to brew today.”

Nott wasn’t present in Potions. Nor did he show for Charms, and Draco said that he wasn’t in Arithmancy either. Harry sat with Draco at the Slytherin table at lunchtime, and noticed that Goyle was missing too.

“McGonagall spoke to them last night,” said Blaise. Harry hadn’t heard him approach and jumped violently, dropping his forkful of casserole. “Both have been suspended until after the Christmas holidays, and when they come back they’ll be put on probation. One toe out of line and they’re expelled.”

“Good,” Harry snarled. “Cause if they so much as look at Draco again, I’m going to annihilate them.”

“You will not,” Draco said quietly once Blaise had returned to his seat next to Daphne. “You are pregnant and you won’t be getting into fights with anyone. OK?”

“But—” Harry began, but Draco put a hand up to stop him.

“I don’t care if you are Harry bloody Potter, defeater of the Dark Lord with a simple Disarming Charm. You will not put our baby in a potentially risky situation, OK? Stop being a reckless Gryffindor for five minutes and show some Slytherin self-preservation. You don’t have to fight every battle. Let McGonagall and the rest of the staff sort this out.”

Harry was strangely moved. Yes, he knew Draco was concerned for the baby, but he also knew that there was a part of Draco that was worried for Harry’s safety. His heart swelled.

“OK,” he said eventually. “I promise I won’t go looking for them. But I will defend myself— and you, if necessary— if they come looking for us.”

“That’s fair,” Draco said, and began to eat. Harry snorted. Potter and Malfoy, compromising like
mature adults? Snape would be turning in his grave.

The remaining four days leading up to the Christmas holidays seemed to drag, yet were packed with last-minute tasks that needed finishing at the same time. Harry had a check-up with his Healer the day before school broke up, where both he and the baby were proclaimed perfectly healthy, but she gave him a Portkey that would bring him straight to the maternity ward at St Mungo’s should there be an emergency over the Christmas period.

Harry spent a lot of time with Ron and Hermione in the last week as well, as he was going to be spending reduced time with them over Christmas. He hadn’t forgotten what Ginny had said about Hermione being suspicious about Harry’s feelings towards Draco, but unless she brought the subject up he was was leaving it for the time being. Harry was sure of his feelings now, but the week was so busy with end of term assignments to complete etc., that he hadn’t had the chance to discuss it with Draco. Not that he even knew how to start the conversation. “Hey, Draco, I’ve decided that I do want to snog your face off after all,” just sounded stupid.

*I’ll talk to him over Christmas, Harry thought to himself. We’re going to be together for two weeks. The thought of being alone with Draco for this amount of time was both exciting and terrifying. And it left him somewhat distracted as he made his way to the Thesstral-drawn carriages to take them to Hogsmeade station. This Christmas was going to be a good one. Harry just knew it.*
Harry and Draco emerged from the Hogwarts Express, both feeling excited. Draco’s excitement, Harry assumed, was down to seeing his mother in a couple of hours’ time. But, whilst Harry would be lying if he said he said he wasn’t really looking forward to seeing Andromeda and Teddy, his excitement was all for the two weeks he had ahead with Draco.

He said goodbye to Ron, Hermione and Ginny (who had ridden the Express to keep Harry company, and were all Apparating to The Burrow from King’s Cross), and promised them he’d see them on Boxing Day. He saw Ginny saying an emotional goodbye to Neville and didn’t so much as feel a pang of jealousy. As soon as his friends had Disapparated, he turned to Draco with a grin.

“You ready to conquer your fears about Muggle transport?” he asked. Draco swallowed but nodded. They stepped through the magical barrier and emerged onto the Muggle side of King’s Cross.

Unwilling to make a large Floo journey due to the nasty nausea and sickness it caused, Harry had convinced Draco to travel to Andromeda’s via Muggle train, pleading with him that the Floo journey to The Burrow on Boxing Day would be more than enough for him. Draco had agreed, as Harry knew he would, and it lightened his heart to know that Draco was doing this for him, despite clearly hating it. He fumbled with the notes in his wallet and stood in front of the automatic ticket machine in slight confusion (what did he know about travel ‘zones’?) but eventually managed to purchase Underground tickets.

“You sure the Muggles won’t notice your bump?” Draco said in a low tone as he and Harry headed for the escalators.

“They don’t notice anything. They’re Londoners,” Harry replied. “Look.” And true to Harry’s words, hundreds of Muggles were bustling around them, hurrying down escalators and full-speed, clearly desperate to catch the next train rather than wait a whole two minutes for another one, or had their nose buried deeply in their copy of the *Metro*. No one was looking at, or in any other way interacting with, anyone else around them. “Besides, if any do notice, they’re hardly going to think I’m pregnant, are they? They’ll just think I’m a bit tubby around the waist. But this coat hides most of the bump anyway.”

Harry quickly explained how the Tube map worked, and showed Draco where they were and where they needed to get to, which was Waterloo Station. After deciding they needed to change at Oxford Circus, Harry led Draco to the Victoria Line. He realised that Draco was breathing heavily and was slightly panicked.

“For someone who spent as much time underground in the Slytherin Dungeons as you, I’d have thought you’d be used to this,” Harry teased good-naturedly. Draco glared but didn’t answer.

They stepped onto the southbound platform which had a couple of hundred Muggles already waiting. They’d managed to arrive in London bang in the middle of the evening rush hour. The closeness of all the people was making Harry very hot and uncomfortable; there was no fresh air circulating on the platform. He became aware of the familiar sickness in his stomach that he’d not felt for a few weeks now, and also a little faint, and suddenly wished they’d taken the Floo after all. Draco must have realised, for he reached into his rucksack and pulled out a bottle of water, perfectly chilled, which Harry accepted gratefully. He also felt a cool breeze wash over him, and noticed the tip of Draco’s wand poking discreetly out of his sleeve. Harry could have kissed him.

Just then he heard a low rumble, and in the next moment a train shot out of the tunnel, filling the
entire length of the platform. “That’s a train? Where’s the engine, the steam?” he heard Draco sneer, but Harry ignored him, pulling him instead towards the doors.

Everyone tried to push into the train before letting others off, then, once on, ignored the driver speaking over the intercom instructing passengers to fill up all the space inside the carriages and not stand right in the doorways. He saw a sign, ‘Please give up this seat for the elderly, disabled, or pregnant women ’ and laughed wryly. He could have killed for a seat right now.

“Are you OK, Harry?” Draco asked quietly. He’d positioned himself almost as a human shield, preventing any of the Muggles from accidentally pushing against Harry’s stomach.

“Yeah. Will be,” Harry said. “I’ve not been on the Underground much before. Just remembering I don’t particularly like it.”

They got off the train at Oxford Circus and changed to the Bakerloo Line. The train was less packed this time and Harry managed to get a seat at least, even if Draco had to stand. By the time they reached Waterloo Station and rode the escalator up to the ground again, the sickness had all but gone.

Harry checked the timetables on the wall, and discovered there was a train leaving for Petersfield in thirty minutes’ time. Draco again left him to buy the tickets.

“Muggles may have trumped us wizards when it comes to medical apparatuses,” Draco said, once Harry returned from the ticket booth, “but they travel like cattle being packed off to market. That. Was. Horrible.”

“It’s London at rush hour,” Harry replied.

“Rush hour? It’s Saturday.”

“Yeah, that doesn’t make much of a difference in London,” Harry replied. “That was the worst part of the journey. The rest of the journey won’t be so bad. I bought seats in first class, so at least we’ll be comfortable.” That seemed to cheer Draco up.

They had about twenty minutes until the train departed so they bought some sandwiches from the station and looked at the shops (with Draco fascinated by Tie Rack, wanting to know if it was normal for Muggles to suddenly need to buy a silk tie or a set of cufflinks just before setting off on a journey), then made their way onto the platform, where the train was already waiting. They found seats in a quiet area of the first class coach, and attacked their food, having not really eaten since breakfast that morning. The train filled up, the guard blew his whistle, and they set off. The journey to Petersfield was only just over an hour from London. Harry had been to Andromeda’s over the summer, and the house was lovely. She’d moved after the war, saying her old house reminded her too much of her late husband and daughter, and not in a way that was helping her accept their deaths. She’d chosen the Hampshire town as it was quiet and quaint, and virtually all Muggle; a good place to heal, she’d said.

The train left London. Harry pointed out some of the low-flying aircraft as they made their descent into Heathrow, and Draco was astounded, wanting to know how they stayed up in the air. When Harry informed him that he and Arthur Weasley had something in common, Draco flushed and muttered something unintelligible, but no doubt uncomplimentary, under his breath.

They reached Guildford station, and the train virtually emptied. Harry and Draco were the only passengers remaining in their carriage.
“This is near to my aunt and uncle’s house,” Harry said.

“Are you ever going to properly tell me about them?” Draco said.

“Maybe. One day.” Harry stared aimlessly out of the window as the train began to move once more. “I don’t really want to… Oh, wow!” Draco raised an eyebrow, and Harry beamed at him, thoughts of the Dursleys removed from his mind completely. He checked and double checked to make sure they were alone in their compartment. “Draco, she just kicked me!”

Draco’s eyes widened, then a huge, genuine, smile crossed his face.

“You sure?”

“Yeah,” Harry replied. “I thought I felt her move a couple of weeks ago, but now I know I definitely did. Here.” He took Draco’s hand and placed it on his stomach. They waited a couple of minutes but then Harry felt the tiny nudge from inside again. Draco’s smile became impossibly wide.

“I felt him,” he whispered in wonder. “That’s- I- oh, Harry…”

They both stared at each other for what felt like an impossibly long time, grinning like a pair of morons at each other, then, just as he had that afternoon after the scan outside McGonagall’s office, Draco began to lean in. Harry closed his eyes, having no intention of stopping it this time. He could feel Draco’s breath tickling his lips…

“Tickets, please!” called a voice from the door of the carriage. Harry and Draco both jumped and flew apart. Completely dazed, Harry rummaged in his pocket for the wallet containing the tickets and handed them over with a slightly trembling hand. The guard took the tickets and punched a hole in them before handing them back. Harry swore under his breath and returned the tickets to the wallet once the guard had exited the carriage. Moment ruined, he proceeded to stare out of the window at the southern English countryside for the remainder of the journey.

Harry and Draco jumped in a taxi once they’d exited the station at Petersfield.

“Heath Road West, please,” Harry said to the driver, and he and Draco settled back to enjoy the journey. Eventually they pulled into a road that lay adjacent to a lake, Harry gave the driver the number, and the taxi stopped. Harry handed the driver a note, told him to keep the change, and they exited the cab.

The house was modest in size compared to those around it, but beautifully kept. The front garden was filled with rose bushes, which Harry knew were stunning in the summer months. There was a brand-new BMW 5 Series in the drive, which led to a pretty two storey house with large bay windows and stone-cladded walls. It looked every inch the house of a perfectly respectable middle-class Muggle.

“Aunt Andromeda lives here?” Draco asked, studying the house, which was quite clear to see thanks to the light of a street lamp overhead.

“No. I just thought I’d bring you to a random address then go on a mystery tour,” Harry drawled. “Course she does. I told you she was living in a Muggle area.” They made their way up the path and Harry rang the bell. Andromeda opened the door.

“Harry! Draco! So good to see you both,” she said warmly, giving them both a hug as they entered. Narcissa was standing in the doorway of the living room. She beamed when she saw Draco, and he
all but flew to her, hugging her tightly to him.

“My son,” Narcissa said, then spoke in his ear, so only Draco could hear. Harry took off his coat, and both Andromeda and Narcissa stared at the bump.

“Oh my,” Andromeda said. “Oh, Harry, you’re really blooming.” Narcissa didn’t say anything, she simply stared, her expression one of both disbelief and amazement.

“That’s your grandson, Mother,” Draco said through a huge smile.

“Granddaughter,” Harry replied. “Well, actually, we don’t know, and won’t until the birth. But Draco’s convinced it’s a boy, and I think we’re having a girl.” Andromeda gave a small laugh, but Harry noticed her smile didn’t quite reach her eyes. He realised with a terrible jolt that this time last year Tonks was pregnant, and only about 4 weeks ahead of what he was now, and she and Remus would probably have been having a similar conversation, making plans for their future as a family. He suddenly felt incredibly awkward, wondering if perhaps he should have gone to the Weasleys after all. Andromeda seemed to pick up on this and hugged him warmly once more.

“I’m extremely glad to see you, Harry,” she said sincerely. She patted his bump- the only person besides Draco, Hermione and Ginny who had touched it. “Both of you. This baby is a blessing for our family.”

They sat in the living room. Andromeda popped upstairs to check on Teddy, who was sound asleep, then returned.

“Kreacher will have dinner ready for eight. I hope that isn’t too late for you,” she said. “Thank you again, Harry, for giving him to me- he really has been invaluable these last few months. It’s taken a huge amount of pressure off me.”

Dinner was wonderful. Despite their earlier sandwiches on the train, both Harry and Draco wolfed down everything on their plate. Harry said a quick hello to his former house-elf, before Kreacher disappeared into the kitchen, to prepare the pudding. After dinner, Narcissa asked Draco to talk privately with her, and they remained in the dining room whilst Harry and Andromeda returned to the living room. She switched on her television (she said this was the one Muggle device Ted couldn’t live without and she’d become very used to it over the years) and the pair watched a documentary on the BBC about Antarctica. It had nearly finished by the time Draco and his mother returned from their talk, both looking happy, and Narcissa slightly red-eyed. Harry suddenly realised he was exhausted, giving a huge yawn, which he unsuccessfully tried to stifle.

“Tired, Mister Potter?” Narcissa asked. “I remember that well from my pregnancy with Draco. I just had no energy the entire time. Of course, he was also two weeks late, and it was an incredibly hot summer, by the time I finally went into labour. I was ready to hex anyone who talked to me. And then of course I was in labour for fourteen hours and he was nine pounds. Draco was rather a fat child.”

“Call me Harry, please,” Harry said, trying not to laugh at the scandalised expression on Draco’s face, “and, yes, I’m knackered. We’ve been travelling since ten this morning. Would it be terribly rude of me if I turned in for the night?”

“Of course not, Harry,” Andromeda said. “You and Draco are sharing the room you stayed in over the summer, if that’s OK. Sorry you have to share, but Narcissa is in my other spare room.”

“No! That’s fine,” Harry said, almost too quickly, then cursed himself inwardly for being a complete prat. “Thank you. I shall see you all in the morning. Goodnight.”
He wearily climbed the stairs, entered the room, and grabbed his pyjamas from the rucksack that Kreacher had already brought up for him. He crossed the hall to the bathroom, washed and dressed for bed, then practically fell into the bed upon his return to the bedroom. He was instantly asleep and didn’t so much as stir when Draco came up to bed, a couple of hours later.

Harry was awoken around six the following morning by the sound of Teddy crying. He heard Andromeda comfort him, then eventually make her way downstairs with the still-crying infant. He got out of bed and made his own way down, taking care not to wake Draco.

Andromeda was in the living room when he entered, a roaring fire in the grate, with a special ward Harry really needed to learn the charm for preventing the crawling Teddy from being able to touch the flames. She looked exhausted. He felt a massive pang of sympathy.

“Morning, Harry,” Andromeda said with a yawn. “Oh, excuse me. He was up twice in the night.”

“I’ll feed him,” he offered. “Go and get some more rest. It’ll be good practice for me.” Andromeda shot him an incredibly grateful smile and handed him the bottle she was about to give Teddy. Teddy turned and spotted Harry for the first time. He reached out his chubby arms for Harry to pick him up, his hair turning the exact shade of black that Harry’s own hair was. Harry chuckled, switched on the TV, found BBC Breakfast, and in the crook of his arm he positioned the tot, who reached out, grabbed the bottle, and put the teat in his mouth.

“Hungry this morning, Teddy?” Harry laughed, as Teddy sucked greedily on the teat.

“Da,” Teddy gurgled, and spat out a mouthful of milk.

“Yeah, I’d spit it out too. This formula stuff tastes like cra- er, not nice,” Harry said. Teddy returned to his bottle, and by the time he’d finished it five minutes later, his eyelids had drooped and he’d fallen back asleep.

And that was how Draco found Harry an hour later, curled up half asleep on the sofa, watching a news story about some Muggle actor who had cheated on his wife with another man, Teddy sound asleep nested in Harry’s arms, thumb in his tiny pink mouth.

That set the pattern for the following few mornings. Harry would get up when he heard Teddy awaken, give him a bottle and change his nappy, and then either play with him or let the tot doze on him until everyone else got up for the day. Harry found he very much enjoyed his mornings alone with his godson; the baby had grown so much in the few months since he’d last seen him. Harry vowed not to miss such a large portion of his life again.

On Christmas Eve, it was Narcissa who joined him first in the living room. Teddy was awake and crawling around (Harry having learnt the spell to ward the fireplace). The pair had been getting along fairly well since their arrival.

“Good morning, Mrs Malfoy,” Harry said. Narcissa smiled at him.

“I’ve requested you call me Narcissa, as you requested I use your given name, Harry,” she said. She sat down on the sofa next to him. Harry was dressed only in pyjama bottoms and an old T-shirt; his almost eighteen weeks bump was poking out of the bottom of it, the material not quite stretching enough. Harry caught Narcissa looking, and he suddenly felt self-conscious.
“My apologies, Harry. I didn’t wish to make you feel uncomfortable,” Narcissa said. “You have a very neat bump. When I was carrying Draco, I’m afraid I carried nothing like you. My bump was all over the place. Pregnancy seems to really suit you.”

“The baby’s moving,” Harry said. “Would you like to feel?” Narcissa beamed and nodded. Harry gently placed her hand on his abdomen, and was almost instantly rewarded with a small kick. Narcissa sucked in a sharp intake of breath.

“Incredible. Thank you, Harry, for this wondrous gift,” she said. “I know my husband does not share my sentiments, but that is his loss. I am honoured to welcome your child.”

“And it’s not a problem for you that the baby is a half-blood?” Harry asked.

“I admit, I would have preferred a fully pure-blood grandchild,” Narcissa began, “but I’m not like Lucius. I won’t abandon my own flesh and blood over a matter like blood status. Not when I know the damage it causes to families.” She paused and looked around Andromeda’s living room. Her eyes fell to the photograph of Tonks and her father that took pride of place on the mantelpiece. “It tore our family apart once, and it took a tragedy for bridges to be rebuilt. I will not see that happen again. Besides, the child has three pure-blood grandparents, and comes from two old, prestigious pure-blood families, the Potters and the Malfoys. The child is three-quarters pure-blood. That’s good enough for me.”

Harry felt a jolt of annoyance at Narcissa’s proclamation that the baby was ‘good enough’, but realised that even this was a massive step for Narcissa to be taking, given her views on non-pure-bloods prior to the end of the war.

Kreacher bought them some tea and toast then. Harry cut one of the slices into soldiers and hoisted Teddy, who had crawled over to the table, pulled himself up and was opening his fat little fist and trying to grab a slice, onto his knee and handed him a soldier. Teddy began to gum the toast happily; his face was soon smeared with butter and toast crumbs.

“I wanted to talk to you alone,” Narcissa said eventually, having merely nibbled at her own slice of toast. “I remember the day Draco revealed his sexuality to my husband and me vividly. I won’t lie-when he told me about himself I was disappointed. Lucius believed that Draco would still do the honourable thing- marry a witch and produce an heir. I knew differently. Draco preferred the company of males. It was very unlikely he would take a wife simply to please his father.”

Harry bit into his toast, wondering where the conversation was leading. Teddy had finished his toast soldier and was trying to grab Harry’s toast from its plate, so Harry quickly handed the baby another piece. Teddy laughed and scrunched the toast into his fist, then smeared butter onto Andromeda’s chairs. Narcissa drew her wand and muttered a quick Cleaning Charm.

“I understand Draco has had a very hard time this term, Harry,” Narcissa said. “And I am fully aware of how magnanimous you have been towards my son. Given the acrimonious history between the two of you, it would have been understandable if you had refused to allow Draco anything to do with your child. That you have accepted him and befriended him- helped him through this difficult time with his housemates, and are going to allow him to be a father- Harry, I owe you my sincere gratitude, once again. You have given him what I thought he’d never have.”

Harry blushed somewhat. Narcissa patted him awkwardly on the hand. She wasn’t a particularly tactile woman; Draco seemed the one exception to that.

“But be cautious with him. I know my son. And he cannot hide his feelings from me. Draco may like to play the cool arrogant Slytherin, but the past couple of years have taken their toll on him. He has
had to re-evaluate everything he thought he knew, everything he believed in. And it's left him emotionally vulnerable. He could easily be hurt by, ah, misinterpreted feelings, shall we say. If he is indeed misinterpreting them?"

Harry’s blush increased, as it became clearer where the conversation was heading. He was not having this discussion with Draco’s mum. He just was not.

“I’m not going to hurt him,” Harry said eventually. “I have no intention of upsetting him. I- I like him too.”

That’s all I needed to know,” Narcissa said, smiling. “You know, Harry, it may not have been your life I was desperate to save, back in the Forbidden Forest, but I’m extremely glad I saved you, nonetheless. You’ve given my son something he’s had precious little of for two years. Hope.” She stood up and brushed away the crumbs Teddy had dropped into her lap from her dress robes. “I’ll leave you to enjoy the rest of your breakfast.” She left the room.

“Wuf?” said Teddy, then blew a loud raspberry.

“Exactly,” replied Harry, a small grin playing at the corners of his mouth.

Christmas morning was a lot of fun, if mixed with sadness for those who were not there and should have been. Harry wondered if he should have just bought Teddy a giant roll of wrapping paper, given that was all he played with; the cuddly dragon lay the paper had encased completely forgotten. He’d bought a book for Narcissa (which Draco had chosen) from a Muggle antiquarian bookshop in the town centre, and had bought Andromeda a photo frame with the words, *The ones we love never truly leave us*, engraved on the side. Inside the frame was a photo of Tonks and Remus, holding a newborn Teddy.

“Dumbledore said it to me a few years ago,” Harry said, as Andromeda hugged him tightly.

Draco handed Harry his gift: a small platinum signet ring, with an emerald set into the metal. Harry laughed.

“Buying me Slytherin jewellery now, Draco?” he said. Draco rolled his eyes.

“I should have known a philistine like you wouldn’t know its significance. The emerald is the birthstone for the month of May. I thought once the baby was here we could put their name and birthdate on the face of the ring.”

Harry was speechless. He had to swallow back the lump that had formed in his throat.

“Draco, it’s… it’s gorgeous. Thank you,” he said, with full sincerity. He couldn’t believe he’d received such a gift. He handed over the present he’d bought for Draco- a soft grey Cashmere scarf and dragon-hide gloves. Not nearly as thoughtful as the gift he’d received from Draco, Harry cursed himself, but Draco loved them nonetheless.

Harry received a Floo call from Ron at around eleven, and he wished him a Merry Christmas.


“I heard her crying this morning,’’ Ron said. “And she’d put Fred’s stocking on the fireplace and filled it with a Weasley jumper. But she’s bearing up OK. I think having the house full is helping, plus Bill and Fleur announced over breakfast that they’re expecting a baby too, which she’s
delighted about. It’s hard but we’re doing alright.”

“I’ll see you all tomorrow,” Harry promised. “Just have a bowl ready the other end for me to hurl into as soon as I arrive.” Ron gave a soft laugh.

“Will do. See you tomorrow, mate,” he said, and disappeared with a soft pop.

Christmas lunch with a thing of beauty. Harry initially thought they were having turkey, when Kreacher brought the bird to the table, but once it was carved it was clear it wasn’t. He stared at the meat in obvious confusion. Draco laughed.

“Goodness gracious, Harry. It’s a ballotine.” Harry blinked. Draco sighed. “It’s two boned birds with one stuffed into the other. This is a pheasant and woodpigeon ballotine, with stuffing. It’s delicious.”

Harry accepted the slices of meat onto his plate with some trepidation, and added vegetables and beautifully crisp roast potatoes and a delicious rich gravy (which Andromeda, Draco and Narcissa called a ‘jus’- rather pretentiously, Harry thought. As far as he was concerned, it was bloody gravy). He placed a small bit of the meat into his mouth, and was surprised to find it was delicious.

Teddy had a small bowl of mashed potatoes, carrot batons and some of the meat cut into tiny pieces. Most of it was in his hair (which was bright orange to match the food), as he picked up handfuls of potato and smeared it over his person with delight. He held out one of his carrots for Harry to take a bite.

“Thanks, Teddy,” Harry said, nibbling the vegetable, and Teddy giggled, before shoving the carrot up Harry’s nose, causing him to splutter, and resulting in much laughter from the rest of the table.

Main course devoured, Kreacher then brought out the dessert. There was traditional Christmas pudding, which Harry didn’t like anyway so didn’t try (and it contained rather more alcohol than was probably safe in pregnancy, given Andromeda’s slightly slurred speech after her portion), and a toffee pavlova filled with thick Guernsey cream. Harry said a silent thank you that he no longer had sickness after eating, and tucked heartily into his slice, savouring every mouthful of the sweet crispy meringue. His tongue darted out to lick a blob of cream from his lips, and caught Draco staring at him, mouth slightly open. Harry’s cheeks flushed and he returned to his pudding quickly.

Once that had been finished, and Andromeda, Draco and Narcissa had a glass of sherry each (Harry had refused any, despite Narcissa’s insistence that ‘one glass won’t hurt’), they returned to the living room, and Andromeda switched on the television to watch Mary Poppins.

“It’s always on during Christmas,” she said. “And it was Nymphadora’s favourite film when she was a little girl.” Draco scoffed at Mary Poppins’ ‘magical’ ability, and the fact she was performing it in front of Muggles.

“It’s just a story,” Harry reminded him gently.


“Well,” Harry said, feeling slightly annoyed, “last Christmas I think Hermione and I had some stale bread that we had in our tent, having only just managed to escape from Voldemort twelve hours previously.”

That shut Draco up.

“Sorry,” he mumbled.
“‘S OK,” Harry said.

The rest of the afternoon was a lot of fun. They played cards, watched more mindless Muggle television (a rare treat for Harry now, and a completely new experience for Draco), and played with Teddy. Harry gave him his bath and put him to bed, then collapsed on the sofa. He was exhausted. He knew he needed to talk to Draco, and soon. Something was happening between them, that much was clear. But the conversation could wait, for just one more night. He hauled himself off the sofa and padded up the stairs to bed, wishing he could simply Apparate up them. He fell into his bed, thinking that he’d talk to Draco the following evening. Definitely. After he’d visited the Weasleys. It was his new plan.

He should have learnt by now that his plans always turn to shit.

* 

Harry was standing in the graveyard in Godric’s Hollow, next to the grave of his parents. It was clearly Christmas time; the local Muggle shops were decorated, and he could hear carol singing coming from the church. A few flakes of snow began to fall.

“Merry Christmas, Hermione,” Harry said, as she conjured a wreath of Christmas roses and laid it on the grave. Suddenly the dream shifted; Hermione had disappeared and in her place was a toddler who had not yet reached their second birthday— a little girl with black hair and green eyes. She whimpered slightly in the cold. Harry scooped her up and cradled her protectively. They exited the graveyard. An old woman was staring at the Potter cottage.

“Bathilda,” Harry whispered, pulling the child closer to him. She nodded and began walking, tentatively, up the cobbled path.

They entered a small house which was in a state of disarray. Harry placed the girl on the floor next to him, taking the matches from Bathilda and proceeded to light the candle for her. The flame lit, Harry reached out for the little girl once more. All he grabbed, however, was a white, bony hand. He looked up. Voldemort was standing in front of him, holding the girl in one of his arms. Harry heard him hiss in Parseltongue and Nagini emerged from the body of Bathilda. Harry screamed.

“Give me the girl,” he pleaded. Voldemort laughed.

“No,” he said, in the cruel, high voice. “You took my life from me, Harry Potter. Now I will take the life of your child, as I did your parents, too.”

Harry raced towards Voldemort but found he couldn’t get close. He pulled his wand and tried desperately to get close, but he couldn’t. Voldemort drew his wand and pointed it at the girl, who was sobbing.

“No!” shrieked Harry, but Voldemort merely laughed.

“Avada Kedavra!” he yelled, and green light shot out of the wand, slamming into the little girl in his arms, and she sobbed no more…

Harry’s eyes flew open. He was drenched in sweat, he was breathing hard and he could feel his pulse racing. To his mild embarrassment he realised his eyes and cheeks were wet. He looked at the luminous display on his wristwatch; it was just after one in the morning.

“Fuck,” he said aloud to the darkness, his voice shaky. Then he jumped out of his skin when he realised Draco was leaning over him.
“Sorry,” Draco said. “I heard you shouting out. I’ve been trying to wake you for a couple of minutes. Harry- are you OK?”

Harry reached out for his wand and cast *Lumos* letting the gentle light fill the bedroom. “Yeah. Bad dream,” he said. He was still dangerously close to tears. Draco had clearly noticed.

“Want to tell me about it?” Harry shook his head. He bit his bottom lip and closed his eyes. “Oh, shit. Harry, come here.” He climbed next to Harry in the bed and pulled Harry into his arms, running soothing fingers through Harry’s hair. Harry took a deep breath as he felt himself calm down. He placed a hand on his stomach and felt a reassuring little kick, as if to say, ‘*see, Daddy? I’m safe*’. He left out a shuddering breath of relief.

“The nightmare. It was about the baby, wasn’t it?” Draco asked gently, having clearly noticed Harry’s reaction to the kick. Harry nodded but said no more, and Draco didn’t push the issue. He simply placed a hand on Harry’s stomach. “He’s fine. I promise you he’s fine.”

“Yeah, I know,” Harry said. “Thanks.” He suddenly realised that he and Draco were in bed together, and cuddled up at that. Draco’s fingers were still carding his hair soothingly. His pulse quickened again- for a different reason this time. His earlier plan- to talk- suddenly seemed so unnecessary. Words were just words. He needed to act. Harry summoned his Gryffindor courage and threaded his own fingers in Draco’s hair. He couldn’t see Draco’s face, so angled himself differently, and looked straight into Draco’s eyes, not removing his fingers from the soft platinum hair. Their faces were just inches apart now. Draco was giving him an appraising gaze; his teeth were worrying his bottom lip.

“I didn’t imagine it,” he said eventually, more to himself than to Harry, and in an incredibly soft voice. “I didn’t, did I? The day I was in the Hospital Wing. After I’d taken a Sleeping Draught. I thought it was my mind playing tricks but… Harry, you kissed me, didn’t you?”

Harry didn’t answer with words. He simply pulled Draco towards him, closing few inches that were separating them, and pressed his lips to Draco’s. Draco gave the smallest gasp of surprise, and then he was kissing Harry back, and it was warm, soft, and passionate.

Harry had only kissed two other people until this point. Cho, whose kiss Harry could only describe as ‘wet’, and Ginny, whom he’d actually enjoyed kissing rather a lot. Both kisses paled into insignificance now, however; Harry gave a small moan of delight and deepened the kiss. He was tingling, actually tingling- from scalp to toes; his skin was fire and ice. Each touch from Draco’s fingers on him felt like an electric shock. He realised he’d forgotten to breathe and broke the kiss, gasping for air.

“Wow,” he whispered, once his lungs had had their fill. Draco chuckled.

“Yes. Wow,” he echoed, and then his lips were on Harry once more, kissing his mouth, his jawline and his neck. Draco nibbled Harry’s earlobe, and Harry suddenly realised that this was rapidly heading into far more than a shared snog in the dark in the early hours of Boxing Day morning. He took in an involuntary gasp of breath as Draco’s lips sucked lightly, not hard enough to leave a mark, at the pulse point on Harry’s neck.

“I, this is, Draco,” Harry babbled. He felt Draco’s answering smile against his neck and the low rumble of a chuckle in his chest, and then Draco’s lips were on his once more, his tongue in Harry’s mouth. Both were sighing, and moaning softly into each other’s mouths. Then the hand that was pressed into the gap between Harry’s shoulder blades traced a pattern down Harry’s left side, causing Harry to squirm and shiver slightly from the ticklish sensation. It settled for a second on Harry’s bump, before tracing lower, resting at the waistband to Harry’s pyjama bottoms.
Draco broke the kiss and looked into Harry’s eyes, clearly searching for the permission to continue that Harry was so ready to give. He nodded slightly, and Draco’s hand slipped inside Harry’s pyjamas.

Nothing had ever felt so intense, Harry decided, as he began to kiss Draco with a force and urgency he’d never experienced in his life before. The rest of the world didn’t exist. He pressed his mouth furiously against Draco’s as a burning heat began to spread through him. He had a fleeting mental image of waves crashing onto a beach, rhythmically and repeatedly, with each crash of the wave an accelerated jolt of desire, building to a wonderful, earth-shattering crescendo. He let out a hoarse cry into Draco’s mouth, trembling, as the pleasure reached its peak, before breaking the kiss and allowing his forehead to collapse onto Draco’s shoulder, breathing heavily.

Harry had no words, or even competent thoughts, for how he felt at that moment. All he knew was he felt absolutely euphoric. The part of his brain that was still somewhat lucid decided he should reciprocate, and Draco certainly seemed to agree, given the hardness inside Draco’s own pyjamas pressed against his thigh. And suddenly there was nothing Harry wanted to do more in the world.

“I’ve never, um, you know,” Harry said, still sounding breathless, his hand slinking south.

“I know,” Draco replied. “But you’ll be- ngh!” He abruptly shut up and buried his face in Harry’s neck, as Harry’s hands slipped inside the silk.

Harry concentrated making Draco come apart. The usually cool and composed Draco Malfoy gasped and shuddered, and shivered, and begged Harry not to stop. Harry kissed every inch of skin he could reach, wondering if it was possible to become addicted to a person, because he didn’t think he could ever get enough. He bent his head and kissed Draco’s smooth naked chest just as Draco sucked in a huge breath, held it, arched his back, and came, releasing the breath he was holding in a rush that sounded very much like, *Harry.*

Harry simply stared into Draco’s eyes, at his skin which was looking almost ethereal, bathed in wand light. His hair was tousled, he was breathing heavily, and he had beads of sweat hanging from him. Harry thought he’d never seen anything so beautiful. He leant over, fully intending to have one more snog, but felt a big kick from the baby instead. Draco must have felt it too, for he chuckled.

“He’s feeling left out,” he said, placing a hand on Harry’s tummy.

“She,” insisted Harry, with a grin.

“We’ll see,” Draco replied sleepily.

The pair fell sound asleep curled tightly together, Draco’s right hand cradling Harry’s bump, the left buried in Harry messy locks, and the only dreams Harry had for the rest of the night involved silver eyes, panting breath, and full lips gasping his name in ecstasy.
Harry awoke later than usual the following morning, and was extremely warm and comfortable. It took him a second to remember what had happened the previous night. Then it all came rushing back to him in glorious Technicolor. He’d kissed Draco. More than kissed him, in fact. And it had been absolutely spectacular. For the first time in his life he was waking up in someone’s arms, and Harry thought it all felt utterly brilliant. He smiled against Draco’s chest, which he’d evidently curled close against during the night, listening the rhythmic thudding of Draco’s heart, and feeling his chest rising and falling with deep, even breathing. Then Harry felt a moment of irrational, unfounded panic, as people often do when suddenly presented with something they desperately wanted. What if Draco regretted the previous night? What if he thought they were better just as friends?

He felt Draco stir next to him, and he opened one sleepy grey eye. He gave Harry a massive smile when he saw Harry staring at him.

“Morning,” he said. Then he stroked a finger down Harry’s cheek, tilted Harry’s chin up, leant down, and kissed him soundly. Harry allowed himself to become lost in the kiss for a few wonderful minutes, relishing in the relief that Draco did indeed still want him, and the fabulous sensation Draco’s tongue was drawing from him, before unwillingly pulling away.

“I need to get up,” he said. Draco sniggered and ran a firm hand down Harry’s body before allowing it to come to rest on the top of Harry’s thigh.

“You are up,” he said pointedly, raising an eyebrow. Harry felt himself flush.

“No… I mean… Teddy,” he said, slightly flustered.

“He’s not just your responsibility, you know,” Draco said. “You’ve got up with him every morning for nearly a week.”

“Yeah, and Andromeda does it every other morning when I’m not here,” Harry countered. He leant over and kissed Draco once more. “I’d love to stay in bed with you all day, but I want to help her out, too. Plus I’m due at The Burrow in an hour or so. Besides, you or your mum could get up with Teddy as well you know, one of the mornings, if you’re so concerned about me doing it every time. I’m the pregnant one here, after all.”

He (very) reluctantly hauled himself out of bed, and, ignoring Draco’s protests, grabbed his clothes and headed for the bathroom, where he took a quick shower before dressing. He realised as he was brushing his teeth that he hadn’t stopped smiling once yet that morning- the exception being earlier when Draco had his tongue in his mouth.

He headed downstairs and found both Andromeda and Narcissa up, supervising Teddy, who was attacking a bowl of porridge with a spoon, as if it was a drumstick banging against a tom-tom. They both smiled at him as he entered.

“Sorry, Andromeda,” Harry said, once he’d greeted them all. “I overslept this morning. I didn’t hear Teddy wake up.”

“That’s fine, Harry,” Andromeda said. “I should imagine you needed a lie-in after the night you had.”

Harry’s hand stilled on the roll he was reaching for. “The night I had?”
“We both heard you,” Narcissa said. “You were quite vocal.”

Harry felt his cheeks flame. *Fucking fucky f*uck. “I… sorry… I… oh,” he mumbled, wanting the ground to open up and swallow him whole and wondering what on earth Draco was going to say.

“That’s OK, Harry,” Andromeda said kindly, “no need to be embarrassed. I get nightmares sometimes too. I was going to come in and see if you were OK, but you quietened back down so I assumed it was fine.”

“Oh! Um, yeah, it was,” Harry said, relief that Draco’s mother and aunt hadn’t overheard anything he’d rather die before letting them hear flooding through him, “er, fine, I mean. It was just a bad dream. Sorry I woke you both though.” He took a roll, breaking a piece of the crusty bread off and popping it in his mouth, more to make himself shut up than because he actually wanted it. Just then Draco entered the room, dressed in crisp charcoal grey robes and looking stunning. Harry couldn’t pull his eyes away.

“Good morning, Mother, Aunt Andromeda,” Draco said as he sat down. Teddy handed him the spoon from his bowl, which was covered in Ready Brek. Draco grimaced, reached out for it, and placed it as quickly as he could onto the highchair, wiping his fingers on a nearby napkin, with a fixed smile aimed at Teddy, who rewarded Draco by turning his eyes the exact same colour as Draco’s. Harry suddenly realised he was staring, and hastily averted his own eyes, concentrating on buttering his roll and pouring himself a cup of tea from the teapot.

“What time are you off to visit the Weasleys?” Andromeda asked.

“I said I’d Floo over around ten,” Harry replied. “I’m not going to bother eating a lot this morning. It’ll only come up again the other end.” He really was dreading the journey.

They finished up with breakfast and Kreacher removed the plates and bowls from the table. Harry spent a few minutes playing with his godson before, very unenthusiastically, declaring it was time for him to leave. He grabbed a bag containing presents for Hermione and the Weasleys from the side, took a handful of Floo powder from the marble box on the mantelpiece, and threw it into the flames, which instantly turned emerald.

“Bye then,” Harry said to Draco, who was the only one in the room. Draco cocked a crooked smile at him and grabbed his hand. He drew Harry back out of the flames and kissed him.

“So you don’t forget me,” he said with a smirk, probably in relation to the stupefied and glassy-eyed expression Harry knew was on his face. Harry grinned.

“I’m only going for a few hours, prat.” But he leant over and kissed Draco back once more, touched by Draco’s obvious sincerity and reluctance to let him go. “I… really… have… to… leave,” he murmured as he peppered kisses along Draco’s jawline. “I’ll see you later.”

Before he could change his mind and decide to stay after all (which part of him- the part below his belly button, if Harry was truthful- really wanted him to do), he called out, “The Burrow!” and disappeared.

He began to feel nauseous as soon as Draco’s face vanished, and he screwed his eyes tightly shut. He finally landed in the fireplace in The Burrow’s kitchen where, as arranged, Ron was waiting with a bowl; Harry had a second to dizzily realise it was there before he was desperately grabbing it and retching violently into it. Thankfully, Ron must have told the others about the Floo sickness (or Mrs Weasley remembered it well from her own pregnancies), as he and Hermione were the only ones in the kitchen to welcome him, which gave Harry a lot more dignity than he was expecting to arrive
with at least- he’d imagined being sick in front of the entire Weasley clan.

“Jesus fucking bollocking arsing sodding Christ,” he groaned, resting his hands on his knees and panting for breath, wishing the room would stop spinning so he could regain some degree of equilibrium. Hermione quickly whipped the bowl away from under his chin and Vanished its contents. Despite having hardly eaten any breakfast that morning, he’d still made an impressive mess of the bowl. “You have no idea how utterly hideous that was. I’m sorry you had to watch that. And, um, for my language. Sorry, Hermione.”

“Shall I make you a Portkey with which to return to Andromeda’s?” Hermione offered soothingly, clearly thinking that Harry was allowed one attack of the potty mouth given what he’d just gone through, and began rubbing his back gently before leading him over to one of the kitchen chairs, which Harry gratefully sank into, resting his face on the table. Harry shook his head.

“Thanks, Hermione, but no. The Healer has recommended I only use those for emergencies or when I can’t Floo or use Muggle transport,” he explained. “They’re safe for use in pregnancy but the resulting Portkey-sickness is apparently fifty times worse than with Floo travel, and pregnant women often end up in St Mungo’s with it. It’s the reason we didn’t take one from Hogwarts, remember?” He reached for the goblet of water Ron has just ran from the tap for him and took a huge swig, before pulling out his wand and casting a Cleaning Charm on his shirt where a stray fleck of vomit had landed, and performing handy little charm which freshened his breath.

“Harry! Thought I heard your discreet arrival,” said George, appearing at the doorway. Harry noticed he was smiling- a genuine smile that reached his eyes, which were sparkling in amusement. It was the first he’d seen on his face since the night of the Battle of Hogwarts. “At first Mum and Dad weren’t sure it was you, but then you started swearing like a sailor, so they figured that it was you after all.”

Harry grinned apologetically and stood up from the kitchen table, exposing his tummy. George’s mouth fell open.

“Bloody hell, Harry,” he said. “Your stomach… well, I never thought I’d see you up the duff.”

Harry opened his mouth to reply, but just then all the other Weasleys poured into the room. It wasn’t lost on him that every single pair of eyes, Ginny excepted (who was, of course, used to the bump), was on his stomach rather than his face. Molly recovered first.

“Harry, dear,” she said, smile as wide as her arms. She took Harry into an embrace. “You look so well.”

Harry was beginning to wonder if ‘well’ was a euphemism for ‘fat’ that people used when speaking to pregnant people, in some attempt at not hurting their feelings. He’d heard it a lot from family and friends recently, and given he’d just chucked up for England and still felt sick, he was quite certain he looked anything but ‘well’.

“At least you’re not telling me I’m too thin, this time,” he said, his eyebrows raised pointedly, and was gratified to see a guilty flush on her cheeks, which told him he had been right. Bill roared with laughter, whilst Fleur, who Harry remembered was also pregnant, shot him a smile of comradeship and elbowed her husband in the ribs.

“Arry! You ‘ave a beautiful bump,” she said. “I ‘ope my stomach looks like yours when I am at ze same stage as you.”

He greeted and hugged or shook hands with all the Weasleys. Somewhere in all the jumbled noise, Mrs Weasley had produced a bacon sandwich and a huge steaming mug of tea for Harry, and
steered him back to the table to eat. He felt extremely self-conscious with everyone asking him questions about the baby and pregnancy, so he distracted everyone by taking the scan picture out of his wallet and passing it around for everyone to coo over whilst he ate his breakfast.

“So, how’s Andromeda and Teddy?” Hermione asked, once the fuss calmed down slightly and Harry managed to tuck in to his sandwich. He nodded his head and put a thumb up, mouth full of sandwich, to show they were fine. “And Malfoy?”

He blushed. He knew he did. He could feel the heat pooling in his cheeks. With effort he swallowed the bread that was in his mouth.

“Yeah, he’s fine,” Harry said, in what he hoped was a nonchalant voice, but knew he’d failed as soon as he heard Ginny. His ex-girlfriend let out a small snort of laughter that she managed to disguise as a sneeze, which, thankfully, no one seemed to notice. Harry quickly averted her eyes and went back to his sandwich.

Once he’d finished, they went into the living room and exchanged gifts. Harry received a jar of stretchmark cream and a tube of Preparation H from George; clearly his idea of a joke. Molly admonished him for his thoughtlessness, but Harry didn’t mind; George, at least, was treating him like the old Harry (and it was certainly a ‘George’ thing to do), and Harry greatly appreciated it. His heart melted, however, when he saw that Molly had knitted a tiny newborn-sized Weasley jumper that exactly matched Harry’s; he gave her a massive hug.

Arthur Weasley was ecstatic with Harry’s gift- a copy of How Aeroplanes Fly which he’d seen whilst shopping for Narcissa’s book, and instantly began to read. Hermione was thrilled with her present from Harry, too- an antique copy of Jane Eyre (a story Hermione had spoken about recently, admiring it for its forward thinking on feminism in literature). He had bought gift vouchers (via mail order- no way was he going into Diagon Alley at the moment) for Quality Quidditch Supplies each for Ron and Ginny. Hermione had bought him a book called Bewitching Babies: A Guide to Bringing Up Magical Children for the Muggle-raised Parent, Ginny had bought him a set of aromatherapy oils designed for use in pregnancy (and Harry secretly thought Draco would use far more than him) whilst Ron had been the only one not to give him a gift related to the baby and had bought him a massive hamper from Honeydukes.

Eventually the room began to empty: Charlie and his boyfriend, Bill, Ron, Ginny and George all engaged in an impromptu game of Quidditch in the orchard (which Harry desperately wanted to take part in, too), Mrs Weasley was busy cooking in the kitchen, Arthur was still engrossed in his book at the kitchen table, Fleur was feeling unwell and had gone to lie down, and Percy left to spend the day at his girlfriend’s house. Only he and Hermione remained in the living room.

“So, Harry,” she began. “You and Draco are together, then.” It clearly wasn’t a question, and Harry didn’t take it as one. He stared at her. She laughed and took his hand in hers. “It was obviously just going to be a matter of time before you two got together. You never have been good at subtly, have you?”

“What gave me away?” Harry said. He’d not planned to have this discussion with his friends today, on Boxing Day, when it was likely to upset his friends, but he hadn’t planned to kiss Draco the previous night either, and that had worked out well enough. Besides, had no intention of lying, and it was obvious Hermione already knew. Denying would have been stupid.

“Well, there’re the looks you’ve each been giving the other for weeks,” Hermione said. “And when he was attacked you were beside yourself with worry and only left his bedside when you were ordered to, even when it was clear he was going to be fine. It was obvious you liked him, Harry. But the way you blushed earlier when I asked you how he was- Harry, I don’t want to pry, and tell me to
mind my own business if you want to, but when did something happen between the two of you?"

“Mind your own business,” Harry said, but he was smiling. “Merlin, Hermione, you’re far too smart for your good sometimes. I should call you Miss Marple.” He picked at a loose thread that was hanging from the hem of his T-shirt- one of the few items of clothing that still fit him (and only because it used to be one of Dudley’s). “We kissed last night.” He couldn’t keep the smile off his face. “And we- um-” He caught himself just in time and stopped the train of thought materialising into speech. “Actually you don’t need to know that bit.” He saw Hermione bite back a laugh at this. “But, yeah, I think we’re together now.”

“You only think?” Hermione asked, her eyebrows raised.

“OK, yeah, we are together. He gave me a ring for Christmas- no, not that type of ring, Merlin!” he added hastily as Hermione’s hands flew to her mouth and her eyes widened. “We’re not engaged or anything ridiculous like that! We only kissed for the first time last night! But it has the baby’s birthstone on it and a space for their name. It was beautiful. I wish I brought it with me now to show you.”

“You only get someone a gift like that if you have feelings for them,” Hermione said. “And frankly, Harry, Draco has been smitten with you for a very long time.”

“And how do you feel about it?” Harry hadn’t forgotten the vile names Draco had called Hermione in the past. That it was his aunt that had tortured her in Draco’s own home.

“He makes you happy,” Hermione replied flatly. “And if anyone deserves some happiness, Harry, it’s you. Besides, I think by now we’ve all learnt to trust your judgement. And I’ve had a few weeks to get used to the idea. It’ll come as more of a shock to Ron; he never notices anything and is still quite convinced you and Ginny will ‘come to your senses’-” she made air quotes with her fingers- “and get back together one day.”

“Oh God, I’ve got to tell Ron, haven’t I?” Harry groaned. Hermione’s grip on Harry’s hand increased.

“I think he’ll surprise you. Have faith in him, Harry. He loves you. And he’s grown up a lot in the last few months.”

Harry ran his hands over his face.

“I’ll talk to him after lunch,” he said, suddenly feeling like a condemned man, and lunch was to be his last meal.

Lunch was served soon after Harry’s conversation with Hermione. As always, it was delicious. Molly Weasley had produced a cold buffet spread; Harry helped himself to chicken wings, coleslaw, salad, and a multitude of other delicious things, and sat down to eat.

“I need to talk to you after we’ve eaten,” he said in a low voice to Ron. Ron gave him a slightly confused look, but agreed, returning to his food. Harry caught Ginny’s eye; she smiled warmly at him and gave him a wink.

As soon as lunch was over, and Mrs Weasley had charmed the pots and plates to wash themselves in the sink, Harry disappeared upstairs with Ron, wishing that Ron’s room wasn’t right at the top of the house as the stairs left him breathless. Ron closed the door to his old room, which was still violently orange and covered in Chudley Cannons posters. One of them, Dragomir Gorgovitch, threw the
Quaffle to a teammate and turned his head to wink at Ron as he entered, before zooming out of the picture, and then the scene started again. Harry took a deep breath and sat on the bed.

“You alright, Harry?” Ron asked. “You look like someone died.” His eyes widened. “It’s not the baby, is it? I mean, is it OK? There’s not a problem or anything?”

“Yeah, Ron, she’s fine,” Harry said. “Actually, she’s moving around at the moment. Wanna feel?”

“No, I’m good thanks, mate,” Ron said, nose slightly wrinkled in mild horror at the idea. Harry laughed nervously. “So if there’s nothing wrong, why do you look like shit?”

“Cause I need to tell you something, and I’m worried you’re going to hate me,” Harry replied honestly. Ron’s amused smile slipped off his face instantly.

“Ginny’s not pregnant too, is she?” he said, and glared accusingly at Harry. Harry couldn’t help himself. He began to laugh.

“I don’t think so, no, but if she is, blame Neville, not me. Bloody hell, Ron.” He sobered quickly and stared at his fingernails. He took a deep breath. “Ron, Draco and I have started seeing each other. You know, as, um, not just friends. We’re- we’re together. Together together.” He forced himself to stop staring at his fingers, and looked into Ron’s face, expecting to see hatred there. He was surprised.

Ron had turned rather pale, but other than that his face hadn’t changed. Harry thought Ron was probably trying to decide if Harry was pulling his leg or not. Eventually deciding Harry wasn’t joking, he said simply, in an even tone, “You’re gay?”

For some reason this hadn’t been the question Harry had expected, at least not first. He’d expected something melodramatic, along the lines of how could he betray the Weasleys, or shack up with a stinking Slytherin. He’d certainly been anticipating ranting or shouting. It threw him slightly.

“I don’t know,” Harry replied honestly. “All I know is I’m definitely not straight. I don’t know if I only like blokes, or I like both blokes and girls. I mean, I’ve not fancied that many people. There was Cho and your sister, and no other girls, but no other blokes besides Draco either. I’ve decided it doesn’t really matter. All I know is I really, really like Draco and I’m very attracted to him, and he likes me too, so we’re giving it a go.” He forced himself to hold Ron’s eye contact. There was a small trace of hurt there. Harry bit his lip- the same lip that Draco was biting just a few short hours previously.

“Hermione already knows, doesn’t she?” Ron said eventually. “That’s why she’s not up here too, isn’t it. Didn’t you trust me, Harry? You could’ve told me you liked him,” “I wouldn’t have flown off the handle, y’know.” He wiped his hand across his mouth and sighed deeply. “Look, I’ve already accepted that the git’s going to be around. If I can get used to my best mate getting pregnant by him then I can accept you having a-relationship- with him. And if I didn’t smash his stupid pointy face in for knocking you up in the first place, then I’m not going to now he’s finally doing some good and actually making you happy, alright?”

“I didn’t tell anyone,” Harry replied. “Hermione and Ginny guessed I liked him, but me and Draco only got together last night, and Hermione worked it out and asked me about it when you were playing Quidditch earlier, and now I’m telling you.” He realised he was rambling. “Sorry. Look, Ron. I really don’t want to be in a position where I have to choose between you, sometime down the line. You’re both far too important to me.”

“I don’t care you like men,” Ron said. “Although I’m surprised as I’d never have guessed. And,
yeah, I wish it was anyone other than the Ferret, but I’m not going to stand in your way, Harry. Besides, you’re having a baby with him. And it’s nice if a kid’s parents care a lot about one another and you can all be a family, you know? Just promise me you won’t snog him in front of me, OK.”

Relief flooded through Harry, as in that moment he knew it was going to be okay. It must have shown on his face because Ron was suddenly pulling him into a fierce hug.

“I learnt my lesson about not trusting you, Harry,” he said. “Last Christmas- I should have been with you and Hermione when you faced You-Know-Who. And I wasn’t, and I was a complete and utter git, and if you’d both been killed I’d never have forgiven myself. I’m not going to stop being your best mate just ‘cause you’re with the Ferret. Follow your heart. We’ll be fine.”

“Thank you,” Harry said into Ron’s shoulder, thinking Hermione had been right and Ron really had grown up. The war, and dealing with the losses, had forced them all to grow up, he supposed. “And I promise. About the snogging, I mean. We’ll keep it to our room.”

“Crap, I’d forgotten you were moving out of Gryffindor Tower,” Ron said, but it was said good-naturedly. “Y’know, you get to share a bed with him every night now. And Hermione and me are stuck in different dorms. That’s hardly fair, mate.”

Harry laughed then, and it was an open, carefree laugh. He felt like a weight had been removed from him. Hermione and Ron knew about him and Draco, and they were both still his friends. He felt a very weird sensation in his stomach. He had family, friends, Draco, and a baby on the way. Maybe, Harry thought, this is how it felt to be truly happy.

“So, have you shagged him yet?” Ginny asked later that afternoon. Harry spat out a mouthful of his spiced warm apple juice and made a mental note to stop eating and drinking around her. It never ended well.

“Gin,” he warned, cleaning up the spilt juice with his wand. Ginny just grinned. Harry sighed. Ginny Weasley had clearly decided to appoint herself as his fag hag. “Fine. I had a nightmare last night, he crawled into bed with me to comfort me, we ended up kissing, and-” He stopped talking.

“And?” Ginny probed, looking deliriously happy. Harry sighed, re-cast the Warming Charm around them in The Burrow’s garden, made sure no one was watching them from The Burrow’s kitchen window, and made an obscene hand gesture with a loosely-closed fist at Ginny. Her eyes widened and she let out a whoop of delight. “Was it good?”

“What do you think?” Harry said, but he, too, was smiling now. “Yeah. It was incredible, actually. Doing it to him was almost better than having it done to me.”

“Yeah, you’re definitely at least bi,” Ginny said with a small giggle. “God, if I had to touch another girl’s bits I think I’d throw up.” Harry snorted.

“Actual sex, though- Merlin, Gin, I don’t know if I’m ready for that. I mean, yeah, of course I want to, but how does it even work? Between blokes, I mean? Doesn’t it like, really hurt or something? I mean, it can’t, not all the time, otherwise men wouldn’t do it, but I don’t know how to make it not hurt.” He knew that Draco had done it at least once before- Harry always tried very hard to forget that Draco had already sort of had sex with him once already, as it was just still too weird- but he didn’t want to be the blushing fumbling virgin all the time. He wanted to at least know what he was supposed to be doing, rather than their first time becoming something of a tutorial that he needed to be guided through.
“Ask Charlie, I’m sure he’d be more than happy to give you step-by-step instructions,” Ginny said, and was rewarded with a playful elbow to her side.

“I know you’re just joking, but I’d rather not tell your family just yet,” Harry said. “This is all so new to me. Just let me get used to the idea for a while before telling anyone else. Please.”

Just then Harry felt a small kick.

“Baby’s woken up,” he said. “She must like the juice.” He took Ginny’s hand and placed it on the bump, and she gasped softly when she felt a kick on her hand.

“You’re going to look like a right tit if it is a boy, you know,” she said, but her eyes were sparkling. Her hand stroked Harry’s bump with tenderness. “Wow, it’s incredible. I can’t believe there’s actually a baby inside you.”

She continued to stroke the bump and snuggled in to Harry, who kissed the top of her head. Neither of them noticed the flash of a camera going off in the distance.

* * *

The weak December sun had long since set, and darkness had fallen over The Burrow, when it was time for Harry to return home. He said his goodbyes to everyone, promising Molly to send regular updates about the pregnancy, and arranging to meet Ron, Hermione and Ginny at King’s Cross on the fourth of January to return to Hogwarts. Then, arms filled with pie, Christmas cake and leftover buffet food, he tossed a handful of Floo powder into the flames, took a deep breath, stepped into them, and called out Andromeda’s address.

He practically fell out of the Floo the other end, feeling extremely giddy and sick, swearing extremely loudly, and vowing not to Floo again until the baby was born. Draco had clearly spotted him arrive for he was by his side in an instant, casting Cooling Charms and snatching up a glass of cold water for him, just as Ron had done that morning. Harry gripped the side of the chair he’d been led to tightly and took a series of deep breaths to calm himself, wondering if he was going to keep down the food he’d eaten earlier.

“Well, that was rather inelegant, Potter,” a voice drawled with faint amusement. Sickness or not, Harry’s head snapped up at the voice, and his eyes confirmed what his ears had heard. There, sat on the armchair opposite Harry’s, and sipping from a large glass of mulled mead and looking perfectly relaxed, was Lucius Malfoy.
“What’s your father doing here, Draco?” Harry snarled, not even looking at Lucius.

“I wasn’t aware your permission was required to visit my family at Christmas, Potter,” Lucius sneered. “I suggest you calm down; you look quite enraged, which surely, given your current situation, isn’t good for your blood pressure.” Harry was sure he hadn’t imagined the slight sneer Lucius gave on the word ‘blood’.

The situation was completely strange. Here was Lucius Malfoy, aristocratic pure-blood, sitting in Andromeda’s floral squishy armchair in this modest, three-bedroom semi-detached house, in a quaint, conservative Muggle town in Hampshire, sipping mead and looking thoroughly comfortable.

“He Apparated here about an hour ago,” Draco said. “He turned up unannounced. And completely and utterly inebriated, might I add.” He shot a disapproving glare at his father.

It was obvious now Harry looked at Lucius that the man had indeed been drinking heavily; his eyes were bloodshot, and they scrutinised Harry with an unfocussed, unsteady gaze. Harry even thought he caught a whiff of alcohol emanating from the elder Malfoy, and felt his anger spike.

“So you thought you’d give him a glass of mead and make him welcome. How cosy,” Harry said, his voice laced with sarcasm.

“I came to talk to Draco, not that it’s any of your business,” Lucius said. He took another sip of his mead. “I’ve tried, unsuccessfully I might add, to make him see sense. However he is still firmly of the opinion that you and your half-blood brat are preferable to his birth-right as my sole heir.”

“So what are you still doing here, if Draco has told you he’s not interested?” said Harry, refusing to rise to Lucius’ clear attempt at goading him. He was tired, he felt sick from the Floo travel, and all he wanted was a bath then Draco’s arms wrapped around him whilst he slept. He didn’t want to have to deal with Lucius sodding Malfoy and whatever shit came with the man.

“Mother took pity on him,” Draco replied, and Harry could hear the annoyance in his voice. This cheered him greatly. “Apparition when drunk is highly dangerous- the fucking idiot-” he gave his father a filthy look- “so we don’t want to send him back that way in case he Splinches himself, not to mention the trouble Mother and I would be in if the Ministry ever found out we’d let him Apparate illegally without a licence. And Floo travel when drunk is as bad as when pregnant, apparently. And my father looks so pathetic, apparently, that she asked Andromeda if he could sleep on the sofa for the night, to sober up.”

“Yeah, and giving him more alcohol is really helping with that,” Harry snapped (thinking that a bout of Floo sickness or Splinching could actually do Lucius some good), and Draco had the grace to look abashed. “Where are your mother and Andromeda, anyway?”

“They’re bathing Teddy,” Draco said. “Apparently they wanted to give Father and I time to talk. All he’s done, however, is drink more and call me a disappointment.”

Harry was extremely tempted to Floo back to The Burrow and stay there until Lucius had well and truly fucked off, but the thought of having to make the journey for the third time in less than twelve hours was enough to knock the idea on its head. Besides, he didn’t really want to leave Draco to deal with his drunken and verbally abusive father alone.

“Couldn’t he go back to the Manor via Side-Along?”
“No,” Draco replied. “Mother and I are not allowed to Apparate, and Aunt Andromeda can’t. You can’t take him because of the baby. He has to stay here.”

“Fine,” Harry said, defeated. He turned to Lucius. “But you leave tomorrow morning.” It was still relatively early, but Harry didn’t care. “I’m going to bed.” He turned and stormed out of the room.

It was a couple of hours later that Harry was awoken to the sound of Draco coming up to bed. He relaxed when he felt the other man slide in between the sheets next to him.

“I’m sorry,” Draco whispered, and wrapped an arm around Harry’s waist, coming to rest on Harry’s bump.

“I know,” Harry replied drowsily, and joined his fingers with Draco’s. He felt Draco’s lips caress his jaw and neck for a few sleepy minutes before he drifted back off.

He woke up a few hours later needing the loo. He grabbed his glasses, got up carefully without disturbing Draco, and padded across to the bathroom. He was just returning to the bedroom when the flicker of wand light from downstairs drew his attention. He headed down the stairs and found Lucius, perfectly sober and composure, sat on the sofa, reading.

“Potter. This is a pleasant surprise. Just the person I wished to talk with,” Lucius said, putting down his book as Harry approached. There was something in Lucius’ tone of voice that prickled uneasily at Harry’s skin, making him feel extremely uncomfortable. It sounded almost like… triumph. And in that instant, Harry knew this whole thing—Lucius arriving here, knowing that he wouldn’t be returned to the Manor immediately—it wasn’t about reconciling with Draco at all. Lucius wanted to talk with him. He should have guessed, Harry thought. He’d probably even managed to ensure Harry had woken, although Harry wasn’t entirely sure how that could have been achieved. But it wasn’t as if Lucius wasn’t learned in the Dark Arts.

“How did you fake the drunkenness?” Harry asked, realisation thundering through him. Lucius chuckled lightly. The laugh almost made him sound human, and Harry loathed him for it.

“Glamours and some good acting,” Lucius replied with an arrogant smile. The man almost looked delighted that Harry had worked it out. “I may not be adverse to a little illegal Apparition, but I’m not foolish enough to risk Splinching myself.”

“So what did you want to talk to me about?”

“Draco, naturally,” Lucius said. “My son seems rather obsessed with you.”

“And what do you want me to do about that?”

“If you cared about him as he claims you do,” Lucius said, “you would step aside and allow him once more to become my heir, rather than keeping him from his birth-right due to this farce of a friendship between the two you.”

“I’m not the one keeping him from anything, Harry said hotly. “You did that. Don’t you dare try and make it that I’m the Bad Guy in this little drama.”

“I’m merely looking out for the welfare of my son,” Lucius continued. “You see, he is under the impression the two of you will be able to form some type of—romantic relationship—” Lucius’ lips curled in obvious disgust—“and you leading him on is extremely unkind.” Harry bit back the incredulous laugh that threatened to burst out at the notion of being taught kindness from Lucius of
all people, but he bit it back. Lucius, oblivious to this, continued. “I thought holding the threat of the Malfoy millions over his head would be enough to make him see sense, but obviously not.” He drew his wand then and Harry held his breath, berating himself for his stupidity in not going to fetch his own before heading downstairs. But Lucius merely erected an Imperturbable Charm on the door.

“Leave my son alone,” Lucius said. His voice was icy, and its tone caused Harry’s skin to erupt in goose pimples. However he stared Lucius straight in the eye, refusing to back down. “Leave Draco alone, and let him return to me. To his heritage. Let him find a wife, a pure-blood female, and have a proper family. Your presence—yours and your half-blood brat’s—is surplus to requirement.”

Harry stared at Lucius, hatred boiling in the pit of his stomach. He felt a small kick from the baby, and absently placed a hand on his abdomen protectively, a gesture not missed by Lucius, who sneered at him. Bloody fucking bastard.

“Go back to your little Weasley girlfriend,” Lucius continued. “And play happy families with a bunch of blood-traitors and Mudblood-lovers.”

“Ginny isn’t my girlfriend,” Harry said defiantly. He took a deep breath. He was going to enjoy staring at Lucius’ face as his next few words registered. “She hasn’t been for well over a year. And there is nothing you can say that will make me abandon Draco. Absolutely nothing. I care more about him than you realised, you see. I care about him in the same way he cares about me. And you’re wrong. We will be a proper family.”

The little colour that was in Lucius’ pallid face drained, leaving the man deathly white. Whether this was with anger or shock, Harry didn’t know. He felt a momentary surge of sadistic pleasure as he saw realisation flicker across Lucius’ features.

“Well, this complicates matters, certainly,” said Lucius finally. He twisted his wand between his fingers, clearly toying with the idea of hexing Harry. “I was under the impression you spent yesterday with Ginevra Weasley, and the two of you were incredibly close by the looks of things.”

Every drop of Harry’s victory drained from him in that instant. He didn’t say anything. He simply stared at Lucius, willing his face not to change.

“I was hoping that the evidence of yours and Miss Weasley’s reconciliation would be enough to dissuade Draco of his ludicrous ideas surrounding the two of you,” Lucius continued. “But apparently it will instead be the catalyst that stops whatever disgusting affair the two of you have begun in its tracks.”

“What ‘evidence’?” Harry said, in genuine confusion. His palms were sweaty and he was aware his pulse was beating a little faster. How he wished he’d just stayed in bed, curled tightly into Draco’s embrace, instead of having to investigate. He was more than a little spooked, too. “And how did you know I visited the Weasleys yesterday?”

“You’ll see,” Lucius said, and this time he really did smile. It was extremely unpleasant and made the hair on Harry’s neck stand on end. “And as to how I knew where you were? Magic, Potter. When Draco realises you’ve been sleeping with the Weasley girl behind his back—”

“I have not,” snarled Harry, but Lucius continued as if Harry hadn’t interrupted.

“When Draco realises what you have done to him, he’ll come crawling back to me, and I shall forgive him. I will not let you inflict your bastard child on my son. Now, you and I have nothing else to say to one another. I bid you goodnight.”
“I should have left you to rot in Azkaban for the rest of your life,” Harry spat, surprised by the abrupt dismissal, then turned on his heels and stormed out of the room.

Draco murmured some incoherent babble as Harry slid back into bed, and pulled him close to him. Harry absentley threatened his fingers through Draco’s hair, trembling with rage. He had no idea what Lucius Malfoy had done, but Harry knew that whatever it was wasn’t good. It was a long time until he managed to fall asleep again.

* 

The remainder of the Christmas holidays passed quickly and peacefully. Harry hadn’t mentioned his conversation with Lucius to Draco, and had heard nothing from his friends- or anyone else- that would suggest there was a problem. He had by no means forgotten Lucius’ words, but he put the conversation to the back of his mind and concentrated on enjoying the remaining week or so with his new boyfriend.

Three days after Boxing Day, Andromeda and Narcissa took Teddy to the lake to feed the ducks and, after some coaxing from Draco, he and Harry had showered together, despite it being a rather tight fit for them both in the cubicle. It was the first time they’d seen each other naked (well, Draco had seen Pansy Polyjuiced as Harry, but that didn’t count) and Harry had been self-conscious about his forever-swelling stomach, until Draco had fallen to his knees and kissed it, which had led to the kissing of other, more delightful areas, until Harry was yelling himself hoarse and shuddering, and he was extremely glad that they had the house to themselves.

The day before New Year’s Eve, Harry and Draco told Narcissa and Andromeda about their relationship. Both women giggled and said they already knew. Harry refused to probe further to find out exactly how they knew, and hoped they’d got the message through his and Draco’s body language, rather than overhearing anything they shouldn’t have. Still, Harry erected Imperturbable Charms of his own before bed every night after that- just in case.

He and Draco saw the New Year in together whilst in the throes of pleasure. Harry could hear the clock in the town centre striking midnight just as Draco’s back arched and Harry’s mouth was flooded with his release. It wasn’t a bad way to begin a new year and, Draco reminded him afterwards, it’s said that what you’re doing at midnight on New Year is what you spend the next year doing. Harry noticed Draco had a lascivious grin on his face when he said this.

All in all, Harry was going to be very sad to have to say goodbye to Andromeda’s. The Lucius Incident and Floo travel aside, Harry had had a wonderful couple of weeks. He was going to miss Andromeda and, even more, Teddy, but what he was going to miss the most was the languid days of lying in bed, getting a blowjob (now he’d started being intimate with someone he found he couldn’t get enough), or Draco simply taking the time to massage Ginny’s Christmas oils into his shoulders. The idea of having to return to Potions, and essays, and NEWT exams was highly unappealing.

The night before they returned to Hogwarts, Kreacher cooked a special meal and Harry and Draco said goodbye to Narcissa, who was returning to the Manor that night. Andromeda offered to drive Harry and Draco back to London the following morning, rather than them having to catch the train. Both Harry and Draco were incredibly grateful, and Draco clearly preferred the journey- until Andromeda pulled onto the A3 and began to drive at seventy miles an hour. However it was once they merged onto the hustle and bustle of the morning rush hour on the M25 that Draco completely lost it. The four lanes of traffic, all weaving precariously in and out of gaps far too small for them, the beeping of horns and the slamming of breaks- both from other cars and Andromeda’s- had caused Draco to practically hyperventilate, and Harry had to send a Cheering Charm at him. He was more relaxed by the time they reached the junction for Heathrow; the extremely low-flying aircraft
effectively shut him up as he stared up in awe at them. For once he had nothing negative to say about something Muggle, it seemed.

They arrived in central London at ten-thirty. The city was noisy, dirty and smelly in comparison to the relative peace of Petersfield. Harry was very grateful for his thick winter coat, as his bump had really grown in the last fortnight. He would be unable to venture into the Muggle world again, he reckoned, until the baby was born. As it was he simply looked like he’d eaten way too many slices of Christmas cake, but very soon he would be unmistakably pregnant-male or not. He and Draco said their goodbyes and thanks to Andromeda at King’s Cross Station, Harry hugged his godson tightly whilst the tot grabbed handfuls of his hair and pulled painfully, then they stepped through the magical barrier and emerged onto Platform Nine and Three Quarters.

The scarlet Hogwarts Express was familiar and comforting, even if a pang in Harry’s chest reminded him that this was to be the last time he ever took the train to Hogwarts. He noticed that the Hogwarts students and their parents already assembled on the platform were openly staring at him. This was nothing new, however; it had always been this way, and that was before he had walked onto the platform with a pregnancy bump, which everyone was clearly trying to grab a look at.

“Honestly, Harry, they’re treating you like a monkey in a zoo,” Hermione’s voice called out and Harry turned, grinning, to find his friend glaring at people, who were flushing with embarrassment and turning away quickly. She gave him a quick hug. “How are you?”

“Good, thanks,” he replied, as Hermione and Draco greeted each other cordially. He noticed Hermione was steering them towards Ron, who was alone, loading his and Hermione’s luggage onto the train. Harry raised an eyebrow.

“Where’s Ginny?” he said, and to his amazement Hermione flushed a bright scarlet which matched the Express so perfectly it was almost camouflage.

“Um, she spent the last few days with Neville at his gran’s,” Hermione said, not quite meeting Harry’s eyes. “They’re going to Apparate to school later.” She was worrying her lower lip between her teeth, a sure sign with Hermione that something wasn’t quite right, and Harry felt the uncomfortable prickling sensation on the back of his neck again.

“Hermione…”

“Not here, Harry,” she sighed. By now they’d reached Ron, who gave both him and, worryingly, Draco such a cheerful and obviously false greeting that Harry knew with certainty something was up- this was confirmed when Draco shot him an astounded look. He wondered if everyone was staring at him for a reason besides the baby, after all. He was also pretty sure that whatever this was had something to do with Lucius Malfoy’s cryptic talk about ‘evidence’ back just after Boxing Day.

He, Hermione, Ron and Draco boarded the Express and found a compartment to themselves. As soon as they were all seated, Harry demanded, “Tell me what’s going on.” Ron and Hermione exchanged a look which made Harry feel rather pissed off, and then Hermione reluctantly pulled out a copy of the Daily Prophet that was dated a few days previously from her bag. To Harry’s absolute dismay there was a photograph of him and Ginny, cuddled close together, with Harry kissing her head then muttering some unheard words whilst Ginny stroked his stomach and laughing- it had clearly been taken whilst he was at The Burrow over Christmas. The headline read, “Harry Potter: Reunited with his Lost Love at Last.” Feeling sick to his stomach, Harry began to read:

*It appears that Harry Potter, the Boy Who Lived and defeater of You-Know-Who, has finally found love. In a tender moment, seen here in an image taken on Boxing Day, it is clear that Potter and his young sweetheart- heroine of the Battle of Hogwarts, Ginevra Weasley- have reconciled. Despite*
Potter’s obvious mysterious pregnancy, the two appeared relaxed and very much in love, as they spent time together in the Weasley family garden. The couple were even observed to share a kiss, and appeared inseparable.

Miss Weasley (17), the exceptionally beautiful daughter of Order of the Phoenix member and slayer of Bellatrix Lestrange, Molly Weasley (49), seems as excited as Potter himself must be about their imminent bundle of joy. She was seen to lovingly caress Potter’s now-obvious bump. Adoration was clear in their eyes as they gazed at each other.

“Harry’s crazy about her,” said one source close to the happy couple. “It won’t be long until we’re hearing wedding plans from them.”

I’m sure everyone both here at the Prophet and our loyal readership wishes Mr Potter all the luck in the world as he embarks on this exciting new chapter of his life.

Harry looked up, dumbfounded. Anger began to surge through him and he began to tear the article to shreds.

“Those lying-” rip “fucking-” rip “bastards!” he yelled. He realised he was shaking with rage, and the knuckles holding what remained of the newspaper were chalk white. “I’ll get them for this. And Lucius.”

Draco, who had remained silent ever since Hermione had produced the newspaper, fixed his gaze on Harry, and Harry didn’t like the glint in his eyes one bit. “What’s my father got to do with this?”

Harry ended up telling him, Ron and Hermione the full story, regarding his talk with the elder Malfoy.

“So you see, Draco, I’m certain your father knew I was there and tipped off the paper,” Harry finished. “If he’s got a Tracking Charm on me, I’ll kill him.”

Hermione whipped out her wand and muttered something quietly. “There’s nothing on you, Harry,” she said. “If it was Lucius then he must have known you were there another way.”

Harry noticed Draco was hardly listening. He had in his hand a piece of the torn photograph, which unfortunately happened to be the bit where Harry kissed Ginny on the head and she smiled.

“It’s not true, Draco,” Harry said, suddenly filled with a feeling of foreboding. “None of it is true.”

“So you’re telling me this is a doctored photograph then? That you’re not cuddled up with your ex-girlfriend and kissing her?” Draco said. His voice was soft, yet dangerous. Harry noticed Ron give Hermione a look.

“We’re going to go and check on, um, something,” he said lamely, and they disappeared from the compartment, leaving Harry alone with a Draco who looked ready to spit venom.

“I’m waiting,” Draco said, as soon as the compartment door closed.

“No. The photo is genuine,” Harry admitted. “But the reporters have blown it all out of context! I mean, we’re certainly not-”

“So it is indeed a photograph of you and Ginny Weasley, canoodling like lovers,” Draco interrupted, evidently having only heard half of Harry’s answer- the part where Harry had admitted the photo wasn’t a fake. He was still staring at the black and white image, where Harry could see his own lips repeatedly pressing to Ginny’s temple and a warm smile flooding her features. “So when you when
you said, ‘none of it is true’ you were, in fact, full of utter shit.’

Harry couldn’t believe this was happening. First he was going to murder Lucius Malfoy, and then he was going to hunt down the fucking reporter, who clearly went to the Rita Skeeter School of Ethical Journalism, and hex him into the next week. No wonder Ginny had gone to stay with Neville as soon as the article had been released. Harry wondered fleetingly if Neville had believed a word of it. He hoped that Lucius’ determination to see him and Draco apart hadn’t jeopardised Ginny’s relationship.

“Please, Draco, don’t do this,” Harry said. He felt utterly miserable. And more than a little angry that Draco apparently believed the Prophet over him. The Express had left London by now, and Harry stared out of the window at the Hertfordshire countryside. It began to drizzle; wispy flecks of rain fell against the pane of glass like tears. Ironic, Harry thought.

They fell silent for a very long time, neither speaking nor looking at each other. Harry could hear the rain tapping at the glass. It was a sound that normally comforted him; today, however, it was a source of irritation. He swallowed hard, realising he was mortifyingly close to tears. Was two weeks of happiness all he was going to get? Was Lucius Malfoy really going to fuck it all up for him?

“There’s nothing between Ginny and me,” he said eventually, when he could stand the silence no longer. He noticed his voice breaking the silence caused Draco to jump slightly. “There hasn’t been for ages- nearly two years. Draco, please, please believe me.” Draco fumbled through the wreckage that was formerly the article, clearly looking for something specific. He finally found it and quoted from the scrap.

“Miss Weasley… seems as excited as Potter himself must be at their imminent bundle of joy’.” He drew his wand, scrunched the paper into a ball, tossed it into the air and caught it with a perfectly-aimed Incendio on its descent, instantly turning it to ashes. He pressed his lips together tightly, in a gesture that Harry now knew meant Draco was extremely upset. “That’s my baby. Not the she-Weasel’s.”

“No one said it was Ginny’s!” Harry said, mentally smacking himself for the words as soon as they left his stupid mouth because, quite evidently a newspaper had said exactly that- and now the whole of wizarding Britain was under the impression that it actually was going to be his and Ginny’s baby. “OK, that was a twatish thing to say. Draco, I know she is yours. And so does anyone who actually matters. Ginny and I- she was the one who helped me realise I liked you as more than a friend in the first place. I’m not going to lie. Yes, I love her- no, don’t you look at me like that! And she loves me. But we’re like family. She’s like my little sister. Please believe me, Draco! When that picture was taken, d’you know what we were talking about?”

Draco turned his head and stared at Harry. His face was expressionless but his eyes glinted with a desperate need. He still didn’t say anything, however, obviously prepared to let Harry do all the talking for the time being.

“We were talking about you. I was telling her about how we’d kissed and stuff, and saying how brilliant it was, and she was really happy for us. She’s not my girlfriend, she will never be my girlfriend, and I don’t fucking want her to be my girlfriend and she doesn’t want to be mine!”

Draco looked momentarily mollified. Harry even thought he saw relief on his face. But it disappeared as quickly as it arrived, to be replaced with one of inexplicable hurt, and the small leap of hope Harry had felt slipped away.

“OK. I accept that you’re telling me the truth- about the Weaselette, I mean. But why didn’t you tell me about my father? Why did you keep it all to yourself? Don’t you trust me still? I thought we had
something far more than just sex here,” Draco said.

“Yes, we do! Course I trust you! God, Draco, I-‘fancy you, want to spend all my time with you...love you? -‘I wouldn’t be with you if I didn’t! I just didn’t want to ruin our holiday together, that’s all. Same reason no one told me about the article I expect.”

“You can’t confide in me,” Draco all but whispered, and he sounded sad, not angry. His right hand absently stroked his left forearm, where the Mark was located. The simple action broke Harry’s heart. “You sit there, spilling out all your most private thoughts and feelings to Ginny fucking Weasley, but you can’t tell me a damn thing, not even that my father threatened you and our baby, because you don’t fucking trust me- me, the Marked Death Eater. Tell me, Harry, what sort of a future does that give us?”

Just then Ron and Hermione returned, and Harry was surprised to see how late it was. The rain outside had morphed into snow as they travelled north, and had begun to fall quite heavily over the Yorkshire Dales, which Harry could see in the distance from the window. The sky was bleak and the poor January light was already beginning to fail. The weather was obviously incredibly cold. He wished he was still tucked up in Andromeda’s spare bedroom, with Draco curled around him and the Muggle central heating making the room cosy, just as he was only hours previously. Had that really been the same day?

The rest of the journey was awkward at best. Hermione had her nose stuck in a copy of Transfiguration Today, Ron interchanged from talking loudly about nonsense and then referencing the ‘pile of steaming Crup shit’ that was the article, whilst Draco sat stoically. Harry had taken to staring out of the window. The landscape outside now was a sheet of white, and it reminded him bitterly of Hedwig. He felt a few kicks and stoked his bump back in response. He saw Draco give him a sideways glance, but no hand came out to join his like it normally did when the baby was moving.

Eventually the train pulled into Hogsmeade Station, and everyone headed for the Thestral-drawn carriages. In Harry’s maudlin mood, he wondered how many of the students could see the Thestrals now. He followed his friends and Draco into a carriage and headed up towards Hogwarts Castle.

Ginny and Neville were in the entrance hall when Harry arrived. Neville shot him a smile and waved.

“The article was nothing but lies, Harry,” he called, as Harry made his way into the Great Hall. “I just wanted you to know I knew that.”

“Thanks, Nev,” Harry said, forcing a smile, whilst Ginny shot him a worried gaze. He made his way to the Gryffindor table and his heart sank when Draco headed to the Slytherin one without a word. He pressed his lips tightly together and took a few deep, steadying breaths.

“It’ll be okay, Harry,” Hermione said, and gave his shoulders a comforting squeeze. “Draco will come round.”

Harry just hoped she was right.

Harry finished eating (what he’d managed to force down, anyway, as he had no appetite), and began to make his way to Gryffindor Tower to collect his stuff. He still intended to at least try to move in to Draco’s room, even if Draco would simply slam the door in his face. Harry had never given up and walked away from a situation before, and he most certainly wasn’t about to start now.
As he walked he thought. Draco was convinced Harry didn’t trust him still, and Harry had to concede he could see why Draco thought that way, especially with their history. The truth was, Harry never confided in anyone. Not even Ron and Hermione (or even Ginny), unless he was pushed. It was just the natural reaction for him. But he needed a bona fide way to prove to Draco that he did, indeed, trust him now. But how? An idea came to him and he smiled to himself. Yes, he thought, that might just work. He continued to the Tower happier than he’d been at dinner, determined to fix this mess.

* *

Draco looked surprised to see Harry standing at the door to his room.

“Before you tell me to piss off, can we talk?” Harry said. He’d brought a bag of his essential clothing, toiletries etc with him. Draco took one look at the bag, gave him a very Malfoy-ish sneer, but stood aside to let Harry in. He entered Draco’s- their?- room, dumped his bag in the corner, and sat down.

“Please, Draco. Just listen to me,” he said. “I’m sorry I didn’t tell you about Lucius, and I’m sorry that I told Ginny things- personal things- about us that I probably shouldn’t have said. But you’re wrong. I really do trust you.”

He reached into the pocket of his trousers and pulled out what looked like an ordinary blank sheet of parchment. Draco clearly thought that was what it was, and stared at it in confusion, as Harry handed it to him.

“What-” he began, but Harry placed a finger gently on his lips to stop him.

“Tap your wand, and say, ‘I solemnly swear that I’m up to no good’. Go on, try it.”

Draco did as instructed, and Harry watched as his eyes widened, as the Marauders’ Map sprung to life.

“It’s a map? Of Hogwarts?” Draco asked in obvious confusion. “Hang on- it shows everyone in the castle! Harry, where did you get this?”

“My dad made it when he was at school,” Harry said proudly. “He, Remus Lupin and Sirius Black made it. And, um, I guess Wormtail helped them too. It’s one of only a tiny number of things that I own that belonged to my dad. It’s really, really special to me. And I’d like you to have it for the remainder of our time here at Hogwarts.”

Draco’s eyes snapped up to meet his, and his expression was unreadable.

“I’m sorry I made you doubt me- us. And I promise- in future you will be the first person I confide in.”

Draco gave a strangled sort of a noise, which could have been a sob, and suddenly his arms were wrapped tightly around Harry’s neck, the Marauders’ Map tightly in his hand.
“Thank you,” he whispered, as Harry’s arms tightened around Draco in response. “And I’m sorry, too. I overreacted. It’s just- I find it hard to comprehend that you of all people actually want me, after what I’ve done and what’s branded on my arm, and I keep waiting for someone to succeed in taking you away.”

“Your father definitely wants me out of the picture, but I’m going nowhere,” Harry said. “I mean it, Draco. I’m not leaving, OK?” Just then the baby kicked. Harry put Draco’s hand onto his stomach. “She’s missed you,” he said.

“He,” Draco corrected automatically.

“Don’t start that again,” Harry admonished, and he leant forwards and kissed him.

It was a kiss of apologies, and promises, and solidarity, and it was completely and utterly wonderful. Harry deepened the kiss, but there was nothing sexual in it; he was overwhelmingly relieved, and just wanted to be close to Draco. Eventually Draco broke the kiss, and rested his forehead against Harry’s. Harry was delighted to see that Draco was slightly breathless. He grinned at Harry, then pulled away, walking over to this writing desk.

“What are you doing?” Harry asked, as Draco drew out a sheet of parchment and a quill.

“Writing to my father,” Draco said, dipping the quill into an inkpot.

Harry read over his shoulder. Draco scrawled, Nice Try, Father, on the parchment, signed it, then folded it in half. He grinned at Harry.

“Short and sweet. Perfect,” Harry said, as Draco slung a cloak over his shoulders. “Shall I come to the Owlery with you?”

“No need,” Draco said with a smile. “I have my Map.” He gave Harry a kiss on the cheek. “Why don’t you unpack your belongings whilst I’m gone? I won’t be long.”

The door to their (Yes! Their! Harry thought happily) room closed, leaving Harry alone. He began to unpack- his toothbrush placed next to Draco’s, his robes sharing wardrobe space with the other man’s. It had been a horrible day. For a few hours, Harry thought he was going to lose the unbelievable happiness he’d found over the past couple of weeks, and it had scared him witless. For the truth had hit him full-blown in the face.

Harry was rapidly falling in love with Draco Malfoy.
January was whizzing past in a blur of essays, practice exams, and assignments. The library was fuller for longer each evening now, and Harry was finding he woke up almost as tired as he was when he went to bed. Before he knew it, it had been two weeks since he’d returned to Hogwarts. Yet the hushed whispers and pairs of eyes still followed him wherever he went. Harry noticed too that the same whisperers were also following Ginny, who was just about as pleased of the attention as Harry himself was.

Draco was in the library, working on an Arithmancy assignment with Hermione of all people (they still weren’t exactly friends, but each accepted that the other was their equal in terms of academic achievement and they worked well together) and Harry had re-read the chapter in *The Standard Book of Spells, Grade Seven* three times and was still unable to accurately describe exactly how the Fidelius Charm was performed. He downed his book and pulled out the journal he was writing to the baby in instead. Balancing the open journal on his now sizeable bump, he dipped a quill in the ink pot on his bedside table, and began to write.

**Wednesday 20th January 1999, I am 22 weeks pregnant**

Hello, baby,

I’ve not written for a week or two, have I? I’m sorry. It’s been hectic since I got back to Hogwarts a fortnight ago! So, 22 weeks, huh? We’re over halfway! I can’t believe it. Well, I can’t until I look down and realise I can no longer see my feet, anyway! My respect for any woman who does this more than once is extremely high. I officially have 18 weeks until my ‘due date’ but they say they’ll take me in around mid-May to deliver you, so realistically I have about 16 or 17 weeks left. I’m so excited!

You’re moving loads and loads now. I’ve even begun to feel you hiccupping. And when you move my tummy wobbles and slides from side to side. It really freaks Ron out, which makes Daddy Draco laugh.

Your other daddy is brilliant, and I’m completely smitten with him. If someone had told me this time last year I’d have said that, I’d have had them carted off to the Janus Thickey ward. Then again, this time last year I didn’t think I’d live to see now. And not only am I alive, but I have you, and my friends, and your daddy. I’m so happy, little one.

The only problem seems to be your daddy’s father (I will not write ‘your grandfather’; he has no right to such an honour) who seems quite determined to make sure Daddy and me won’t be a family. He’s being quiet since the whole Boxing Day thing, but he’s as Slytherin as they come; he’ll be planning something. Don’t worry though; we won’t let Lucius tear us apart.

Oh, you know how I’m convinced you’re a girl and Draco’s convinced you’re a boy? We’ve made a bet on it. But instead of the winner getting Galleons neither of us need, we’ve come up with something far better. The winner gets to name you. It’s a bit of a risk, but, as my wonderful godfather told me once, ‘what’s life without a little risk’?

Well, I have work to do, so I’d better leave this for now. I’ll write to you again soon,

Love from Daddy xx
“Potter, can I speak with you and Mister Malfoy in my office after breakfast before you go and see your Healer?” McGonagall asked the following Saturday, as Harry helped himself to toast and cereal. The tone of her voice was always authoritative to the point of scary, and Harry gulped. He shot her a worried glance and she sighed. “No need to look so panicked, Potter. I’m fully aware you’re sharing a room with Draco and, whilst I won’t deny I wish you’d asked for my permission, I happen to agree with you that it’s a good idea. There is just an important issue I need to discuss with you both, that’s all.” He agreed and watched her head to the Slytherin table to speak with Draco.

Harry finished his toast and cornflakes and, once Draco had finished eating, the pair quickly made their way to the Headmistress’ Office, discussing hurriedly what it could be about. They climbed the spiral stairs and Draco knocked.

“Enter!” a stern voice commanded from inside, and Harry opened the door. Sat at the desk was Professor McGonagall, but also an ancient-looking tiny witch in purple robes, whom Harry recognised as the woman who had examined him when he had taken his O.W.L.S.

“Harry, Draco, this is Madam Marchbanks,” McGonagall said. “She’s come to discuss a matter of importance regarding your N.E.W.T examinations with you both.” Harry looked at her with slight confusion as Draco did the same, and McGonagall shot them both an impatient look.

“Boys, your baby will be born no later than the end of May. This means the two of you will be adjusting to life with a newborn baby and little sleep once the examination period begins. There is no way either of you can be expected to achieve the good grades you’re both predicted whilst you’re caring for a new baby, not to mention the problems of childcare whilst you’re both sitting exams.”

Harry felt his stomach drop. Of course he’d realised that the baby would be born by the time N.E.W.T.S began, but for some reason he’d never seen it as a problem.

“What did I think I was going to do? Pitch up with the baby in a sling and run a practical Defence exam, after having been up all night, he thought wryly.

“So what do you propose, Professor?” said Draco calmly, who was staring at Griselda Marchbanks and had obviously put two and two together a lot quicker than Harry had regarding her presence.

“You will both sit a specially-adapted course of examinations in April,” Madam Marchbanks squeaked. “This does on very rare occasions happen, and the Ministry considers your highly unusual situation to be extenuating circumstances enough. I will personally oversee the examinations. They will lead to full N.E.W.T qualifications, just as they would, had you taken them with your peers the following month.”

“Thank you,” Harry said, relieved, but Draco was still frowning, apparently having worked something out that Harry had missed. Harry then noticed that McGonagall looked uncomfortable.

“And can Harry and I remain at Hogwarts afterwards, even though we’d have finished our education?” Draco asked, slightly accusing, Harry thought, and McGonagall flushed ever so slightly.

“I’m sorry, but once you’ve finished your exams, I would like you both to consider formally leaving the school,” she said.

“You’re kicking us out?” Harry yelled. He felt Draco’s hand on his shoulder and the touch was so familiar and comforting it calmed him down. The gesture wasn’t missed by Professor McGonagall, who flashed them both a most-knowing look with her eyes.

“I’m not ‘kicking you out’, Potter,” she said, “but once you’ve sat your exams you will no longer be attending lessons and your education here will be complete. Plus your baby’s birth will be imminent.
A school is no place for an infant. You will have lodgings here until the end of the school year, if you require them, but I am suggesting that it would perhaps be sensible to have a conversation with Mister Malfoy about living arrangements beyond Hogwarts sooner rather than later.”

Twenty minutes later and Harry was feeling rather upset and angry as they made their way to the Hospital Wing for his check-up. Listening to the baby’s heartbeat had the desired effect of cheering him up, however, and half an hour later- with both dad and baby proclaimed ‘perfect’ by Healer Moore, he and Draco left the ward and made their way to the entrance hall to meet Ron and Hermione in Hogsmeade as arranged.

“McGonagall’s right, isn’t she?” Harry said reluctantly. “We can’t very well bring the baby back here after she’s born. For one thing we’d never fit a cot in our room, let alone the rest of the baby’s stuff.”

“You’ve got a house, haven’t you?” Draco asked, as they made the walk to the village, clearly ignoring Harry’s use of ‘she’. They tended to ignore each other’s referrals to the baby’s sex now, rather than get into a silly squabble over it. There was a thick layer of snow and ice on the ground, and Harry was walking incredibly tentatively, feeling very off-balance with the bump; not to mention the fact that being unable to see his feet properly was disconcerting him.

“Yeah,” he replied, not taking his eyes from the ground, as if staring at it would ensure he remained on his feet, “but there’s no way we can live there. It’s not fit for a baby- there’s mould and stuff everywhere. It’ll need months of work just to make it habitable.”

“Fuck,” Draco said. “Well, we’re definitely not going to the Manor. Andromeda will take us in, I guess.”

“We can’t move in there,” Harry said. “For one thing, she doesn’t need another baby screaming all night. And for another, I don’t like the idea of being so far away from my friends when I can’t travel magically.”

It wouldn’t be for several hours that Harry would realise, throughout their talk about living arrangements, they’d each used the pronouns ‘we’ and ‘our’ and ‘us’ without question. Neither had once considered the possibility of living apart from the other.

It was walking to the Hog’s Head (Draco still unwelcome in the Three Broomsticks for obvious reasons) that Harry had an idea.

“Hey, Draco! Why don’t we just get a small place here?”

“Live in Hogsmeade, you mean?” Draco replied, sceptically. He looked far from thinking it was a good idea.

“Why not? It’s close to the school, and there’s no way I’m living somewhere where I’ll have to Floo or Portkey just to see my friends or to come up for the anniversary of the Battle of Hogwarts. It can just be temporary, if you like.”

They reached the Hog’s Head. Ron and Hermione were sat next to each other in a booth, the other side of the table left free for Harry and Draco. As expected, every pair of eyes in the pub turned and stared at Harry- and not just Harry, but an obviously pregnant Harry who had a known Death Eater in tow. Harry sighed and knew the rumours would be starting any second. Hermione rolled her eyes and cast Muffliato to give them some privacy as Harry and Draco slid into the booth. Harry noticed that the gap between himself and the smooth, solid oak was much smaller than it had been the last time he sat here. He figured that by next Hogsmeade weekend it would be a rather tight fit.
Ron took drinks orders and disappeared to the bar. He returned with a tray of drinks levitating in front of him, and Harry took his goblet of hot apple drink and drank gratefully, closing his eyes in pleasure as the heated fruity juice and cinnamon warmed him from head to toe.

“Are you alright, Harry? You look agitated. What did Professor McGonagall want?” Hermione said. Harry sighed and relayed the meeting with the Headmistress to his friends. Hermione looked more horrified at the idea of the early exams than she did at Harry leaving the castle.

“But- but April is only ten weeks away!” she squealed, looking worried. She opened her mouth to say something else exam-related, but obviously noticed the look on her companions’ faces and closed it again.

The afternoon passed happily, and Harry enjoyed spending time away from the castle with his friends very much. After the Hog’s Head they all did a bit of shopping; Draco needed to visit the apothecary’s, whilst Hermione needed parchment and ink, and Ron wanted to pop into the Hogsmeade branch of Weasleys Wizarding Wheezes (Hermione muttering something about ‘childish boys never growing up’ all the time). They then passed a shop selling baby equipment, and Harry had a quick look in the window. It was hard to imagine that in less than four months he would have a small person of his own to take care of that would require half of the shop display. McGonagall was right. They’d have to move out of Hogwarts.

They returned to school freezing cold, wet from the recent fallen snow, and starving, yet happy. Harry wolfed his dinner- a hearty beef casserole and suet dumplings followed by rhubarb crumble and custard- and returned to his room as soon as Draco had finished eating. He collapsed onto the bed, feeling tired from the day, and overly full from the delicious food. He put his hands behind his head and closed his eyes.

“OK, we’ll do it,” he heard Draco say, and he sleepily opened his eyes.

“Huh?”

“Hogsmeade. We’ll move there.” Draco was grinning at him. “Weasley and Granger mean an awful lot to you, and if having them nearby makes you happy, then I’m happy. So let’s do it. We’ll find a little cottage or something.”

Harry’s resulting smile must have been huge, he thought, as it was straining his mouth. “You sure?”

“No, I just felt like royally pissing you off tonight by lying,” Draco drawled.

“Come here,” Harry said, practically pulling Draco on top of him (but not properly because of the baby), and kissing him soundly. “Thank you.”

The remainder of January passed, and February arrived. There was no let-up in the harsh, freezing weather, however; if anything, Harry thought, it had gotten worse. For the first time since he’d found out he wouldn’t be able to play Quidditch for the foreseeable future, Harry didn’t feel jealous of the Gryffindor team as they took on Hufflepuff the weekend before Valentine’s Day. Despite an easy win for Gryffindor, the team trudged off the pitch looking dishevelled and frozen; Ron was muttering something about ‘hot showers’, whilst Demelza Robins had to fed a large dose Pepperup Potion due to her uncontrollable and violent shivering.

Things came to a head regarding the rumours surrounding Harry and Ginny a couple of days later. When the pair arrived for dinner together- and late at that (they’d been innocently talking in the
Gryffindor common room, where Harry had been visiting, and lost track of time), the chatter in the Great Hall ceased immediately. People began poking their neighbours and pointing, and every pair of eyes bar Draco and Harry’s friends fixed on them for a few seconds, before whispered gossip broke out amongst the house tables.

“Oh for fuck’s sake,” Ginny cursed. “I’ve had enough of this.” She strode over to Neville, grabbed him by his tie and yanked him up (Harry caught Draco smirking at that and thought he saw him mouth, “Henpecked”), before crushing her mouth violently to his. Harry stared on, highly amused, as Neville flushed scarlet and he stood as rigid as if someone had just cast a Full Body-Bind Curse on him, before he relaxed and began to respond to Ginny enthusiastically. Ginny eventually broke this kiss, looking determined and slightly flushed.

“Enough proof for you all that Harry and I aren’t together?” she called to the Hall loudly, before sitting down, dolloping a portion of lasagne onto her plate and grabbing a slice of garlic bread, acting for all intents and purposes as if she hadn’t just been snogging her boyfriend to within an inch of his life with every pair of eyes in the school watching her.

“I almost admire Ginevra,” Draco said that night, once he and Harry were in bed. “She certainly knows how to cause a scene.”

“Hmm,” Harry said sleepily into Draco’s chest. If he was honest with himself, he was a little jealous of the ease in which Ginny had publicly shown her feelings for Neville. Harry had had enough of hiding his relationship with Draco, despite the fact it was he who was initially desperate to keep it quiet. He was proud of his relationship- if anyone had a problem with the fact he was seeing another boy- one that just happened to be a Malfoy- well, they could go fuck themselves. He’d spoken up for Draco months ago now- he’d told the whole wizarding world that Draco was not a killer, and that he’d saved Harry’s life. That was the end of the matter, as far as Harry was concerned.

Coming out was something he’d been thinking about for a few weeks now. He knew he was in love with Draco, and was pretty sure Draco was in love with him too; not that either of them had said it yet. In an ideal world he wouldn’t have to ‘come out’ to anyone except his closest friends and family; but he was Harry Potter, the Boy Who Lived, and to think it would be possible to keep his private life, well, private for any length of time would be incredibly naïve of him. It was just a matter of time before some sodding journalist caught wind of the relationship, especially as Ginny had made it clear she and Harry weren’t together. And Harry wanted his ‘outing’ to be on his terms, rather than the Prophet or some other rag catching them in some sort of clinch and posting it on the front page, accompanied by a bunch of lies.

“How would you feel about telling people? About us, I mean?” he said to Draco, tracing a pattern onto Draco’s bare chest with a finger, making Draco squirm and his skin break out in goose pimples.

“Are you sure you want everyone to know? You’re not ashamed of me?” Draco asked. Harry sat up, so he could look Draco in the eye, and took either side of his face in his hands.

“Don’t ever think that. Merlin, Draco, no, I’m not ashamed! I-” love you, go on, just say it- “I want to be with you so much, and I’m not going to hide you away like some dirty little secret. If I want to hold your hand in the street then I’m bloody well going to. So, what do you say? Want to come out with me?”

Draco stared at him for a few more seconds before his face split into a wide, sincere grin. It made him look so open and vulnerable, and Harry was quite certain that the only two people who ever saw him like this were himself and Narcissa. It made his stomach flip and he leaned in for a kiss.

“So, you really want to do it?” Draco said as he absentely stroked a hand over Harry’s arse, then in
response to Harry’s slightly widening eyes, chuckled lightly and said, “The coming out, you dick.”

Harry felt himself relaxing. It wasn’t that he didn’t want to have full sex with Draco. Very much on the contrary in fact- the idea of it left him aching with desire at times. No- as loath as he was to admit it to himself, Harry was scared of the idea. Scared of hurting Draco, or doing it wrong, or Draco doing it to him and it hurting the baby or something. And it wasn’t as if what they did do wasn’t fantastic. He gave a small, relieved grin.

“I was thinking. Would you come out for dinner with me on Saturday in Hogsmeade? As my date? We could go and look at a couple of houses together first, and then go out to eat. It won’t take long for word to get out that we’re house-hunting together.”

“Some bastard from the newspaper will probably turn up,” Draco replied.

“Yeah, I know,” Harry said, “but the press is never going to leave me alone. The article with me and Ginny proved that. If we give them a statement, at least we get to control what is published, rather than some bollocks along the line of what they published over Christmas, which they will publish sooner rather than later, especially once it’s obvious we’re living together and the baby’s born. I’d rather not have to do this at all, but considering everyone in our world seems to think they own a part of me and that my life is public property, and that’s not about to change anytime soon, this is the lesser of two evils. It beats them making up some crap about us. And I will not act like I’m ashamed to be with you, because I’m not.”

“Then let’s do it,” Draco said, and Harry could hear the delight mingled with relief in his voice. He snuggled tightly into Draco’s arms once more and drifted off to sleep, warm and comfortable and wanted. It was a wonderful combination.

* *

The day before the planned Hogsmeade weekend brought letters from some members of the Weasley family. Harry had written to them, explaining his relationship and his plans (the last thing he wanted was Molly Weasley finding out about him and Draco from the Prophet). The letter from Ron’s parents had been very kind and accepting- they expressed their shock, but offered Harry their unconditional support. Molly had signed it with ‘lots of love to you and my grandchild’, as she did every letter she’d sent him for the last few months, which told Harry that even though the news about him and Draco had been a bit of a bombshell, he would always be welcome at The Burrow, and that Molly and Arthur would always be there for him.

Harry opened the letter George sent him- surprisingly heavier than the others- and felt his cheeks instantly begin to burn. He quickly cast a privacy ward around him and his friends.

“What?” Ginny said curiously through a mouthful of bacon, and reached over and grabbed the envelope out of Harry’s hand. She peered inside and screeched with laughter, then withdrew a sheet of parchment on which Harry recognised George’s messy scrawl. “‘Harry, mate’,” she read with undisguised glee in a poor imitation of George’s voice, “‘heard about you and the Ferret. Thought the following would be useful’.” She slid a thin book out of the envelope entitled Bend Over! The Complete Guide to Anal Sex for Men.

Ron made a small sound of complete misery, whilst Hermione’s eyebrows disappeared into her hairline. Harry wanted to hide under the table. He didn’t dare look at Draco at the Slytherin table, who had been talking animatedly with Blaise Zabini the last time he’d stared over, for fear he might just combust from humiliation.

“Your brother is a bastard,” he said.
“No, I’m quite sure Mum and Dad were married when he and Fred were born,” Ginny replied merrily. Harry snatched the book from her hands and threw it into his school bag. He removed the ward and chanced a glance at Draco. He’d clearly noticed the ward’s presence and was giving Harry an odd look. Harry mouthed ‘later’ at him, flung his bag over his shoulder, and headed off for Herbology. The day was so packed that he didn’t give the book a second thought all day.

Later that evening, however, he was alone in his and Draco’s room, meaning to make a start on his Defence Against the Dark Arts essay (‘Explain in your own words why chocolate is an effective remedy after exposure to Dementors’) when he accidentally pulled out the book George had sent him instead of his textbook. Harry hesitated for just a second before discarding the essay (on which he’d managed to write ‘Harry Potter’ and the date and nothing more) and began to read. Draco was in the library with Hermione translating a paragraph in some ancient tome from runes into English and would be ages. He had plenty of time.

Forty minutes later, Harry was as hard as a rock, clammy and, had he cared to look in a mirror, would have seen he was bright red both from embarrassment and arousal. He had to admit to himself now that he was more than simply ‘Draco-sexual’; he was definitely attracted to the men in the (extremely graphic) images on the pages. He also thought he had an idea of what he was supposed to do, when the time came. Harry drew his wand, Transfigured the cover of the book into an old Charms textbook, stuffed it into the bottom of his bag, and headed for the shower, where he treated himself to a leisurely-paced wank before washing quickly. He’d only been out of the shower five minutes when Draco returned.

“Are you still wanting to go through with it tomorrow?” he asked nervously, as he began to pull of his school robes.

“Definitely,” Harry said. “Never been surer.” He sat and entertained himself for a few minutes watching his stomach flip from side to side as the baby decided to have a party in there whilst Draco showered, feeling both excited and nervous about tomorrow. His friends had supported his decision, but he was definitely prepared for the inevitable backlash. Still, he told himself, he’d be leaving school in a few weeks anyway. He’d put up with worse before.

* *

The estate agent that met Harry and Draco the following morning was a young witch whom Harry vaguely recognised from Hogwarts as a girl a few years ahead of him; possibly a Ravenclaw, Harry thought. She gaped when Harry took Draco’s hand in his and informed her loudly, catching the attention of passing villagers, that he and Draco wished to rent a house together, and that two bedrooms were required, one of which would become the baby’s nursery. Harry bit back a laugh as she stumbled through the introduction to the house.

It was a quaint nineteenth century cottage right on the outskirts of Hogsmeade, about a forty minutes’ walk to Hogwarts. It had a large garden, with a little wooden fence and gate at the beginning of what the estate agent told Harry and Draco was a cobbled path (they were unable to see it thanks to the snow) leading up to a stone cottage with thatched roof and black, glossy front door.

Harry fell in love with the cottage the minute he stepped inside. The ceilings were low-beam, the rooms an irregular, almost quirky shape, and there were well-worn, comfortable-looking armchairs whose pattern didn’t match that of the carpet. There was a huge fireplace, which the agent lit with her wand, and very soon the house was alive with both heat and light. The large living room window overlooked the garden, and there was a wonderful view of an apple tree- bare this time of year, of course, but Harry imagined it with its leaves, offering cool shade in the summer months. Harry suddenly had an image of Draco chasing a crawling baby around the garden in springtime whilst he
watched from this window, and his stomach fluttered. The kitchen was long and rectangular and airy. It had a brushed limestone tiled floor with a large solid pale wood table at the far end, and a jade green Aga to cook on. He could tell Draco was unenthusiastic about the house, however; until the agent, whose name was Laura, she’d said, showed them a small but perfectly equipped Potions lab through a doorway that led off from the kitchen. Then Harry knew he’d been won over.

The bedrooms were modest in size but incredibly comfortable with neutral décor, and a large four-poster bed in the master bedroom. The bathroom was clean and functional, and had a deep bath sunk into the floor in the centre of the room.

Harry turned to Draco hopefully. Draco rolled his eyes but nodded, and Harry threw his arms around him.

“Rent is three hundred Galleons per calendar month,” Laura said automatically, reading off a chart. “The contract is for an initial period of six months, and your tenancy will commence on the thirtieth of April, 1999. The landlord allows you to cast your own privacy wards on the property but does insist stronger charms such as the Fidelius Charm are only cast with written prior permission.” She waved her wand and conjured a sheet of parchment. “Here’s the contract. Take it away with you and have a read through, and if you’re happy with its terms then return it via owl within seven days from now.” She smiled warmly at them both. “Congratulations, gentlemen. And good luck with everything.” She left then, leaving Harry and Draco alone in the property.

“Wow, this is our new house,” Harry said.

“Just ours,” Draco said, leaning in for a kiss. “At least until Malfoy Junior arrives anyway.”

“Potter-Malfoy Junior,” Harry corrected, and reached up to meet Draco’s waiting lips.

By the time they emerged from the cottage, beaming and clasping hands, there was a small crowd gathered outside the gate. Harry grinned. Stage one of Harry Potter’s Grand Coming Out Plan had gone perfectly.

* *

The second part of Harry’s plan was also going well, too. He and Draco had booked a table in a small, exclusive restaurant in Hogsmeade, surrounded by couples, all enjoying a romantic meal on the evening before Valentine’s Day. There was no way anyone watching them could mistake them for simply friends. Both were wearing smart dress robes (Hermione had once again altered Harry’s for him to fit over his impressive twenty-five weeks bump), and he and Draco were sat opposite one another, eating and talking, but it was the small things, like a brush of fingers across the backs of hands, that had seemed to capture the other diners’ attention. As they finished their main courses and waited for dessert, the inevitable happened.

“Harry Potter! Felicity Stewart, *Daily Prophet,*” she said, thrusting out a confident hand to Harry, whilst completely ignoring Draco. Harry noticed the camera flung ostentatiously around her neck and didn’t take her hand. “Mister Potter, would you care to make a statement about the nature of your relationship with your dining companion?”

Harry took a large sip of water from his glass and pretended to think it over. Hermione had, of course, coached him in exactly how to answer this question.

“Draco and I are prepared to give you a statement for your paper,” Harry said, and the reporter looked as if all her Christmases had come at once, “but we have a few stipulations. Firstly, we are prepared to give you an exclusive statement and one photograph, and guarantee not to talk to any
other reporter or publication. But in return for you getting an exclusive, the *Prophet* will print the facts as we give them to you only. It will not print lies, or speculated half-truths. Neither you nor any other *Prophet* journalist or photographer will take photographs without our knowledge, and after tomorrow’s edition of your rag you will print nothing more about us unless you have our express prior consent. And after we have spoken this evening you will leave us alone to enjoy the rest of our dinner.”

“And if I don’t agree to your terms?” said the reporter sweetly, and Harry was reminded horribly of Umbridge. Fuck, he hated reporters.

“If you don’t,” Draco interjected just as falsely sweetly, and Harry had to admit he was good at the voice, “then we will give full, open interviews to both *Witch Weekly* and the *Quibbler*, and we will sue you for defamation. You think any judge will rule against the Boy Who lived?”

The smile on Felicity Whatevtherfuckhersurnamewas’ face faltered slightly, but she nodded.

“OK, boys, have it your way.” She drew out a small notebook and what Harry recognised as a Quick-Quotes Quill.

Harry realised all eyes were on him, including the waiting staff. He reached over, took Draco’s hand in his, and brought it to his lips, brushing his mouth lightly across Draco’s knuckles.

“Draco and I are in a relationship together. And, before you say it, no it’s not a Love Potion, or Imperius, or anything else you’re probably going to suggest. It’s simply the two of us, realising we felt more for each other than just friends and taking it to the next level.”

“And what would you say to our readers who are rightly concerned that their hero is romantically involved with an ex-Death Eater?” Felicity pushed.

“As I said at Draco’s trial- months before we were even friends, let alone anything else happened between us- Draco Malfoy was forced by Voldemort to carry out the desperate acts he did, for fear of his parents’ lives. He never killed anyone, and he saved my life. I would have lost the war with Voldemort had it not been for him,” Harry said confidently.

“Is Draco Malfoy the father of your baby?”

“No comment,” Harry said. “You will publish nothing about the pregnancy. Remember that little thing Draco mentioned about suing you?”

“Fine.” She sounded petulant. “I will have that photo now.”

Harry grinned at Draco, as Draco leant over and kissed Harry gently and chastely on the mouth as the bulb of the camera flashed.

“Remember,” Draco warned, “you will not twist our words, print anything we haven’t said, or take any additional photos. Now, you have your scoop. Fuck off.”

Harry snorted at the expression on Felicity’s face from Draco’s rude dismissal, but simply waved bye-bye at her mockingly. She opened her mouth as if to speak, clearly changed her mind, nodded to them both and disappeared from the restaurant. Harry released a shaky breath he hadn’t known he was holding.

“Did I-” he began, but Draco cut him off.

“You were brilliant,” he said, as a dumbfounded waiter brought over two portions of chocolate
fondant and cream. “And I’m sure it won’t hurt that I got a Tongue-Tying Curse on her whilst you were talking. She can’t mention the pregnancy or baby, either verbally or in print.”

“You total genius,” Harry laughed, and tucked into his pudding.

Harry was merely picking at his breakfast next to Draco at the Slytherin table the following morning when the owls delivered the 
Sunday Prophet
 to the students and staff. There was almost a collective gasp as newspapers were unfolded and students were treated to a full-spread photo of Draco and Harry, lips pressed together, with a huge, bold headline that simply read, ‘THE KISS’. Harry skimmed the article: The Prophet can exclusively reveal… Witches everywhere will have their hearts broken… Potter in a relationship with another man… appeared extremely comfortable with one another… Malfoy exonerated of serious Death Eater activity back in August… obvious his relationship with Ginevra Weasley is one of friendship only… shared intimate touches and were clearly happy.

Felicity Stewart had clearly kept her word. There was nothing except the truth as Harry had told it in the paper. Harry felt himself relax. He still hated the fact that he’d had to go through with this at all, but Harry was just delighted it had been on his terms with his words, rather than some vile little story accompanied by a covert photo taken by some journalist who’d been spying on him. He looked over at the teachers’ table: Hagrid had his mouth wide open in surprise- a mouthful of un-chewed scrambled egg clearly visible within. Other teachers appeared to be muttering about the article, but when Harry’s eyes caught Professor McGonagall’s she gave him a wink and raised her goblet to him. He turned his head to the Gryffindor table. His friends were all staring with smiles and support, whilst the rest of his house seemed slightly shocked but glaring at the other tables, as if daring to confront their hero.

Blaise Zabini shook Harry’s hand and told him he’d guessed a long time ago, whilst the majority of the Slytherin table- Nott and Goyle in particular- were shooting murderous glances. That had been expected, however. Harry quickly scanned the Hufflepuff and Ravenclaw tables whilst Draco read the article. Those students who didn’t subscribe to the paper were hovering over the shoulders of those who did, or leaning across their house table to get a better look. There was no open hostility from the two houses, but Harry didn’t doubt for a second that he’d provided the two biggest gossiping houses ammunition for the rest of the school year. It’s not as if there hadn’t been speculation amongst the students, but to have it confirmed in- literally- black and white, as Photo Draco leant over the candle-lit table and kissed Photo Harry sweetly before the pair beamed at each other- well, it was like giving a man who’d been lost in the desert for days a huge glass of ice water.

He and Draco had already planned to spend the day in their room to avoid the questions that were bound to plague them, and once they were in the corridor Harry threw his Invisibility Cloak over them both for added privacy as they made their way to the fifth floor. The walk was awkward and the Cloak barely covered him, Draco and the baby, but eventually they made it, whispered the password, slammed the door behind them, and tore off the Cloak.

“That went as well as could be expected,” Harry said, making his way to their bed and laying on his back across the width of it, legs dangled over the side. “McGonagall seemed to approve, anyway.”

“We’re a gossiper’s wet dream, I hope you know that,” Draco said, perching on the mattress next to him. Harry looked into his eyes. They were sparkling. It took Harry a while to place the emotion contained in them, but when he did he felt his heart flip. It was pure devotion. Fuck it, he thought, and reached over and grabbed Draco’s hand in his.

“You do know, don’t you, that I wouldn’t have done this if I wasn’t serious about us,” Harry said,
and suddenly what he wanted to say flowed with ease. “I did this because—because you’re my future, the one I want to be with forever, and I refuse to spend my life hiding. I love you, Draco.”

Harry had barely got the words out before Draco’s mouth crashed desperately onto Harry’s, his tongue swiping at Harry’s lower lip not asking but demanding entrance, Draco’s hands grasping Harry’s arms tightly.

“Love you too, I- oh fuck, Harry,” he rasped, peppering Harry’s mouth, cheeks, chin, and neck with the sweetest, most sensual kisses imaginable, before he nibbled on Harry’s earlobe. Harry became aware of Draco’s fingers deftly unbuttoning his own shirt and he moved his hands up to take over the job. “I wanted to tell you ages ago, but I was scared to, and then- mmmmm that’s good,” he moaned as Harry reached up and swiped a tongue over Draco’s nipple, “then you told the whole world about me and I knew you must love me too and- and now I’ll shut up.” He buried his face in Harry’s neck and slipped a hand around the elastic of Harry’s incredibly unsexy tracksuit bottoms, yanking them down, taking Harry’s boxers with them.

A minute later and neither of them had a scrap of clothing on. Harry was usually self-conscious of his ever-growing stomach, and Draco of his Dark Mark, but today it didn’t matter. They loved each other, and Harry thought his heart might explode with emotion. He trembled as Draco began to trail kisses down him, starting at the corner of his mouth and working his way past his collarbone, chest, and belly button, before reaching his goal. Harry’s hands fisted into blond hair, pulling tighter than was probably comfortable. It was brilliant, fantastic, magnificent, and a whole other load of adjectives that Harry’s lust-addled brain couldn’t quite remember, and yet it was nowhere near enough.

“Draco. Draco, stop,” he gasped, and Draco did, coming back up the bed. He looked both confused and a bit hurt.

“Sorry, was it not…?” he began, uncertain of himself, and Harry shook his head vehemently.

“Draco, it was great, honestly. It’s just I- I want to… I…” Deciding actions would speak louder than words, Harry kissed Draco’s mouth with a passion, and allowed the hand that was holding the back of Draco’s head to trace a lazy trail down Draco’s spine, before settling on his buttocks. Harry squeezed the cheeks, and ran a finger suggestively up and down the cleft.

“Oh,” Draco said, breaking Harry’s kiss, and looking him in the eyes. They were dazed, and slightly clouded, with huge dark pupils burying the stormy grey irises.

Harry had a few seconds where he mentally thanked George and his inappropriate gag gifts, before Draco was kissing him so intently he was no longer thinking at all. He was feeling. And he felt alive.

His heart skipped a beat and his stomach fluttered with both nerves and excitement as Draco Summoned the small bottle of aromatherapy oil Ginny had given him for Christmas, and handed it to Harry. He felt his breath come shallower as he uncorked the bottle and poured a small amount into his hand, before slipping it between Draco’s legs.

Fingers suddenly gripped Harry’s arms hard enough to bruise. Harry stopped.

“Am I hurting you?” he asked, worried. Draco shook his head.

“No, it’s just- it feels strange. You know I’ve never—”

Harry did know this, of course; Draco had said weeks ago that when they did finally have sex, he wanted Harry to top, so they could each be the other’s first time— at least in one sense. It had warmed
Harry to know that his cool, proud Slytherin could be as a big of a romantic sap in private as he himself was.

"'S OK," Harry soothed, searching for the spot the book had told Harry would have Draco seeing stars. He knew as soon as he'd found it; Draco gave a small whimper, and clung to Harry tightly.

“Harry, ready,” Draco moaned. Harry took a few deep breaths, trying to calm himself. He was actually going to do this. He sat on his ankles facing Draco, and pushed forward.

It was unlike anything he’d ever felt before. Harry’s entire nervous system tingled and flickered, and he shut his eyes tight, focusing on making Draco produce those glorious noises, finding just the right spot inside him that made Draco gasp and shudder and cry out. His nerves danced in appreciation as he moved, gently and tentatively at first, and then speeding up as he gained confidence. They sparked as pushed, harder and deeper, before finally they combusted in an explosion of sheer euphoria as Harry let himself go, with a chant of, “Draco, yes, love you, love you, Draco,” on his lips, before collapsing, utterly spent, onto Draco’s chest. He reached upwards and kissed Draco furiously, wrapping a shaking hand around him and stoking him, once, twice, three times, before Draco too was arching his back and coming, letting out a sharp cry into Harry’s open mouth.

“God, Harry,” Draco said, and Harry was delighted to hear his own emotions echoed in Draco’s unsteady voice.

“Are you OK? I didn’t hurt you?” Harry asked. Draco shook his head.

“No, not really. Totally worth it, anyway.” He held out an arm, clearly wanting Harry to cuddle into him; a request he was more than happy to oblige.

It wasn’t going to be perfect. There was going to be an inevitable backlash from the Prophet’s article, both from the public and some of the students. Nott and Goyle in particular Harry needed to keep an eye on until they could move out of the castle. But he loved Draco, and Draco loved him. And that was enough to get him through whatever problems were about to come their way.

Bend Over! A Complete Guide to Anal Sex for Men is a real book O_o I went onto an online bookshop and did a search, and chose the one with the most comically inappropriate title. It fits so perfectly here.
The Backlash

The ‘I’ve just lost my virginity’ buzz lasted for exactly twenty-two hours, until Harry and Draco re-joined the hustle of the school early on Monday morning. The previous day had been wonderful; they’d lain in bed together, talking, kissing, and even having sex once more, before showering together, eating some of the food they’d picked up in Hogsmeade the previous day, kissing again, and telling each other they loved them whilst pretending they were the only ones who existed. It had been bliss.

Returning to lessons was a sharp lesson in reality. Harry had been prepared for the whispers and pointing- after all, it was nothing new. What he was unprepared for was the downright abuse yelled at him and Draco, albeit by a small minority of students.

“Boy Who Bends Over!”

“Hey, Potter, if I get a Dark Mark on my arm, would you suck my dick too?”

“Your mother sacrificed her life for a queer? What a waste.”

“Well, Malfoy, now we know how you and your scumbag family avoided Azkaban. Whored yourself out in exchange for a testimony, didn’t you?”

He and Draco gritted their teeth and ignored them the best they could, and it was to Harry’s mild surprise that it was Hermione who snapped first, catching the next person who made a ‘Harry Poofter’ joke with a Stinging Hex so powerful that they’d had to spend the morning in the Hospital Wing having Dittany applied to their skin.

“Maybe this wasn’t such a good idea,” Draco said that evening. Harry stared at him.

“I don’t regret it for a second,” he said. “I can deal with this if you can. I spent all of last year being ‘Public Enemy Number One’, remember? This is nothing.”

That wasn’t entirely true, Harry thought to himself. The words did hurt. He took comfort though that not a single student that remained at Hogwarts who had been in the DA or fought in the Battle of Hogwarts had a single bad thing to say. Ernie Macmillan and Justin Finch-Fletchley had cornered Harry after Herbology and offered him their support, whilst Anthony Goldstein had winked and said that if he and Draco ever split up he’d love to take Harry out on a date- causing Harry to blush furiously. Harry had caught Parvati, Lavender and Fay Dunbar whispering and giggling in the Gryffindor common room, all three of whom shut up abruptly as soon as he walked in with Ginny and Neville, but it wasn’t malicious in nature, and Harry could deal with that.

It wasn’t as if half the school hadn’t at one point speculated about them being a couple, since Draco’s Confunded revelation about the baby back in Potions, what seemed like years ago now. But a few weeks is a long time in a school; the speculation had died down, particularly as, at the time, there really had been nothing romantic between them then to fuel any rumours, and McGonagall had made it clear, in no uncertain terms one morning at breakfast when the gossiping was at its peak, that the pregnancy had been a magical fluke. Then the article with Ginny appeared over the Christmas holidays, and everyone had turned their attention discussing whether Harry and Ginny were back together or not- Draco practically forgotten.

And now, of course, there was a new article, leaving no room for ambiguity as to the precise nature of Harry and Draco’s relationship. And once again Harry was discovering that people whom he’d
never previously had any interaction with felt they had the right to pass comment on his life.

That sentiment wasn’t just confined to the walls of the castle. Never had Harry been more grateful that mail from strangers was no longer delivered to the Gryffindor table at breakfast. By the time a week had passed from the publication, Harry had accumulated a pile of mail several feet high. It wasn’t all critical- some people were offering their support, but Harry cast Incendio at the entire pile without reading more than a couple. There had also been a rather sizeable pile of tell-tale red envelopes, magicked to only open at his touch, that had lain on the Owls’ floor, waiting for him. He opened them in quick succession, releasing a huge bust of screaming, of which he caught snippets: “Wicked Boy… Death Eater… Unnatural… Repent before it’s too late… says in Leviticus 18:22… let your public down…” causing the few stubborn owls that had remained in the Owls’ trying to sleep over the noise to up and leave their perches. The Howlers were thankfully mainly short, and combusted almost in unison (the sound of which was a mini explosion), leaving nothing but a substantial mound of ash behind, which Harry Vanished quickly with a flick of his wand.

“Fucking freaks,” Draco said, casting a Fire-Making Spell at his own pile of hate mail (‘Stop corrupting that nice young Potter boy’ tended to be the common theme of his particular correspondence). After the first morning, which had brought a pile of letters and several Howlers to the Hall, McGonagall had applied the same restrictions to Draco’s post as Harry had on his.

They both paused whilst Draco dealt with a pile of Howlers (which was a lot larger than Harry’s), hands over their ears. “And to think I used to envy your fame. It’s nothing but a burden, is it?”

“I could have told you that years ago when you were being such a git to me,” Harry yelled over the din.

The reams of post dwindled over the coming week, although hurried excited whispers still plagued Harry every time he walked down a corridor. Still, both he and Draco had dealt with worse, and Ron’s constant bellowing and terrifying the younger students was both heart-warming and amusing.

March arrived, and with it, Harry’s third trimester. He was beginning to become incredibly uncomfortable, and the extreme tiredness was beginning to return, along with difficulty in walking due to pain in his hips, and a persistent need to use the loo. He was also aware that his and Draco’s revised N.E.W.Ts were fast approaching, and he had reluctantly begun studying hard for his examinations.

It was after dinner on the first Wednesday in March, and Harry and Hermione were hard at work on their Transfiguration homework in the library together, when Harry felt the all-too familiar irritation building low down in his abdomen again.

“Need to pee,” he said to Hermione, who hadn’t looked up from her work.

“Hmmm? Oh, OK,” she muttered absently, clearly not having heard a word Harry had said. He hauled himself out of his chair, smiled fondly at his friend who hadn’t even noticed him standing up, and headed for the library doors. He didn’t notice a small pair of black eyes trailing him as he stood, or the padding of footprints behind him as he made his way to the boys’ toilets.

He was just emerging from a cubicle when he looked up and stopped dead, noticing the huge figure of Gregory Goyle standing in front of the door, arms folded and glaring in what Harry assumed Goyle thought was a menacing manner, but Harry thought just made him look like a constipated rhinoceros.
“Move,” he commanded. Goyle just stood there.

“Make me,” he said. Harry rolled his eyes. He was tired, he had work to do, and he was feeling achy and uncomfortable. He didn’t have the time or the inclination for a fight. He stared at Goyle, eyebrow raised in what he hoped was a contemptuous manner.

“I were surprised to hear you and Draco was together,” Goyle said, and Harry thought it might be the first time he’d ever heard the man utter a complete, albeit grammatically shit, sentence.

“Yeah, well, I’m surprised you can walk and talk at the same time,” Harry replied. “Particularly without dragging your knuckles across the ground, anyway. Life’s full of surprises.”

“I’m gonna make you pay,” Goyle said. Harry rolled his eyes.

“I’m trembling. I’ve fought Voldemort, Bellatrix, and a bunch of Death Eaters all by myself- and won, remember- but now is where I get really scared.”

“You killed Crabbe,” Goyle said. He opened his left hand and punched his right into it. He looked like a class A thug.

“Actually, Crabbe killed Crabbe. It’s thanks to me and Ron that you didn’t die too,” Harry replied. “Although perhaps I should have told Ron to leave you to burn to death like your useless friend after all.”

Goyle stepped away from the door then, both to Harry’s relief and chagrin, for, although he now had a way out, Goyle was heading straight for him. Draco’s words from weeks and weeks ago flashed into his mind: ‘You will not put our baby in a potentially risky situation, OK? Stop being a reckless Gryffindor for five minutes and show some Slytherin self-preservation.’ He suddenly felt incredibly stupid. He should have just hexed Goyle as soon as he saw him standing by the doors, but no, he had to be a reckless Gryffindor with a smart mouth, didn’t he? It was too late now. He’d lost the element of surprise; if he went for his wand now Goyle would be prepared. Best to try and keep him talking and get the hell out of there. Faking nonchalance he didn’t feel, Harry headed for the sinks and washed his hands.

“You know, McGonagall said that if you got into any more trouble she’s expel you,” Harry said, wiping his wet hands onto his robes. “I’d say threatening me in a bathroom counts as trouble, wouldn’t you?”

“Don’t care ‘bout school,” Goyle said. “This is worth getting expelled over.” His hand quivered and went for the pocket in his school robes. Harry reacted instinctively, reaching for his own wand. He was a fraction of a second quicker drawing his than Goyle, and yelled, “Impedimenta!”

The hex missed by millimetres. Harry swore and only just managed to dodge Goyle’s Stunning Spell. At that point the stark truth slapped him in the face. He was in the later stages of pregnancy, he couldn’t run, and he couldn’t drop impulsively to the floor. He wasn’t anywhere near in the condition needed to be duelling.

What the fuck am I doing? Harry thought erratically, dodging another curse simply through luck as he fired back a Stunner of his own. He was out of practice, and heavy, and his movement was restricted. He had edged nearer to the bathroom door, determined to make a break for it if he could, when two things happened in rapid succession. Harry was suddenly aware of the bathroom door bursting open and Draco and Ron running in at full speed, just as Goyle, a malicious feral grin on his troglodytic face, pointed his wand directly at Harry’s bump and yelled, “Sectumsempra!”
Harry barely had time to register the words that had left Goyle’s mouth before Ron, who was nearer to Harry than Draco, had leapt in front of him, catching the spell on his right thigh, which split open and instantly resulted in a pool of crimson around them. He gave a huge roar of pain and fell to the ground, just as Draco yelled, “Petrificus Totalus!” Goyle’s hulky body went rigid and tumbled onto the cool stone steps of the bathroom floor.

“Fuck,” Harry said, and stared, wide-eyed and terrified, at his best friend. His best friend who had willingly and quite deliberately just taken a curse for him that could have seriously injured- or worse- his baby, had it struck Harry. And now he was lying, looking incredibly white, in a pool of his own blood on the floor of a bathroom in some kind of sick déjà vu. Harry thought he might cry.

“Harry. Move.” Draco sounded furious and Harry didn’t hesitate to obey. He watched as Draco crouched over Ron, wand out, repeating the same soft, almost song-like incantation that he’d heard Snape use on Draco himself nearly two years previously, and gave a huge, shuddering dry sob of relief when he saw the skin of Ron’s thigh begin to knit back together.

“He needs Dittany,” Draco said. Harry noticed his voice was icy calm, a tone that Harry had learnt meant the Slytherin was anything but. “You take him. I’m taking Goyle to McGonagall.” Harry watched as Draco cast ropes and bound the still immobile Goyle securely, then he Levitated him out of the bathroom.

“Harry! For fuck’s sake! Take Weasley to Pomfrey!” he yelled, then was gone.

Harry snapped out of his shock.

“Ron,” he said softly, as Ron struggled to his feet, wincing in pain but no longer looking as pale. Draco had done a fantastic job healing his leg. “Oh, Ron, I’m so sorry. Can- can you walk?”

“Yeah,” Ron rasped. Harry carefully steadied Ron with an arm- overwhelming affection and gratitude for him flooding Harry- and together the pair gingerly made their way to the Hospital Wing.

“Don’t I see enough of you here as it is, Potter?” Madam Pomfrey said, not unkindly, as she helped lower Ron onto a bed. Harry smiled grimly at her and explained the situation. By the time he’d finished, Madam Pomfrey looked appalled.

“Despicable boy,” she said, retrieving a bottle of Dittany from her store cupboard and applying it to the now thin red line where the Sectumsempra Spell had hit, “trying to hurt a baby like that. He was a wicked child last year; he may not have the Mark on his arm but he did more damage than most children in this school. I saw first-hand what the brute did. He should never have been allowed to return, but of course he managed to convince the Wizengamot that he feared for his life so followed the Carrows’ orders. Lies, all of them, but Headmistress McGonagall had no choice but to allow him back this year.”

Harry was surprised. He’d never heard the matron talk like that about another student before. Just then the door to the Hospital Wing opened and Professor McGonagall strode in, followed by Draco and a worried-looking Hermione, who immediately spotted Ron on the bed and sprinted towards him. When she reached his bed she burst into tears and threw her arms around him, until Ron was completely obscured by a huge mass of bushy brown hair.

“Malfoy has informed me of what has happened, Potter,” Professor McGonagall said. “And Gregory Goyle will of course be removed from the school permanently. However it’s not as simple as just expelling him. From what I understand, Goyle cast a charm so serious in nature it could have caused severe damage to you and the foetus, correct?” Harry nodded numbly. “In that case, Potter, it’s a
matter for the Aurors. That spell is incredibly Dark and certainly illegal, and Goyle can’t claim he felt his life was under threat this time.” Harry thought there was a tone of satisfaction in her voice.

“Weasley, how are you feeling?”

“’M, OK, P’f’s’er,” Ron’s voice murmured through Hermione’s hair. Hermione blushed and shifted positions slightly, allowing Ron’s face to become visible once more. Professor McGonagall’s lip twitched in amusement. “Very well then. I shall leave you all in Madam Pomfrey’s hands whilst I contact the Auror Office.” She bid them all farewell and turned to stride back out of the Hospital Wing.

“Er, Professor,” Ron called, “can I talk to Goyle before he goes with the Aurors? Please? It’s important.”

“As long as Madam Pomfrey says it’s okay, then yes, Mister Weasley. Join me in my office when you can,” she replied, and walked out of the room.

Harry, Hermione and Draco gave Ron a look, as if to say, ‘What are you talking to that maniac for?’ but he simply shook his head. “I’ll tell you later,” he said.

“Well, it’s been an eventful evening,” Harry said, and was surprised to see both Draco’s and Ron’s livid faces trained on his. “Um. What?”

“You complete and utter fucking bastard,” Draco said, and Harry was totally taken aback. “What do you think you were doing, running off to meet Goyle on your own like that? If I didn’t have the Map, if I hadn’t seen you both in the bathroom on it-”

“I didn’t go ‘running off to meet Goyle’,” Harry snapped back, his temper rising. “How was I to know that psycho was waiting for me? What am I supposed to do, wait for someone to take me to the toilet like a fucking toddler or something?”

“Yes,” Draco said simply.

“You fought him,” Ron said, his tone accusing, and Harry felt a huge spike of guilt rise up within him. “Merlin, Harry, you’ve got everyone and his wife surrounding Malfoy day and night, but you’re the bloody moron who needs protecting, aren’t you? I didn’t know what to think when I saw Malfoy pelting towards the bathroom, but guessed enough. I- just- be careful, Harry, OK? I’m not always going to be there to take curses for you, you know?”

“Weasley, I never thought I’d say this, but I’m extremely grateful you were there tonight,” Draco said evenly. Ron’s ears pinked.

“Yeah, well, thanks for patching my leg up,” he said. And despite his guilt, his fear, and his anger, Harry couldn’t help smiling. It would take a near-death experience for Ron and Draco to be almost friendly with one another, he thought wryly.

Madam Pomfrey appeared then with a phial of Blood-Replenishing Potion, and instructed Ron to drink it all. Ron sighed but followed her order, grimacing as the slimy, foul-tasting potion slithered down his throat.

“Now keep your voices down, gentlemen. And Miss Granger,” she added as an afterthought, although Hermione had been eerily silent the entire conversation so far. “Otherwise I shall have to ask you all to leave so my patient can rest.”

“Hermione, are you alright?” Harry asked gently and, to his bewilderment, she threw herself into his arms and began to cry.
“Oh, Harry,” she sobbed, “it’s my fault, you tried to tell me where you were going, didn’t you, and I wasn’t listening, I was so engrossed in my stupid book, and by the time I realised you weren’t there anymore I didn’t have a clue where you’d gone, and then Draco came running into the library and said Ron was hurt, and…” She buried her face in her hands, sobbing loudly.

“Really!” came Madam Pomfrey’s voice. “I do have other patients you know! Patients who are trying to sleep! Out, all of you! You too, Mister Weasley. You’re perfectly healed thanks to Mister Malfoy’s spell work and my potions. You’re free to leave.”

All four of them began the walk to McGonagall’s office with Ron. They appeared a united front, and despite the horrors of the evening, Harry felt a tingling of warmth at this. Not enough to wash down the guilt he felt about Ron’s injury, however. He hung back from Draco and Hermione (who’d stopped sobbing now), and Ron, letting go of Hermione’s supporting arm and waving her ahead, slowed down with him.

“Look, Ron,” Harry began. He inexplicably felt nervous. “What you did this evening, I… well, it… oh, bloody hell, Ron. I don’t know what to say. You could have saved the life of the baby tonight. Thank you so, so much.” Ron’s angry face softened and he let out a deep sigh.

“I wasn’t going to let him hurt you or the sprog,” Ron replied. “Although just promise me, Harry, that I won’t be in a situation where I have to do it again, OK?”

“I promise I’ll try not to be in that situation, but you know me and trouble,” Harry quipped, and Ron grinned at him, before engulfing Harry in a tight hug. The ‘I was scared shitless’ went unsaid, but Harry heard it nonetheless. He hugged Ron back furiously, affection for his first and best friend overwhelming him, and he realised his eyes were prickling once more. He impatiently blinked the threatening tears away, and released Ron from his grip.

They caught up to Draco and Hermione (who had both tactfully gone ahead to give him and Ron a ‘moment’) and Harry reached out for Draco’s hand. Draco glared at him, clearly not having forgiven Harry yet, but took the hand anyway, and Harry noticed he was holding on extremely tightly.

They reached the staircase leading up to McGonagall’s office. Harry noticed Draco had balled his free hand into a fist, and the fingernails in the hand held in his were digging into the flesh on Harry’s palm.

“If I see Goyle right now, I shall kill him,” he said. Harry noticed he was shaking. “He tried to hurt Harry and my child, and it’s already taken every ounce of my restraint not to seriously injure him once this evening. I cannot find such restraint again.”

“Then we’ll go back to our room,” Harry said, rubbing soothing circles over Draco’s hand with his thumb. He looked at Ron and Hermione, making sure this was fine with them, and received two small smiles in response. “But, Ron, please tell me. Why do you need to talk to him?”

“The cunt owes me a life debt,” Ron replied with a smile of triumph, and it was testament to how much Hermione clearly hated Goyle that she made no attempt to reprimand Ron for his extremely foul language. “And I’m cashing it in. He’s never going to hurt you, Malfoy or the baby ever again—either directly or due to him ordering someone else to hurt you.”

“That’s very decent of you, Weasley,” Draco said and, to Harry’s shock, held out a hand. Ron offered half a smile before taking it. The handshake was brief, far too formal, and cool, but it was real. It was the most civil Ron and Draco had ever been towards one another, and it was a start.

The events of the last couple of hours or so finally caught up with Harry, and he suddenly felt
completely exhausted. He tried- unsuccessfully- to stifle a yawn, which was noticed by all three of
the people watching him.

“Go to bed, Harry,” Hermione said. It was the first thing she’d said since they’d left the Hospital
Wing. She was being unusually quiet. Harry assumed she had been shocked by Ron’s injury.

“Yeah, I will. Ron- you’ve been amazing this evening. Thank you. Again.”

Ron and Hermione disappeared up the spiral staircase then, leaving Draco and Harry in the corridor.

“Let’s go,” Harry said wearily.

They reached their room, Draco whispered the password, and slipped inside. He hadn’t said a word
to Harry on the walk back to their room. Harry sighed and followed him into the room. He shrugged
out of his clothes and got into his pyjamas whilst Draco instantly disappeared into the bathroom. He
could hear the running of water, but wasn’t tempted to try and slip into the shower with Draco.
Instead he picked up a book and tried to read, but the words just swam randomly and meaninglessly
in front of his eyes. Eventually Draco emerged from the bathroom, hair soaked and darkened from
the shower, with only a towel wrapped around his waist, leaving his smooth chest bare. Harry stared
at it, but not in a sexual way.

“I’m sorry,” he said. Draco looked up.

“Yes?”

“I never apologised to you. When I cast that at you. The Sectumsempra, I mean. Draco, I’m so
sorry.”

Draco gave him a small smile. “I thought you were going to say sorry for tonight. Harry, that was
nearly two years ago, and I was trying to Cruciate you! You did what you could to defend yourself.
If anyone owes anybody an apology, it’s I who owe you one for attempting an Unforgivable.”

“Let’s say we both fucked up then, and we’re both sorry?” Harry suggested hopefully. Draco flashed
him one of the crooked smiles that were reserved purely for him and made his heart flutter. He
crawled into bed next to Harry, and extinguished the lamps with his wand.

“I was terrified he’d hurt you,” Draco whispered into the dark. “Goyle, I mean. I saw the spell, and
froze, and if it hadn’t been for Weasley, I might’ve-”

Harry heard Draco’s voice stall, and he took a shuddering breath before continuing. “I know it
wasn’t your fault tonight. I was furious, but with Goyle for doing that to you, and with myself for not
reacting quicker. And, yes, I was pissed off that you hadn’t just hexed his arse and got out of there.
But I was so frightened. For you and our baby.”

“Boys Who Lived are difficult to destroy, you know,” Harry said, running his fingers through
Draco’s damp hair. “And thanks to Ron he can never hurt us again.”

“There’s still Nott,” Draco reminded him.

“Well, as Mad-Eye used to say, ‘constant vigilance’, ” Harry replied. “We just need to be careful. I
learnt a lesson this evening. I can’t fight. Not well, anyway. And I won’t put the baby in a situation
like that again, not if I can help it. Even if that does mean I need to be chaperoned just to go for a
pee.”

Draco’s lips were desperate against his then, and Harry was kissing him back, and it was a kiss of
relief and possession.

“Mine,” Draco growled, once the kiss ended.

“Yours,” Harry agreed.

Harry still didn’t regret telling the world about him and Draco. The whole Goyle thing would have come up eventually anyway, he thought as he was drifting off to sleep. And he also vowed to buy Ron the most expensive pair of Keeper gloves he could find next time he was in Quality Quidditch Supplies. But there was one thing he was sure of. The end of April, when he and Draco could move into their cottage in Hogsmeade, couldn’t come quickly enough now.
Leaving Hogwarts

To Harry’s surprise, Nott left him and Draco alone over the next few weeks. He still received the occasional letter from people either offering their support of condemning him to the fiery pits of Hades, but overall the excitement surrounding his relationship with Draco had died down—both from the students and the public, as he knew it would. And by the time the Prophet published their latest scandal—a story about a Quidditch player for the Appleby Arrows who had apparently flipped out and hexed her husband’s penis off when she caught him in bed with her Chaser teammate—life had returned to its relatively peaceful normality once more for Harry. As peaceful and normal as it can be when you’re an eighteen-year-old male who also happens to be thirty-two weeks pregnant and looking like you’ve swallowed a beach ball, anyway.

Harry’s most recent check-up with his Healer had left him with a strange feeling in his stomach that had nothing to do with the baby moving. His caesarean section had been booked for the sixteenth of May, a few days short of his thirty-ninth week of pregnancy, which was just a little over six weeks away. Having a definite date by which he would be a parent had suddenly made the entire thing seem a lot more real and he’d had a moment of panic, eased only when Draco took him to the Prefects’ Bathroom and sucked him off whilst Harry laid back in the bubbles.

Goyle, meanwhile, had been sentenced by the Wizengamot. He’d avoided prison but had had his wand snapped and he’d received a lifetime ban on performing magic. He’d also had a modified version of the Trace, one used by the Ministry to track such criminals that could be cast upon of-age witches and wizards (and a relatively new invention), applied, and should he perform any magic either wandlessly (both Harry and Draco had laughed hard at the idea that anyone would think Gregory Goyle capable of any wandless magic) or with another wizard’s wand, then he would receive ten years in Azkaban.

The first of April was a sombre day. Ron and Ginny left Hogwarts via Professor McGonagall’s Floo and spend the day at The Burrow with their parents and George, for his and Fred’s twenty-first birthday. Harry had sent flowers to Mrs Weasley and cards both to George and Arthur, telling them all he was thinking of them and wishing he could be there with them for the day. A pale-looking Ron and Ginny, both with red-rimmed eyes, had returned that evening and disappeared off with their respective partners, leaving Harry to study hard for his first N.E.W.T: his Charms practical exam, which began at nine the following morning.

He and Draco breakfasted in the Great Hall, then, with a final, “Good luck, boys!” from Hermione, they made their way to the sixth floor, where Professor McGonagall had transformed an unused classroom into their examination room.

Madam Marchbanks was already waiting for them when they arrived.

“Mister Malfoy first!” she piped, and Draco gave Harry a grim smile and disappeared into the room. Half an hour later he emerged with a smug smirk on his face, mouthing, “Piece of pizz,” at him before taking the seat Harry had just vacated—Marauder’s Map out (just in case of trouble), with a book to wait for Harry.

“Better than your Charms O.W.L, anyway,” Harry taunted with humour, before entering the classroom. He let out a small laugh at Draco’s snort of indignation, remembering how he was responsible for messing up Draco’s practical OWL exam three years previously (and costing Draco the ‘Outstanding’ he had been expected to receive). He was still grinning when Madam Marchbanks asked him to perform a Disillusionment Charm upon himself, ten minutes later.
He emerged from the classroom at the end of the examination and found Draco sat where Harry had left him, with his head in an Astronomy book. Harry looked at him, puzzled.

“You’re not taking Astronomy N.E.W.T,” he said, unnecessarily.

“I know that,” Draco said with amusement, as he replaced the book in his bag and stood up. “I’m looking for baby names.”

“In a school textbook?!”

“You know our family tradition,” Draco said. “I’m named after a celestial body, as is my aunt, and your godfather. I’d like it to continue in our son.” He paused. “I’m thinking of the name Scorpius Hyperion.”

*Oh dear God, please let this baby be a girl,* Harry thought desperately, but instead he fixed a smile on his face and replied, “Lovely,” with as much false enthusiasm as he could muster.

He spent lunch with Ron, Hermione, Ginny and Neville, before heading back to the classroom with Draco and sitting the written portion of the Charms exam, which was all on the Fidelius Charm. Harry felt that he had done a decent, albeit not brilliant job on his paper, and left the exam feeling rather content, before returning to his and Draco’s room to begin revising Defence Against the Dark Arts- the only one of his N.E.W.Ts in which he was aiming for an O.

The following day, Draco had his examination in Arithmancy. Harry took both his DADA book and, Draco’s words about wanting to follow tradition still fresh in his mind, the Astronomy book from yesterday with him up to the classroom to wait for Draco to finish. The chapter in *Advanced Defence for N.E.W.T Students* on the importance in distinguishing between a Siren and a mermaid (before the former lured you to your death with her voice) was dull; Harry put the book down and turned to the Astronomy book instead. He quickly located the section he was looking for, scanned the information, and smiled broadly. He’d just found his child’s name, should it be a girl, and now he really, really hoped it was as the name was much nicer than Scorpius.

He reluctantly turned his attention back to his Defence book, and was still reading when Draco emerged from his exam, looking tired, slightly pale and muttering about numerology, half an hour later.

In between their N.E.W.Ts, he and Draco were still required to attend lessons for subjects they’d not sat their exams in yet. Potions was never fun, and Harry found himself becoming more and more frustrated with the subject- particularly so during the first Potions lesson after the Easter holidays where he was trying- unsuccessfully- to brew the antidote for Veritaserum. One look at both Draco’s and Hermione’s told him that whatever Harry had done, it was wrong. It was nowhere near the ‘soft, shimmering pearlescent pink’ that it described in *Advanced Potions*, as theirs were. His was opaque, cerise in colour and emitting a faint smell of almonds. Still, it was better than Ron’s; Ron had a lump (that was the best word Harry could use to describe it) or tar-like matter in a shocking shade of orange that could rival the Chudley Cannons uniform, and had the acrid smell of melting plastic which caught in the back of Harry’s throat, causing him to keep his distance. Slughorn came over, tutted and shook his head, and scribbled a large and obvious ‘P’ next to Ron’s name before glaring at him.

“Fucking Potions,” Ron said to Harry, when they were in the Gryffindor common room together whilst Draco and Hermione were in Ancient Runes. “I wish I never had to take it again after next week, mate. Fancy a game of wizard chess?”
Teddy’s first birthday arrived. Harry and Draco were unable to visit him for the day, but sent gifts and an invitation to Andromeda to spend the day with them on May the first, the day after they moved into their cottage. Harry had said they could all attend the memorial at Hogwarts the following day together, and Andromeda had agreed.

Harry and Draco’s exams had nearly finished. With just Potions and Defence Against the Dark Arts to go, Harry was feeling cautiously optimistic that he was at least going to pass his N.E.W.Ts with satisfactory grades. And Harry had to smile, two days later, when he opened his Potions written exam and saw the first question, ‘Explain the effects of a human taking Polyjuice Potion containing non-human DNA’. Remembering Hermione and the Polyjuice containing a hair belonging to Millicent Bulstrode’s cat in their second year, Harry grinned and began to write.

The practical exam didn’t go as badly as Harry expected, either, and by the time Harry emerged from the makeshift Potions classroom with Draco later that afternoon, he felt as if he may have even scraped an ‘E’ on the exam.

Defence Against the Dark Arts was, as Harry had expected it would be, the one exam he breezed through. More so, he thought, due to the fact that his practical had been especially adapted due to his pregnancy, and involved very little in actual casting and counter-jinxing. He was required to produce a corporeal Patronus (bonus points for getting it to relay a voice message), demonstrate the best way to detect a wizard’s magical signature, and show how to identify traces of Dark magic left behind at a location.

The written exam also went well (‘Discuss, with examples of spells and their effects, the ideology that it is the intent of the caster, rather than the spell itself, which determines a spell’s legality and whether a spell should be considered “Dark”’). He left the exam feeling, as he did after his Defence O.W.L examination, that he might have just managed to achieve a top grade.

By the time Draco’s final exam finished on the twenty-eighth of April (an Ancient Runes translation that left him grumpy for the rest of the day), both he and Harry were exhausted. They spent the following day sat by the lake for the final time, with Harry’s friends and Blaise, a picnic in tow, and enjoying the warm late April sunshine, preparing themselves to leave Hogwarts the following day.

* 

“Pack,” Draco commanded, pointing his wand first at his belongings, and then at Harry’s, on the morning of the thirtieth of April.

“My mother taught me to do that a long time ago,” Draco said, in response to Harry’s amused look. “The house-elves just never quite got the knack of packing so many items into a tiny space.”

Harry smiled a sad smile, thinking fondly of Tonks in his bedroom in Privet Drive, performing the same charm, and muttering how much better Andromeda was at the spell than her. He couldn’t believe that in just two days’ time it would be the first anniversary of her- and so many other people’s- death. The anniversary of the fall of Voldemort.

He was now thirty-six weeks pregnant, had terrible heartburn all the time that neither potion nor Muggle remedy helped with, and angry-looking red stretch marks all over his stomach that Healer Moore assured she could remove once the baby had been delivered. He supposed he should be thankful he hadn’t grown breasts, at least. Still, he felt unsexy, and hadn’t had the energy or the inclination for anything more than a hand job just before bed for a couple of weeks now. And despite the fact that Harry didn’t feel like an invalid, Draco and his friends were treating him like one. All in all, Harry was fed up, hot, and trying his best not to be acerbic with everyone all the time.
There was a knock at the door then, and Harry opened it to allow Ron and Hermione to enter.

“Alright, mate?” Ron asked cheerfully. He and Hermione had arrived to help them move, having been excused from lessons for the morning: Hermione was going to Floo into the cottage with Draco and the luggage, whilst Ron was walking into Hogsmeade with Harry.

“Yeah,” Harry said. “Um, could you give us both a minute?” Hermione levitated the trunks out of the room, Ron following. He closed the door behind him. Draco gave Harry an awkward smile.

“I’m going to miss this room,” he said wistfully. His eyes fell on the bed. “Some happy memories.”

“We’ll make new ones. A new beginning,” Harry said, and he was kissing Draco, deeply and with all the love he felt. They both gazed around the room once the kiss ended. Harry was remembering, as he was sure Draco was too, the feeling of Draco underneath him, writhing on the sheets, as Harry trembled and came atop him. Or Harry, in the earlier weeks of them sharing a room, on his knees in the shower sucking Draco off to within an inch of his life. They hadn’t been able to shower together for a long time now. As if to remind him why, the baby gave a massive kick that took Harry’s breath away. Draco looked at him with concern.

“Ribs,” Harry rasped. “I’m OK. Come on, let’s go.” They gave the room a final look over, and then slipped out from the portrait of Eris and Dysnomia for the final time.

“I’ll see you at our cottage in about an hour,” Harry said, grinning. Draco kissed him quickly one final time, levitated one of the trunks whilst Hermione took the other, and they disappeared down a flight of stairs. Harry took a deep breath, said goodbye to Eris in the portrait, and walked away with Ron.

At Harry’s insistence, he and Ron made their way to Gryffindor tower (“For fuck’s sake, Ron, you don’t have to practically cuddle me, I can walk by myself!”) for Harry to say his goodbyes to his friends and take one last look at the first place he ever felt he could call home. The damn pregnancy hormones got to him, and by the time Ginny had extracted her arms from his neck and made Harry promise to come back and see them soon (“yes, Ginny, I’ll be back on Sunday for the memorial, won’t I? See, not even a week”), Harry realised he had a lump in his throat.

McGonagall and Hagrid were in the Entrance Hall, waiting to see Harry off.

“You take care of yourself, Potter,” McGonagall said formally, although her eyes shone with fondness. “I’d like to say it’s been a pleasure, but it hasn’t. It’s been seven years of Hell, you’ve broken virtually every school rule, almost gotten yourself killed on more than one occasion, and not since your own father was here has anyone got into more trouble. But I’m extremely honoured to have been your Head of House.” She held out her hand and Harry gripped it tightly.

“Thank you, Professor. For everything,” he said with sincerity. He jumped when he heard what sounded like a foghorn blasting, but turned out to be just Hagrid blowing his nose, fat tears streaming down his cheeks and burying themselves in his hairy face.”

“Ah, Harry! Firs’ time I saw yeh, yeh were on’y a baby, an’ yeh fit in me hand! And now look at yeh, yer a man, Harry, abou’ ter have a kid o’ yer own, and I ’ave ter tell yeh, I’m as proud as punch o’ yer, lad.”

That damn lump in his throat again. Fuck.

“Thanks,” Harry whispered, all he was capable of at that moment, he feared. “I’ll see you both soon.” And before he broke down completely like the soppy tit he was worried pregnancy had turned him into, he gave them both a watery smile, turned on his heels and strode- as much as is
possible to stride when you’re thirty-six weeks pregnant—out of the castle doors for the final time as a student of Hogwarts.

The walk to Hogsmeade took nearly double the normal amount of time. Harry had to keep stopping—the pain in his hips getting worse with every few steps—and when he did manage to walk, it was very slowly. He found this all incredibly frustrating, given how nimble and speedy he was when he wasn’t carrying the spawn of a Malfoy inside him. He quickly regretted declining Professor McGonagall’s offer of lending him a Thestral-drawn carriage to take him and Ron at least most of the way (Accepting it had felt like giving in at the time, and Harry berated himself for his own pig-headedness), and even seriously considered hailing the Knight Bus—only the thought of the extreme nausea that the journey would cause put him off. Not that he thought the violently-purple triple-decker vehicle would be welcome in such a quaint and pretty village as Hogsmeade, anyway, and it wouldn’t be a great first impression to make on his neighbours.

The cottage finally came into view. It looked incredibly different than it had the last time Harry had seen it, just over two months previously. That time it had been buried under the thick snow; this time the grass was fresh and dark green, the apple tree he had admired so much was covered in delicate pink and white blossom, and the garden was alive with vibrant the yellows, purples and reds of the spring flowers that were in full bloom. He felt his heart soar; he was going to be very happy here. He just knew it.

“Nice, mate,” Ron said, and Harry could hear the small stab of jealousy that was in his voice. “Think of me tonight, won’t you, when you’re here in luxury and I’m sharing a dorm room with the others, listening to Seamus wanking.”

“Actually, Ron, I was thinking you and Hermione should have mine and Draco’s room,” Harry said with a wink. “Password is ‘Wrackspurt.” He grinned fondly, thinking of Luna, who hadn’t returned to Hogwarts this year, choosing to visit Sweden to look for Crumple-Horned Snorkacks with Xenophilius Lovegood instead. “Should be much more comfortable for you both.”

“Thanks, Harry,” Ron beamed. The two made their way up the garden path to the large black front door. It swung open, revealing Draco who was looking slightly agitated, whether due to the fact Harry and Ron had taken much longer than the hour he said he’d be, or because he’d had to endure an over-excited Hermione on his own.

“The landlord came and dropped off the paperwork and keys,” Draco said, once Harry and Ron were inside the hallway. “And I’ve already unpacked all our belongings.”

“Oh, Harry, it’s wonderful,” Hermione gushed, virtually pushing past Draco in her haste to get to him. “Draco already showed me the Potions lab, and did you know there’s a patch in your garden for growing Potions ingredients? Of course you’ll have to keep the baby away from that—once he or she begins to crawl—but it’s so perfect, and there’s so much space! And it’s so light, and airy, and—”

“Hermione,” Ron said in amusement, “how about you let Harry into his new house properly before you ambush him?”

She flushed and apologised and Harry, entertained, took Ron on the tour. Unsurprisingly, Ron was about as excited by the Potions lab as Harry was, but he did appreciate the huge grassy space at the back of the house, proclaiming it would be perfect for Quidditch games, once Harry could fly again.

Ron and Hermione ran into Hogsmeade then, grabbing basic supplies for Harry and Draco, whilst the pair took a few minutes to relax in their new home. Harry realised he hadn’t stopped smiling once since he’d entered the cottage.
“Going to christen the loo,” he said, hauling himself out of the chair and padding to the toilet. He certainly wasn’t going to miss having to pee every hour. Or at least twice every night. By the time he was done, Ron and Hermione were back and Draco was making a pot of tea on the Aga.

“We’ve got to be back at Hogwarts. Look after yourself, Harry,” Hermione said, once they’d drunk their tea and Ron had eaten half a packet of the chocolate digestives they’d bought. “We’ll see you on Sunday, OK?” She gave him a hug, and looked like she was going to give Draco one too, before changing her mind at the last minute.

“Bye, Harry. Malfoy. Tiddler,” Ron said. He reached into the small ceramic box on the fireplace, which had been stocked with Floo powder by the landlord, threw it into the fireplace, and called out Professor McGonagall’s Floo address. As soon as he disappeared, Hermione repeated his actions, leaving Harry and Draco alone.

“I’m starving. Wish we had a house-elf,” Draco said. Harry rolled his eyes.

“We’ve been here all of five minutes and you’re already complaining about having to make yourself a sandwich?” He laughed. “Sit down. I’ll make them.”

They ate lunch in their garden, at a small table Draco had cleaned with his wand whilst Harry was buttering bread. It felt odd. He had nothing to do- no Horcruxes to search for, no dark lords to slay, no essays to write and no exams to prepare for. He couldn’t remember a period in his life before where he’d literally had nothing but free time. He figured he’d earned it.

Harry ended up cooking dinner that night too- just a simple dish of pasta, bolognaise sauce and salad, and made a mental note to teach Draco to cook. He wasn’t expecting cordon bleu food from his reluctant boyfriend. But a slice of toast might be nice.

He couldn’t complain too much though. Draco ran Harry a bath in their huge tub, and Harry luxuriated, eyes closed and glasses off, in the deep, hot water. So relaxed was he that he didn’t hear Draco enter the bathroom, until a soft, “Budge up,” made him jump.

“Sorry,” Draco said, and Harry saw, through blurry eyes, that Draco wasn’t wearing a scrap of clothing. He shifted forwards in the bath and allowed Draco to climb in behind him, his back falling against Draco’s chest and resting his head on Draco’s shoulder. It was then that he noticed Draco may have had an ulterior motive for joining him in the bath, given a familiar hardness digging in his lower back, and the fact Draco was now peppering his neck and jaw with open mouthed kisses.

“You know, we really should break in that bed of ours,” he said seductively. Harry gave a light chuckle in response.

“Yeah, ’cause being thirty-six weeks pregnant makes me the ultimate sex machine. You know I can’t at the moment. The angle is all… wrong.”

“Who said anything about you topping me?” Draco replied. Harry suddenly stiffened, and probably not in the way Draco wanted him to.

It wasn’t that he was afraid to let Draco do that to him. It genuinely wasn’t. But Harry was more than aware that Draco had- sort of- done that to him, or what had seemed to be him, already. And he kind of thought he should have at least been there that first time. It made him feel uneasy, that Draco already had the knowledge of what Harry looked like, spread out underneath him, how he felt around Draco, and uneasiness wasn’t exactly the emotion Harry looked for in a sexual encounter.

“Draco, I-” Harry began, but then Draco resumed his kissing, and his hands began wondering lower,
and Harry felt himself begin to respond to the touch.

“We will stop straight away if any point you’re uncomfortable,” Draco whispered in his ear as he gripped Harry, causing him to moan and clutch the side of the bath tightly, and Harry could hear the desperate plea in Draco’s voice that had little to do with the desire to fuck him and everything to do with his need for Harry to trust him. Overcome with the need to reassure Draco, to show just how much he trust Draco to do this to him, Harry suddenly found himself nodding. He allowed Draco to help haul him out of the bath (not the best pre- sex course of action in terms of seductiveness), and Draco took him by the hand and led him to their bedroom, kissing him all the way, and laying him down on the bed.

“Don’t be nervous,” Draco said, correctly ascertaining Harry’s mood, but probably not the reason for it (given Harry had never told him as he was piss-poor at actually discussing how he felt about things), and kissing him with passion. Harry was amused to note, as Draco reached for their tube of lubricant, that it had already been put away in a bedside drawer, only hours after moving in.

“I won’t hurt you. I promise,” Draco said, unscrewing the tube, squeezing a generous amount into his palm, and using it to stroke Harry a few times before slipping his hand lower.

It was a very, very unusual sensation. Not unpleasant as such, Harry thought, just… odd. And, despite the fact he’d done it to Draco a fair few times now, more than a little embarrassing. However, with every passing second, Harry’s apprehension ebbed and the pleasure grew as he got used to the intrusion. And when he did feel discomfort, he looked at Draco. Draco, whose skin had broken out in goose pimples from the bathwater drying on his bare skin, his grey eyes sparkling with love and dark with lust, cheeks flushed, and it was all because of Harry. And then Draco’s hands grazed over that spot, and suddenly Harry couldn’t have pulled away even if he wanted to.

And as Draco laid Harry on his side, and pushed slowly forwards, Harry totally forgot about any reason why he’d been worried about this. Draco’s raspy breathing, his teeth in the juncture of neck and collarbone, a flick of a wet tongue at the pulse point, and Harry was lost. Draco was doing amazing things to his entire body and he simply enjoyed the experience of being truly taken care of for once.

“Draco,” he said, and realised he’d spoken aloud. “I- oh, wow, there.” He could hear the shift in Draco’s breathing, felt the urgency of his strokes increase, and then Draco’s fingers tightened on his hip and he made that little noise, the one he always did just as he began to come. And it was enough to drag Harry along with him. Hot pleasure that started low in his abdomen spread throughout his body at speed, leaving him tingling all over and gasping, his hands fisting the sheets furiously.

The pair lay close for a while afterwards, and Harry wondered if he’d ever felt so languidly content before. He also wondered why the bloody hell it had taken him so long to give in to that.

“I don’t know,” Draco said, and then Harry realised he’d spoken aloud. “All I know it was fucking fantastic. Harry- I know why you were worried about this. And it was nothing like it was that time, OK? This was a million times better. Because it really was you this time.” Harry’s heart soared. He tilted his head and greedily accepted Draco’s kiss. He threaded his fingers into Draco’s hair, which was damp from sweat, and gripped tightly, thinking the whole time, Love you. Love you, Draco. He then felt a huge tightening in his stomach which took his breath away momentarily, and when he touched it he discovered it was rock hard. Draco had noticed too, and looked alarmed.

“Don’t panic,” Harry said. “It’s happened before. It’s just one of those Braxton something-or-others. Just uterine practice contractions, according to Healer Moore. And apparently it’s normal after er, you know, having an, um, yeah.”
“An orgasm?” Draco teased, eyebrow raised, and looking far too pleased with himself. Harry reddened and nodded. “You can say the word, you know. I love how you’re so coy about things at times. It’s really cute.”

“I am not ‘cute’,” Harry protested. And then yawned. In a way that was possibly a little bit cute. Draco laughed and Harry scowled.

Sheer overwhelming exhaustion overtook Harry then, and his eyelids fell, heavy and unmoving, over his eyes. He snuggled back against Draco’s chest, and sighed contentedly. He heard Draco muttering something to him, but he hardly heard the words. Within minutes he’d fallen into a deep sleep.

Andromeda arrived by Floo with Teddy in tow just after breakfast the following morning. She set Teddy down on his very wobbly legs and beamed proudly as the boy toddled precariously towards Harry’s outstretched arms. Harry looked up in amazement as Teddy reached him, laughing.

“He learnt last week,” Andromeda said. “I kept it as a surprise for you.”

“Har!” Teddy said, before falling onto his bottom.

“Yeah, that’s right, that’s my name. Good job, Teddy,” Harry said. “And look at you walking! You’re my clever little man, aren’t you?”

“Ball,” Teddy replied, reaching for Draco’s glass sphere ornament, which he quickly pulled out of the boy’s reach, resulting in tears.

“Look, Teddy, chocolate biscuit!” Harry said hastily, grabbing the packet of the few biscuits that had survived Ron’s onslaught the previous day, and the tears immediately stopped.

“Bib bib!” Teddy shouted, reaching for the biscuit in Harry’s hands, glass ornament completely forgotten about.

“Bis-cuit, that’s right, Teddy,” Harry repeated, slowly. “Now come and sit on my knee whilst you eat that. Don’t walk around with food in your mouth, you’ll choke.” He looked over to Draco and Andromeda, who were both smirking at him in a look that could only be described as some sort of Black family trait for its resemblance. “What?”

“You’re going to be a natural father, Harry,” Andromeda said kindly. “You’re brilliant with him, you know?”

Once Teddy had gone down for his nap and Draco had made tea, he enquired after his mother.

“She’s fine, Draco,” Andromeda said. “The falling out between you and Lucius has really upset her though. She’s not taking sides but I know she was far angrier about that article in the Prophet than she let on to you. She came and stayed with me for a few days again, until Lucius turned up, begging. It was rather pathetic, if truth be told. She’s made it quite clear, however, that she will not tolerate anything else against you. And after what she did to Theodore Nott, your father clearly has heeded her warning.”

Both Harry and Draco stared at her, and Harry was quite sure that Draco’s rounded eyes of shock mirrored his own.

“What did Mother do to Nott?” he asked, and his voice was low, with that dangerous tone to it that never failed to make the hairs on Harry’s arms stand on end. Andromeda stared back, then suddenly
realised what she’d aid and threw a hand over her mouth.

“It’s nothing,” she lied. She had stared at her fingernails for a long time now, without looking at either Draco or Harry.

“Aunt…”

Andromeda sighed. “OK. But please, don’t tell your mother I told you. She sent Nott a letter a few weeks ago, asking to meet him. He snuck out of the castle and met her in the Forbidden Forest. Your mother Stunned him and placed a type of Memory Charm on him, meaning that, whilst he usually remembers everything normally, if at any point he tries to either attack you or Harry, or attempts to plan such an attack with others, the curse kicks in causing him to temporarily forget both of your existences. It’s impossible for him to plot against you. It’s an extremely Dark and highly illegal curse. I guess this is why she didn’t want you to know.”

Well, thought Harry, that certainly explains why Nott has been so quiet. But as much as Harry disliked the spell, he couldn’t bring himself to object to the use. Narcissa had proven, almost exactly one year ago to the day, that she would do anything— even lie to the Dark Lord— in order to save her son. She would certainly do this. And, if Harry was honest with himself, he would have no problems doing it to protect his own child, either. He looked at Draco and could tell, by his expression, that he felt exactly the same.

“Good,” Draco said. “Bastard deserves it.”

The rest of the day passed quietly, but Harry noticed that, as the hours ticked down, he was becoming incredibly restless, as was Andromeda. This time last year I was breaking out of Gringotts on that dragon… right about now we were right here, in Hogsmeade, setting off that awful Caterwauling Charm….Snape and McGonagall duelled this time last year…

As midnight approached— the time the Battle of Hogwarts had begun— Andromeda began to weep softly.

“I’m sorry,” she said through raspy breathing. “I think I shall retire now, if it’s all the same to you boys.”

“You need sleep too,” Draco said gently to Harry. “You’ve got a busy day tomorrow.”

They made their way up to bed, and changed in near silence. Draco especially, Harry noticed, was uncharacteristically quiet. They climbed into bed, and Harry gave Draco a kiss, which wasn’t returned with its usual enthusiasm.

“I wish I was on the right side to begin with,” he all but whispered. “I wish I had had the courage you did.” His fingers traced the outline of the Dark Mark. It had faded somewhat in the last year, but it was still noticeable. Harry stared at fingers, long, and lean, and trembling slightly.

In the distance Harry heard the chiming of the clock in the centre of Hogsmeade. Midnight. He squeezed Draco’s hand tightly.

“You were on the right side in the end,” Harry reassured, swallowing the lump in his throat. He reached over and picked up Draco’s wand. The length of hawthorn felt familiar and warm in his hand. “I would have lost without you. Thank you.”

He eventually fell asleep with Draco in his arms, but rest was troubled. His dreams were plagued with green light, and cruel laughter, and wide, unseeing eyes. He woke in a sweat around four in the morning after a particularly harrowing scene involving Rookwood and Fred, and got up to use the
As much as he tried, he couldn’t return to sleep so went downstairs and put the kettle on the Aga to boil. He was sipping his tea when he was joined by Andromeda looking about as rested as he did, who helped herself to a cup from the teapot. He looked at the clock on the kitchen wall, and realised with a jolt it was the exact time that Voldemort had been defeated. It had been exactly one year. He blinked rapidly and found his eyelashes were wet.

“It’ll all be over in a few hours,” he said, staring out of his kitchen window at the early morning dawn just beginning to break, and wondered if he was trying to reassure Andromeda or himself. “And then I can enjoy a couple of weeks’ peace and quiet, and get ready for the baby. I think I’ll have earned the rest.”

But he was Harry Potter. Events never turned out how he thought they were going to. And as he sat in his darkened kitchen, sipping tea and worrying about the upcoming anniversary events, he was totally unaware that those would be the least of his problems. And that in just a few short hours his life would be changed forever.
Draco joined Andromeda and Harry downstairs in the kitchen around seven, and Teddy woke up soon after that. Andromeda made toast that no one except Teddy ate (“More!”) and then the adults all dressed in their sombre black dress robes, left the cottage, and poured in to the waiting Thestral carriage that Harry had arranged with McGonagall the previous day, eating a huge slice of humble pie in the process. Harry’s heart had thumped uncomfortably when he saw Andromeda stroking the Thestral before they got in. The unease must have shown on his face, however, for she said gently, “Don’t worry, Harry. It was my mother-in-law, twenty years ago, and she had terminal cancer. I was with her when she died.” Teddy was the only one in the carriage who could not see the skeletal black horse pulling the carriage, Harry realised, and he vowed to do everything in his power to make sure it stayed that way.

Hogwarts’ grounds were already filled with people by the time they arrived. Harry spotted Kingsley chatting with some of the surviving members of the Order of the Phoenix, looking authoritative and grave. He’d done a brilliant job in his first year as Minister, rebuilding the wizarding world and restoring the rights of the Muggle-born. He saw Harry arrive and nodded to him in greeting. Harry was incredibly thankful that Kingsley had accepted his request to not have to make a speech. People stared enough at him these days. He didn’t need the added attention.

“I’m still not entirely sure I’m exactly welcome here,” Draco said. He nervously fidgeted with the material covering his Mark, in response to the glares he was receiving.

“I’ve made it clear numerous times that you and your mother both saved my life and defected from Voldemort,” Harry replied. “It’s not like I invited Fenrir Greyback along. Besides, you’re my boyfriend and we come as a pair now. If they want me to stay then no one will say anything to you. They’ll have to lump it.”

At exactly ten, the entire Weasley family, including Ron and Ginny, arrived. They all looked incredibly pale. Andromeda spotted Mrs Weasley and immediately made her way over to her. The two women began crying when they saw each other and embraced, united in a mother’s grief at the loss of a child. Harry swallowed hard and turned away from them. Today was going to be challenging.

“Morning, Harry, Malfoy, Teddy,” Hermione said solemnly, approaching him and Draco, who had Teddy balanced on his hip, chewing on the ear of the toy dragon Harry had bought him for Christmas. “We’ve just been to visit Fred’s grave.” She dropped her voice so only Harry could hear. This close Harry could see dried tear tracks on her face. “Oh, Harry, it was horrible. Molly began to sob, and George- it was like the light had gone out again. He just stood there and stared at the headstone- he didn’t cry or anything. I don’t think he slept at all last night.”

Just then Ron and Ginny came over. They looked drained.

“Distract me,” Ron said. “Please, tell me about your cottage, or whatever. Anything that will take my mind off today.” Harry opened his mouth to say something, anything, but, unfortunately, Draco beat him to it.

“Well, Weasley, Harry finally let me do him up the arse,” he said. Then his lips curled into a smirk. “That thought ought to distract you for a while.”

Harry froze in total horror due to what Draco had just announced. Hermione’s eyebrows disappeared into her hairline and she turned scarlet, Ron buried his head in his hands, and murmured, “When I
said distract me, this wasn’t exactly what I had in mind. I could have happily lived the rest of my life never hearing that,” but Ginny threw her head back and roared with laughter.

“Thank you, Malfoy, that really did cheer me up,” Ginny spluttered, wiping tears from her eyes as she continued to chuckle.

“You did not just say that,” Harry groaned, mortification flooding him. “I can’t bloody believe you sometimes.”

“It worked, didn’t it?” Draco replied, looking completely smug. And Harry had to admit that was perfectly true. Ron didn’t look upset anymore. However he did look slightly nauseated, which Harry didn’t think was much of an improvement.

Harry looked over the grounds and saw people were beginning to take their seats. He spotted Dennis Creevey sat with two people who were obviously Muggles, and must be his parents. Harry wondered how they got here, given the Muggle-Repelling Charms on the castle, but decided McGonagall would have had to alter the wards in some way for today. Colin was certainly not the only Muggle-born to have lost their life, one year ago today.

Draco set Teddy onto the ground, and he and Harry held a hand each (the dragon in Draco’s robe pocket) and the group made their way slowly to their seats, Ron muttering to Hermione in a low voice, although Harry picked out the words ‘Harry’, ‘ferret’, and ‘arse’. They took their seats next to the Weasleys and Andromeda in the front row.

A hush fell over the crowd at Kingsley made his way onto a makeshift platform and cast **Sonorus** upon himself.

“Welcome, Ladies and Gentlemen, to Hogwarts, on this most special and sombre of occasions,” he began. “Exactly one year ago today, our world was finally rid of the most critical threat it had ever faced. A tyrant was destroyed, and this time, for good. Evil was defeated at the hands of one Harry Potter. Harry, every witch and wizard here owes their freedom to you. On behalf of the magical community of the United Kingdom, I extend my sincere gratitude.”

There was an outbreak of enthusiastic applause then- the clapping from his friends and family was almost deafening, and Harry knew he was blushing furiously; his cheeks felt extremely warm to his touch. He sank lower, in a vain attempt to make himself less conspicuous. Clearly not an attainable feat given the size of his stomach, and the fact he could almost feel hundreds of pairs of eyes boring a hole in the back of his head.

“But,” Kingsley continued, and a grave hush fell over the crowd once more, “Harry would be the first amongst us to point out that he didn’t accomplish this astounding achievement alone. Hermione Granger and Ronald Weasley both played vital roles in the downfall of You-Know-Who, and they both deserve just as much of our gratitude as Harry does. Both showed themselves to be true Gryffindors, and utterly loyal friends to Harry when it really mattered.” Harry clapped enthusiastically, and was heartened to see that even Draco managed some polite applause. Both his friends beamed with pride, rosy-cheeked and eyes sparkling.

“We do, however, also have many, many others to thank. And many of you are sitting in the audience here today,” Kingsley said. “To anyone who fought in the Battle, I commend you for demonstrating outstanding courage. You all played your part in defeating the foulest Dark Lord who has walked the earth, perhaps ever. Everyone here had their role to play. You-Know-Who tried to destroy us. Instead, with his own destruction, he bonded us in a way that is unbreakable. United we stand. And it is for this reason that I am beyond proud to serve you all as the Minister for Magic.”
Kingsley paused then, and the smile that was on his face slipped off.

“There are, however, over fifty other brave souls who demonstrated bravery beyond anything that could have ever been expected of them, and are not with us today. Over fifty witches and wizards who gave their lives fighting for what they believed in. We all lost friends and family on the second of May, 1998. And every single one of them died an absolute hero.”

He waved his wand and conjured a list of all the names of the dead. The list was long, as if to visually remind each and every one of them exactly how many had fallen, one year ago. Kingsley began to read from the list of names, pausing for a few seconds after each one. The audience was silent, save the sound of grieving relatives weeping softly when their family member’s name was called. Most of the names Harry didn’t recognise, but that didn’t stop him feeling gratitude beyond anything he’d ever felt before for each and every one of them. He tried to keep his emotions in check, but lost the battle and let the tears fall as soon as Kingsley read out Remus’ name.

Snape’s and Tonks’ names followed in succession, and by the time they got to the final name on the list- Fred’s- there was barely a dry eye anywhere in the audience. Even Draco had a tear track running down his left cheek. Kingsley himself was crying softly as he read, and Harry thought back to the reigns of Fudge and Scrimgeour. He was positive that neither of them would have shown such a public display of honest, raw emotion.

“We do not just mourn today, however,” Kingsley said, taking a deep breath to calm himself. “We celebrate a truly remarkable victory. And we prove to those we lost that they did not die in vain. We will go on, and we will live, and we will get stronger, and stronger. And so both in memoriam and as thanks to those who died, I ask you all to raise your wands and send sparks of a colour of your choice into the air.”

As one, the witches and wizards all drew their wands, and there was a low muttering of various incantations as sparks of all colours shot into the sky. Harry looked at the Weasleys- they had all chosen, unsurprisingly, red. It represented both Gryffindor and Fred’s favourite colour. Hermione chose gold- a representation, Harry was sure, for Remus Lupin, as she chose the colour of a phoenix, as well as also representing Gryffindor- linking to Lupin’s former house. Andromeda shot shocking pink sparks, clearly signifying Tonks, from hers. It took Harry just a tiny moment longer to decide on his. Emerald sparks erupted from his length of holly, joined a fraction of a second later with the silver of Draco’s, intertwining with the green.

“Thank you, Severus,” Harry whispered tearfully, as Teddy, who was still on Draco’s lap, laughed and tried to grab the sparks. He wondered what the Muggles would think, should an aeroplane be flying over Hogwarts grounds at that moment, then decided he really didn’t care.

Thankfully, the speeches had been kept to a minimum. After Kingsley had spoken, Professor McGonagall had thanked everyone who had worked over the summer on the restoration of Hogwarts. Following that there was a speech devoted to Snape, detailing how he had exactly foiled Voldemort and his crucial role in victory. Its climax came when McGonagall unveiled a new portrait of the hooked-nosed former Potions master that was to be hung next to Dumbledore’s in the Headmistress’ office.

“Let us not forget that today is a day of exultation as well,” advised Kingsley. Today heralds the anniversary of a wonderful victory. Therefore please do try and enjoy the rest of the memorial service, and remember what the Battle of Hogwarts gave to our community. It gave us all a reason to rejoice. Thank you.”

He performed the Quietus counter-spell on his throat and stepped off the platform to tumultuous applause.
Harry spent the best part of the next hour with Ron and Hermione, fake grin firmly fixed in place and inwardly wishing he could just sit in a chair and eat a sandwich, being thanked by strangers, whilst the few invited members of the press took photographs and set Quick-Quotes Quills to work. He had a vindictive moment when he wondered in his head how many of the people ringing his hand and thanking him profusely right now, and who had clapped and cheered when Kingsley talking about unity had sent him angry letters or even a Howler just a few weeks ago, but forced it from his mind. Everyone here was here because they had played their role (or was a relative of someone who had) in bringing down Voldemort. He found it hard to believe that any one of the people crying quietly whilst stammering their gratitude would have called him ‘wicked’ or damn him to Hell, simply for allowing himself some personal happiness for once in his life.

When his stomach forcibly reminded him that he was late for lunch and he also hadn’t eaten breakfast, and this was a terrible idea when heavily pregnant, he politely but firmly made his excuses and escaped with Draco and his friends to a quiet area of the lake and tucked into the plate of food Hermione had made up for him. He felt better with a good meal inside him, and stared out over the lake, which was rippling slightly in the cool spring breeze, and tried to ignore the embarrassment he felt at having to sit in a Transfigured chair, deciding that if he sat on the grass with the others, he wasn’t going to be able to get back up. He looked over and saw Augusta Longbottom in the distance. He couldn’t hear what the old woman was saying, but could clearly see her enthusiastically miming what very much appeared to be a sword drawn from a hat and beheading a snake to two unknown elderly witches. He chuckled lightly to himself. The woman was finally proud of Neville, and it had only taken the destruction of a Horcrux to achieve it.

“What’s it like, Harry?” Ron said in a low voice, once Hermione and Draco were deep in conversation about some Potions theory, and drawing Harry’s attention away from the amusing charade. Harry only had to look at his face to know what he meant.

“Thought you didn’t want to know anything about it?” he countered, taking another bite of a ham sandwich. “Weren’t you the one who begged me to not even snog Draco in front of you?”

“I don’t want you two to shag in front of me,” Ron said, “I’m just curious. Does it hurt? Or feel like, you know, you’re on the loo or something?”

“Not really, and certainly not,” Harry replied. He was getting fed up of this conversation. And he was more than a little fed up with Draco for mentioning anything at all. As far as he was concerned, what he and Draco did in bed was no one’s business except theirs. He’d never once asked Ron about his and Hermione’s sex life. “And that’s all I’m saying.” Ron opened his mouth to utter something else, and Harry felt his fragile patience snap.

“If you’re so desperate to know what it feels like, Ron, just ask Hermione to peg you,” he said, sharper than he’d intended, and apparently louder too, from the look of horror Hermione shot him and the tirade of laughter Draco dissolved into.

The afternoon session involved the unveiling of a monument a short distance from Dumbledore’s tomb, engraved with the names of all those who had lost their lives in the fight against Voldemort, not just in the Battle of Hogwarts. Harry found the names of his parents, Sirius, Dumbledore, Mad-Eye, and even Cedric, each one sent a thrill of sadness through him.

The day concluded with a brilliant display of daylight-compatible Weasleys’ Wildfire Whiz-bangs, courtesy of George, the climax of which was a spectacular minute-long finale, with the final fireworks spelling out ‘Mouldy Voldy’ in huge green lettering. Everybody laughed, except Teddy, who had begun to cry and reached for Andromeda when the fireworks exploded.

“We’ll all see you very soon, dear,” Molly Weasley said as the memorial finally came to a close and
people began to leave. Harry noticed the woman looked absolutely exhausted. He gave her a quick hug.

“You’ll have to come and see the baby as soon as she’s born,” he said. “After all, the grandmother should be one of the first to hold her grandchild.”

As Harry had expected, his words had Molly in more tears, but he knew they were happy ones this time. He was engulfed once more in a hug.

“Thank you, Harry,” she whispered. Harry said a quick goodbye to the rest of the Weasleys, including a very pregnant Fleur (“You are lucky you are ‘aving a caesarean, ‘Arry, I am already scared of ze labour!”) and Charlie’s Romanian boyfriend Rasvan, and they left the grounds.

It was, however, another hour before Harry managed to get away. Members of the Order, his school friends, and Kingsley himself all wanted to speak to him, until Hermione loudly and pointedly said, “You must be shattered, Harry; I’m sure you must be desperate to get home and have a lie-down?” resulting in everyone uttering their apologies and goodbyes. Harry could have kissed her, and he’d never seen Draco look so grateful to her either.

He left Andromeda with McGonagall (the former was dining with the Headmistress that evening) and set off across the grounds to the Thestral-drawn carriages with Draco, Ron and Hermione. He sat down heavily on his seat and let his head fall on Draco’s shoulder. The constant tiredness was what Harry found the hardest to deal with in the pregnancy- he was used to being full of energy.

“I’m not going next year,” he said, knowing the words were empty in their threat. He closed his eyes. “All I want to do now is eat, have a bath, and sleep.”

“Are you sure you want us to come for dinner, Harry?” Ron asked. “We can go back up to the castle if you’d rather.”

“No. I want to spend some time with you both,” Harry replied dozily. “I’m just going to close my eyes for a minute, that’s all.” He hadn’t realised he’d nodded off until Draco was gently shaking him, telling him they were home and it was time to wake up.

He stepped out of the carriage behind Draco, and it was a second or two before he realised Draco had frozen. He followed Draco’s shocked stare to the small table in the garden, where he and Draco had eaten lunch just a couple of days before, and felt his blood run cold.

Lucius Malfoy was sat at the table.

“Father,” Draco said coldly. “What are you doing here?”

“I decided today would be a good time to speak with you,” Lucius said. “I was under the impression that you would not have been welcome at the festivities today, and would therefore be home alone when I called. Obviously I was mistaken. Your illicit affair with Potter has shoehorned you in, in all directions, hasn’t it?” The bitterness in Lucius’ voice was poorly disguised. He glared at his son, just as Hermione and Ron emerged from the carriage. “And you’re associating yourself with a blood traitor and a Mudblood too now, I see? I’m extremely disappointed in you, Draco.”

“We are blood traitors too, Father,” Draco snapped. “I think defecting from the Dark Lord and indirectly playing a part in his downfall qualifies us as that. And it is only due to that fact that we’re not rotting in Azkaban. Sorry to break that to you. So why don’t you just say what you came here to say then leave us to enjoy our evening in peace.”
“I want to offer you one final chance to reclaim your inheritance,” Lucius said. “I’m seeing my solicitor in the morning and I am going to make it all legal. After tomorrow you will be unable to claim a Knut of the Malfoy vaults, and the wards will be adjusted to refuse you entry to Malfoy Manor.”

“Then I suggest that’s what you do, if you feel this strongly about it,” Draco said. He reached out and very deliberately put an arm around Harry’s shoulders. Harry noticed that Lucius’ eyes narrowed in extreme distaste. “Harry and the baby mean more to me than any amount of money ever could. You really thought I’d abandon my own child for a Manor that housed the Dark Lord for months, and a bunch of Galleons that I don’t need? This child is your flesh and blood. And you’re treating him like a parasite. I don’t want anything from you.”

“May I come in, and we can discuss this properly, rather than standing in your garden and arguing like common Muggles?” said Lucius. Draco shook his head. Harry noticed that Draco had his hand on his wand. He had done the same to his, and a quick glance at his best friends showed they both had, too.

“We’ve been over and over this, Father.” Draco said. “We have nothing else to discuss. I don’t want your money, and you won’t accept my orientation or my child. You’re upsetting Mother with your behaviour. I will not allow you to blackmail and manipulate me. Good day, Father.”

“If that is genuinely how you feel, Draco, then so be it,” Lucius sighed. He glared at Harry. “I sincerely hope you’re proud of yourself, Potter.” He stood from the table and began to walk down the path, pausing as he reached Harry and Draco.

“There really is nothing left to say, is there?” he said, in a voice full of resignation that Harry didn’t trust one little bit. “Except for one thing. Praetrunco Placentam!”

“Stupefy!” yelled Draco, Ron and Hermione together, the second Lucius had begun to cast, but they were too late; even as Lucius crumpled to the ground as the force of three Stunners knocked him unconscious, his unknown curse slammed into Harry, who had been standing at far too close a range to do anything about it.

At first he thought that whatever Lucius had cast had done nothing; he certainly didn’t feel different. But all of a sudden a searing, gut-wrenching agony flooded through him, radiating from his stomach. He screamed- something Harry had barely even done under the Crucius Curse. He then became aware of a frantic, distressed kicking in his belly, as if the baby was thrashing.

“Draco,” he rasped, as his own consciousness began to ebb. “I’m sorry. I didn’t keep her safe.”

The last thing he heard was Draco’s own screams of anguish and Hermione and Ron’s terrified shouts, and then his world went black.
...and Baby Makes Three?

Chapter Notes

This is the last chapter, although there will be a short epilogue to the story. To everyone who's been reading, thank you all so much. And a special thank you to those who have left a comment. I've not replied to them all, but I read and appreciate every single one. Thank you.

Draco caught Harry by the shoulders just in time, as his unconscious form began to fall deadweight to the ground.

“No- Harry, wake up!” he yelled.

“He needs St Mungo’s. Now!” Hermione shrieked. “That spell- I think it’s detached the placenta from the uterine wall. Harry’s got severe internal bleeding and the baby’s not getting any oxygen.”

“You mean he’s suffocating?” Draco gave a whimper of distress.

“Malfoy- where’s that Portkey? The one the Healer gave to Harry just before Christmas?” Ron bellowed, but Draco’s brain wasn’t working.

“I… I’m not sure,” he said numbly. Ron looked at him for the briefest of seconds before drawing his wand.

“Accio Harry’s emergency Portkey!” he yelled. Nothing happened. “Sod this, we don’t have time. We need to get Harry to hospital now. We’re Apparating.”

“Draco can’t Apparate,” Hermione said.

“Fuck the law! Harry and the baby need help!” Draco’s voice was full of panic. He was almost hysterical now.

“But what if it ends up Splinching the baby…” Hermione began, but Ron cut her off.

“Hermione, they’re both dying. It’s worth the risk, OK?”

“You’re right,” Hermione said, her voice trembling. “But we can’t get into the maternity ward via Apparition, can we? It’s warded for safety. It’ll have to be Spell Damage. They’ll be able to treat him there.”

“Granger, will you take Harry?” Draco said. “I know you’re the least likely of all of us to Splinch them during the Side-Along. I trust you.” Hermione acknowledged this for the compliment it was with a quick nod of the head, and without further hesitation took Harry from Draco’s arms, turned on the spot, and whisked him away.

“Malfoy, come on. I’ll take you on Side-Along. You’re in no condition to Apparate by yourself,” Ron said, in a gentle tone he’d never used with Draco before. It was testament to the severity of the situation that Draco offered no objection. Ron quickly conjured a Patronus, relayed a brief message explaining what had happened and where to find Lucius Malfoy, and sent it to McGonagall, before
grabbing Draco’s right forearm and dragging them both into the smothering sensation of Apparition.

They arrived at St Mungo’s almost instantly, only a minute or two after Hermione and Harry, and Draco immediately spotted Hermione pacing along the corridor, looking extremely white and with tears pouring down her face. She hurried over when she saw them.

“We made the jump intact,” she said quickly, in response to Draco’s unanswered question, “but they’ve taken him straight in for an emergency caesarean section. Room six.” Draco nodded briefly to her, turned on the spot, and sprinted towards the door, flinging it wide open and running inside.

Harry stirred groggily. He tried to take a breath and felt a moment of panic when he realised there was something covering his nose and mouth, and scrambled to remove it.

“I’d leave that in place, if I were you, Mister Potter. It’s just an oxygen mask. It’s helping you to breathe,” said a voice he recognised vaguely. Healer Moore’s, he thought. So he was in St Mungo’s then. Suddenly, everything flooded back to him- Lucius Malfoy, the argument in the garden, then being cursed with- whatever that spell was. And the pain… fuck, the pain.

“Harry, you’ve suffered a placental abruption, and your baby is very unhappy in there. We need to deliver immediately,” the Healer continued. Harry screwed his eyes tight and nodded.

“Please save her,” he whispered.

“We’ll do our best,” the Healer replied, and it wasn’t lost on Harry that it was far from a guarantee.

Just then the door flew open, and Harry saw a panic-stricken Draco run into the theatre.

“Just in time, Mister Malfoy,” Healer Moore said. “We’re about to begin. Harry is spelled numb from the waist down, and as you can see, we’ve awoken him.”

Draco didn’t say anything. He just stood, frozen, near the table Harry was laid out on, wide-eyed and looking grey.

“Hey,” Harry said trying to sound reassuring when he felt anything but reassured himself. “Come here.” He held out a hand for Draco, which seemed to snap Draco back into action. Draco didn’t say anything, but stoically made his way to the chair next to Harry’s head and took Harry’s waiting hand. There was already a green screen erected across Harry’s abdomen. It was amazing how much quicker everything was with magic.

The Healer sprayed cold water on Harry’s stomach, he confirmed he couldn’t feel it, and then the caesarean began. Harry couldn’t feel any pain, but there was a lot of tugging and pulling. He noticed the salty coppery smell of his own blood, and felt slightly nauseated, aware that his stomach was currently sliced open in a worse way than even _Sectumsempra_ could achieve. He heard the Healer talking to another and saying things like, “Grade two abruptio placentae,” “Borderline grade three, very severe,” and “Suspected Couvelaire uterus,” whilst looking extremely grave. Harry knew the definition of none of these terms, but knew that it was extremely serious.

After only a minute or so, he heard a watery suction noise as the amniotic sac was pieced and the fluid drained, followed by felt a very odd sensation, like someone was washing up inside his stomach, and then a tiny, purple thing covered in Harry’s blood was removed and whisked away to the other side of the room.

Their baby had been born.
And it was still, and silent.

Harry held his breath and willed himself not to cry, and he felt Draco’s hand clamp on his. He didn’t once take his eyes away from the small table, where one of the Healers was rubbing the baby vigorously with towels and casting airway clearing, monitoring and warming charms, whilst another was holding a tiny mask over the baby’s nose and mouth, administering oxygen.

“Come on, baby,” Harry pleaded desperately, “You can do this! You’re a Potter. We get ourselves out of these sorts of situations all the time!”

And finally, after what had felt like an eternity, there was a tiny whimper from the baby, which gradually built to a loud wailing which filled the entire room, and it was a sweeter sound than any music Harry had ever heard. A huge rush of relief spread to every single nerve Harry possessed, causing him to lose his fragile grip on his emotions and he broke down in a way he hadn’t since Sirius had died, not caring in the slightest that he was in a room with a bunch of strangers who were witnessing the Famous Harry Potter sobbing.

Draco wasn’t much better beside him, Harry noticed. He, too, hadn’t taken his eyes off the—now, thank Merlin—pink bundle that was letting everyone know there was a healthy set of lungs inside that tiny body, but he was clinging to Harry like his life depended upon it, and Harry could feel his entire body shaking next to him.

“I’ve never been so thankful for the Harry Potter good luck gene in my entire life,” Harry heard him rasp, his voice thick with emotion. The Healer was still tending to the caesarean, showing a trainee Healer where the blood had leaked into the peritoneal cavity due to Lucius’ spell and caused massive, life-threatening internal bleeding.

“We need to remove all traces of the pregnancy completely, Harry. The uterus included. It’s incredibly damaged. And you will require a course of Blood-Replenishing Potion for several days,” she said, but Harry barely heard her. Their baby was alive. Nothing else in the world mattered at the moment. He was aware of the Healer Vanishing various things from inside his stomach, which did make him somewhat nervous, and then Summoning a bottle of Dittany and applying it to the incision in his stomach, but then one of the Healers who was with the baby wrapped it up in a bundle of fleecy blankets and said, “Would you like to hold your baby, Harry?” and he forgot all about the surgery.

She placed the baby into Harry’s eager arm, and Draco’s instantly engulfed the bundle too. And for the first time, Harry and Draco gazed at the face of their child. The infant was unmistakably Draco’s,Harry thought. There was a shock of white-blond hair jutting out from the blankets, and the chin was angular, in exactly the same way Draco’s was. He bent down and kissed the sleeping infant, startled by the feel of super-soft skin on his lips. And then realisation hit him like a freight train. He was a father. The baby in his arms was his child, his flesh and blood. The sudden sense of responsibility was very nearly overwhelming. He tore his eyes away and gazed at Draco in pure astonishment, who just grinned at him and leant in for a kiss.

“You were brilliant,” Draco said. “Seriously amazing. Um, Harry, shall we find out who’s won our bet then?” And to Harry’s surprise, he realised he’d not considered the sex of their baby once since the rather dramatic birth. He nodded and tentatively pulled back the blankets. The baby hadn’t been dressed, nor had a nappy put on yet. And there, between the legs, was—

Harry laughed.
“Bloody told you to trust my instincts,” he said happily. “Looks like Malfoys can make females after all!”

They had a daughter. He was cradling his and Draco’s baby girl.

Draco looked shell-shocked for only a few seconds before he, too, began to laugh.

“After the stress of the last half an hour, I really couldn’t care less that I lost the bet,” he said. “I’m just delighted she’s here safely. I was terrified.”

“She wouldn’t be related to me if she’d made it easy on herself coming into the world, even if she did manage to scare everyone shitless,” Harry said. A thought suddenly occurred to him. “Oh god! Draco, can you let Ron and Hermione know? They’re outside still, aren’t they? They’ll be so worried,” Harry said. “Tell them we’re both fine, but don’t tell them the sex. I want to do that.”

Draco kissed him once more on the forehead and walked to the door. He deliberately left it open so Harry could hear as he walked through, and said, in a voice that sounded completely disbelieving, “They’re both fine. And, er, I’m a father, and that sounds incredibly surreal.”

Harry chuckled to himself as he heard Ron’s relieved expletives trying to turn the air in the corridor blue, and Hermione’s relieved sobs as she burst into tears and garbled ‘Oh Merlin, thank god’-s.

Draco returned to the room just as a Healer came to take the baby away to be weighed.

“Five pounds five ounces,” she announced a minute later. “Not a bad weight; a little on the low side, but considering she’s slightly premature, she’s doing well. But her colour is good, her heart rate is normal, and she’s nice and warm, plus she’s breathing well by herself, so there’s no reason she can’t stay with you on the ward, Harry. We’ll just keep a series of monitoring charms around her that will alert us if she needs help.” She dressed the baby then, and made to hand her back to Harry, but he shook his head.

“Draco’s turn for a cuddle,” he said. He watched Draco’s face soften and melt as his daughter was placed in his arms for the first time. Even when they were kissing, or making love, Harry had never seen the look Draco was giving their baby on his face before. A look of such pure delight combined with devoted astonishment, Harry thought. It was beautiful.

“So what’s the little princess’ name then, Mister I Won the Bet?” Draco said. He tried to sound petulant, but failed miserably. It was obvious that Draco was already totally besotted with his little girl, and that no man would ever be good enough for her in his eyes.

Harry whispered two words, knowing Draco would understand the significance of them both, and he wasn’t disappointed. His eyes welled up, and it was several seconds before he could speak. When he did, he managed to croak out, “Perfect.”

Whilst Harry would always maintain that the Muggle way of doing things was sometimes the best, he concluded very quickly that a caesarean section wasn’t one of those things. Healer Moore had used a combination of Muggle science and magic to perform the operation, but as the screen was removed from Harry’s abdomen some time later and he gazed down at his perfectly flat stomach that didn’t contain so much as a trace of a scar, let alone any of the other gruesome things he had been picturing, he had to laugh. He really fucking loved magic sometimes.

An hour after their daughter was born, she was placed in a cot with a Warming Charm applied to it, Harry was given a large dose of Blood-Replenishing Potion to counter his huge blood-loss, and he
and his daughter were wheeled into a private room in the maternity unit, closely followed by Draco, and an extremely over-excited Hermione and Ron.

The Healer and Draco both helped Harry first into clean pyjamas and then into the bed whilst Ron and Hermione waited outside- the spell used to numb him hadn’t quite worn off yet. There was a large draught of Pain-Relieving Potion on the bedside cabinet, ready for when sensation did return to his lower body. He wasn’t looking forward to that part.

“She will need feeding when she wakes up,” Healer Moore said. She placed a glass bottle containing formula milk on the side. “There are no mammary glands in your chest, so you will have to feed artificially, rather than from the breast.”

“Not a problem,” Harry said, who thought breastfeeding might be pushing the whole ‘I’m a bloke who’s just had a baby’ thing a tad too far.

“You were both extremely lucky, Harry,” the Healer continued. “I won’t lie to you. The situation was extremely serious when you both came in, and there was a strong chance we could have lost either one of you today.” She smiled at him. “As it is, I’m delighted to have you both here, fit and well. Congratulations on your baby, Harry, Mister Malfoy. I shall give you some time with your friends.”

“Thank you. For everything,” Harry said sincerely, and was joined with Draco’s enthusiastic show of gratitude too.

No sooner had the door closed when Hermione and Ron entered, their eager talking filled the room.

“What is it, mate?”

“Harry, please tell us! We’re simply dying to know!”

He put up a hand to stop them, reached into the cot next to his bed, and lifted the still-sleeping baby into his arms. He turned her so she was facing his friends, and announced, “Ron, Hermione, I’d like you both to meet Lily Eltanin Potter-Malfoy. Our daughter.”

Hermione squealed and Ron cheered. Once the noise from his friends died down, Ron said, “OK, I get Lily, but, er, Eltanin? Bit out there, isn’t it?”

“Oh, Ron, Eltanin is the brightest star in the constellation Draco,” Hermione said, and Harry noticed tears on her cheeks again. “Harry’s named her after her father. It’s lovely.” Harry looked over at Draco, who looked unbelievably smug.

“Damn sight better than ‘Scorpius Hyperion’,” Harry teased, which wiped some of the smug expression from Draco’s face, much to Harry’s amusement. “And Lily is after my mum of course, but there are two other reasons I chose it. Lily of the Valley is the birth flower for the month of May. And apparently the flower was given as a gift in Victorian times and meant, ‘you have made my life complete’. It just seemed to fit.”

“Where in the name of Merlin’s hairy testicles did you learn that?” Ron asked, incredulous.

“Herbology textbook. Turns out it wasn’t just Astronomy books that were good for finding names. Having to study early for exams did have some benefits,” Harry said with a wink.

Lily was passed between his friends for a few minutes, until Hermione started cooing and making that noise women made whenever they held babies. As soon as she started on about that “wonderful baby smell”, however, Ron looked rather nervous, and took the baby off her, handing her to Draco,
with a muttered, “Don’t get any ideas.”

“Wish Mum and Dad had a fellytone,” Ron said, a few minutes later, after a nurse had brought Harry a cup of tea and a plate of toast. “There are a few downstairs in reception for Muggle-born patients to ring their relatives if they can’t send them owls. It’s gonna take a while to let my parents know you’ve had the baby.”

“I expect McGonagall will have told them,” Draco said. “And Andromeda almost certainly told my mother. If the Aurors didn’t first.” His fists clenched, but otherwise he made no reference to Lucius Malfoy. It was a topic no-one was prepared to discuss at the moment, it seemed.

Just then, Lily began to fuss, which escalated quickly into full-blown screaming. Draco looked alarmed.

“She’s hungry, I think,” Harry said. “Healer Moore said she’d need feeding when she woke up. Give her here.” He took the baby from Draco’s arms, Hermione handed him the bottle and he placed it in Lily’s mouth. She instantly stopped bawling and began to suck, making soft cooing noises as she did so. And then, for the first time, she opened her eyes and stared straight at Harry. He heard his breath hitch.

“Look at her eyes,” he whispered.

They were bright green. Exactly like his.

“Well, little Lily,” he said, delighted, “you look just like your other father. Except your eyes. You have my mother’s eyes.”

“I thought all babies had blue eyes at birth?” Hermione said, not taking her eyes off Lily for a second.

“I guess it’s magic,” Harry said happily.

* 

The next few hours were a bit of a blur. Exhausted, Harry had fallen asleep after he’d fed Lily, and when he awoke it was well after dark. The numbing charm had definitely worn off too; he had intense pins and needles in his legs, and a dull ache in his stomach, but he’d been expecting far worse. Still, he reached for his glasses (that Draco must have removed), dutifully downed his Pain-Relieving Potion, and pushed himself up in the bed. Ron and Hermione had left; Harry guessed they’d had to get back to the school.

Draco, who was cradling a sleeping Lily, saw he was awake and smiled. “My mother and Gawain Robards are here to see us,” he said.


“Auror Head,” Draco said, and his words triggered something in Harry’s mind. A conversation with Scrimgeour a couple of years ago in the garden of The Burrow.

“What does he want?” Harry was thinking of earlier when Draco Apparated, and wondering if it was to do with that. But it was a Side-Along, an emergency, and surely the Head Auror wouldn’t personally attend to such a case?

“I’m not sure, but I guess it is to do with my- to do with Lucius,” Draco said, and his hesitation in saying ‘father’ pained Harry slightly. “They wouldn’t tell me. They wanted to wait until you were
awake.” He handed Lily over to Harry, who nuzzled her with his cheek. He reckoned she’d not been placed in the crib once since Harry had lifted her out to show her off to his friends.

“You slept like the dead for a couple of hours. She woke for a bottle about eight, but I fed her,” Draco said, indicating the baby. “And then she did this absolutely revolting shit that I swear should have been impossible to come from something related to me, but the Healer said it was just meconium and is normal, apparently. I changed her nappy all by myself.” He sounded so proud of himself that Harry had to laugh.

“First of many, Draco,” he said. “Let your mother in. Has she seen Lily yet?” Draco shook his head.

“I was waiting for you,” he said, and stood, crossed the room and called his mother in, telling Auror Robards to wait for a few minutes.

Narcissa swept into the room with her usual cool grace, but her face betrayed her; it could not have been plainer that she was desperate to meet her granddaughter. She looked at Harry, as if unsure if she could ask for a cuddle, so Harry took the initiative and held Lily out for her to take.


“It means, ‘My love is more than words,” Draco said. “It’s the traditional blessing a child’s grandmother gives to her grandchild the first time she holds them. Archaic pure-blood stuff.”

“Goodness, Draco! Look at her hair,” Narcissa said. “She is the image of you as a newborn.”

“She has Harry’s eyes,” Draco replied, and Harry realised in that moment how pleased Draco was about that. In fact, he sounded positively delighted.

“Mother, what does Auror Robards wish to discuss with Harry and me?” Draco said. Narcissa opened her mouth to answer, but Robards obviously had good timing as her words were rendered pointless as the man strode into the room as if he owned the place. Harry instantly disliked him.

“I can’t wait any longer,” Robards barked self-importantly. “I’m here in an official capacity, Potter. Not that, er, congratulations aren’t in order.” Harry noticed that none were forthcoming. He didn’t know whether to feel amused or annoyed.

“I’ll get to the point. The Aurors arrested a suspect from the garden of your cottage just after five this afternoon, and took them in for questioning. I sent Auror Proudfoot to Malfoy Manor to inform Mrs Malfoy of her husband’s arrest, and I received some startling news from him. Lucius Malfoy was inside the Manor, and appeared to have no idea why we’d called. ‘How can that be?’ I asked myself. So I checked the holding cell which we’d assigned to Mr Malfoy and made a shocking discovery. We didn’t, as I assumed, have Lucius Malfoy in custody at all. We had a young woman by the name of Pansy Parkinson.”

Harry felt as if he’d received a slap in the face.

“It wasn’t Lucius that cursed me?” he said, astonished.

“No, apparently not,” Robards growled. “We questioned Miss Parkinson under Veritaserum two hours ago and extracted a full confession. Apparently she’s quite the expert in the use of Polyjuice.” He paused and smoothed out his long moustache which he obviously thought made him look important, but made Harry think of walruses. “Her plan- if one could call such misguided foolishness that- was to cause you, Potter, to lose your baby, and then Apparate away, leaving Lucius Malfoy to be blamed, and therefore receive the Azkaban sentence she believes he should have been given for
Death Eater activity, whilst leaving Draco Malfoy heartbroken. She called it, ‘killing two Jobberknolls with one spell’. Poetic girl, that one.”

“Father didn’t try to kill Lily,” Draco rasped. The relief was evident on his face.

“Your father is a lot of things, Draco, but he wouldn’t hurt his son that way. He fights with his status and uses politics and money as his weapon against his family,” Narcissa replied.

“So this was all a set-up by her? The claiming she arrived to talk to Draco alone thing?” Harry asked.

“According to her, someone by the name of Millicent Bulstrode- who we’ll be bringing in for questioning tomorrow- sent word to Miss Parkinson as soon as you left Hogwarts to return to Hogsmeade,” Robards informed them. “Parkinson quickly took the Potion and positioned herself to make it look as if she’d been waiting a while.”

“I should have known it wasn’t him,” Draco said. “He’s my father. What sort of a person cannot recognise it when their own parent is being impersonated?”

“We’ve known the Parkinsons since you and Pansy weren’t much older than Lily,” Narcissa said. “She knows Lucius’ mannerisms well enough to emulate them. It’s certainly not your fault, sweetheart.”

Lily began to fuss in Narcissa’s arms, and she handed her back to Harry, who began to rock her gently from side to side, and she fell back to sleep.

“That’s all I came to say,” Robards said. “I will owl you once a trial date has been set, although with a full confession already extracted, it’s likely Parkinson is heading straight for Azkaban. Evening, gentlemen, Mrs Malfoy.” He swept from the room. Draco put his head in his hands.

“Fucking Pansy- sorry, Mother,” he said. “That bitch said she was going to get me. I just thought she was upset because she’d been expelled. How can she hate me that much? We used to be friends.”

“It backfired and she’s going to prison,” Harry said soothingly, “and your father didn’t try and kill our baby after all. After everything, that has to be a relief.” Harry knew it would mean a huge amount to Draco to know that his own father didn’t try such a wicked spell on him, even if they were still firmly estranged.

Just then a Healer entered the room.

“it’s eleven at night,” she said kindly but firmly. “I must insist you all leave now- yes, you too, Mister Malfoy. Mother- er, father, the birth father, that is- and baby only overnight.”

“I’ve booked the Oliver Messel Suite at the Dorchester for us for a few nights, Draco,” Narcissa said. “It’s not far from here.” Harry snorted inwardly at Narcissa’s knowledge of luxury London hotels, but then figured if the wizarding equivalent was the Leaky Cauldron, it was no contest, if a witch like Narcissa needed to stay overnight in London. It was Muggle-style or slumming it.

“Get some sleep,” Harry told him. “I’ll see you tomorrow.”

“I’ll be back first thing in the morning,” Draco promised him. He leant over and kissed Harry soundly. “I love you.” He took Lily from Harry’s arms and kissed her too. “And I love you. Ab imo pectore.” Harry didn’t ask what it meant. He didn’t need to know. The gentleness of Draco’s tone gave it as much meaning as he needed.

Despite the fact that he only got about a further three hours’ broken sleep that night, in between feeds
and nappy changes (and deciding all the practice he’d received with Teddy was worth its weight in Bertie Bott’s Every Flavour Beans), and just comforting a baby who wouldn’t stop screaming, Harry couldn’t keep the smile at bay.

He’s had some surreal days before in his life. Breaking out of Gringotts on a dragon then defeating Voldemort less than twelve hours later was high up on that list. But, he thought sleepily, as he stared into the eyes of his newborn daughter (identical to his in every way), whilst she greedily gulped her milk at four in the morning, becoming a father unexpectedly after being cursed by Pansy Parkinson Polyjuiced as Lucius Malfoy, when this time yesterday his biggest worry was getting through the memorial service was the most surreal of them all.

* 

Three things surprised Harry the following day. The first was that Draco confirmed there were no members of the press downstairs, or groups of people demanding to be let in to the maternity ward, meaning the birth of the baby and Pansy Parkinson’s arrest had somehow not yet become common knowledge. The second was that a clearly besotted Molly Weasley—tears streaming down her face and cradling Lily tenderly in her arms—had bestowed the same pure-blood blessing on the sleeping infant that Narcissa had the day before. And the third was how some of the nurses had no respect for his privacy whatsoever.

“Have you opened your bowels yet, Mister Potter?” Rude Brisk Nurse, who had arrived to do his and Lily’s observations, asked loudly whilst Draco and Narcissa were both in the room.

“Um,” Harry said, his face scarlet. “No.”

“Well, tell us as soon as you do. We like all new, er, parents, to do so before we discharge them from hospital,” she said.

“I went this morning and I’m a new parent. Can I be discharged?” Draco drawled, and Harry shot him an incredibly grateful look. He knew Draco had said that purely to make Harry feel less embarrassed, and it worked. Particularly when the nurse flushed slightly at his words, and Narcissa snorted in amusement.

The nurse did the rest of the observations—checking Harry’s blood pressure, feeling his stomach, taking Lily’s temperature and checking her respiratory rate, in silence. She handed Harry his phial of Blood-Replenishing Potion, which he drank quickly, collected the empty container, and, with a passing, “Healer Moore will be in to see you later,” left the room. Harry yawned heavily, which was not missed by Draco.

“Will you give in and sleep?” he said. “I will look after Lily.” Harry wanted to protest, but he’d had about six hours’ broken sleep in the last thirty-six, and he felt his body obey Draco’s words. “Kay. Just for a while then,” he said, and closed his eyes, falling almost instantly into slumber.

This set a pattern for the next few days. Due to Lily Eltanin being born a few days shy of thirty-seven weeks’ gestation, the Healers insisted on keeping both her and Harry in hospital so she could be monitored. Molly and Arthur visited in the day, as did Narcissa, and occasionally Andromeda. Ron and Hermione visited most evenings, after dinner at Hogwarts. On the third day, they brought Ginny with them, who had not been allowed to leave but had snuck out of the castle anyway, desperate to see the baby. She cooed and fussed just as Hermione had, and Harry laughed, deciding there was obviously something about babies that turned strong, independent females into putty. Hermione had quelled Harry’s voiced worries about having nothing ready for the baby at the cottage yet with an enigmatic, “It’s all sorted, Harry.”
Draco didn’t leave his side from the time he arrived in the mornings until he was ordered from the ward at night. Harry spent a lot of daylight hours sleeping, for he was entirely on his own with Lily at night; he’d refused Kind Nurse with the Purple Hair’s offer to sit with her for a couple of hours whilst he slept, his fierce parental instinct decidedly not letting Lily out of his sight. Still, as he watched dawn arrive for the fourth consecutive morning with a crying Lily refusing to settle in his arms, he couldn’t help feel resentful of Draco’s full nights’ sleep, and vowed that as soon as he and Lily were discharged, Draco was on night duty for a few days.

Finally, on the ninth of May, when Lily was exactly a week old (and a week before she was scheduled to have been delivered), Healer Moore said the baby was back to her birth weight and was ready for home. Draco brought in an outfit that he’d picked up in a Muggle shop on Oxford Street, and Harry dressed her, wrapped her in a pure white shawl that Narcissa had given him and had been Draco’s as a newborn, and carried her out of his hospital room towards the Floo, Draco at his side with the bags. He wondered if Floo travel would still affect him as he thanked his Healers profusely, said his goodbyes and threw a handful of Floo powder into the flames. Lily yawned as he stepped into the fire, called out the address of his cottage, and disappeared.

The first thing he noticed on arrival was he didn’t need to throw up. Floo would never be his favourite way to travel, and he felt giddy, but there wasn’t the overwhelming nausea that had plagued his few Floo trips the past few months. The second thing he noticed was Lily was still sound asleep in his arms, having noticed nothing about her sudden change in location.

And the third thing he noticed, once he’d regained his balance and looked around, was that his home had been decorated in massive banners and streamers, and his friends and family were in the living room.

“Welcome home!” they cheered in unison, causing Lily to fuss but not awaken. A second later, Draco joined them through the Floo, looking smug, and Harry knew instantly that the git had known this was going to happen. Ron, Hermione and Ginny hurried forwards.

“It’s great to see you, Harry,” Hermione said

Those who hadn’t been to St Mungo’s to visit him and Lily fussed over the baby, and even McGonagall’s harsh expression softened dramatically.

“A week old already, my wee lass!” she said, and Harry bit back a smile at her totally uncharacteristic soppy tone and words. “Wednesday’s child is full of woe, Thursday’s child has far to go, Friday’s child is loving and giving, Saturday’s child works hard for a living, but the Child who is born on the Sabbath day- and this be you, pretty girl- is bonnie, blythe, good and-”

“Gay?” Draco interrupted, with a wry smile. “Well, it’s possible, I suppose. Still, it will solve the, ‘Harry and I hexing any man who comes within twenty feet of her’ problem, wouldn’t it.” And this time, Harry couldn’t keep the laughter at bay. He’d noticed in the week since Lily had been born that most of the haunted sadness that had followed Draco for most of the year had been lifted, and some of Draco’s former cockiness was returning. She really was healing him. It was wonderful to see.

Teddy waddled over to him, arms stretched up.

“Baby?” he said.

“Yeah, Teddy, That’s Lily,” Harry said, lifting him. It was amazing how huge Teddy seemed in comparison now. “But don’t worry; you’re still my favourite little man.”

“Come and look at the rest of your surprise,” Ron said, and Harry handed Teddy over to
Andromeda, whilst Draco reclaimed Lily from their former headmistress. Once they were joined by Hermione, they headed for the hallway, where Harry noticed a brand new buggy parked in the corner. He barely had time to say thank you, however, before he was being led up the stairs to his and Draco’s bedroom. He opened the door and his eyes widened. There was a tiny Moses basket next to their bed, all ready for Lily.

“That’s not the best part,” Ron said, grinning like a lunatic. He backed out of the room, and Hermione opened the door to the nursery. Harry stepped inside and gasped.

There was a beautiful cot in white wood, dressed with soft pink hangings, in the centre of a room which had been furnished with a pretty pink wardrobe, and had a mural of butterflies all over the wall in delicate pastel shades, charmed to flutter and fly.

“Dean painted that,” Ron said proudly. “Great, isn’t it?”

“It’s utterly wonderful,” Harry replied honestly. Hermione showed him Lily’s wardrobe, which was stacked with outfits and nappies, and various lotions and potions, both magical and Muggle. Harry was overwhelmed.

“You did all this? For me?” he rasped.

“If anybody deserves it, it’s you, Harry,” Hermione said. “We love you. And just wanted to show you how much.”

Harry couldn’t reply.

* * *

Harry was ready to collapse into bed and sleep for years by the time everyone travelled back up to the castle or went home, despite the fact it was only seven in the evening. It had been wonderful to see everyone and show Lily off, but he just wanted a hot bath and a long rest. The first he managed to achieve thanks to Draco. However by the time Lily had been fed and gone down it was after ten. He crawled into bed and fell against Draco’s chest. He’d missed Draco every night they’d spent apart and the feel of his warm, smooth skin, his warm scent and the gentle thumping of his heart underneath Harry’s ear were comforting and familiar. He was home.

Draco threaded his fingers through Harry’s hair.

“Do you think she’ll be good tonight?” he asked hopefully.

“Not a chance,” Harry said. “Love you, Draco.”

“Mmm. You too,” Draco murmured sleepily. It was so warm and quiet. Harry began to drift off…

…and was instantly re-awoken by a strange grunting noise that was unmistakably Lily filling her nappy.

He began to laugh. He laughed as Draco swore loudly and flicked his wand at the light that he’d so recently turned off, causing it to flick back on. He laughed as Draco gagged as he removed Lily’s dirty nappy and accidentally smeared shit all over his hand. And he laughed as Draco responded by flipping him the finger. And as Draco Vanished the offending nappy and Summoned a clean one from the nursery, Harry realised he had everything he’d ever wanted, right in front of him. None of it had been planned. He certainly didn’t expect to become a parent at eighteen, or fall in love with Draco Malfoy of all people, but life has a funny way of turning out for the best. And as he watched Draco cradling their daughter and singing some old wizarding song to her that Harry knew none of
the words to, he thought his heart might burst from joy. When he’d decided to return to Hogwarts to complete his missed seventh year, he was carrying around a lot of sadness and anger. And now he felt light, free. And it was all down to the two people he shared his house with. His family.

It wasn’t going to be easy, Harry knew that. Babies were never easy, and Harry had a strong suspicion already that his daughter was going to be just as demanding and as her blond-headed father, and as stubborn as him. At times, the coming year or so was going to be nigh on impossible and incredibly stressful at times. But he could do it. And, Harry thought sleepily as Lily yawned and grabbed Draco’s finger with a tiny fist, he wouldn’t have it any other way.
Chapter Notes

This is the end of this story. Thank you all so much for reading.

August, 1999

Draco rolled Harry onto his back and traced over the smooth toned stomach with the flat of his tongue.

“You know,” Harry said, his breath coming in short pants now, “I think you like my belly better this way than when I was carrying Lily.”

“Just different,” Draco replied, pausing to dip his tongue into Harry’s belly button. “You know I loved your bump. Not going to lie though. You look bloody fantastic like this. All smooth and hard. Your stomach, I mean.” He smirked and gazed downwards. “Although I won’t deny that other parts of you also meet that particular criterion right now.” He dipped his head lower, causing Harry to cry out. “Shhh. You’ll wake Lily Bud.”

“She’s-ah, that’s amazing- gonna wake soon anyway,” Harry panted. “Um, milk.”

“Then let’s be quick,” said Draco. And as he took Harry into his mouth again, Harry didn’t think speed was going to be a problem. They’d managed one hurried shag- whilst Narcissa was watching the baby and giving them time to ‘catch up on some sleep’- and a couple of hand jobs in the three months since their daughter’s birth, and that was it. They were both simply too exhausted at night, and during the day they were too busy. In fact, Harry was rather impressed with himself that it hadn’t been all over the second Draco’s mouth wrapped around him. This was the first morning in weeks that Lily had slept past seven, and her two daddies were making up for lost time.

Or so they thought.

Her timing really did suck. Just as Harry was beginning to lose himself, a persistent and unyielding whine, which developed almost instantly into full-blown screaming let both him and Draco know that a certain little lady was awake and demanding attention. He felt a huge wave of frustration crash over him and had to bite back a groan of annoyance. Harry could tell that Draco had considered carrying on regardless, but there’s something about the sound of a screaming infant that acts as a mood killer. His grey eyes met Harry’s, full of regret, and Harry nodded resignedly. Draco sighed deeply, reached for his hastily-discarded pyjama bottoms from the bedroom floor, and picked Lily up out of her Moses basket.

“I hope you’re proud of yourself,” he chastised in a joking way. “Your fathers are going to get a case of blue balls thanks to you.”

“Draco!” Harry said. Draco raised an eyebrow.

“What? She can’t understand me.” He lifted Lily so her head was resting on his shoulder, her stomach pressed against his chest. “Come on, you little cock blocker. Let’s get you some breakfast.” And despite Harry’s disapproval of Draco using language like that around their daughter, he couldn’t
help but laugh as he followed them downstairs.

He was just finishing a slice of toast with one hand, whilst feeding Lily a bottle with his other, when an owl swooped into the open window and dropped two envelopes on the table, before turning around and taking off instantly. Harry could see from where he sat that the envelopes were both sealed with the Ministry’s stamp.

N.E.W.T results.

“You go first,” Harry said to Draco. With obviously fake nonchalance, Draco slid open the envelope and teased the sheet of parchment from it. He opened it, and Harry’s heart flipped pleasantly when he saw the delighted expression spread over Draco’s face. He handed the parchment to Harry, looking incredibly pleased with himself. Harry took the slip and gazed down.

The bastard had all O and E grades. And couldn’t have looked smugger if he tried.

“Congratulations,” Harry said, delighted for Draco, but feeling incredibly nervous about his own results now. “You did brilliantly.”

“Open yours,” Draco said, taking Lily from him to continue feeding her. Harry took a deep breath, reached for his own envelope, and slid it open. He took the slip from it, opened it, and glanced down.

And beamed.

He’d achieved Exceeds Expectations in all his subjects- including Potions- with the exception of Defence Against the Dark Arts, where he’d achieved the Outstanding he’d so desperately wanted.

Today was going to be a good day.

*#

When Harry had first brought up the subject of Lily’s godparents with Draco back in July, he’d been a bit anxious. So he’d been both relieved and rather surprised when Draco not only consented to Harry’s choice, but agreed with him that they were the best two for the job.

“Weasley and Granger may not be my friends as such,” Draco had said at the time, “but I will never forget that Weasley willingly took a potentially life-threatening curse for you and Lily Bud. That’s the sort of man I want looking out for our daughter.”

“And Hermione?” Harry had asked.

“Lily doesn’t have a mother. And we could choose a lot worse than Hermione to be her female role model. I suppose I can- grudgingly- admit she’s super-intelligent. And she’s, well, independent, and brave, and compassionate. There are poorer candidates,” Draco had said, and Harry beamed, acknowledging the reluctant words for the huge understated compliment Draco was actually giving.

Hermione had burst into tears when Harry asked her and Ron to be Lily’s godparents. Ron settled for a huge grin. And both had agreed straight away.

And now it was the day of Lily Eltanin’s naming ceremony, the day after they received their exam results. Neither Harry nor Draco were especially religious so didn’t feel comfortable with a full Christening ceremony, and had opted instead for a private naming ceremony which was taking place at the Unitarian church at Godric’s Hollow in which Harry’s parents were married. They both wore smart dress robes, and had clothed Lily in what Harry thought was an overly fussy garment of white
lace and silver thread, interwoven with what he was sure were genuine precious stones that Narcissa had given to them. It was the Black family Christening gown, she’d said, and all Blacks for over two centuries had been christened wearing it. Harry had been uneasy at first when he realised this included Bellatrix, but the knowledge that Sirius, in addition to Draco himself at his own baptism, had worn the garment was enough to overcome that. He liked the fact that his daughter and godfather would have this link to one another.

Once Lily was dressed, Harry began to laugh.

“What’s so funny?” Draco asked.

“Nothing. Just trying to picture you in a sparkly dress,” Harry replied. “I’ll have to ask your mum to bring photos next time she comes to visit Lily.”


“She truly does,” Harry agreed. “Ready to go?” He scooped Lily into his arms as Draco nodded. “See you in a second then.” Harry turned on the spot and Disapparated. He landed next to the church a second later, in an area designed for Apparition and protected with Muggle-Repelling Charms, joined almost instantly by Draco, whose probation period had been completed a couple of weeks previously.

“I love having my Apparition licence back,” Draco said. “Muggle trains were becoming intolerable. It almost makes me feel sorry for them.”

They’d arrived a few minutes early, and instead of heading for the church, Harry led Draco over to the churchyard.

“Hi, Mum. Hi, Dad,” Harry said, swallowing thickly, once they reached the grave he was looking for. “I’ve brought your granddaughter to meet you.” He squatted down and positioned Lily on his knee. He leant forwards and gave his daughter a huge kiss on the cheek. “Here she is. Beautiful, isn’t she. She has our eyes, Mum. Sadly not our hair though, Dad, but I think we can let that particular Potter trait end with me.”

He handed Lily to Draco, drew his wand and performed a few charms to tidy up the grave. He’d not been here since the end of the War, when he’d come to tell them that it was all over and he’d won. It had become overgrown. Once it was presentable again he waved his wand and, as Hermione had done over eighteen months previously, conjured flowers for the grave. However he chose a vibrant bloom of summer flowers. There was also a small sprig of lily of the valley amongst the jasmine.

“For life and hope,” Harry said. “You two gave me both. Thank you.”

“Come on,” Draco said gently.

By the time they made it back to the church, most of their friends and family had arrived. The Weasleys, Narcissa, and Andromeda sat in the front couple of rows. Fleur was due any day now. She looked uncomfortable and boiling, and Harry sympathised with her immensely.

Minerva was the only member of Hogwarts staff, besides Hagrid of course, who had been invited. She greeted Harry and Draco with her usual stiff formality as she took her seat, but melted when she saw Lily, and began cooing in that way that Lily, and Lily alone, made her do. To say Harry’s former headmistress had a soft spot for his daughter was a huge understatement.

The naming ceremony was beautiful. The official from the Ministry who had married Bill and Fleur conducted it, and, despite Teddy shouting, “Cars! Brrm Brrm!” in the middle of the service, went off
perfectly. At the end of the service, Minerva pulled Harry and Draco aside to inform them both that Lily’s name had appeared in the book of magical children at Hogwarts, confirming her future place at the school, causing them both to cheer.

“I was saving it for today to tell you both,” she said with a smile. “It just seemed appropriate.”

“Not a Squib then,” Harry teased to Draco, once they were alone.

“I’d have still adored her if she was,” Draco replied bluntly. And the truth radiated from him. Because, Harry knew, that little girl was the absolute centre of Draco Malfoy’s world. The cool, pure-blood loving elitist bigot he once was had gone. He was just Draco now. And Harry loved him for it.

Mrs Weasley had prepared a buffet, which was revealed when the Disillusionment Charm concealing it during the naming ceremony was lifted. And what a buffet it was. The next half an hour was spent happily with everyone eating and chatting.

Molly, Andromeda, Narcissa and Minerva all squabbled over whose turn it was to feed and change Lily- a phenomenon that Draco called the ‘Menopause Crisis’. Champagne was poured when George announced that Angelina was pregnant and due around the following Easter (“There’s going to be an entire cohort of them in a couple of years, isn’t there?” said Draco), and Neville became blind drunk then fall asleep on a pew after drinking a glass of ‘Champagne’ that George gave him, causing everyone to laugh. In fact, Harry was having such a good time that it came somewhat as a shock when Narcissa pulled Draco and him aside and said, quietly, “Draco, your father is outside.”

“I’ll see him,” Draco said. “But I’m not taking Lily Bud with me. Mother, will you take her please?”

Harry and Draco stepped outside, and there was Lucius, waiting.

“Father, what gift did you and Mother give me for achieving an Outstanding on my Potions O.W.L?” Draco asked immediately, wand drawn and pointing directly at Lucius’ chest. He clearly wasn’t prepared for a repeat of what had happened the day Lily was born.

“A phial of Acromantula venom and seven fluid ounces of unicorn blood- the rarest and most expensive Potions ingredients money can buy,” Lucius replied without hesitation, and Draco noticeably relaxed, lowering his wand.

“I had to check. What do you want, Father?”

“To talk. I’d have preferred alone without Potter present, but I’m assuming you will not consent to that?”

“Correct.”

Lucius sighed. “Very well, Draco. I… I came to offer my congratulations to you. And my apologies.”

Whatever Draco had been expecting, Harry reasoned, it wasn’t this. His mouth fell open.

“Apologies, Father? You owe me so many, I’m afraid you will need to be more specific.”

“For threatening to cut off your Malfoy inheritance, for one thing. It was always meant as just a threat, Draco. I was so certain you’d turn away from Potter, and when you didn’t I couldn’t go back on my word without losing face.” Lucius sighed again and Harry realised the man was looking old. “So I switched tactic- I tried to force you two apart with that article in the Prophet. And still you
stayed with Potter and the child. And my damn Malfoy pride wouldn’t allow me to just admit I was in the wrong.”

“So what’s changed? Why the humble pie now?” Harry admired the unyielding tone of Draco’s voice. He also knew that Draco missed his father terribly despite what he told people, and whatever Harry’s personal feelings were towards the man, he hated anything that made Draco miserable.

“You have become a father yourself,” Lucius said simply, “and I want our family to rebuild, for your mother’s sake if nothing else. And even if my granddaughter is not a pure-blood, I would like to meet her.”

Draco didn’t reply to that.

“I won’t hurt her, Draco,” Lucius said. “That was not me. Not what happened in May. I couldn’t do that to either you or her.”

“Harry, get Lily Bud,” Draco said, not taking his eyes from Lucius. “Give me your wand, Father.” Lucius rolled his eyes, but dutifully handed over his wand. Harry reentered the church and took Lily from Narcissa, refusing to say any more, and stepped back outside. He handed the sleeping baby to Draco.

“Father, may I introduce you to Lily Eltanin,” Draco said, and Lucius’ eyes widened.

“I’d seen photographs your mother has of course, but they don’t do her justice,” he whispered. “Draco- she’s exquisite.”

Harry knew- just knew- in that second that Lucius was a hundred percent genuine. There was something about their daughter that people fell instantly in love with, and it appeared her grandfather- a title Harry would have to bestow on the elder Malfoy, it appeared, seemed no different.

“Would you like to hold her?” he asked. Draco shot him a look, but didn’t disagree. Instead he handed the baby over, and Lucius cradled Lily with a tenderness Harry was certain he’d never seen from him before.

“Precious Lily Eltanin. Born from two noble pure-blood lines, the Potters and the Malfoys. She makes a fine Malfoy heir,” Lucius said, and Harry decided to let the fact that his mother most definitely had not been a pure-blood slide. This was about as accepting as Lucius Malfoy got.

“And my sexuality, Father? I will not have you making derogatory snide comments about that all the time,” Draco said. Lucius tore his eyes away from Lily.

“I still find it… distasteful. But I will learn to be accepting,” he replied grudgingly. “And you have my word that I will not try to marry you off to a witch.”

Lily woke up then, and gave Lucius a smile, whilst reaching out and touching his cheek with a chubby hand, and in that moment it could not have been plainer that there was yet another person in the world that Little Miss Potter-Malfoy had wrapped around her (very) little finger. Harry began to laugh.

“Yeah, she does that,” Harry said aloud in response to his own thought, not caring when Draco gave him a questioning look. “I’ll take her back inside now. Draco, talk with your father, OK?” He gave Draco a kiss on the cheek, which Lucius ignored rather than scowled at, and returned inside with Lily, where he told a delighted Narcissa what had happened with his daughter and that Draco and Lucius were talking.
Twenty minutes later, Draco returned.

“It’s not going to happen overnight,” Draco said. “In fact, it will take us a long time to return to the relationship we once had, if we ever can completely. But we’re making a start. He needs to accept me for who I am though. I’ve warned him— one more sneering comment about my sexuality or my choice in partner and that’s it.” He smiled. “But I won’t deny it feels good to be talking to Father again.”

Eventually the reception ended, and Harry and Draco Apparated home with an exhausted Lily, accompanied by Ron, Hermione, Ginny and Neville, who had been given a Sobering Potion produced from somewhere (and warned to never drink anything George gave him ever again). Once Lily was in bed and Harry set monitoring charms around her that would alert them if she woke up, or anything more sinister happened (like she stopped breathing), he headed back downstairs and joined Draco in the kitchen, who was preparing drinks for everyone.

“That girl is barely three months old and manipulates everyone around her,” Harry said with a grin, taking the glass Draco handed him.

“Of course she does. She’s a natural Slytherin,” Draco replied.

“You can’t possibly know that. She’s a baby.”

“Oh, but I do.” Draco looked positively gleeful. “Harry, when you discovered the name Eltanin, did you research the etymology of the name?” Harry shook his head. “The name Eltanin comes from Arabic, and means, The Great Serpent. Trust me- with a name like that she’s heading nowhere except Slytherin.”

“You bastard,” Harry said, but couldn’t keep the laugh at bay. “You’ve been dying to tell me that for weeks, haven’t you?”

“I was just waiting for the right moment, Harry,” Draco replied. “Fuck, I love you.”

“I love you, too,” Harry replied.

“Hurry up, Malfoy! We’re dying of thirst in here!” Ron’s voice called from the living room. Draco planted a quick kiss on Harry’s mouth, levitated the tray of drinks in front of him, and strode into the room with a, “Keep your ghastly vibrant freckles on, Weasley, I’m coming.”

An hour later and Harry was stifling a yawn, despite the fact it was only seven in the evening. Hermione gave him a knowing look.

“Tired, Harry?”

“Um, yeah. Lily woke up three times for a feed last night, then refused to sleep past half five,” he said.

“Sounds like you need a break,” Ginny said, a mischievous glint in her eye.

“What are you lot up to?” Draco questioned.

“We’ve booked you a small break,” Ron announced, beaming. “Some poncey five-star resort in Rye that Hermione recommended. For two nights. And you leave… now.” Hermione beamed as she reached into that damned beaded bag of hers and pulled out a large envelope, containing all the hotel details and handed it to Harry.
“I don’t know. Lily…” Harry said.

“Harry, she’s seen Ron and me virtually every day of her life. We’re her godparents now,” Hermione said. “She knows us extremely well and is very comfortable with us. Besides, if there’s a problem or she’s upset and won’t settle you can Apparate home in seconds. Go. Enjoy yourselves for a couple of days. Get some proper sleep.”

“It does mean that the next time I give you a blowjob, the only person who will be screaming during it is you,” Draco whispered in Harry’s ear, and he felt himself redden, much to the Ginny’s delight.

“If you don’t want it, Nev and I will take it,” she joked.

“Your Portkey directly into your suite leaves in, oh, two minutes,” Hermione said, handing over a large pebble that Harry was quite sure came from their garden path. “So hurry up!”

“Um, luggage- clothes,” Harry said, dazed.

“You’re not going to be needing them,” Draco replied with a lascivious grin. Harry felt himself give in.

“Fine. You’re on!” he laughed. He grabbed one end of the Portkey as Draco grabbed the other, just as the stone began to glow blue.

“Have fun. Happy shagging!” Ginny called.

“We will, and, no, Harry will not be telling you all about it when we return,” Draco said. And then, for Harry’s ears only, he said, “I hope the room has lube, as I have a feeling we’re going to get through a lot of it in the next forty-eight hours.”

“Ten seconds!” Hermione called.

“You’re all brilliant,” Harry said with a huge smile. “Thank you.”

Then he felt the familiar hook behind his navel as the Portkey activated, and he and Draco were gone.

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