The Bodyguard
by Laughing_Daffodil

Summary

Harry receives the shock of a lifetime when Snape applies for a job as his bodyguard.

Notes

A/N: Harry Potter, sadly, is not mine.
“You’re joking.”

Harry was sitting in the kitchen at Grimmauld Place, staring across the table at Kingsley Shacklebolt with his mouth hanging open.

“No.”

Harry’s hands reached up into his hair and yanked on the messy strands. “But you know how people are, Kingsley. This could be a disaster. This person could turn out to be mental! They could – “

Kingsley held his hand up. “Harry,” he admonished, “do you really believe I would hire just anyone to be your bodyguard? Give me a little credit.”

“Why do I even need a bodyguard? Voldemort is gone! This is ridiculous.”

“Vanquishing the darkest wizard of our time only puts you at an increased risk, Harry. There are still many Death Eaters at large. How many of them wish you ill? You destroyed their master and they’re feeling resentful. Whether they care he’s gone is one thing, but they definitely care about their lowered social status. You’ve made them outcasts. Trust me, Harry, they will be after you.”

Harry slumped over the table, head in his hands. Defeating Voldemort was supposed to make his life easier, not cause him more problems.

“I also think it would be good for you to have a little protection from our side, as well.”

Harry’s eyes snapped up to meet Kingsley’s. “Surely no one would try to – “

“I think there may be some overenthusiastic Harry Potter supporters that may try to bombard you when you go out. You’re the hero of the wizarding world, the job comes with some drawbacks.”

“Don’t remember applying for the position,” Harry muttered resentfully. He pushed his plate of sandwiches away, having lost his appetite. “So when will you have a decision?”

Kingsley stood and strode over to the fireplace, grabbing a handful of Floo powder off the mantle. “Over the next couple of days. I need to get back to the office and review applicants. Don’t worry, I will be screening vigorously. Not just anyone gets to be Harry Potter’s bodyguard.” He grinned at Harry before stepping into the grate.

Harry rolled his eyes. “Yeah, it’s a real treat, looking after me.”

“Kingsley thinks I need a bodyguard,” Harry told Ron and Hermione later that evening as they ate their dinner, prepared by Kreacher.

Ron didn’t look up from his chicken, but Hermione put down her fork and looked thoughtful. “I don’t think that’s a bad idea, actually.”

“Oh, not you too. I’m not helpless! I can defend myself! I killed Voldemort – “

“That’s exactly why you need a bodyguard, Harry,” Hermione cut across him. “You’re going to be a media magnet, even more than you usually are. It will be easy for anyone to attack you if you end
up in Diagon Alley, surrounded by swarms of people. It makes sense for someone to be responsible for your safety.” She stabbed some broccoli with her fork and gave Harry a stern look as she placed it in her mouth.

“She’s right, mate. With Voldemort gone, people’s guards will be down. It would make you an easy target, because no one would be expecting an attack.” Ron tore his bread in half and promptly stuffed the bigger piece in his mouth.

Hermione wrinkled her nose as she watched Ron. “I don’t think you should give Kingsley such a hard time about this, Harry,” she said as she turned back to Harry. “It’s for the best. And you can trust Kingsley, he won’t give the job to someone he doesn’t approve of. I’m sure the candidates will be thoroughly scrutinized.”

Harry sighed, knowing he would regret this. Then he nodded.

As he prepared for bed that night, Harry thought about how much his daily routine would be interrupted by having someone hovering over his every move. What if this person tried to stop him from starting his Auror training? He knew he would never be able to take orders from a stranger claiming to have his best interests at heart.

A copy of The Daily Prophet lay on the bedside table. Harry glanced at the front page briefly as he reached up to remove his glasses. Severus Snape Lives! His gut twisted painfully as he remembered hearing of Snape’s survival. He should have known it would take more than some snake venom and blood loss to kill Snape. Harry had been too preoccupied with Snape’s memories: of his friendship with his mother, Lily, how Snape had loved her; Snape’s loyalty to Dumbledore all along; how Snape had been the one protecting Harry since he’d first stepped inside Hogwarts seven years ago.

Harry still felt guilty for not checking to make sure Snape was really dead. But it had seemed impossible at the time for him to have survived such a brutal attack by Nagini. Harry had not spoken to Snape since his survival was made public knowledge. Before the story was published, Harry had briefly visited Snape in St. Mungo’s, to apologize for his past behavior and for doubting the man’s loyalties.

The most interesting aspect of their conversation, though, had been when Harry mentioned his mother. It seemed Harry had been mistaken when he interpreted Snape’s feelings for Lily.

“Yes, Potter, I loved your mother,” Snape had rasped, still recovering from his wounds and struggling to speak. “I loved her much in the way you love Miss Granger. I may have believed it to be romantic love, but as I matured, I discovered I had… misconstrued my feelings towards Lily. Now, leave me in peace, so I can sleep before those damn Healers return to ply me with substandard care.”

Harry smirked to himself as he climbed into bed, sliding beneath the covers. Snape may have done the impossible and survived, but he was still a surly bastard.

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An owl flew in the next morning, carrying a letter from Kingsley. Harry removed the letter from the proffered leg while the bird helped itself to a piece of his bacon. He opened the letter with trepidation, afraid Kingsley had already made a decision.

Harry,

I spent most of the evening reviewing candidates for a potential bodyguard, and I believe I have made a decision. After a formal interview with the applicant this afternoon, I should have an answer for you. If it’s not an inconvenience, I’ll Floo in and tell you in person.
Harry sighed as he took his plate to the sink, having lost his appetite. By the end of the day, he would know who Kingsley deemed fit to be his bodyguard for the foreseeable future.

Fantastic.

Harry tried to keep his mind off the impending news by tidying his room, reading a book, and thinking about Auror training, but he was unable to finish each task, and found himself repeatedly checking the time. Ron was at the Burrow, his family was still grieving the loss of Fred, and Harry had chosen to stay behind, as he was avoiding an inevitable conversation with Ginny about their relationship status.

Over the past few weeks, Harry had realized that it would never work between Ginny and him. He had changed too much, been through the unimaginable. He just didn’t think he would ever be able to be himself around her. Not to mention the fact that lately, Harry had realized that firm chests and muscled arms were more of a turn-on than soft curves and girly giggles. His life had always been so consumed by Voldemort, Harry had never been able to discover himself. Now, however, he discovered that he found the male form to be a very pleasing sight indeed. Not that he’d had a chance to do anything about it. Ron and Hermione were staying at Grimmauld Place with him for the summer, and he rarely had a moment alone. It would be impossible to go out and try to meet someone.

Especially with a bodyguard on my tail, Harry thought wryly.

Kreacher called him to dinner, and Harry tossed aside the book he hadn’t been reading and made his way into the kitchen, this bodyguard dilemma still on his mind.

Hermione showed up after dinner. “Mum and Dad insisted,” she said breathlessly as she dropped her bag unceremoniously on the floor. “They’re still miffed that I’m not living with them. I told them there was too much work to do right now, the war just ended.”

Harry nodded. “Don’t feel obligated though, Hermione. I want you to spend time with your parents, especially after what you all have been through.”

Hermione smiled thinly at him over her cup of tea. “I know, trust me.” She sat down at the table and studied him carefully. “Have you heard from Kingsley?”

“He’s coming over to talk to me about his chosen bodyguard. Any minute now, I’d imagine.”

Hermione reached across the table and covered his hand with her own. “I know you don’t like this, Harry, and I know you feel like you’re being treated unfairly, but this is for your own protection. And it won’t be forever, just until the media frenzy dies down and the remaining Death Eaters are caught.”

Harry said nothing. He wasn’t going to pretend that he was fine with this plan. A bodyguard still seemed pretty unnecessary to him.

Suddenly, the fire turned a brilliant shade of green and Kingsley Shacklebolt stepped into the kitchen. Brushing his robes off, he sat down next to Hermione, across from Harry.

Harry looked at him warily, noticing how Kingsley’s earring glinted in the dimly lit kitchen. “Well? Let’s have it.”

Kingsley took a deep breath. “After much consideration, I have decided that out of everyone who
applied for the job, the best bodyguard for you is Severus Snape.”

Harry’s teacup exploded.
Chapter Two

Hermione waved her hand in front of Harry’s face, her eyebrows creased in concern. “Harry?” she inquired, fanning his face slightly.

Harry continued to stare off, not registering the conversation between Hermione and Kingsley. He was baffled. Why on Earth would Snape want to be his bodyguard? Surely he would find such a task to be tedious and beneath him?

Exhaling, he looked up into the face of Kingsley, whose lips twitched before settling into their usual thin line. Amusement? Harry failed to see how the situation was funny.


Kingsley folded his hands on the table in front of him and stared steadily at Harry’s befuddled expression. “I know how this must seem. I even questioned his desire for the position myself. However, his credentials are impressive, to say the least, especially considering how many times he has saved your skin over the years. I might add that you mentioned his affinity for looking after you while you advocated his innocence.”

Harry nodded reluctantly. “Yes, but he protected me out of a sense of duty to my mother, and later, because of his loyalty to Dumbledore. That doesn’t explain why he would choose to do it willingly.”

Kingsley shrugged. “Even though he was exonerated, I doubt he will ever have a lot of job prospects, considering people’s uneasiness with his history. He may be an innocent man, but he is not an easy man to get along with, to say the least. And he expressed an intense dislike at the thought of returning to teach at Hogwarts, despite Minerva’s invitation to go back. I believe in a way, this job would give him a sense of freedom. No one ordered him to apply for the position; he did it of his own accord. That meant something to him. I could read it in his body language. Part of being an Auror for so long.” Kingsley grinned into Harry’s stunned face.

Harry mulled that over. He supposed it made sense, in a way. This was probably the first job Snape had ever applied for and been offered on his own merit, rather than someone like Dumbledore vouching for him or being forced into it by Voldemort. He supposed he could never begrudge the man his free will. But that still didn’t explain why Snape would actually want to look after Harry, whether he was being paid or not.

“Besides,” Kingsley added as he stood up and stretched, “I think the job would be second nature to him, he’s quite used to you attracting trouble. Just another day at the office,” Kingsley snickered.


Hermione hesitated. “Well, I can see Kingsley’s point. Snape’s job opportunities are obviously limited, and even if there were other positions he could apply for, the chances of him actually being offered the job are slim to none. But it is odd that Snape would even want this job to begin with, considering his history with you, Harry.”

Harry nodded. “Yeah, it is. He hates me. Are you sure I won’t need a bodyguard from Snape?” He gave Kingsley a weak smile.

Kingsley snorted. “I have no doubt that Severus will do everything in his power to make sure you
come to no harm. You’ll be able to discuss the details with him tomorrow when he moves in.”

“MOVE IN?!” Harry and Hermione shouted at the same time.

“Surely he’s not going to actually live here with Harry?” Hermione asked while shooting Harry a nervous glance.

Kingsley frowned. “The job is essentially a twenty-four hours a day position. Surely you knew your bodyguard would have to stay with you?”

Harry shook his head. “Er, no. Definitely never occurred to me. Thanks for the heads up.”

Hermione elbowed him in the ribs sharply.

Kingsley sighed. “I’m sorry, Harry. All I can say is this is not a permanent situation. Once everything settles and life gets back to normal, hopefully you won’t need the added security anymore. Now,” he grabbed a handful of Floo powder, “I’ve had quite a long day, so if you need nothing else from me, I’ll be on my way.”

Harry said nothing as Kingsley vanished moments later. He looked at Hermione helplessly. “What do I do?”

For once, Hermione had no answer.

Harry slept restlessly all night, worrying about Snape’s impending arrival. At four o’clock in the morning, he finally gave up and made his way down to the kitchen for tea and some scones Ron had brought over from Mrs. Weasley.

Ron and Hermione had chosen to stay at the Burrow while Snape remained at Grimmauld Place with Harry. Harry suspected Ron had been adamant about not living with Snape. The man may not have been as evil as they had originally thought, but Ron still wasn’t about to traipse around in his too-short pajamas while Snape read the newspaper at breakfast, like some sad attempt at cozy domesticity.

After breakfast, Harry showered and pulled on a new pair of jeans and a T-shirt. When the war had finally ended, the first thing Harry had done was go shopping for plenty of clothes that actually fit him. His jeans hugged the contours of his body pleasantly without being indecent, and his T-shirt was loose without being baggy, as they always had been. Of course, having three meals a day on a regular basis over the last couple of weeks had also affected how well his clothes clung to him.

When it came time for Snape’s arrival, Harry found his courage failed him, and instead chose to remain in the library, curled up in an armchair with a book he pretended to be engrossed in.

He heard footsteps in the kitchen, and knew Snape had arrived via Floo network. There was silence for a long moment, and then the footsteps seemed louder. Snape was obviously going to search Harry out.

Sighing, he tried to burrow further down into the cushions surrounding him, but it was no use.

“Hiding, Potter?”

Harry looked up and barely contained his gasp. Snape leaned against the doorway, arms crossed and one leg slightly extended. He had decided against the billowing robes Harry was used to seeing him in as he towered over the terrified students of Hogwarts, and instead was wearing his black frock coat, cuffs slightly flared. Typically, he was in black trousers and shiny black shoes. His hair
was different, however. It seemed… well, clean, actually. And it was a bit shorter. The last time Harry had seen him, his inky black hair had brushed his shoulders. Now, however, it was chin-length. He looked younger, Harry decided, remembering how Snape had looked when Harry first began his time at Hogwarts.

He looked… well, Harry gulped and let his eyes wander over Snape’s imposing form once more. He looked good.

Harry shook his head and clenched his eyes shut. ‘Snape’ and ‘looking good’ did not belong in the same sentence.

Snape raised an eyebrow at Harry, who realized he had yet to answer Snape’s question due to his ogling, and blushed.

“I’m not hiding!” he said hotly, hoping his blush came off as indignant rather than embarrassment.

Snape studied the cover of Harry’s book. Harry, feeling defensive, held it closer to his chest. He hoped Snape didn’t ask about what he was reading. Harry didn’t even know what it was, really. He’d been too nervous to concentrate.

“Reading upside down, Potter? No wonder your schoolwork was well below par.”

Harry glanced down at his book and mentally slapped himself. Could he be any more of a nervous klutz around Snape? Why did the man always have such an effect on him?

Realizing that Harry wasn’t going to rise to the bait, Snape turned on his heel and strode from the library. Harry, bringing himself out of his insecure state, tossed his book aside and followed the man.

“Why did you want this job?” Harry demanded as he watched Snape levitate his luggage up the stairs.

“I suppose my room is up to my choosing, yes?” Snape asked, not waiting for an answer as he followed his belongings and began the climb upstairs.

Harry opened his mouth, and then closed it again. He really didn’t care what room Snape chose.

Snape ended up claiming the room Hermione and Ginny had usually stayed in, choosing the double bed closest to the door. His luggage landed on the floor at the foot of the bed, and the man proceeded to put his clothing away silently, ignoring Harry completely.

Harry was irked. This was his house, after all. He refused to be treated as if he wasn't even here.

“Hello? I asked you a question.”

“Undoubtedly, as you will again, I’m certain.”

Harry huffed. “Why did you take this job, Snape?”

Snape said nothing, and with a wave of his wand, sent his robes to the wardrobe where they hung themselves neatly.

“I mean, this can’t really be the better alternative to teaching?”

Silence. A drawer closed.

Harry threw his hands up. Well, this was going to be just wonderful. His own bodyguard wouldn’t
even tell him why he applied for the job!

“You hate me. Surely you don’t want to spend all of your time with me now that you’re free?”

Snape’s trunk snapped closed and the man whirled around to face Harry, wand out. Harry was taken aback by him. The man definitely had presence. Not to mention the pleasant way his frock coat stretched across that chest.

‘Shut up!’ Harry thought to himself. ‘This is Snape, remember?’

He really needed to get out more.

Snape lowered his wand and straightened his back, making Harry feel even more like he was three feet tall. “Potter, there are quite a few reasons why I chose this assignment, none of which are your business. Get out.”

Harry bristled. “You can’t order me around in my own house.”

Snape smirked. “Why, I believe I just did.”

Harry shivered at the low rumble of Snape’s voice. Had he always sounded like that?

“Fine,” Harry said, turning to storm out of the room. If Snape wanted to be a prick, Harry wasn’t going to stop him.

In fact, he would just stay as far from the man as possible.

‘Seems like it would be a bit hard to stay away from your bodyguard,’ the voice in his head supplied.

Well, Harry would just see about that. The less he saw of Snape and his well-tailored frock, the happier he would be.
Harry considered missing breakfast the next morning to avoid Snape, but decided Snape would perceive that as cowardice. Reluctantly, he dressed and made his way down to the kitchen. Upon entering, he was hit with the smell of bacon and his mouth began to water.

Harry sat down at the table expectantly, assuming Kreacher would soon show up with a plate for him. He was taken aback when Snape set his food before him before seating himself across from Harry.

“Kreacher usually brings the plates when he cooks. He gets mad if you don’t let him serve you,” Harry said pointedly.

Snape brought a forkful of eggs to his mouth and answered without meeting Harry’s eyes. “Your elf did not prepare this meal, Potter.”

Harry raised his eyebrows. “You mean, you cooked?”

“I assure you, I am quite capable of scrambling up eggs and frying bacon,” Snape said stiffly, burying his large nose in the newspaper beside his plate.

Harry rolled his eyes. “I never said you couldn’t cook, I was just surprised you would make the effort, when I have an elf.”

The paper rustled as Snape turned the page, but the man gave no response.

Shrugging, Harry tucked into his breakfast. Why would Snape go to the trouble of cooking them both breakfast when Kreacher would happily do it? Snape didn’t seem terribly concerned about elf welfare, so it couldn’t be out of any compassion for Kreacher. Did Snape think this was part of looking after Harry, preparing his meals? Snape didn’t seem the type to wait on anyone. Surely the man didn’t believe this was part of being someone’s bodyguard?

“You don’t have to cook for me, you know. I really don’t think that counts as protecting me. I’m sure Kingsley didn’t mean for you to become my personal chef,” Harry said as he tore his bacon into pieces and popped one in his mouth.

Snape slammed his fist down on the tabletop, startling Harry. “Potter, I cooked breakfast. Say thank you and eat it.”

Harry huffed and reached for his tea. “Thanks,” he muttered sullenly.

“Young gratitude takes my breath away.”

Harry stood up. “Thank you ever so much for the nutritious meal, sir. May it nourish my body and provide me with energy for the day ahead.” He put his hand over his heart and stared at Snape with wide eyes.

Snape snorted. “I’m touched.” He wrapped his long fingers around his teacup as if warming his hands and brought it to his mouth.

Surprised that Snape hadn’t berated him for his disrespectful display, Harry sat back down and finished his tea. His eyes couldn’t help but wander to Snape’s hands, still around his cup. Large, pale hands with long, elegant fingers. Harry thought his fingertips would have been stained from
working with potions over the years, but they appeared spotless with short, clean nails.

Harry watched the way Snape’s fingers traced the edge of the page before turning it and a vision flashed before him of what those fingers would feel like as they skimmed across his flesh. Harry shook his head vigorously, trying to remove the image.

Snape was staring at him, and Harry realized how idiotic he must look, randomly shaking his head over his empty plate. Blushing, he stood up, took his dishes to the sink, and left the kitchen. He needed a distraction from Snape. He wasn’t really attracted to the man. There was nothing appealing about those long, tapered fingers, intense eyes that stared right through him, and trim yet powerful figure.

Harry needed to get away.

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“I still don’t see why I have to do this,” Harry complained as a young witch tried to tame his hair. She slicked it down, only to spring back up. Sighing, she gave up and began brushing his face with some sort of powder.

“Hey!” Harry yelled, jerking his face away from her. “I am NOT going to wear makeup.”

The girl rolled her eyes. “It’s for the photos, Mr. Potter.”

Ron, who was sitting next to Harry nursing a butterbeer, shot him a grin. “Yeah Mr. Potter, she’s just trying to powder your nose.”

Harry glared at him. Why had he agreed to a post-war interview? This was turning into a nightmare. When he’d relented to letting The Prophet run a story in the paper, he hadn’t counted on it becoming a one-on-one photo session.

“So how are things going with old Snape? Has he tried to poison you yet?”

Harry sighed. “Surprisingly, he’s been tolerable. He’s not around much, he keeps to himself when we’re at home. This is the first time we’ve been out in public with him as my bodyguard.”

Ron shuddered. “Sorry mate, but I can’t imagine anything being worth living with Snape. I’d rather give up sex.”

“I’m sure that can be arranged,” Hermione chimed as she reached around Harry’s chair to grab some water.

Ron laughed nervously. “Only joking, of course.”

Hermione simply raised an eyebrow and headed to the corner of the room, where Snape leaned against the wall and watched Harry with intense, dark eyes. He tilted his head in Hermione’s direction as she spoke to him, but his gaze never left Harry.

“He watches you very… intently,” Ron said slowly, following Snape’s line of vision.

Harry blushed and pointedly avoided meeting Snape’s gaze. “Come on, Ron. He’s always looked at me like that. That’s his death glare.”

“No, I’ve been on the receiving end of his death glare enough times to know when he’s trying to make someone’s head explode. He’s not glaring at you. It’s more like – ‘Ron broke off, his face reddening. “So, have you been keeping up with the Cannons lately?”
Glad for the change in conversation, Harry enthusiastically joined Ron in praising the latest scores from his favorite team.

After his interview, the photographer insisted on getting some photos of Harry, who awkwardly sat before the camera, fake smile etched on his face. The photographer clicked his tongue in disapproval.

“I’m not comfortable having my picture taken, what do you want from me?” Harry asked defensively, crossing his arms.

The photographer gave a toothy grin. “Well, you’ve been of age nearly a year. How about showing us a little skin?”

Harry’s eyes widened. “I’m not sitting here starkers!”

Off to the side, Ron sniggered. Harry glared at him as he held up his hand and gave him a rude gesture.

The photographer chuckled. “No, Mr. Potter. I mean, why not unbutton your shirt a bit. Gretchen,” he called to the young woman who had tried to powder Harry’s face, “mess his hair up a bit, why don’t you?”

Harry gritted his teeth as Gretchen raked her fingers through his hair. A long fingernail scratched his scalp sharply, and he pulled away from her. To his chagrin, she also tried to put more powder on him. He dodged as the brush came towards him.

“Oh!” Ron called out, “it’s his face, not a baby’s bottom.”

“Ron!” Hermione chided.

Shrugging, Gretchen pocketed the powder and proceeded to unbutton his shirt. When she reached his navel, she stopped, and pulled his shirt across his chest, exposing a deep V of skin.

“Excellent,” the photographer said, positing his camera. “Now, don’t try to smile, just look intensely into the camera.”

Harry wrinkled his face in confusion. “So, you don’t want me to smile?”

The photographer smirked. “No, I think this will be more appealing to your fans.”

The camera flashed, blinding Harry. After a few more takes, Harry was free to go, and he hurriedly buttoned his shirt up before his friends and Snape reached him.

“Well that wasn’t too terrible, now was it?” Hermione asked, reaching over and brushing invisible lint off Harry’s shoulder.

“Are you kidding? The last thing I want is to be spread across the front page of The Prophet like some sort of – “

“Harlot?” Ron supplied.

Harry reached over and slapped the back of his head. “You owe me a drink for that one, Weasley.”

“Shall we go out tonight and celebrate?” Ron asked, looking between Harry and Hermione as he rubbed his head gingerly.
Harry studied himself in the mirror. Black jeans clung to his body almost indecently, and his dark green button down was a slim fit as well. He ran his fingers through his hair nervously, and pulled on a pair of black boots.

Having never had a night out with his friends before, Harry wasn’t quite sure what to expect. The club they were going to was magical, meaning Harry would be easily recognizable. Although he was reluctant to be approached because of his fame, he didn’t relish going to a Muggle pub and pretending that magic didn’t exist while he tried to chat up some random bloke.

Harry opened his bedroom door, only to find Snape standing on the other side.

“Snape!” Harry gasped, “What are you doing?”

Snape looked down at Harry’s attire, and his eyes flashed with something Harry couldn’t identify before it was gone again. The man scowled. “Potter, you cannot go out in public looking like that. Change your clothes at once.”

Harry bristled. “I will not. I’m going out with my friends and this is what I’m wearing. Get over it.”

Harry brushed past the man and down the stairs. He met Ron and Hermione in the drawing room, and they walked out of the house and Disapparated before Snape could follow.

Once they were in front of the club, Hermione narrowed her eyes at Harry. “Harry, that was stupid. Snape is your bodyguard, he’s supposed to be with you! I can’t believe we left without him.”

Harry shrugged. “He tried to tell me I couldn’t leave the house dressed like this!”

Ron looked him up and down and his ears turned red. “Well mate, you do look a bit… er, you know.” He waved a hand at Harry’s backside, snugly encased in the black jeans. “Your arse looks like it’s on display!”

Hermione giggled.

Harry rolled his eyes. “Just because I finally have some clothes that fit for a change –“

“Yeah, would’ve been nice if you’d worn those instead.”

“Stop,” Hermione ordered, as Harry opened his mouth to retort. “It doesn’t matter now, we’re already here. Let’s just go inside and order some drinks.”

It soon turned out that a night out was the exact opposite of what Harry needed. He soon grew uncomfortable with the loud music, the bumping of bodies against him as he tried to maneuver through the room, and the smell of sweat and alcohol. He even grew tired of his drink, and not long after they arrived, his eyes began to droop.

Harry tapped Hermione on the shoulder, who was dancing with Ron. “I’m going home.”

Hermione looked up into his face and began to protest, but stopped when she saw his expression. “Okay,” she nodded, reaching out to squeeze his arm. “You’ll be fine getting back alone?”

Harry nodded. “I haven’t had much to drink, it’s fine.”

He left them to their dancing and made his way towards the entrance, eager to get outside and
Apparate home. Before he could get to the door, however, he was blocked by a man with thick blonde hair and sinewy forearms.

“Where are you going?” the man asked, breath smelling strongly of beer.

Harry tried to dart around the man, but he reached out and grabbed Harry’s upper arms with both hands.

“I don’t think you’re going anywhere yet, good-looking,” the man breathed, running his hands down Harry’s arms in a clumsy attempt at seduction.

“No, let go of me, I’m just trying to get home.” Harry tried to wrestle out the man’s grasp, but to no avail. Just as he was about to reach for his wand and blast the man out of his way, a hand clamped down on his shoulder and jerked him backward.

“I believe he told you to let go,” came the silky voice of Snape, who was glaring at the man before them.

Once Harry was free of the man’s grasp, Snape steered him toward the door, where they headed to the street to Disapparate. Instead of letting Harry disappear on his own, however, he gripped his arm firmly and brought Harry home via Side-Along Apparition.

When they were safely back inside Number Twelve, Grimmauld Place, Harry watched Snape warily.

“Are you angry?”

Snape said nothing as he removed his outer robes.

“Because I would understand if you were. You have a right to be.”

At that, Snape looked up. “Oh, do I? How kind of you. Potter, what part of bodyguard do you not understand? You are not to go anywhere without my presence, is that clear?”

Harry nodded miserably. He supposed if anything worse had happened with the drunk man at the club, Snape would be in loads of trouble with Kingsley for not having been there to prevent it.

As he began to walk to the staircase and prepare for bed, Snape reached out and stopped him, curling his fingers around Harry’s wrist.

“Do you require anything for bruising or pain?”

Harry looked at him in confusion, before remembering the way he had been grabbed roughly. He shook his head, unable to think clearly. The skin where Snape’s fingers rested tingled, causing Harry’s stomach to flutter nervously.

Snape looked into Harry’s face, nodded and released him, fingertips brushing the skin briefly as they separated. Then he turned and went into the kitchen without another word to Harry.

Harry, not realizing he’d been holding his breath, exhaled and tread upstairs. It was getting harder to muster up any ill feelings toward Snape, especially when he knew how it felt to have the man touch his skin, however briefly.

As he climbed into bed, he wondered how much longer he and Snape would have to live together. He hoped the post-war mania died down soon, so he could start the normal life he’d always
wanted. A normal life where he didn’t enjoy seeing Snape in his frock coat or feeling the man’s fingers on his skin, leaving a trail of fire in their wake.
Chapter Four

The next few days passed uneventfully. Harry slept in, and breakfast was always waiting for him when he finally made his way down to the kitchen. Kreacher was nowhere to be found, so Harry took that to mean Snape continued to do the cooking. Snape and Harry made small talk over their meals, but otherwise kept to themselves. Snape had taken to reading in the library, so Harry chose to spend time in his bedroom, cleaning and re-cleaning to keep himself busy.

And to keep himself from remembering the brush of Snape’s fingers against his wrist.

Harry had never before noticed how sensitive the skin was there. Ever since that terrible night at the club, Harry had taken to running a fingertip over the inside of his wrist, trying to recreate the fluttery feeling he had when Snape had touched him. Surely anyone who touched him there would illicit such a feeling? It had nothing to do with Snape.

But Harry was beginning to doubt that. He’d always had a complicated relationship with Snape. It seemed to be just Harry’s luck that he now had feelings for the man on top of everything the two had been through together. He would be humiliated if Snape ever found out Harry’s secret.

Harry didn’t make any more public appearances. He was still scarred by his interview and photo shoot with The Daily Prophet. Plus, he couldn’t get Snape’s intense, dark stare as he watched Harry from the corner of the room out of his head. His belly flipped just remembering how those eyes had scanned over his form.

As Harry lay in bed that night, he thought about how much his feelings for Snape had changed in such a short amount of time. From hatred, to grudging respect, to admiration, to… picturing the man running his hands over Harry’s body? It was ridiculous. Harry didn’t even know if Snape preferred men.

But then Harry recalled the heat in Snape’s eyes when he’d seen Harry in his black jeans before leaving for the club, and realized that maybe Snape did appreciate the male form, after all.

He drifted off to sleep, mind still on Snape.

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Harry stood in the Great Hall, heart pounding in his chest as he stared at the bodies of Remus and Tonks, lying side by side on the floor, their lifeless hands touching. He couldn’t believe they were gone, that poor young Teddy would be an orphan, as Harry was. It seemed so unfair for Voldemort to be responsible for so much loss.

Cackling drew Harry’s gaze away from his friends’ bodies and over to the side of the room. Bellatrix Lestrange stood there, holding Teddy, her rotted teeth exposed in an evil grin that she aimed at Harry. She reached one hand up and smoothed down Teddy’s hair, in an affectionate gesture clearly intended to be mocking. Another maniacal laugh escaped her.

Hatred swelled in Harry’s chest. How dare she stand there with her filthy hands on his godson! He raised his wand and ran toward her, ready for a fight, but he was too late. Teddy was squealing, eyes bulging, face turning blue as he suffocated in Bellatrix’s grasp. She laughed harder, not even bothering to reach for her wand as Harry approached her. He panicked as he watched helplessly. Teddy was dead, it was too late….

Rough hands gripped his shoulders, shaking firmly. Harry gasped, eyes snapping open.
Snape stood above him, dressed in a long gray nightshirt, staring down at Harry in—concern?

Slowly, Harry sat up, running a hand down his sweaty face. Snape, rather than standing back or leaving altogether, sank down onto the mattress, watching Harry with those dark eyes. Harry took a deep breath and reached for his glasses, fumbling with the frames before sliding them onto his face.

Quietly, Snape said, “The battle?”

Harry nodded. “I—Bellatrix Lestrange—she had Teddy. She—”

Snape cut him off. “Shh,” he murmured, his low voice washing over Harry and heating his skin. “Your godson is perfectly fine, sleeping soundly at his grandmother’s. You needn’t worry. And, in any case, Bellatrix Lestrange is dead, a favor I have yet to thank a certain Weasley for.”

Harry smirked, remembering the ferocity of Molly Weasley’s surprising dueling skills.

A moment of silence passed between them, and then Snape asked, “A vial of Dreamless Sleep, perhaps?”

Harry shook his head. “No, I don’t want to rely on potions to help me sleep. Nightmares are bound to happen. I’ll deal with them.” He shrugged, causing his loose pajama top to slide to the left, exposing a pale shoulder. Harry blushed, ducking his head to hide his red cheeks from Snape.

Snape seemed surprised at Harry’s determination to sleep without the aid of a potion, but he nodded.

Harry gave the man a weak smile. “Goodnight, sir.”

He was looking down at the covers, pulling half-heartedly at a loose thread, so he jumped when a warm hand suddenly landed on his bare shoulder. “Goodnight, Potter,” Snape said, sliding his hand lazily down Harry’s shoulder, tugging lightly on the shirt. Goosebumps erected along Harry’s flesh, embarrassing him far more than his irritating blushing.

Snape raised an eyebrow, but remained silent. He removed his hand, and turned and left the room, closing the door behind him.

Harry let out a breath and collapsed back against the pillows. Snape’s hand had only touched him for a moment, but Harry felt its absence keenly.

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“I’m sorry,” Ron began, setting his fork down with a clang, startling the three of them. “But I think I heard you wrong. I thought you said you fancy Snape.”

“I don’t fancy him!” Harry said hotly, shoving his drink to the side. “I just—”

“Shh!” Hermione hushed him, nodding toward the open door. “He’s in the library, but you never know.”

Harry’s eyes widened and he glanced at the doorway in a panic. Hermione rolled her eyes, and then smirked knowingly as Harry’s cheeks reddened.

Ron made a noise in the back of his throat, his face betraying his disgust. “What’s happened to you? What did the git slip you?”
“He hasn’t slipped Harry anything yet, which I’m assuming is the reason Harry’s frustrated,” Hermione quipped.

Harry glared at her.

Ron sputtered. “Oi! I’m eating!”

Hermione put her hand to her mouth and giggled. “Sorry, Harry. I couldn’t resist.”

Harry rolled his eyes. “Seriously, what am I supposed to do? I can’t keep living with the man! He won’t get out of my head,” he finished irritably.

“That usually happens when you fancy someone, Harry,” Hermione said, reaching across the table to rest her hand atop Harry’s.

“Well, obviously I don’t want him to find out.”

Ron pushed his plate away morosely. “I give up.”

Hermione shot him a dark look.

Harry sighed. “I’m completely lost here. The only experience I have with fancying someone is Cho and Ginny. And if you didn’t know, they’re women.”

“I actually did notice that my sister isn’t a man, funnily enough,” Ron said, wiping his fingers on his napkin.

“Maybe you should try to find out if Snape is… ah, amenable to the idea. Of the two of you,” Hermione told him.

“How am I supposed to do that without coming out and asking him, ‘Hey Snape, fancy a shag?’ He’ll think I’m the most insolent – “

“No,” Hermione interrupted, shaking her head. “That is definitely not the way to go about this. What about any signs? Long looks, touches, anything?”

“Well,” Harry began slowly, lowering his voice as he glanced at the doorway again. “Not really. He touched me that night he made me leave the club, and then again last night when he woke me from a nightmare. But other than that, he doesn’t go out of his way to touch me.”

“He does stare at you awfully intensely though. And didn’t you say earlier that he sort of caressed your shoulder?” Ron demanded.

Harry blushed, leaning over the table. “I didn’t use the word caress!” he whispered furiously.

Ron waved a hand in dismissal. “Sounds like maybe he wouldn’t be completely adverse to the idea, mate. Not that I’m, er, encouraging you. And please, please don’t tell me if Snape shags you. He just started to show signs of human decency. It’s too soon to think of him, you know, bending you over – “

“Ron!” Hermione and Harry yelled at same time.

Ron grinned, holding his cup up at Harry. “Cheers,” he sang, taking a long swig.

Harry held his head in his hands. What was he going to do about his feelings for Snape? He couldn’t very well go up to the man and ask him out for tea, the very idea was laughable. Perhaps
this was just a fleeting crush that he would soon get over?

‘Not likely.’ his mind supplied unhelpfully.
Chapter Five

Chapter Notes

Thanks so much for all the lovely comments! I really enjoy reading them.

Harry came down to breakfast and sat across from Snape, whose head was behind his paper. Rolling his eyes, Harry reached for a piece of bacon and chewed on it thoughtfully while he contemplated the man before him. The only parts of Snape visible were the hands holding the paper, a finger running down the length of the page before turning it. Harry shivered, remembering the trail that same finger had followed down his shoulder.

“Why did you want this job?” Harry asked conversationally as he took a sip of tea.

Snape slammed the paper down on the table, startling Harry, causing him to drop his bacon.

“Potter, if you are so incredibly dense that you have not figured it out by now, you truly are stupid.” He stood up and stormed out of the kitchen, leaving Harry to deal with the man’s dirty dishes.

“Well what’s got his knickers in a twist?” Harry muttered to himself as he cleaned up the remains of breakfast.

It had been a reasonable question. Harry didn’t go out much, so he didn’t see the need for a bodyguard. Why would Snape want to be shut up in this house all day with just Harry for company?

After clearing the dishes away, Harry made the trek to Snape’s room, thinking he may as well mend the bridge. Snape had left his door ajar, and Harry was surprised to discover that Snape had partially transformed the room into a potions lab. A large cauldron sat in the corner, fumes wafting up into Snape’s face.

Harry knocked lightly on the door and leaned against the frame. “Knock knock.”

Snape slowly straightened his back and turned to glare at Harry.

“T’m sorry,” Harry said, taking a few steps farther into the room. “I shouldn’t keep pestering you about why you took this job. I guess I just don’t understand why you would want to be stuck in this house all day with me.”

Snape sniffed disdainfully as he ladled some of the potion into a vial. “I am unable to remain at my home with Death Eaters still at large. My living here is just as much for my protection as it is yours. The fact that I am being compensated for my time here is an added bonus. Your lack of social life also enables me to brew potions for private individuals who do not wish to place an order through a large company. This allows me to establish a clientele in order to earn a living once I am no longer beholden to the Savior of the Wizarding World.”

Harry couldn’t help feeling disappointed. It had nothing to do with him; it was just a business transaction.

“So, it has nothing to do with me, then?” He asked, and then wanted to hit himself for allowing his
insecurities to escape.

“Don’t put words in my mouth, Potter. You are not the center of the universe.”

“Kingsley wouldn’t have hired you to be my bodyguard if he thought you weren’t personally invested in protecting me,” Harry pointed out.

“Go away, Potter. Your babbling is bringing on a headache.” Snape turned away from Harry and went back to his cauldron.

Harry rolled his eyes and walked out of Snape’s room. Damn that man’s moodiness. Just when Harry thought Snape might not mind him, might even like him, Snape turned into a surly bastard again.

“Whatever,” Harry mumbled, flopping down onto the nearest sofa.

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“Potter,” Snape approached him the next day, towering over Harry.

Harry set aside the book he’d been perusing and looked up from his cushion. From this angle he was nearly eye level with Snape’s groin. Blushing, Harry quickly looked away, hoping Snape hadn’t noticed.

“What?” he asked, glancing up into the man’s face.

“Your presence is required in the kitchen.”

“Why?”

Snape pinched the bridge of his nose. “For once in your life, cease your questions and follow me.” He turned and headed toward the kitchen.

Harry quickly stood up and smoothed out his shirt, wrinkled from being curled up for so long. He caught up to Snape, who was standing outside the kitchen.

Snape put his hand on the small of Harry’s back, guiding him inside. “After you,” he said in a low voice.

Harry, who was too distracted by the feel of Snape’s hand just above his arse, could only give Snape a blank look. “Huh?”

Snape snorted and pushed Harry into the room. Harry stumbled slightly and looked behind him to glare at the man. “Hey!”

“Happy Birthday, Harry!” a chorus of voices behind him shouted.

Harry whipped around. Before him stood the entire Weasley family, their faces beaming at him beneath a sea of red hair. Hermione was next to Ron, clutching his hand as she gave him a warm smile. Andromeda was in the corner with Teddy, who had managed to turn his hair green for the occasion. Neville and Luna had come as well, and each raised a hand in hello as Harry’s eyes met theirs. Even Kingsley had managed to get away from the ministry. He gave Harry a quick smile before eyeing the large chocolate cake Mrs. Weasley was levitating onto the table.

Harry smiled brightly. “When I didn’t hear from anyone today, I thought maybe you had forgotten.”
Hermione smacked him lightly on the arm. “We’re not your relatives, Harry. We would never just skip over your birthday.”

“Of course not, dear,” Mrs. Weasley said as a pile of presents appeared next to the cake. “We contacted Severus yesterday to make sure you’d be here when we came to surprise you.”

Harry turned around to look at Snape, who was smirking as he leaned against the doorway into the kitchen. “Is that why you insisted I ‘attempt to put something in my brain’ and stay in the library?”

“That, not to mention your brain needs all the exercise possible,” Snape drawled, crossing his arms.

Harry just rolled his eyes but couldn’t prevent the smile that broke out on his face as he reached for his godson. “Hello, Teddy,” he cooed to the baby. He ran his fingers through the tuft of green hair, laughing as it turned purple due to the baby’s excitement.

Andromeda sighed dramatically. “He makes it hard for me to color coordinate.”

“Alright now, Harry, why don’t you see what everyone’s brought you? That’s it,” Mrs. Weasley said as Harry reached for a package that turned out to be from Ron. “Severus, come in here and have some cake, don’t lurk in the doorway.”

Snape scowled but surprisingly remained silent as he joined the party. Harry raised his eyebrows incredulously as Snape took a plate of cake from Mrs. Weasley and brought a forkful to his mouth without protest.

‘Mrs. Weasley taking out Bellatrix must have really brought them closer,’ Harry mused as he watched Snape turn to respond to whatever Mr. Weasley had asked him.

Hermione sidled up to him, one hand holding her plate of cake while the other rested on his arm. “He seems so different, doesn’t he?” she murmured as she gestured to Snape with a nod of her head.

Harry nodded. “He’s still prickly, but it’s as if the sting is gone.”

Hermione smiled. “I never thought I’d see the day when Snape of all people showed up to your birthday party. Happy eighteenth, Harry,” she said as she kissed his cheek before circulating over to Neville and Luna.

Ron snickered.

“What?” Harry demanded.

“She left chocolate on your cheek.”

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Later that night, once everyone had finally cleared out and all the cake had been consumed, Harry wearily climbed stairs, looking forward to shucking his clothes off and collapsing into bed. When he reached the top of the stairs, he found Snape crossing the hallway towards his own room. He stopped in his tracks when he saw Harry.

Harry smiled and approached Snape, who smirked and raised his chin haughtily. “Thanks for letting them give me a party. I know they don’t need your permission, as it’s my house, but I appreciate you being okay with it.”
Snape shrugged his shoulders. “Everyone deserves to celebrate their birthday. Even you, Potter.”

Harry snorted. “Big of you, Snape,” he retorted, but smiled to show Snape he was joking.

Snape said nothing, eyes scanning Harry’s face as Harry stood awkwardly before him. Harry cleared his throat nervously, looking down at his shoes.

“Well, I’m off to bed, good ni – “ Harry’s voice failed him as Snape suddenly leaned forward slightly, fingers brushing aside the fringe hiding Harry’s scar.

“Happy Birthday, Harry,” he murmured, his voice sliding over Harry’s skin like silk. Thin lips placed a warm kiss on his forehead, and Harry closed his eyes in surprise at Snape’s unexpected tenderness.

A soft click made Harry’s eyes snap open. Snape was gone, his bedroom door firmly shut.

Harry let out a breath, confused now more than ever, and made his way toward his own room for the night.
Chapter 6

Harry sat at the table, leisurely flipping through The Prophet as he brought a spoonful of cereal to his mouth. It was a quiet morning, and Harry had slept later than usual. Snape had yet to come out of his room, choosing instead to work on a potions order he had received.

It had been three days since the night of Harry’s eighteenth birthday. Three maddening days since Snape had bestowed a warm kiss against his skin. It had only been three days, but Harry felt the loss of those lips with every waking moment.

He pushed away his bowl and put his head in his hands with a groan. There was no denying it. He had feelings for Snape. And based on Snape’s behavior, there was no denying the other man felt something as well.

Harry just had no idea what to do. He had no experience with this sort of thing. It was obvious Snape was waiting for him, only Harry was unsure what exactly he was supposed to do.

If only there was a way to get Snape to make a bolder move. Although, to be fair, the man had been pretty bold already. Never in a million years would Harry have expected him to show any sort of affection.

Just then, the fire flared green, pulling Harry from his thoughts. Kingsley Shacklebolt stepped into the kitchen, brushing ash from his shoulder before taking the seat across from Harry. Harry folded up the newspaper and tossed it aside, giving his full attention to the man before him.

“You received my owl?” Kingsley asked, folding his hands in front of him on the table.

Harry nodded. “What did you want to talk to me about?”

“Where’s Severus?”

Harry shrugged. “In his room, I think. Brewing.”

“Ah,” Kingsley nodded, and then hesitated. “And, how are things here, with you and Severus?”

Harry absentmindedly scratched his thumbnail along the wooden surface of the table, avoiding eye contact. “Fine,” he muttered. “Er – better than expected, actually.”

“That’s a relief. I was afraid it would be more difficult for you, given your history together.”

Harry nodded, still not looking up from the table.

“Well,” Kingsley began, sitting up straighter and leaning forward. “Normally I would run this by Severus first, but considering who’s involved, I thought it best to discuss this with you first. I imagine your bodyguard would react unfavorably to what I’m about to tell you.”

Harry wrinkled his eyebrows in confusion. “What’s going on, Kingsley?”

“There is someone who has asked me to reach out to you. He’d like to talk to you about his standing, perhaps create an alliance of some sort with you.”

Harry waited, but Kingsley said nothing else. “And, who is this person?”

“Draco Malfoy.”
“Ugh,” Ron groaned, helping himself to more mashed potatoes. “I thought living with the greasy git would be bad. A meeting with the bouncing ferret? Your life just got worse, mate.”

Hermione rolled her eyes. “So what exactly does Malfoy want to talk to you about, Harry?”

“Apparently, things haven’t gone so well for the Malfoys lately. People believe they’re Death Eaters.”

“Er – well, they are,” Ron pointed out helpfully.

Harry snorted. “Yeah, it seems they don’t like the way they’re being treated, now that they can’t claim they were under Imperius again. Draco wants to talk to me about what he can do to improve his family’s public image. He thinks some kind of association with me is the best way to get their name out of the mud.”

“Just tell him to bugger off,” Ron said, pushing his plate away.

Hermione tutted. “Technically, Harry owes Narcissa Malfoy for the way she saved his life in the forest at Hogwarts. I don’t think telling the Malfoys to ‘bugger off’ is necessarily the best approach in this scenario.”

“I don’t know what to do. And I’m meeting with him tonight, over dinner. Can you believe that?” Harry yanked his hair in frustration.

“At Grimmauld Place?” Hermione gasped in surprise.

Harry nodded. “Kingsley doesn’t think it’s a good idea for Malfoy and me to be seen in public.”

“What about Snape?” Ron asked.

Harry shrugged. “Kingsley hasn’t told him. He doesn’t think Snape will react well, and is planning on calling him to his office before Draco arrives.”

Hermione frowned. “That seems dangerous, leaving you without protection around Draco Malfoy.”

“First of all,” Harry said, rolling his eyes. “I can handle Malfoy. Second of all, Kingsley is making Malfoy surrender his wand before he Floos in, so at least he can’t curse me.”

“Well, send us a Patronus if things get out of hand. I don’t trust him.”

Harry was pacing in the kitchen nervously. It was nearly six o’clock, and Malfoy was due to arrive soon. Snape was still upstairs. Harry twisted his hands, anxious to get the man out of the house before Malfoy came through the Floo.

Footsteps had Harry whirling around to face the kitchen doorway. Snape strode through, a traveling cloak draped around his shoulders. He stopped just before he reached the fire, and looked over at Harry.

“I have been called to Shacklebolt’s office on business. Go nowhere. I shall return tonight.” He stepped into the fire and was gone in a swirl of green flames.

Harry let out a breath, blowing his fringe out of his eyes. Before he had a chance to relax, the fire
turned green again and out came Draco Malfoy.

The weeks since the end of the war had not treated Draco well. His clothing was still pristine and expensive, but the bags under his gray eyes told Harry a different story. The normally kempt blonde hair was disheveled, as if Draco spent a great deal of time running his hand through it.

Draco pretended to straighten his robes, but could no longer avoid looking up to meet Harry’s gaze. “Potter,” he said, stiffly but quietly.

Harry offered a weak smile. He gestured to the table, where a modest dinner of stew and bread was waiting. “You wanted to speak to me?”

Draco nodded, taking a seat at the table. He held up a bottle. “I brought wine.”

Harry raised his eyebrows. “Wine?”

The other boy flushed. “I was raised not to show up to someone’s home empty-handed, alright?” he said defensively.

Harry snickered. “I’ll just get some glasses, then.” He strode over to the cupboard and took out two wine goblets.

Dinner progressed in awkward silence, and it wasn’t until Draco pushed way his half-eaten plate of stew that he finally began to speak.

“Potter, as I’m sure Shacklebolt mentioned, my family is having a bit of difficulty running in our usual circles.”

Harry rolled his eyes. “Yes, I’m sure it’s hard to keep up your pureblood supremacist act with Voldemort snuffed out.”

Draco flinched. “Don’t. Just don’t, alright? I get it. We fucked up.”

“Yes, I’m just not sure if you actually believe you were wrong, or if you’re just trying to do damage control now that your side has lost.” Harry drained his glass of wine and studied the fidgeting young man before him.

Draco’s cheeks reddened with anger. “Does it matter? The point is, we need your help. We have fallen far down the social ladder, and what better way to climb back up than to be seen associating with Harry Potter?”

Harry twirled his glass idly. “What did you have in mind? I’m hardly about to stroll down the street declaring you as my new best friend. I don’t know why I should help you anyway. The things you’ve done, the things you’ve said to me, to my friends, to Hermione – ” Harry cut himself off, rubbing his eyes.

There was a moment of silence between them, and then Draco said in a low voice, “My mother saved your skin, Potter. The Dark Lord would have ended you if it weren’t for her.”

Harry sighed. “What do you want me to do?”

Draco looked down and took a deep breath. “My family’s name might be back in good graces if we – if The Prophet got wind that the two of us are… involved…. ”

Harry stood up in disbelief. “You want me to pretend to date you? No.”
Draco stood as well, coming around the table to stand before Harry. “Do you think I welcome the idea? I wouldn’t have suggested it if I thought there was another way.”

Harry shook his head, fuzzy from the wine. “I – “

The fire roared to life, causing Harry to snap his mouth shut. Snape stepped out of the fire, and froze at the scene before him.

Draco’s eyes widened in surprised. He opened his mouth, but no sound came out.

Harry realized how close he and Draco had been standing, and backed up quickly. He looked at the clock in a panic. How could he have let Draco stay so long? The whole point of Snape leaving was so he wouldn’t know Draco had been here.

Draco snapped out of his shock, and edged around Snape toward the fireplace. Without a word to either of them, he Flooed away, leaving Harry alone with Snape.

Harry watched as Snape’s eyes narrowed, taking in the opened bottle of wine and the dinner spread out on the table. “Entertaining Draco Malfoy for dinner, I see. How… cozy.”

Harry gulped. “It’s not like that. He wanted to talk to me.”

“Oh?” Snape removed his outer cloak and approached Harry with slow, calculated steps. “You socialize with young Malfoy now, do you?”

Harry backed up as Snape continued to advance on him, until his back came into contact with the wall behind him. Snape leaned forward, placing his hands flat against the wall on either side of Harry’s head.

Harry met Snape’s eyes, the dark orbs glittering dangerously. “He just came to say – “

Snape cut him off. “And you planned this specifically for when I would be absent. How convenient.”

Harry tried again. “No, listen – “

“Oh, I’m listening, Potter. Draco Malfoy came to talk to you. He needed dinner to talk to you? We have no wine in this house. He was under the impression tonight would call for plying you with alcohol?” Snape leaned in, face inches away from Harry’s own.

Harry’s heart pounded in his chest, fire pooling in his belly. Snape was so close, he could feel the intensity of the man’s emotions emanating from him. His scent curled around Harry, and he felt himself becoming aroused as that velvety voice washed over his body.

Harry swallowed thickly. “He was only telling me that – “

“He was quite close to you. What did he so desperately need to tell you? How he longs to feel your lips against his own?” Snape skimmed his nose along Harry’s throat, and Harry was sure his knees would buckle. “How he desires your naked flesh trembling beneath his own?” One of Snape’s hands dropped down to grip Harry’s hip. “His words mean nothing. What has Draco Malfoy done for you? Has he watched over you for years as you continuously managed to find trouble? Did he aid you along your journey to find Horcruxes? Perhaps he was prepared to lay down his life for you, as a deadly snake ripped out his throat?” Snape inserted his thigh between Harry’s own, and Harry ground against him, unable to stop himself. “No, Potter, the person who did all those acts for you is the same person who has attempted to persuade you to come to him for weeks now. I’m
finished waiting, Harry.”

And with that, Snape’s lips came crashing down on his own. Harry moaned, kissing the man back. Snape took both Harry’s wrists in one hand and held them against the wall above Harry’s head. His tongue traced a fiery trail along Harry’s bottom lip, and Harry moaned again, opening up and letting him plunder his mouth. Harry’s tongue rubbed against Snape’s, and he ground his erection harder against that delectable thigh. His heart thudded against his chest, and he broke away from Snape reluctantly, gasping for breath. Snape stared at him, black eyes so wild with desire Harry actually feared their gaze would burn through him.

Snape released Harry and took a step back, watching as Harry attempted to collect himself against the wall. “If that was still too subtle for you, Potter, then I am at a loss.” He turned and strode out of the kitchen. A door slammed a moment later, indicating he’d gone off to his room for the night.

Harry sank down to the floor, his legs no longer capable of holding him up.
Harry was in bed, wide awake. He was still in shock over what had occurred downstairs. Snape actually wanted him. He couldn’t believe it. No one had ever made Harry feel so desirable before. His body still burned from their heated encounter.

Mind racing and heart throbbing, Harry threw back the covers. He would never sleep like this. He needed release. He needed Snape. Harry sat up, forgoing his slippers, and crept to Snape’s bedroom door barefoot; his pajamas clinging to him from the light sheen of sweat breaking out on his skin.

Harry lightly tapped on the door with his fingertip, and turned the handle, opening the door enough for the light in the hallway to illuminate Snape’s figure beneath the blankets. Snape sat up as Harry came into view, dressed in a long gray nightshirt.

“Harry?” Snape called out, voice thick with sleep.

Harry swallowed. It was now or never. He stepped fully into the bedroom and shut the door behind him. There was a moment of complete darkness, and then Snape whispered a spell and the candle on the bedside table lit, its flame creating flickering shadows along the walls.

Harry came up to the side of the bed across from Snape, and sat down gingerly, leaving his feet to dangle off the edge. “I – “ he began, but then stopped. He had no idea how to verbally convey what he wanted.

Snape sat there, still as a statue, his eyes penetrating through Harry.

Harry’s shoulders sagged and he reached a hand out, coming to rest lightly on Snape’s forearm. “Severus,” he crooned softly, looking up into the man’s face beneath his lashes.

Severus sucked in a sharp breath, and in one smooth motion, rolled over onto Harry, pushing him down against the mattress. Harry barely registered the feeling of another body pressing against his own before Severus leaned down and captured his mouth in a searing kiss.

Harry moaned, eagerly opening up and granting Severus entrance. The slide of that soft organ against his own sent him into a frenzy, and he wrapped his arms around Severus’s neck, fingers burying themselves into that thick, soft hair. He could barely keep up with the intensity of the kiss, and broke free from those thin lips to suck in a harsh breath.

Severus immediately left Harry’s mouth and began bestowing kisses on Harry’s chin, down his throat, to his collarbone. Harry gasped in surprise as his pajama top was ripped open, buttons flying through the hair. He barely had time to breathe before his nipple was enclosed in heat, that hot tongue sweeping across it. The other one was given the same treatment while the first was pinched sharply between those long fingers.

Harry could do little more than lie beneath Severus in a daze. He thought he might burst from the intensity radiating off the older man, who seemed intent on devouring Harry’s skin as though he were starving for it. A tongue dipped into his navel, and then hands were grabbing the waistband of his pajama bottoms, peeling them down off Harry’s legs. They were thrown across the room, causing Harry to smile softly.

His smile quickly disappeared, his lips forming a silent “o” of pleasure as Severus lightly ran his fingertips down the side of Harry’s thigh. Lips placed a light kiss on his inner thigh, and then that
tortuous tongue left a trail of fire down to the inside of Harry’s knee. Harry could no longer keep his eyes open, clenching them shut as his cock was engulfed in that fierce mouth. His hips shot up off the mattress and a groan ripped from his throat as Severus worked him, hands coming up to press him back down. Once Harry was once again lying flat, the hands abandoned his hips and one hand slid up his chest to tweak a nipple. Harry cried out, his orgasm building. His heart raced, breath coming in short gasps, and then he saw stars behind his eyelids as he came, hips undulating as he felt Severus swallow around him.

Harry barely had time to catch his breath while Severus reached for the bedside table and pulled out a small jar. He placed it on the bed by Harry’s leg and then reached for the hem of his nightshirt, pulling it over his head and letting it fall to the floor. Before Harry could get a glimpse of that pale, delicious body, a lubricated finger reached behind his balls and circled his entrance, causing Harry to moan and spread his legs wider, his knees bending. Severus placed on knee on the bed between Harry’s legs and leaned down to kiss him, his tongue invading his mouth right when a finger breached Harry’s opening.

Severus added a second finger, scissoring them while he sucked at a spot on Harry’s neck. Harry ran his hands along Severus’s smooth back, feeling the ripple of muscles as his arse was prepared. His hand reached down and firmly squeezed one of Severus’s cheeks, causing Severus to nip his throat playfully.

After Severus had thoroughly prepared him with three fingers, he abandoned Harry’s neck in favor of settling himself between Harry’s thighs, reaching up to caress Harry’s cheek before lining himself up with Harry’s opening and pressing against it. There was a burning sensation as Harry was breached, and he gasped in pain as Severus fully sheathed himself inside him.

Once Severus was buried to the hilt, he paused, his mouth hanging open and a low, guttural groan escaped him. It was a sound so full of need and pleasure that it shot liquid fire all the way down to Harry’s toes, and they curled involuntarily. Severus pulled out slowly and snapped his hips forward once again. He leaned down and took Harry’s earlobe between his teeth, panting in his ear, “You feel…” before groaning again as Harry wrapped his legs around the man’s hips.

As the pain began to recede, Harry was overcome with pleasure as Severus bumped against something inside him that made him see stars. He let out a yell, and Severus did it again, altering his angle so that he brushed against that spot every time he thrust forward. Harry knew he must be a babbling mess, but couldn’t bring himself to care as Severus brought one of his legs up over his shoulder and began pounding into him.

Harry once again felt that pressure building up inside him. He needed to come. He was desperate for it. Severus leaned forward, his hands on either side of Harry’s face, and brushed a kiss against his lips. “Severus, please,” Harry whimpered against the man’s mouth.

Severus continued to slam into him, reaching down and grasping Harry firmly. It only took three tugs and then Harry was coming, his back arching as he covered both of them with his release. Severus gave another few frantic thrusts, and then he spilled himself inside of Harry, biting Harry’s shoulder to muffle his groan. He trembled for a moment, and then pulled out, collapsing on the bed next to Harry, his chest heaving.

Harry turned his head and studied Severus’s profile. He reached out and brushed away the hair clinging to his sweaty forehead. Severus’s eyes snapped open at Harry’s touch, causing him to withdraw his hand quickly.

Severus wordlessly pulled the hand back, and shifted Harry’s body so that they were flush against each other, chest to back. Harry shivered as Severus buried his face against his neck, breath
ghosting over his skin. Kisses trailed across his shoulder, and then he knew no more as darkness overcame him.

Less than two hours later, Harry woke to the prickling of his skin as fingertips skimmed across his body. A fingernail scraped along the back of his thigh, and he moaned, spreading his legs and burying his face in the pillow.

Hands softly gripped his hips as a body settled above him. “On your knees,” was whispered in his ear, and then he was raised, bare arse in the air. Fingers probed his entrance, and then Severus was inside him, thrusting slowly as Harry mouthed his pillow, fingers grasping the sheets beneath his sweaty body.

Unable to last long due to his sleepiness and exhaustion from their previous fucking, Harry reached down and began stroking himself, clenching around Severus as his orgasm ripped through him. Severus groaned as Harry tightened around him, and Harry felt warmth flood his passage as Severus finished.

Smiling as kisses were trailed down his spine, Harry once again succumbed to sleep as he felt Severus settle beside him.
I know, I know... it's been WAY too long since I updated. I had a lot going on. My husband and I bought our first house, then my mother-in-law went into hospice care and passed away, and then quite frankly, I lost my motivation to keep writing. I always planned to write the ending but never got around to it, so now here I am.

The next morning found Harry waking to his face buried in the pillow, the sheet draped casually across his backside and one leg hanging off the edge of the bed. Bleary-eyed, he gave a great yawn and sat up slowly, wincing at the sting in his bum but grinning lazily upon remembering the cause of said sting.

He had barely placed his glasses on his face before Snape strode into the room carrying a stack of toast on a plate and a cup of tea. The man was completely dressed, something Harry thought was completely unfair given his current nakedness.

Snape, however, didn't seem to mind Harry's lack of clothing, considering the way his dark eyes flickered over Harry's body, nostrils flaring slightly. Harry blushed and pulled up the sheet, causing Snape to snort. "Modesty, Harry? A bit misplaced, considering the noises you made last night."

Harry huffed, his face on fire. He sipped the tea Snape handed him and occupied himself with a piece of toast, not knowing how to respond. Perhaps he had been overly enthusiastic last night? Embarrassment began to curl in his belly, and he ran a hand through his hair nervously.

As if reading his mind, Snape leaned forward on the bed, plucking Harry's glasses off and setting the toast on the bedside table. "Oh no you don't, Potter," he growled softly, his nose tracing the shell of Harry's ear, eliciting a shiver. "Never underestimate the effect your responsiveness has on me." He took Harry's earlobe into his mouth and bit down lightly.

Moaning, Harry tipped his head back as Snape latched onto his throat, kissing and nipping his way down to Harry's torso. The sheet was pulled away, exposing him completely, and Harry jerked up as a hand slid down his front and cupped his growing erection.

"Again?" Harry panted out as he was vaguely aware of the lube flying into Snape's hand.

"Is that a complaint?" Snape had removed his robes and was pressing slick fingers against Harry's hole.

Rather than responding verbally, Harry lifted one leg to rest on Snape's shoulder and moaned as he felt Snape sink into him. The man's eyes closed as he buried himself to the hilt, and when he opened them again Harry gasped at the burning intensity of his gaze.

It was an embarrassingly short time later that Harry felt his orgasm building, as Snape thrust unrelentingly against his prostate over and over again. His back arched and he came forcefully, clenching around the member inside him. The man above him growled and his thrusts became erratic, and he leaned forward and bit down lightly on Harry's collarbone as he released inside Harry.
They collapsed on the mattress and panted heavily in the otherwise silent room. Harry wiped sweat from his brow and rolled onto his side, facing Snape. *Severus*, he mentally corrected himself.

"A man your age can't possibly have this much stamina," Harry groaned as his arse protested his movement.

"I'm not decrepit, thank you," Severus drawled, arching a brow, causing Harry to huff out a laugh.

Eventually, Severus's breathing evened out, his chest rising and falling at a slower pace. He turned his face toward Harry and reached up, running his fingers through Harry's hair. His brow furrowed as he studied the boy. "What is going through that head of yours? You seem...troubled."

Harry shrugged and looked down, picking at the sheets. How could he explain that he feared what would happen when they left this room? They couldn't lie in bed forever, as appealing as that idea seemed. Were they in a relationship or was this purely physical? Severus didn't strike him as the "boyfriend" type. And Harry could only imagine the looks of incredulity he would get if he referred to Severus as his boyfriend.

Severus sighed, reaching out and pulling Harry flush against him. "Tell me, brat."

Harry decided to just blurt it out, not knowing how else to voice his concerns. "So, what is this?" he asked, gesturing between them with his hand.

"Apparently, your idea of pillow talk."

Idly, Harry wondered if he would always be torn between rolling his eyes and strangling the man before him. "I meant this thing between us. Is this just sex?"

There was a long moment of silence. Then, "I am not in the habit of engaging in casual sexual encounters, Harry. I am also not a man inclined to spout romantic drivel. If you are looking for a declaration of undying love, you will be disappointed."

Harry smiled. "So I guess I won't expect flowers and a love note tomorrow."

"You'd have better luck stealing gold from goblins."

Laughing, Harry rested his head against Severus's chest, his heart warming when he felt a firm kiss against his temple. Severus may not engage in sweet talk, but he couldn't deny he was romantic in his own way.

"Do you think this will interfere with your job? Protecting me, I mean," Harry explained, rolling his eyes that he even needed a bodyguard.

Severus scoffed. "It's hardly a job when I already have been protecting you for years. I doubt it will inhibit my ability to ward off anyone unsavory."

Harry hummed, too tired to verbally respond. Just before he succumbed to sleep, he imagined the look on Ron's face when Harry told him he was shagging Snape, and he grinned.

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