Truth behind the name and the lies pt.1

by KusanoSaku

Notes

An abused boy finds out he's a wizard and a hero; his tormented mind rebels. One person sees through the misconceptions to the real Harry and treats him the way he deserves. How does this change them both and those around them? Future Mpreg
Prologue

“Worthless child.”

“That scar on your head? Your drunk scumbag father carved it himself.”

“Your father drove your mother off the road trying to punish her for leaving him. It’s your fault she’s dead.”

“You’re only here because Petunia didn’t want to betray her sister’s memory, as pathetic as Lily turned out to be. If it had been my choice we’d have sent you to an orphanage.”

“Your parents never fought until you were born. Your father didn’t drink until then. You are the reason she’s dead.”

These thoughts haunted five year old Harry Potter as he lay in the dark in the spider-infested cupboard under the stairs. He didn’t remember his parents so he would never know if what his uncle said was true or not. He did know he was unwanted, that he had to earn his keep. If you don’t work you don’t eat was drilled into the tiny boy who was more the size of a three-year old then five. He knew if he woke to find the cupboard unlocked then he was to be up and make breakfast. He couldn’t tell time but he knew he had to be up before the sun was or he would be beaten.

Uncle Vernon took great pleasure in putting him in his place, at five he had been belted, smacked around, starved, locked in the dark, screamed at, threatened, told terrible stories about his parents how despite his only relatives’ charity he was going to end up a no account bum like his father.

He tested the door, locked. He closed his eyes, it would be an interesting morning…

He woke when the padlock was undone and the door ripped open, bright light streamed in and his uncle’s huge bulk filled the light.

“What are you doing lying abed? Where is breakfast? Some of us actually have to work you know.”

Harry knew better then to mention he had been locked up, he scurried away. Dodging a kick from his uncle.

He could hear his portly cousin’s mocking laughter as he went to pull a flying pan out and tugging his stool to the stove so he could put the pan on a burner. HE pulled with all his might to open the icebox and pull out milk, sausages and eggs. He did it one at a time, finding a bowl after moving the stool so he could whip the eggs. The first time he’d been first made to cook, he had been four; he’d whipped the eggs incorrectly and made a huge mess before breaking a bowl. The bowl was broken when Uncle Vernon hit him so hard he flew across the kitchen. He tried to hide a grimace at the memory, he’d broke his arm and still had to learn to cook. He did his best to fry up sausages and eggs, he made toast, lots of it and coffee as well as putting on water for his aunt Petunia’s tea. He bit
his lip as he went searching for the ingredients for Dudley’s favorite, French Toast. He had to make them all happy or he would be punished.

“I don’t want French Toast Mummy. I want pancakes.”

Harry stiffened, so much for that idea. He went to get the pancake mix.

“Whatever you want Diddly-kins.”

Harry wished he had a mother but his was dead, killed by his drunken father if Uncle Vernon was to be believed.

He finished cooking and dished up breakfast…

Vernon glared, “it’s cold. How hard is it to make a hot breakfast? No lunch and no dinner either. Go to your room.”

Harry hadn’t eaten since the day before yesterday, he said softly, “Yes uncle.” he had been disobedient, he deserved to be punished for not performing as he aught.

*Three years later…*

“You trying to embarrass me? How dare you have a better grade then Dudley! We take you in out of the goodness of our hearts, and you can’t even show us a bit of gratitude.”

Harry bit his lip, trying not to cry out as the belt came down again and again. Why hadn’t he died in the car accident? Why did he have to be thrown free? What kind of a horrible baby had he been to deserve his father to kill his mother because he’d been born? What had he done to deserve his father slicing a lighting bolt on his forehead? He was been beaten for scoring well on a test, for proving he was good at anything. He would never try to achieve anything again. He was the son of a worthless drunk after all…he would never achieve anything anyway. He was from bad seed after all…

Harry felt a tear slide down his cheek, why was he so bad? Why couldn’t be good? Why couldn’t he please the only family he had? He was such a bad boy?

XooooooX

Draco Malfoy was born from two exceptionally talented pure-bloods, taught at an early age all things the heir to the prestigious bloodlines of Black and Malfoy ought to know.

Destined for greatest and therefore a son of the House of Slytherin, he was looking forward to Hogwarts.

With each year that passed he grew stronger, born with a temper and exceptional magical skill he would have an easy time achieving good marks, Prefect status and hopefully, Headboy. He was spoiled by his mother but his father didn’t hesitate to punish him if he failed to achieve the level his father expected. He would be highly skilled in many subjects as well as Occumency and Legilimency not mention dark magic that as the Malfoy heir was his right and duty to learn. He would do well, he would exceed his father’s expectations. No rumors of highly gifted babies who grow up after defeating the great and powerful Dark Lord.

The world would be at his feet and that was no less then he deserved.
A new truth

Title: Truth behind the name and the lies

Pairing: DracoxHarry,

Fandom: HP

Summary: An abused boy finds out he's a wizard and a hero; his tormented mind rebels. One person sees through the misconceptions to the real Harry and treats him the way he deserves. Why Harry never fights back from personal attacks...why does he crave more? Because he isn't a hero, he isn't brave, he's hiding behind the shadow of the boy they all believe him to be.

"..." is spoken.

'...' is mind to mind communication.

Chapter 1 - A New Truth?

Three years later...

Harry was picking up the mail. It was almost his eleventh birthday, not that it meant anything. He never received presents, and of course he was worked harder than ever probably because he was now older. He spotted a strange envelope that had his name on it.

H. Potter
The Cupboard Under the Stairs
4 Privet Drive
Little Whinging
Surrey

He was in shock, because he didn't know anyone who might be writing to him...

"Boy! Don't lollygag all day. Give me the mail."

Harry handed over everything but his letter.

"Give me that."

Harry had felt something akin to bravery awaken in him when he held the letter, "No! It's mine. It has my name on it."

Uncle Vernon's face turned red, "No one would be sending a worthless child like you letters." As he stared at the envelope his eyes narrowed, his veins strained his neck, he yelled, "Petunia!"
His aunt emerged from the house, "What is it?"

His uncle held out the letter.

Petunia took it then turned white, "I warned you. You didn't listen. I told you about his parents."

Vernon thundered, "Boy! Cupboard now!"

Petunia snapped, "He can't go there. We have to leave. Now. Hopefully they won't find him."

Harry was in shock. What where they talking about? Why couldn't he have his letter? Why did they seem so upset?

Vernon yelled, "Go to your cupboard!"

Later he was dragged from his cupboard and tossed in Dudley's second bedroom.

There was a row between Dudley and his guardians about whether or not he should sleep there.

Another letter arrived.

Harry barely got a chance to glance at it.

Mr. H. Potter
Smallest bedroom
4 Privet Drive
Little Whinging
Surrey

"That's it! We'll go on vacation. We'll escape them. We won't let them force us to do as they wish. Harry! Car!"

Harry did as he was told, watching his aunt and uncle run about tossing things in the car, listening to Dudley pout.

"Don't understand why we have to leave because of YOU! I'm going to miss my summer with my friends."

Harry tried to ignore the death glare from Dudley, he wished he understood but he was too stupid…

They were chased by a storm of owls, pelting the car with letters.

Uncle Vernon cursed.

They ended up boating to a two-room shack in the middle of a Lake.

Dudley screamed, he was hungry and he wanted his TV or at least his computer.

Aunt Petunia's face had an odd white, pinched look.

They were trying to hide in the cabin: letters pouring in through the windows, under the door, through cracks in the walls and the floorboards.
Harry sat in a corner trying to be invisible. Whoever was sending him letters needed to stop! All they were doing was making things worse. It felt wrong to be sleeping in Dudley's second bedroom. He was the son of worthless drunk. Why did he deserve more than his cupboard for comfort.

A rainstorm coupled with the letters, so Uncle Vernon used the letters to light a fire to keep himself, Petunia and Dudley warm.

Harry didn't attempt to get close enough to share it knowing he would only be thrown back.

There came a loud rapping at the door of the cabin.

Uncle Vernon called out, "Go away. We're not to be disturbed."

The door exploded inwards, the small doorway blocked by someone far larger than Uncle Vernon holding a strange looking umbrella.

Harry curled up into a smaller ball. He was eleven but was the size of an eight year old due to poor nutrition.

"Expandous." The doorframe grew and the large shape entered.

"We said you weren't welcome. We don't want anything to do with your lot." Uncle Vernon's voice shook as he glared at the giant.

"Professor Dumbledore sent me. He said Harry weren't receiving his letters. Yer wife knows that wizards and witches raised by Muggles are often visited by Hogwarts' staff ter explain things," the rough, unfamiliar voice drawled as they put an umbrella under their arm. The doorframe shrunk to return to its original size.

Harry peeked up to look at the man who said his name with a strange tone of voice. Didn't he know what a bad kid he was? Was the scary man coming to take him away to a place for bad kids?

"We swore to stamp the unnaturalness from the boy when we took him in."

"How dare yeh talk about Harry that way! Don't you know who he is? Of course not, yer great lump of a Muggle."

Harry shook as the man walked towards him, trying to burrow into a smaller ball.

"Cum now Harry, no need ter be skeered of me. Me name's Rubeus Hagrid, Keeper of Keys and Grounds at Hogwarts. Yer've grown so much. Last time I saw yeh ye were just a wee thing."

Harry blinked, "You know me? How? I've never seen you before."

"I were a friend of yer parents."

"Then where were you when my father was drinking?" he lifted his fringe, "Or when he carved this into my forehead? When my mother tried to leave him and my father ran her off the road killing her?"

Hagrid blinked spinning on the Dursleys, "Ye've filled his head with lies, ya pathetic worthless
Muggles. How could ya let him grow up not knowing who he is?" He knelt at Harry's side, "Harry, yer father wasn't a drunk. He dinna give ya that scar. Harry, yer parents were heroes. Ya see Harry, yer like me, yer a wizard. Ye've been invited to attend the bestest school of Witchcraft and Wizardry. That's Hogwarts, that is."

"I'm his guardian and I won't have you filling his head with nonsense," Vernon said weakly, Petunia clinging to his shirt and Dudley cowering behind them.

Hagrid held up his umbrella, "Silencio. I'll deal with ya later." He tugged a squashed box out of his great coat, "Harry, a very happy birthday to yeh. Got summat fer yeh here. I mighta sat on it at one point, but it'll taste all right."

Harry accepted the box with shaky hands, opening it to find a large, sticky chocolate cake with ‘Happy Birthday Harry’ written on it in green icing. He said softly, "Why? My birthday isn't worth celebrating."

"Not worth celebrating? I knew leaving ya with these Muggles were a bad idea but Dumbledore said ye'd be alright. I trust that man with me life."

Harry asked softly, "Who is Dumbledore?"

"Who is Dumbledore? He's only the most powerful wizard in the world." He glared at the Dursleys again, "I'll have ter start at the beginning. Muggles are like yer relatives, they can't do magic. Have ye ever had anything strange happen when ye were upset?"

"I had a hideous sweater of Dudley's shrink when Aunt Petunia tried to force me to wear it. The more she tried to put it on the smaller it got," Harry shrugged, not really understanding. He glanced at his relatives before continuing, but played along, "There was this time, Dudley and his friends were playing a game and I didn't want to, I was being chased by Dudley's friends when I somehow found myself out of their reach, on a rooftop of all places. I firmly remembered being on the ground."

He was stupid after all, even if it was just a pretense to keep from being beaten. Then there was the time he was dreading going to school with that ridiculous haircut, he'd managed to make it grow back. Once, the very last time Dudley had hit him, had he got his revenge, without even realizing he was doing it? Had he set a boa constrictor on him?

Hagrid chuckled, "Accidental magic. It's something. I tossed me da up a tree when I were upset once. There you see, the sweater shrunk because ye dinna wanna wear it. Apparating? Wow, I've never heard of a wizard Apparating at yer age. Yer a wizard Harry. Hogwarts invited ye so the professors can teach ya how to use yer power. We've established yer a wizard Harry. Now, yer parents were brave. When ya were born there was this powerful wizard who…went bad. He did terrible things ye see. His name was…” he shook visibly, "I dunna like ta say it but I will once. His name was Voldemort…” Hagrid paled slightly, "He killed a great many an’a skeered a lot more. He attacked yer parents. They died trying ter save ya. I pulled ye out of the ruins of yer house meself. That scar is what was left from when he tried to kill ya. Yer the only one who has ever survived when You-Know-Who tried to kill em. Yer bloody famous Harry. Why, every kid in Our World knows yer name and what ya did."

Harry couldn't believe the story this man was telling, but his uncle must know it because of how hard he was trying to prevent him from knowing. As Hagrid's story came to a close, he saw again the blinding flash of green light, more clearly than he had ever remembered it before — and he remembered something else for the first time in his life: a high, cold, cruel laugh. He sighed staring at the cake, "If I was that special why was I sent there? To them..."
Hagrid shrugged, "Because Dumbledore said ye'd be safe there. They were yer family."

Harry nodded sadly, "If you say so." That meant no one would believe him if he told the truth. He'd have to hide his scars. If it were true that he was going to be seen as a hero, then he'd have to learn to protect his secrets. He couldn't see himself as a hero though…

Hagrid pulled out some kind of paper, a feather and an owl, scribbled a note and gave it to the owl. "Well nah," he began, "since yer aunt couldn't be troubled ter make us tea, I'll have ter come up with sumthin'." He pointed his umbrella, mumbled something under his breath, great flames burst in the fireplace and he sat back down on the sofa, which sagged under his weight. The giant began taking all sorts of things out of his great coat: a copper kettle, a squishy package of sausages, a poker, a teapot, two chipped mugs and a bottle of some amber liquid that he took a swig from before starting to make tea. Soon the hut was full of the sound and smell of sizzling sausage. Hagrid handed Harry an envelope, "Here. It's not everything ya need ter know but it's a start.

Harry read his letter,


HOGWARTS SCHOOL of WITCHCRAFT and WIZARDRY

Headmaster: ALBUS DUMBLEDORE
(Order of Merlin, First Class; Grand Sorc.; Chf. Warlock; Supreme Mugwump; International Confed. of Wizards)

Dear Mr. Potter,

We are pleased to inform you that you have been accepted at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. You will find enclosed a list of all necessary books and equipment. Term begins on September 1. We await your owl by no later than July 31.

Yours Sincerely,
Minerva McGonagall,
Deputy Headmistress

Nobody said a thing while the giant was working, but as he slid the first six fat, juicy, slightly burnt sausages from the poker onto two equally chipped plates:
"What does it mean they await my owl?"


"We're going shopping? For what?" Harry was so confused. A wizard? Magic was make-believe right?

"For school supplies: books, quills, parchment, a trunk, a uniform and other essentials."

Harry sighed, "This is all a joke isn't it? I'm supposed to attend Stonewall in the fall." With his marks and the meager amount his uncle was willing to spend on compulsory education, he couldn't attend anywhere better.
"Yer don't believe me? What have they done to ye?"

Harry shrugged, "Nothing, except for telling me that my parents were losers and drunks." No need to tell this giant the truth, he wouldn't be believed after all.

Hagrid served him tea, sausages and cake, "I'll be having a talk with Dumbledore when I get back ter the school."

Harry turned white and started to shake, "No, it's alright. I'll adjust, right? I'm a wizard…" he said with little conviction after having 'you're worthless' drilled into his head

Hagrid grinned, "Yer made of strong stuff Harry. Yer parents would be proud."

Proud wasn't the word Harry would have chosen. If his parents were heroes, he doubted very much that they'd care about a tiny boy who served his aunt and uncle like a servant and used to sleep in a cupboard. If they had, they wouldn't have died on him would they?
Chapter Two- First steps in a new world or Giving into to the fantasy

Harry slept with troubled dreams; torn between two realities. One, he was the unwanted child, the boy who couldn't do anything right. The other, he was the hero; the boy who defeated a evil man and couldn't remember how. He woke to a loud tapping noise.

Tap. Tap. Tap.

He sighed, sitting up, the musty coat still smothering him due to their difference in size, "I'm coming." he opened his eyes and was shocked. He wasn't at Number 4 Private Drive…he was in that shack by the sea. That meant the letter was real, that the giant was real. But the story the giant told couldn't be real, he still rebelled against it.

Tap. Tap. Tap.

Sighing Harry glanced up to see a rather annoyed owl tapping at the glass. He called out, "Hagrid… there's something at the window."

"Open it. It's the paper." Hagrid's voice was thick with sleep, he was obviously not really awake.

Used to obeying orders Harry did as he was told.

The owl dropped the paper on Hagrid.

"Pay him."

Harry blinked, "What."

"The owl needs to be paid. Give him five knuts."

"Knuts?"

"The bronze ones." the voice broke off due to a snore.

Harry dug through all of the pockets pulling out random items before he ended up with strange looking coins, He choose five little bronze ones.

The owl held out the leg that had a pouch.
Harry placed the strange coins in the pouch, he could feel the slight gnaw of hunger but ignored it. The tea, yesterday had been his first meal in two days. He wasn't used to eating much...

The sofa squeaked, the giant groaned as he sat up, "Best be off, Harry, lots ter do today, gotta get up ter London an' buy all yer stuff fer school."

"London..." he'd never been so far from Surrey until this 'vacation'. "How can we buy anything? I have no money, Uncle Vernon will never pay for Hogwarts."

"Didn't I tell you he's not going?" Vernon Dursley hissed from the doorway of the other room, his wife and son behind him. "He's going to Stonewall High and he'll be grateful for it. I've read those letters and he needs all sorts of rubbish; spell books and wands and other junk."

"If he wants ter go, a great Muggle like you won't stop him," growled Hagrid. "Stop Lily an' James Potter's son goin' ter Hogwarts! Yer mad. His name's been down ever since he was born. Seven years there and he won't know himself. He'll be with youngsters of his own sort, fer a change, an' he'll be under the greatest headmaster Hogwarts ever had Albus Dumbled—"

"I AM NOT PAYING FOR SOME OLD CRACKPOT TO TEACH HIM MAGIC TRICKS!" yelled Uncle Vernon.

Hagrid seized his umbrella and whirled it over his head, "NEVER —" he thundered, "— INSULT — ALBUS — DUMBLEDORE — IN — FRONT — OF — ME!" He brought the umbrella swishing down through the air to point at Dudley — there was a flash of violet light, a sound like a firecracker, a sharp squeal, and the next second, Dudley was dancing on the spot with his hands clasped over his fat bottom, howling in pain. When he turned his back on them, Harry saw a curly pig's tail poking through a hole in his trousers.

Uncle Vernon roared, he cast one last terrified look at Hagrid and slammed the door behind them.

Hagrid looked down at his umbrella and stroked his beard, "Shouldn'ta lost me temper," he said ruefully, "but it dinna work anyway. Meant ter turn him into a pig, but I suppose he was so much like a pig anyway there wasn't much left ter do." He cast a sideways look at Harry under his bushy eyebrows. "Be grateful if yeh dinna mention that ter anyone at Hogwarts," he said. "I'm — er — not supposed ter do magic, strictly speakin'. I wer allowed ter do a bit ter follow yeh an' get yer letters to yeh an' stuff — one o' tha reasons I was so keen ter take on tha job."

"Why aren't you supposed to do magic?" asked Harry.

"Oh, well — I were at Hogwarts meself but I — er — got expelled, ter tell yeh the truth. In me third year. They snapped me wand in half an' everything. But Dumbledore let me stay on as gamekeeper. Great man, Dumbledore."

"Why were you expelled?"

"We're losing daylight and we've got lots ter do today," said Hagrid loudly. "Gotta get up ter town, get all yer books an' that. Don't worry about paying for books and all," said Hagrid, standing up and scratching his head. "D'yeh think yer parents didn't leave yeh anything?"

But you said their house was destroyed and Uncle Vernon said they were penniless trash..."

"They dinna keep their gold in the house, boy! Besides, haven't you figured out Dursley's a liar through and through? Penniless? The heir to the house of Potter? Penniless? Rubbish, that is. Nah, first stop fer us is Gringotts. Wizards' bank. Oh look, we have two sausages left, they're not bad cold.
An' I wouldn' say no teh a bit o' yer birthday cake, neither." he cut another slice of cake for them both and put a sausage on the chipped plates, "Here, breakfast…"

Harry took the plate shyly, "Thanks…" he reluctantly ate with his fingers, he was too in shock to ask more questions. Questions usually meant he was going to get beaten for asking so he figured he'd best be quiet. It couldn't be true, he had money, he was a wizard and everything Uncle Vernon said was a lie? The voice in his mind contended this was all a dream, a fantasy. Surely, there had to be someone who knew the truth, he couldn't handle it if everyone treated him like Hagrid did. He didn't deserve it, he didn't like it but he was scared of what they would do if they discovered it was all a lie.

"Got everythin'? Come on, then."

Harry followed Hagrid out onto the rock, he didn't have anything but the oversized clothes on his back after all. The sky was quite clear now and he could see now that what he thought was a lake was actually the sea. The water gleamed in the sunlight. The boat Uncle Vernon had hired was still there, with a lot of water in the bottom after the storm.

"I have a question." Harry said quietly, "How did you get here?" looking around for another boat and didn't see one.

"Flew," said Hagrid.

"Flew? Oh." not sure he believed him

"Yeah, but we'll go back in this. Not s'posed ter use magic now I've got yeh."

They settled down in the boat, Harry still staring at Hagrid, trying to imagine him flying. His mind rebelled, man didn't fly without planes or helicopters.

"Seems a waste ter row," Hagrid muttered, glancing at Harry. "If I was ter…er…speed things up a bit, would yeh mind not mentionin' it at Hogwarts?"

"I won't." shrugged Harry, eager to see more magic though he still didn't believe. An adult who was huge and imposing who could break him easily said not to tell. Honestly, Harry was too shell-shocked and slightly terrified of the gentle giant to tell anyone about Hagrid using magic.

Hagrid pulled out the pink umbrella again, tapped it twice on the side of the boat, and they sped off toward land.

Harry drifted off into his own tormented mind.

Hagrid read the paper as the boat sped along.

Harry barely noticed the title of the paper was the Daily Prophet and the pictures moved.

XooooooX

It was finally the day Draco had been waiting his whole life for, today, they would be going to Diagon Alley for him. Today, felt like the first day of the rest of his perfect life. They were going to get his supplies for Hogwarts, Father wanted him to go to Durmstrang because of its relaxed stance on the teaching of Dark Magic to continue his education but Mother had refused to let their only child be so far away. Besides, Father was one of the Hogwarts governors, it would look bad if he didn't send his son.

Draco didn't want to go to Durmstrang and was quite pleased his mother's decision stood. He'd have
friends in Slytherin, all the pure-blood children he'd grown up with; Blaisé, Pansy, Greg, Theo and Vince.

He snickered, he couldn't wait. He'd have high marks in every subject, he'd assume the mantle of the Prince of Slytherin from his father and the school would be at his feet. His father was on the Board of Governors, had a seat in the Wizengamot and was well thought of at the ministry.

He picked an expensive stylish outfit to be seen in, smart black trousers, shiny Italian leather shoes, silk socks and a pressed green shirt that would match the colors of his future house.

"Time to go," he sneered at the looking glass as he heard his mother call.

XooooooX

It was a long uncomfortable trip by rail to London, Hagrid led Harry into a place Uncle Vernon would call a seedy pub. The Leaky Cauldron was it's name, Harry saw it was filled with strange types wearing cloaks and things he was sure was called a robe. One lady in a corner was wearing a pointed hat and smoking a pipe. Harry tried to hide behind Hagrid, please don't notice me he thought. He really didn't want to be noticed…he couldn't play the role they wanted yet. He wasn't a hero, he was just a scared little boy.

Hagrid reached back for him and placed the shaking boy in front of him.

"Hey Hagrid. You here for a drink…"

Hagrid shook his head, "No sir. On Hogwarts business. Dumbledore's orders. He sent me to retrieve this little fellow." he brushed aside Harry's bangs.

Harry shook, no…not the scar. He reached up and tugged his hair back down.

"It's him."

"It's really him…"

"Harry Potter? In my pub…"

This was all wrong; the looks of awe, the worship in their eyes. It sliced through Harry's soul like a knife. He was hugged and bowed to by strangers. He whispered, "Hagrid, please. Let's go…" shaking, he needed out.

"Poor dear, Hagrid you've made us overwhelm him. You take him to buy his school things right now. Don't you go telling everyone you meet who he is. Poor thing is shaking in his shoes."

Hagrid glanced down at Harry, "I see. Sorry Harry. I dinna think."

"It's okay. I didn't know I'd react like this." Harry said quietly, a lie but he got used to lying to protect himself a long time ago.

"Come on then. I promise not ter show ya off again." leading Harry with a heavy but gentle hand on his shoulder.

Somehow Harry doubted that…but he couldn't fight back. He didn't know how, didn't have it in him.

They exited out the back door of the pub.
"Three up… two across…" he muttered. "Right, stand back, Harry." He tapped the wall three times with the point of his umbrella. The brick he had touched quivered, it wriggled and in the middle, a small hole appeared. It grew wider and wider, a second later they were facing an archway large enough even for Hagrid, an archway onto a cobbled street that twisted and turned out of sight.

"Welcome," said Hagrid, "to Diagon Alley."

Stepping through the archway only to have it return to a solid wall, Harry shook. Magic was real but what everyone thought he was, he wasn't. He wasn't a hero this was all a mistake.

Harry spotted a sign that read Cauldron, all sizes and types, another that read Eeylops Owl Emporium; Tawny, Screech, Barn, Brown, and Snowy. There were shops selling robes, shops selling telescopes and strange silver instruments Harry had never seen before, windows stacked with barrels of bat spleens and eels' eyes, tottering piles of spell books, quills, and rolls of parchment, potion bottles, globes of the moon…

"We'll need to visit most of the shops, but Gringotts first."

Harry silently let the giant push him towards a snowy white building that towered over the other little shops. Standing beside its burnished bronze doors, wearing a uniform of scarlet and gold, was a strange creature; they were short but muscular with pointed ears.

"That ther is a goblin, strange creatures but guardians and owners of Gringotts. This way."

Harry nodded slowly, not entirely sure.

Hagrid pushed him inside, two goblins bowed to him.

They entered a marble hall; there was a long counter with around a hundred goblins counting money, examining jewel with things that resembled small telescopes and scribbling in books. More goblins were escorting around humans in and out of the many doors in the hall. They walked towards the counter to a free teller.

Hagrid grinned, "We're here to take money from Mr. Potter's safe."

"You have his key…"

Harry froze as Hagrid brushed his hair out of the way before digging into those many pockets in search of a key. In his search he pulled out bits of string, dog biscuits, a quill, an ink pot and finally a tiny golden key.

Harry still was surprised the giant had the key to his safe, why?

The goblin glanced at it, "It seems to be the proper key."

"I'm also here on Hogwarts' business, here's a letter from Dumbledore giving me the authority to remove the You-Know-What in vault 713."

"I see." the goblin gestured at another, "Griphook, take these gentlemen to the vaults."

The new goblin nodded, "come with me."

They followed closely, Harry was tempted to ask but he worried about upsetting the giant.

Griphook held open the door they exited the marble hallway and entered a narrow stone passage with flaming torches.
There were tracks like for a train, the goblin whistled and a small cart like an ore cart appeared and hurled towards. They climbed in, how the giant fit Harry was amazed, himself and Griphook fit easily. Harry wasn’t much bigger then the goblin. He looked around absorbing the new environment still half-afraid he’d wake to find it a dream. He glanced at the man behind him, Hagrid looked a little green, he must get motion sickness or something. The cart stopped suddenly, Griphook exited and unlocked the large door.

Harry watched as a lot of green smoke came billowing out, and as it cleared, Harry gasped. Inside were mounds of gold coins. Columns of silver. Heaps of little bronze Knuts. It couldn't be his, he’d never seen that much money. What was it's worth in pounds?

"It's yer's Harry."

Harry wondered if he was worth that much why didn't the Dursleys know? Why hadn't they taken it from him? They complained he was so expensive, he ate less then a third of what Aunt Petunia ate, wore Dudley's hand-me-downs, cooked and cleaned for them. He was like a maid…

Hagrid helped Harry pile some of it into a bag, "The gold ones are Galleons," he explained. "Seventeen silver Sickles to a Galleon and twenty-nine Knuts to a Sickle, it's easy enough. Right, that should be enough fer a couple o' terms, we'll keep the rest safe for yeh." He turned to Griphook. "Vault seven hundred and thirteen now, please, and can we go more slowly…"

This was more money then Harry's ever seen and they were letting him leave with it?

"The carts have only one speed." was the gruff reply.

The cart took a deep plunge into the torchlight tunnels and traveled over a ravine Harry was too frightened to do more then peek over the edge of the cart. The cart stopped suddenly, before a vault that bore the number 713- it had no key hole.

"If anyone but a Gringotts goblin tried that, they'd be sucked through the door and trapped in there," said Griphook.

Something really extraordinary had to be inside this top security vault, Harry was sure, and he leaned forward curious but shy, expecting to see fabulous jewels at the very least — but at first he thought it was empty. Then he noticed a grubby little package wrapped up in brown paper lying on the floor. Hagrid picked it up and tucked it deep inside his coat. Harry longed to know what it was, but knew better than to ask an adult questions when they wore that self-important look.

"Lets go. I want out ter these infernal tunnels. Dunno how anyone cin stand it."

Harry slightly enjoyed the ride, not so sure of the company.

It was nice and warm outside the huge marble building, he was still overwhelmed. There had to be someone who would see the truth. Someone who would look at him and knew he was no hero.

"Still got yer list Harry." Hagrid asked still looking sick.

Harry blinked, pulling the envelope from his pocket, "Yes…" he said in a soft voice, holding it out.

"Mmm…why don't you get your uniform, I'm going to pick me up something to calm me nerves."

Hagrid pointed with a shaky hand at Madam Malkin's Robes for All Occasions.

Harry nodded, heading towards the shop indicated. He felt a wave of peace wrap around him and nearly calm him the closer he came to the shop he better he felt.
Draco had been left to peruse Madam Malkin's as he wished while his parents did his shopping for school things for him. He felt a rush of a strange emotion wash over him and he glanced around searching to find the source.

Madam Malkin was a squat, smiling witch dressed all in mauve; mauve, what sort of choice was mauve? She called him over, "Young Master Malfoy, Anita is ready for you." she gesture to the tiny boy who looked like he was eight, "Come dear you can come to the back wit us and we can see about measuring you as well."

Draco blinked, "Hogwarts…"

The boy nodded, shifting nervously.

Draco saw fear and uncertainty in those eyes that matched perfectly to the shirt he was wearing. What could make him so afraid? This was Diagon Alley, the war had been over for ten years almost. He felt the strangest urge to protect this boy, who was he? He couldn't be a Mudblood, he would recognize the feel of new magic. This boy had old magic, nearly as old as his own. He could feel his tightly harnessed magic reaching for the boy's. He held out his hand stiffly, as the witches gestured for them to step onto the stools. The boy was so tiny… "Draco Malfoy."

The boy looked at his hand, "Harry…" his voice dropped glancing around, as if afraid the witches would heard him, "Harry…Potter…"

Draco blinked, Harry Potter? The Savior of the Wizarding World? The Boy Who Lived? Surely, this shaking, terrified boy who looked like he'd jump at any shadow wasn't the boy his father muttered and cursed when he drank. Yet, the boy felt honest.

Then he felt his mind invaded…

'Help me. It can't be true. I'm not a Hero. I'm nothing. I don't want to go back but I don't want to experience that again.'

Draco was pulled into the boy's memories,

The boy, Harry saw it was filled with strange types wearing cloaks and things he was sure was called a robe. One lady in a corner was wearing a pointed hat and smoking a pipe. Harry tried to hide behind Hagrid, please don't notice me he thought. He really didn't want to be noticed…he couldn't play the role they wanted yet. He wasn't a hero, he was just a scared little boy.

Hagrid reached back for him and placed the shaking boy in front of him.

"Hey Hagrid. You here for a drink…"

Hagrid shook his head, "No sir. On Hogwarts business. Dumbledore's orders. He sent me to retrieve this little fellow." he brushed aside Harry's bangs.

Harry shook, no…not the scar. He reached up and tugged his hair back down.

"It's him."

"It's really him…"

"Harry Potter? In my pub…"
This was all wrong; the looks of awe, the worship in their eyes. It sliced through Harry's soul like a knife. He was hugged and bowed to by strangers. He whispered, "Hagrid, please. Let's go…" shaking, he needed out.

"Poor dear, Hagrid you've made us overwhelm him. You take him to buy his school things right now. Don't you go telling everyone you meet who he is. Poor thing is shaking in his shoes."

Hagrid glanced down at Harry, "I see. Sorry Harry. I dinna think."

"It's okay. I didn't know I'd react like this." Harry said quietly, a lie but he got used to lying to protect himself a long time ago.

Draco was an Occumentus, he pulled back gasping. How had that happened? What powerful untamed magic the boy had. Harry was terrified, he had no knowledge of who he was or what his birthright was.

The boy, Harry stammered, 'What happened…'

Draco said gruffly, 'I don't know. How could you not know who you are? Who everyone thinks you are…'

Harry shifted back and forth, 'I wasn't raised to know what I was. That's all.'

Draco could see crooked fingers, as they were broken once and hadn't healed properly. The broken and unmended glasses. The glimpse of the scar through the thatch of messy hair, the body so tiny and thin as if he hadn't eaten properly. It made him angry, who dared treat a wizard of Harry Potter's lineage like this? James Potter may have married a Mudblood but a Potter deserved better, hero or no.

The witches twittered to themselves going through the motions of measuring them for robes and uniforms. The uniforms would adjust to house colors when they were Sorted of course.

Draco realized that the witches couldn't hear them, they weren't speaking audibly. Draco knew spells that allowed it but he hadn't cast them. He pushed the thought away, 'Tell me Harry, why aren't you a hero.'

The boy pulled into himself, 'I'm not. I'm not smart. I'm not brave. I barely passed grammar school.'

What was grammar school?

'I was raised by my aunt and uncle…their Muggles and they hate magic. They hate me…'

Draco sighed, 'Why are you telling me this…'

'Because…you see the truth…that what everyone thinks when they look at me is a lie. I'm a waste of space. Can't you see that? I don't belong anywhere.'

Draco felt not only honesty from the boy but an overwhelming sense of sadness, 'You want me to remind you that you don't belong? That you aren't worthy of being among us.'

Harry nodded, 'Please. I just…need time to get used to this. If I can. I hate what happened in the Leaky Caldron. I didn't know what to do. Why do they look at me like that? I don't know what they think I did but I didn't do it.'

Harry actually believed what he said, he wasn't under a memory charm, or a spell that made one
paranoid. Draco felt a need to do as Harry begged, 'Very well, I can help you.' he sneered, he wanted to be his friend, to protect him. If reminding this tiny terrified boy of the truth was the only way he could handle it.

The witch named Anita finished sizing his robes, "Young Master Malfoy, I've adjusted the school robe. We will send five as you ordered, along with properly sized uniforms which will assume the colors of your house."

Draco blinked, glancing at her, "Of course." he looked deep into those emerald eyes, 'If you want to keep your secret, look up glamour spells to hide those formerly broken fingers and any other marks you wish to hide. Buy nutrition, energy and healing potions at the apothecary. You have to appear the role or there will be trouble and you don't want that. No matter what anyone says about me, I'll keep your secret. I know who you are Harry Potter. I'll be your friend, I must go. If you need advice, buy an owl and write to me at Malfoy Manor. Don't sign as Harry. Sign as…Adder. You'll be my little snake in training.' no words passed his lips after speaking to Anita. If his father knew he was going to advise the Boy Who Lived he would be struck with the Cruciatus curse until he was nearly broken. He was an Occumentus. Lucius was not, Uncle Severus had trained him well…

A friend, someone who knew the truth and didn't hate him. Harry had never had a friend before and now he had Draco. Glamours to hide his scars and improperly healed fingers, why had Draco noticed his fingers when no one else had? Potions? What were those? Like medicine and vitamins? He couldn't believe the women didn't notice they were talking, why had he suddenly felt calm and safe when in Draco's presence?

He paid for his clothes and was going to wait for them, he couldn't have them sent to the Dursleys, they would arrive by owl no doubt and it would get him in trouble. He smiled, "Excuse me. Is it possible to arrange an evening delivery? I live near Muggles and wouldn't want to disturb them." where had he gotten this confidence? From Draco? That wasn't possible...

"Of course young Master. I will have them delivered in two days time."

Harry nodded, and walked out to find Hagrid, his current scary guardian. Hagrid was outside with ice creams, Harry blinked he was rarely allowed to have such a treat unless Dudley was unsatisfied for some reason and it wasn't allowed to go to waste. He asked softly, "You got me ice cream…"

Hagrid grinned, "Wanted to apologize fer embarrassing ya like I did at ther Leaky Caldron."

Harry held out his hand nervously, afraid the offer of the sweet treat would be rescinded. The cone was placed in his hand and he started to eat it with relish; it was chocolate and raspberry with chopped nuts. He'd never had anything that tasted so good and it didn't seem to melt in the hot sun. "Perhaps, we should continue our shopping. I'll buy you a birthday present later."

Harry barely noticed his bag of money was slung over Hagrid's shoulder. He'd never really received a present, not like Dudley who received many. Last year Harry received a hanger and old socks.

"Come on." Hagrid said after they both finished their ice cream.

They bought Harry's school books in a shop called Flourish and Blotts where the shelves were stacked to the ceiling with books as large as paving stones bound in leather; books the size of postage stamps in covers of silk; books full of peculiar symbols and a few books with nothing in them at all. Harry picked up some books on Hogwarts, one on himself, one on healing spells and Glamours. He
picked one up on the war, hoping it would answer questions he was afraid to ask. He choose one called, 'A Muggleborn's introduction to the Wizarding world.' he barely noticed a bushy haired girl grabbing similar books and stacking them in an older man's arms, perhaps her father. Harry turned his back on her, "Where to next Hagrid." after his books were paid for by the giant with his money, bundled up and placed in a bag were they shrunk. He also picked up a dozen quills, two ink pots and rolls of parchment.

"Don't worry lad, once you take the books out of the bag they'll resume the original size."

The comment pleased Harry.

"Come along."

Harry chose a pewter cauldron at the cauldron shop, a nice set of scales for weighing potion ingredients and a collapsible brass telescope. He took his money bag back again, letting Hagrid carry his purchases for now.

Then they visited the Apothecary, which was fascinating enough to make up for its horrible smell, a mixture of bad eggs and rotted cabbages. Barrels of slimy stuff stood on the floor; jars of herbs, dried roots, and bright powders lined the walls; bundles of feathers, strings of fangs, and snarled claws hung from the ceiling. Harry asked the man behind the counter for a supply of some basic potion ingredients for school, Harry looked around for the potions Draco mentioned, he saw silver unicorn horns at twenty-one Galleons each and minuscule, glittery-black beetle eyes (five Knuts a scoop). He located the potions, Harry thought back which ones had Draco said? Oh, Nutrient, healing and energy. He grabbed an armful of each, he glanced around for Hagrid, the giant wasn't watching. He headed over the counter, "I want these too. I don't know how to make them yet."

The man shrugged, whispered something and filled the bag with his potions and the ingredients he ordered.

"What did you say…" Harry asked curious.

"I made the vials unbreakable. Wouldn’t want them to mix with your potions making kit."

Harry nodded, smiling, "Thanks." He walked over to the giant, "I got it, what next."

"Gimme yer list." Outside the Apothecary, Hagrid checked Harry's list again. "Just yer wand left — A yeah, an' I still haven't got yeh a birthday present."

Harry felt himself go red. "You don't have to —" he didn't need one or expect it.

"I know I don't have to. Tell yeh what, I'll get yer animal. Not a toad, toads went outta fashion years ago, yeh'd be laughed at — an' I don' like cats, they make me sneeze. I'll get yer an owl. All the kids want owls, they're dead useful, carry yer mail an' everythin'."

Owl, Draco said to owl him. That meant he needed an owl first right? He shifted nervously, "Alright…"

They entered Eeylops Owl Emporium, which was filled with dark and full of rustling and flickering, jewel-bright eyes.

"How might I help ya mate."

"He's going away ter Hogwarts and he'll be needed an owl." Hagrid preened, looking proud of himself.
Harry sighed, not realizing the Giant still had all of his things.
"He'll have to look around, owls don't always want to be taken home. If they don't like you they
won't stay."

Harry worried, how could he contact his only friend, the only person who knew the truth if the owls
didn't want him.

There came a hoot to his left and then a great snowy owl landed on his shoulder.

Harry was nearly knocked off his feet, he was surprised her talons didn't dig into his skin.
"I think she likes ya Harry." Hagrid chuckled.

Harry reached to touch her, "Really…"
"That'll be 25 galleons."

Harry barely noticed it but Hagrid paid for the owl out of his money and not Hagrid's. That hurt…
was it intentional or an accident?

"Don' expect you've had a lotta presents from them Dursleys. Just Ollivanders left now — only place
fer wands, Ollivanders, and yeh gotta have the best wand." said Hagrid gruffly.

A magic wand, this was what Harry had been really looking forward to. His sorrow at realizing it
was his parents money that paid for his birthday present forgotten.

The last shop was narrow and shabby. Peeling gold letters over the door read Ollivanders: Makers of
Fine Wands since 382 B.C. A single wand lay on a faded purple cushion in the dusty window.

A tinkling bell rang somewhere in the depths of the shop as they stepped inside. It was a tiny place,
empty except for a single, spindly chair that Hagrid sat on to wait. Harry felt strangely as though he
had entered a very strict library; he swallowed a lot of new questions that had just occurred to him
and looked instead at the thousands of narrow boxes piled neatly right up to the ceiling. For some
reason, the back of his neck prickled. The very dust and silence in here seemed to tingle with some
secret magic.

"Good afternoon," said a soft voice.

Harry jumped. Hagrid must have jumped, too, because there was a loud crunching noise and he got
quickly off the spindly chair.

An old man was standing before them, his wide, pale eyes shining like moons through the gloom of
the shop. "I expected to see you soon. You have your mother's eyes but you look like your father. I
remember every wand I sell. Her first wand was ten and a quarter inches long, swishy, made of
willow. Nice wand for charm work. Your father had a mahogany wand, eleven inches. Pliable. A
little more power and excellent for transfiguration. Well it's the wand that chooses the wizard, of
course."

Harry was overwhelmed again, he closed his eyes and thought of Draco.

"I just sold a hawthorn wand, eleven inches with Heartstring to Young Mister Malfoy."

Harry's eyes popped open and he smiled only to have it die on his face.

"Malfoys, not ter good wizard in the bunch. Slytherins the lot of them. All wizards that went bad
were from that House."

Harry opened his mouth to protest, then he heard Draco's voice in his mind,

No matter what anyone says about me, I'll keep your secret. I know who you are Harry Potter. I'll be your friend.

It hurt to have his only friend spoken about so harshly.

The old man shrugged, "Sorry to say I sold the wand that left him his famous scar. Thirteen-and-a-half inches. Yew. Powerful wand, very powerful."

Harry grimaced at the reminder of his scar.

"Hmmm," said Mr. Ollivander, "Well, now — Mr. Potter. Let me see." He pulled a long tape measure with silver markings out of his pocket. "Which is your wand arm?"

"My what? Err…I'm right handed."

"Every Ollivander wand has a core of a powerful magical substance, Mr. Potter. We use unicorn hairs, phoenix tail feathers, and the heartstrings of dragons. No two Ollivander wands are the same, just as no two unicorns, dragons, or phoenixes are quite the same. And of course, you will never get such good results with another wizard's wand."

They went through many wands, Harry was afraid they would never find one for him. That it had all been a mistake.

"Tricky customer, eh? Not to worry, we'll find the perfect match here somewhere — I wonder, now — yes, why not — unusual combination — holly, dragon heartstring and phoenix feather, eleven inches, nice and supple. I've never made a wand quite like it."

Harry took the wand. He felt a sudden warmth in his fingers. He raised the wand above his head, brought it swishing down through the dusty air and a stream of red and gold sparks shot from the end like a firework, throwing dancing spots of light on to the walls.

"Well, well, well… how curious… how very curious…" He put Harry's wand back into its box and wrapped it in brown paper, still muttering, "Curiouser… curiouser…"

"Sorry," Hagrid asked, "but what's curious?"

Mr. Ollivander fixed Harry with his pale stare. "I remember every wand I've ever sold, Mr. Potter. Every single wand. It so happens that the phoenix whose tail feather is in your wand, gave another feather — just one. It is very curious indeed that you should be destined for this wand when its brother — why, its brother gave you that scar. Also, being the only wand I made to have a duel magical core. It's other brother left my shop in the hand of Young Master Malfoy. The Dragon heartstring in both your wands came from the same dragon."

Harry smiled to himself, his wand had a connection Draco's. It made him feel better, he did his best to ignore the fact that his scar was caused by the other brother wand.

"The wand chooses the wizard, remember… I think we must expect great things from you, Mr. Potter… After all, He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named did great things — terrible, yes, but great."

Great things? From him? He felt a yearning for Draco, his friend…his only friend. The only one who
knew the truth.

He wasn't sure he liked Mr. Ollivander too much- the man was scary. He paid seven gold Galleons for his wand, and they left.

It was late afternoon as Harry and Hagrid made their way back through Diagon Alley, returning through the wall, walked into the Leaky Cauldron, which was now thankfully empty. Harry didn't speak at all as they walked back the way they came that morning; he didn't even notice how much people were gawking at them on the Underground, laden as they were with all their funny-shaped packages- one package contained a shrunken trunk, which would resume it's former size when it's paper was untied. The snowy owl asleep in its cage in Harry's arms. It wasn't long before they reached Paddington station; Harry wasn't woken from his musing until Hagrid tapped him on the shoulder.

"Got time fer a bite to eat before yer train leaves," he said.

He bought Harry a hamburger and they sat down on plastic seats to eat them. Harry kept looking around. Everything looked so strange, somehow.

"You all right, Harry? Yer very quiet," said Hagrid.

Harry gave him a nervous smile, "Sorry, just a little overwhelmed is all. I've only know who I really was for less then a day. The reaction people had around me was…very different then what I'm used to. I'll be alright."

Hagrid leaned across the table, behind the wild beard and eyebrows he wore a very kind smile. "Don' you worry, Harry. You'll learn fast enough. Just be yerself. I know it's hard ter understand yer different yes but everyone starts at the beginning at Hogwarts, you'll be just fine. Yeh'll have a great time at Hogwarts — I did — still do, 'smatter of fact."

Harry climbed on to the train that would take him back to the Dursleys, all of his oddly wrapped bundles around him, then Hagrid hands him an envelope.

"Yer ticket fer Hogwarts, " he said. "First o' September. King's Cross. It's all on yer ticket. Any problems with the Dursleys, send me a letter with yer owl, she'll know where to find me…. . See yeh soon, Harry."

The train pulled out of the station. Harry wanted to watch Hagrid until he was out of sight; but he sighed, "You won't be the first person I'll owl. Draco will. Draco had had an aura of superiority until they looked in each other's eyes and started talking. When Draco realized the truth he was kind, helpful and promised to always be his friend.
Chapter Three- The beginning of a correspondence

It wasn't two days before Draco got his first letter, he didn't recognize the owl but it headed straight for his window where he was reading one of his schoolbooks, and not his father's study or the music room for his mother. He summoned a cookie and waited for the owl. The snowy owl landed on the window ledge with a letter in it beak. Draco held out his hands, one empty and open for the letter and the other open with the treat.

He smiled at the bird as it flew away before he went curl up near the fire with his letter.

To Drayko Malfoy
Malfoy Manor

Draco sighed, the boy didn't know how to spell his name. He would be corrected when he replied.

Dear Drayko,

It's... [Harry was crossed out with a lot of lines] Adder from the robes shop. I did as you said and bought those potions. They are hiding under a loose floorboard in my room. I've read all my textbooks already and I'm reading the book on Glamours.

How do they work? Do they only cover a part of the body or can they cover the whole body.

In my book on Hogwarts it talks about the Houses. Rivalries and all that, do students really hate each other if they are in different houses?

Tell me about yourself.

Adder

PS. Sorry if my letter is weird. Never wrote one before. I hope to hear from you soon.
Reply to:
H.
The penmanship was terrible, lots of crossed out words and ink stains. Draco sighed, being raised by Muggles really was a draw back. He walked to his writing desk, pulled out ink the color of Harry's eyes and started to write a reply. A rare smile creased his lips…

He called out, "Dobby."

The house elf that his father punished the most Apparated in with a crack. "Yes Master Draco."

"Give this to Artemis right away. I want this sent right away."

"As you wish Master Draco."

Sometimes being the young master had its perks, he would have to come up with a story to tell his father. Something believable. He wasn't sure he agreed with all of his father's beliefs but he was willing to play the role of a good dutiful son unless he saw a different course of action would benefit him.

XoooooX

Harry was about to doze off reading his Transfiguration text when Hedwig gave a hoot and there was a tap at the window. He opened it and let in a beautiful silver owl. "You're pretty…"

It sniffed, dropped off his letter and left.

To H.
4 Private Drive
Little Whinging
Surrey

Adder,

My name is Draco not Drayko. Thought you'd like to know.

Harry blushed in a embarrassment as he curled up on his bed.

I'm glad you got the potions. I hope they are helping, I can make them myself and I'm friendly with the potions instructor so if you need more when we're at school I'll make them. I'm pretty decent at potions myself.

Yes, Glamours can only affect, say your hand to make your fingers not look broken. If you need to more of your body, you can manipulate your magic with practice. Try not to use your wand. I recommend Glamourous Magnus, close your eyes when you say it and envision what you wish others to see. If your concentrate hard enough when you cast it, it should remain even when you sleep unless you are unconscious or too weak to fuel it with your magic.

As for Hogwarts, I don't think you'd like Gryffindor. It would make your hero status more
apparent and harder for the others to ignore. You aren't pathetic enough to be a Hufflepuff. As for Ravenclaw, you said you weren't smart so I doubt you'll be placed there. You have some power though untrained. If you are Sorted into Slytherin I'll look after you. Slytherins won't care about your hero status, many of them won't like you much anyway.

You want to know about me? I'm eleven, born to two prestigious lines of pureblood witches and wizards. I have been educated on decorum and had an education fitting the heir to a pureblood family. My father is in the Ministry and on the Board of Governors of Hogwarts. Mother is content to play her pianoforte and do her duty as Lady of the Manor. I'm keen with Potions, History and Charms.

Will you tell me about you? We are friends right?

Draco

PS. Can't wait to get your owl

Harry blushed, the handwriting was beautiful, he'd never seen anything like it. He still hadn't gotten used to writing with a quill. He hadn't really expected Draco to write back but he was very happy his friend had.

He wrote a reply, set the letter aside to have Hedwig deliver tomorrow night. Harry fell asleep holding the letter.

The days since Hagrid turned his world upside down, he had gotten basically ignored. He hadn't been yelled at, cuffed, beaten or smacked. His aunt and uncle didn't seem to see him and Dudley spent most of the time running away.

XoooooX

Draco waited watching the sky for two days, waiting Harry's reply. He'd started worrying about him, the tiny scared little boy from Madam Malkin's. He was so small and thin, his badly healed fingers, the jumpiness. What kind of Muggles was he living with?

Finally he spotting a white owl, he ran outside forgetting that Malfoys don't run they strut. The white owl landed on his arm gently, he took the letter and pet her.

"Draco."

Draco stiffened, the voice familiar and set his nerves on edge. "Yes father."

"Why were you running."

Draco bowed his head, "Forgive me father. I was waiting for a letter from a friend. I saw their owl and got excited."

"I see. You should restrain yourself more. Which friend."

Draco gave him his practiced reply, "A friend I made in Diagon Alley. He is from a powerful pureblood line. Has a hereditary seat in the Wizengamot. His parents died and he is being raised
Muggle by his Squib aunt. He is having a hard time adjusting." It was close to the truth, Harry was born to the Potter Bloodline, they did have a seat in the Wizengamot. He was raised by Muggles having a witch mother and a Muggle aunt did sort of make the woman a Squib.

"A pureblood wizard? Raise by a squib relation? Why was that allowed? Surely there must have been someone with active magic that could have raised the boy? A godfather or something…"

Draco shook his head, "I do not know why he was raised by the Squib. He had no other relatives that I know of. I felt his magic father, he wasn't lying. He was descended from an ancient line of wizards."

"Making an alliance before school? Quite fortuitous of you, Draco. Keep an eye on the boy. If the Squib is abusing the boy, I will be happy to see if I can have him removed from their custody. He should be raised by his own kind."

Draco nodded, "I will watch out for my Adder, I told him he'd be my little snake. I'll train him well," he bowed, "Bye father." He walked as fast as he dared to his room to read his letter before the fire.

Draco,

I'm using the nutrition potions sparingly, I'm eating more. They are treating me different now that I know I'm a wizard. If I need more potions I'll let you know. You really don't have to go to the trouble. The directions for these three potions look very complicated.

Gryffindor sounds scary, I don't want to be in a house where they'll regard me with awe. I don't think Hufflepuff will fit me, I'm not brave enough to be very loyal. I'm not smart so Ravenclaw won't want me. I'd like to be with you, it would be scary to be at school and not be around my only friend.

Me? Not much to tell. I was raised by my Aunt Petunia- my mother Lily's sister and Uncle Vernon. They have a son about our age name Dudley. They told me my father was a drunk. That he and my mother died in a car accident. They died because of me.

Even if that story wasn't true if they died protecting me doesn't that make it my fault?

I don't know, I only know I'm not a hero. I'm a coward. If some big scary wizard tried to attack me I'd curl up in a ball and try to hide. I'm not a savior, you know that.

Adder

Draco smiled, the handwriting was better. There were less scratched out words, less ink spots and it seemed like Harry was copying his own handwriting. If he kept writing Harry soon perhaps the tiny boy would end up with decent penmanship that wouldn't be an embarrassment to the Potter line.

The section of Harry's letter about himself didn't mention his formerly broken fingers or why he would need a powerful full body glamour. He sighed, if he found out those Muggles were the reason Harry didn't believe he was good enough or smart enough to be a wizard his punishment would know no bounds. His punishment would be swift…

As Draco held the letter staring at the line

Even if that story wasn't true, if they died protecting me doesn't that make it my fault?
*Flashback*

He heard a flash of green light, a high, cruel laugh that chilled his insides and his own voice, "No." There was a scream that pierced his heart, the fear for another person was shocking.

*End Flashback*

Draco shook, the fear for another person was a different feeling. He held the letter, what was locked in his mind? What was this memory he had while reading Harry's letter? Why were they connected?

He couldn't wait to see him, he needed to know the tiny boy he felt a need to protect was alright.
Title: Truth behind the name and the lies  
Pairing: DracoxHarry,  
Fandom : HP  
Notes: An abused boy finds out he's a wizard and a hero; his tormented mind rebels. One person sees through the misconceptions to the real Harry and treats him the way he deserves. Why Harry never fights back from personal attacks...why does he crave more? Because he isn't a hero, he isn't brave, he's hiding behind the shadow of the boy they all believe him to be. -yes I did rename the story. the title wasn't fitting...  
"..." is spoken.  
'...' is mind to mind communication.  

Chapter 4- Falling into fantasy, struggling for reality  

Harry had asked in his latest letter to Draco how to find such a place as Platform Nine and Three-Quarter. Apparently, he had to run at a wall between Platforms Nine and Ten. He had packed and repacked his trunk at least ten times. His uniforms and cloaks had arrived, he sighed. He missed his friend, the only one who knew the truth.  

He kept having panic attacks about everyone on the train reacting like the people in the Leaky Caldron. No matter what he did, the glamour wouldn't hide the scar that everyone recognized him with. He just wanted to be normal for once, he didn't want to stand out….  

Draco had promised to meet him on the train and to keep an eye on him. If Draco was there for him, it would be all okay right? He walked downstairs, his hands in his pocket holding onto Draco's letter. Thinking about his only friend made him feel safe and maybe a little brave. He called out from the doorway, "Umm...Uncle Vernon?"  

Grunt.  

"I need to be at King's Cross station before eleven o'clock to go to school. You'll get a nine-month vacation from me. Can you take me?"  

Grunt.  

Harry smiled, "Thanks." he was about to go back to the safety of his room, when his uncle spoke.  

"Train? Strange way for your lot to get to that crackpot place. What can't use broomsticks or flying carpets?"  

Harry didn't said anything, he'd learned that defending anything was ridiculous.  

"Where is this school anyway?"  

"Somewhere is Scotland. They hide it. I don't know exactly how they do that." Harry said quietly. He wasn't going to mention the strange platform, it would set them off again and Harry didn't want to
fight he was nervous enough.

"All right, we'll take you to King's Cross. We're going up to London tomorrow anyway, or I wouldn't bother."

"Why are you going to London?" Harry asked softly, half-afraid of angering them.

"Taking Dudley to the hospital," growled Uncle Vernon. "Got to have that ruddy tail removed before he goes to Smeltings."

"Oh. Okay." Harry hurried up to his bedroom so he wouldn't laugh, he'd forgotten about the tail. He pulled out his journal, caressing the soft green leather cover and admiring the silver design that looked like snakes. Draco sent him a magical journal that they wrote back and forth in; Harry slept with it under his pillow every night. It comforted him.

Draco had told him about the Wizarding world in their letters and this journal, about Quidditch, how it felt to fly, Portkeys, side-along Apparation. He told him about the houses, sorting, magical sweets, promises to help him with his studies and not let him fall behind. He sent Draco questions he had about his reading.

Draco was really nice, he'd changed from the moment they'd looked into each other's eyes. They'd been drawn into each other, Draco had tried to explain they spoke in their minds and not out loud. He wasn't entirely sure that he believed it but Draco hadn't lied to him…

XoooooX

Draco was excited, he was going to see Harry tomorrow. He would finally be assured the boy was fine. He worried about him, something he wasn't admitting to anyone else.

He smiled, holding the mate to Harry's journal as he drifted off, he couldn't wait…

XoooooX

Harry dressed in the same ill-fitting clothes he'd had for years. He didn't want to wear his new school things yet; it would upset his aunt and uncle, which was the last thing he wanted.

He grabbed his trunk, Hedwig's cage strapped to it and dragged it to the car. He managed to eat a bit of toast for breakfast, he wasn't going to push his luck.

They kicked him out of the car.

"Go. We don't have time to wait for you to catch that ruddy train." Uncle Vernon glared before they drove off.

Harry struggled with his trunk trying to put it on the cart until two identical voices sounded behind him.

"Need"
"Some"

"Help"

Harry turned to see two red-haired twins, he nodded slowly.

They effortlessly placed the trunk on the cart.

Harry gave them a wary smile, "Thanks." he hurried away from the kind strange boys, he had to find Draco. He found the wall between the two platforms as Draco described and walked right through, barely noticing a red-head doing the same thing. He spotted the scarlet train that had Hogwarts Express painted in gold on it's side. Harry looked behind him and saw a wrought-iron archway where the barrier had been, with the words Platform Nine and Three-Quarters on it, he had done it just like Draco said.

Smoke from the engine drifted over the heads of the chattering crowd, while cats of every color wound here and there between their legs. Owls hooted to one another in a disgruntled sort of way over the babble and the scraping of heavy trunks.

The first few carriages were already packed with students, some hanging out of the window to talk to their families, some fighting over seats. Harry pushed his cart off down the platform in search of an empty seat. He passed a round-faced boy who was saying, "Gran, I've lost my toad again."

"Oh, Neville," he heard the old woman sigh.

Harry pressed on through the crowd until he found an empty compartment near the end of the train. He put Hedwig inside first and then started to shove and heave his trunk toward the train door. He tried to lift it up the steps but could hardly raise one end and twice he dropped it painfully on his foot.

"Want a hand?" It was one of the red-haired twins who had placed his trunk on the trolley.

"Yes, please," Harry panted.

"Hard to believe a tiny thing like you is old enough for Hogwarts."

Harry blushed, it wasn't his fault he didn't eat right; he spent days in his cupboard and not allowed eat. If he was on punishment, he was locked in.

"Oy, Fred! C'mere and help!"

With the twins' help, Harry's trunk was at last tucked away in a corner of the compartment.

"Thanks," said Harry, pushing his sweaty hair out of his eyes, forgetting his very memorable scar that his Glamours wouldn't hide. With Draco's instruction he'd picked a powerful glamour that covered all his scars but used such an unnoticeable amount of magic it didn't set off the trace.

"Blimey, you're..." said the one he thought was Fred.

Harry sighed, "Yes." he sunk to one of the seats, how could he be so foolish? Letting anyone see that damn scar.

"Fred. George."

"Coming mum." the twins left before they could really react.

Harry didn't really want to think about red-heads, he wanted Draco.
The door of the compartment slid open and an unfamiliar redheaded boy came in, probably related to the twins. Why wasn’t it Draco…

"Anyone sitting there?" he asked, pointing at the seat opposite Harry. "Everywhere else is full."

Harry shook his head and the boy sat down. Why couldn't he tell him to go away? That he was saving the seat. Wait, how did he know Draco isn't already have a compartment?

The young red-head who had six inches on him glanced at Harry and then looked quickly out of the window, pretending he hadn’t looked.

Harry curled up in a ball, where was Draco? Why couldn't he find him?

"Ickly Ronnikins."

The twins were back.

Harry blushed, they were back…great…

"Listen, we're going down towards the middle of the train, Lee's got a tarantula down there."

"Whatever." Ron mumbled.

"Harry," said the other twin, "did we introduce ourselves? Fred and George Weasley. And this is Ron, our brother. See you later, then."

"Bye," said Harry

The younger red-head named Ron echoed the. The twins slid the compartment door shut behind them.

"Are you really Harry Potter?" Ron blurted out.

Harry sighed, "Not by choice I'm not."

The boy's face twisted in what looked like confusion, "What??"

"I just want to be like any normal student. I don't want to be special."

"But you're Harry Potter. The Boy Who Lived."

"I had nothing to do with that. I don't even remember. I didn't even know until this summer about any of that." He saw a flash of green light, a high, cruel laugh that chilled his insides and a voice that sounded like a young Draco, "No." a scream that felt like his own it pierced his heart, his fear overwhelming him.

Then the compartment door slid open yet again, Three boys entered, and Harry recognized the middle one at once: it was the pale boy from Madam Malkin's robe shop.

Harry smiled, Draco…finally…

Ron leapt to his feet, "What do you want, obviously you're a Malfoy. I won't let you drag Harry Potter to your level."

Harry looked at Draco with a begging look and they were in each other's mind again.
'Harry, you're here. Good, I was worried. You look alright. I should have known no one would let
you be my friend. Trust me. What I tell you in private is true. What I say in company is not. You
trust me right.'

Harry shook, 'Why would they keep us from being friends? It's not fair, I want to be where you can
protect me. Draco, please whatever you are planning don't. Don't push me away even as a lie.'

Draco smiled, 'Trust me. You trust me. I won't let them keep us apart forever. Play along.' he spoke
aloud finally, "So it's true. They're saying all down the train that Harry Potter's in this compartment.
So it's you, is it?"

"Yes," said Harry confused, he was looking at the other boys. Both of them were thickset and
looked extremely mean. Standing on either side of his friend, they looked like bodyguards.

"Oh, this is Crabbe and this is Goyle," said the pale boy carelessly, noticing where Harry was
looking. "In case you forgot, my name's Malfoy, Draco Malfoy."

Ron snorted, "Knew you were part of that lot. Why don't you go bother someone else? We don't
want your kind."

"Think my name's funny, do you? No need to ask who you are. My father told me all the Weasleys
have red hair, freckles, and more children than they can afford."

Harry winced, staring at Draco, did he have to sound so mean?

'Trust me. Just acting like he expects me to.' Draco turned back to Harry. "You'll soon find out some
Wizarding families are much better than others, Potter. You don't want to go making friends with the
wrong sort. I can help you there." he looked into Harry's eyes, 'Say you don't want to be my friend.
You have to. I promise to look out for you. Crabbe and Goyle will do as I say. Trust me. It's all
pretense."

Harry was trying not to cry, 'Please, don't make me do this. You're my only friend.'

Draco sighed, 'You'll still have me. You brought the journal right?'

'Yes.'

'Then tell me no, Adder it's the only thing I can do right now. They won't let me be your friend. Until
I figure out what is going on, we have to do things this way.'

Harry sighed, his heart breaking, "I can choose my own friends just fine." his voice almost too quiet
to hear.

"Be careful who you choose then. Choose riffraff and Blood traitors you'll turn out just like them. I
don't know who raised you but they should have taught you better manners."

Harry's eyes filled with tears, 'Draco, you're hurting me. Stop.'

'I'm sorry Adder.' Draco snorted, "Well if you're going to choose people like Weasleys who have lots
of red-hair, no money and second-hand everything over your own kind then to hell with you." he
spun out of the compartment with his bodyguards on his heels.

Harry pulled out his journal and held it to his heart, trying hard not to cry. Why did Draco do that?
Say such mean things to Ron who seemed to worship the ground Harry walked on. He didn't want
to be friends with someone who looked at him with that expression and sad mean things about
Draco. He pouted, Draco…

The journal warmed in his hand, he opened it.

Adder, I'm sorry. Listen to me. They won't let us be friends. They see me through my father's shadow. They don't see me. I want to protect you. They'll hate you and me if we showed we were friends. In public you have to act like I annoy you. I'll act like I hate you for refusing to be my friend. Unless we end up in Slytherin together.

He wrote back,

Draco, I don't want to do this. I want to be your friend. I can't lose you. You're the only one who knows the truth. The only one who sees me behind my name. I need you.

He waited until for the reply.

Adder, I know you're scared. It's okay to be scared. I'll protect you like I promised. We can keep our friendship a secret.

A tear hit the page and it shimmered.

Draco, you're hurting me. I can't do this without you. Everyone will act like they did in the Leaky Cauldron. I can't handle that again. Especially with more people. It's not fair. Why won't the glamour work on my scar?

It took a while for a reply.

"Don't worry about that git Malfoy. They are all like that. He isn't worth being upset over."

Harry ignored him.

The door opened, the boy who had said his toad was gone in the aisle of the train but he had a girl with him. She was already wearing her new Hogwarts robes, she looked like the girl with all the books from Flourish and Blots.

"Has anyone seen a toad? Neville's lost one," she said. She had a bossy sort of voice, lots of bushy brown hair, and rather large front teeth.

Ron glared, "No we haven't."

"No need to snap at me. You don't have to be rude," the girl said. "Nobody in my family's magic at all, it was ever such a surprise when I got my letter, but I was ever so pleased, of course, I mean, it's the very best school of witchcraft there is, I've heard. I've tried a few simple spells just for practice and it's all worked for me. I've learned all our course books by heart, of course, I just hope it will be enough. I'm Hermione Granger, by the way, who are you?" She said all this very fast.

Harry looked at Ron, and saw his stunned face, so this boy hadn't memorized or really looked at his textbooks. This Hermione was a Muggle…or born to Muggles at least to be a witch. But Ron was from a line of Ancient magic. He could feel it. Yet, the power from Ron was nothing like Draco's, even Hermione didn't come close. He wanted them to all go away…

He had felt the journal in his hands warm.

"Is that a pairing journal?"
Harry held it to his chest before the girl could touch it. "Maybe. None of your business. It's my mine."

The girl huffed, "You don't have to be rude. Who are you anyway to act so rudely?"

Ron's chest puffed out, "He's."

Harry whispered, "No. Don't."

"Harry Potter."

Harry shook closing his eyes. Oh no. it would start again.

Hermione blinked, "This tiny thing? Is the great Harry Potter? I know all about you, of course. I got a few extra books, for background reading, and you're in Modern Magical History and The Rise and Fall of the Dark Arts and Great Wizarding Events of the Twentieth Century."

"I know. None of what they printed is true." Harry said quietly. He'd purchased the same books himself.

Hermione's hands leapt to her hips, "Of course it is."

The journal warmed again.

"No it isn't. I'd know. Just because that's my name don't make me the person they say." he was always braver thinking about Draco. "I'm not that person. I never will be. Leave me alone," he curled up in the corner of his seat, and read the note from Draco.

Adder, it's alright. You're not alone. You have me. As for the glamour it must not work on scars like that one. I'll look into it. I'm still not sure what is so important about that scar. We need to talk. Not now. Later.

Adder, are you there? You feel upset. Is that my fault? I'm sorry.

He ignored the fans in the room, scribbling.

Draco, after you left and Ron said you're a terrible person. You're not. I know you aren't. I need you.

"Be careful with those pairing journals they can be magicked to take away your soul or make you believe untrue things."

Harry glared, "Better to lose my soul then to become the person you all seem to think I am. I will never be a hero."

"So you're just going to give up without trying?"

Harry's jaw dropped, "You don't even know me and you're going to believe lies. You aren't very smart then."

Hermione's jaw dropped, "Me? Not smart? You don't even know me."

"And you don't know me. Go away please. I have nothing to say to you."

Adder, I don't care what that Weasley says about me. You know the truth. You're getting
more upset. Talk to me Adder.

The door slammed.

Draco, is it true that pairing journals can be magicked to take away your soul? I know you wouldn't do that. This girl who was born to Muggles seems to think everything she reads is true. Her name's Hermione. She's mad because I'm giving up without trying to be who everyone thinks I am. And Ron thinks I'm this great person. He has that look I hate. Why is it you're the only one who sees the truth? They're gone. I'm alone. Thank heaven.

The journal cooled as it sent his reply. He looked up and Ron was still there.

Ron smirked, "Nice game you played. It made Miss Know-It-All go away."

Harry closed his eyes, why was that boy still here? It wasn't a game…why did no one believe him?

Adder, it's okay. You're right I would never give you anything that would hurt you. Hermione? She upset you? She's a Muggle-born witch? I won't soon forget her. And that Weasel is still bothering you? I'll do something as soon as I can. Trust me Adder. The next Prince of Slytherin won't take kindly to his friend being upset. I'm glad they're gone. Just rest Adder. I'll wake you with the journal when we get closer to Hogwarts. I know its hard on you to be treated like that by them.

Harry smiled writing back.

Draco. I trust you. I'm glad you know the truth. They're blinded by stories. Don't hurt them too much. I know what pain feels like. I'll rest. Don't forget to wake me.

He hugged the journal to his chest, pulling it beneath his glamour to protect it. Closing his eyes to rest.
First impressions

Title: Truth behind the name and the lies
Pairing: DracoxHarry,
Fandom : HP
Notes: An abused boy finds out he's a wizard and a hero; his tormented mind rebels. One person sees through the misconceptions to the real Harry and treats him the way he deserves. Why Harry never fights back from personal attacks...why does he crave more? Because he isn't a hero, he isn't brave, he's hiding behind the shadow of the boy they all believe him to be. -yes I did rename the story. the title wasn't fitting...

"..." is spoken.

'...' is mind to mind communication.

Chapter 5- First impressions

Harry woke as the journal warmed over his chest, he smiled reaching for his trunk for his robes and peered out of the window. It was getting dark, he could see mountains and forests under a deep purple sky. The train did seem to be slowing down. He wrote quickly,

**Draco. Thanks. See you soon.**

He and Ron took off their jackets and pulled on their long black robes. Ron's were a bit short for him, you could see his sneakers underneath them. Not that Harry cared much for the boy….

They must be close…

A voice echoed through the train: "We will be reaching Hogwarts in five minutes' time. Please leave your luggage on the train, it will be taken to the school separately."

Harry's stomach lurched with nerves, he wanted Draco. He wanted to hold his hand and hide behind him, why wouldn't they be allowed be friends? It wasn't fair...then again life wasn't fair. If it was he would have been raised by his parents and he wouldn't be looked at like he was an idol or a prince.

The train slowed right down and finally stopped. People pushed their way toward the door and out on to a tiny, dark platform. Harry shivered in the cold night air. Then a lamp came bobbing over the heads of the students, and Harry heard a familiar voice: "Firs' years! Firs' years over here! All right there, Harry?"

Hagrid's big hairy face beamed over the sea of heads.

Harry sighed, not Hagrid...he was the last person he wanted to see right now.

"C'mon, follow me — any more firs' years? Mind yer step, now! Firs' years follow me!"

Slipping and stumbling, they followed Hagrid down what seemed to be a steep, narrow path. It was so dark on either side of them that Harry thought there must be thick trees there. Nobody spoke much.
"Yeh'll get yer firs' sight o' Hogwarts in a sec," Hagrid called over his shoulder, "jus' round this bend here."

There was a loud "Oooooh!"

The narrow path had opened suddenly onto the edge of a great black lake. Perched atop a high mountain on the other side, its windows sparkling in the starry sky, was a vast castle with many turrets and towers.

Harry was struck dumb, he looked around wildly for Draco.

Their eyes met.

'Yes, Adder, that's Hogwarts. There were pictures in the books you bought. You'll be safe here. It's very hard for evil to get in here.'

'Draco, I'm scared. There are so many people. They'll all act like I'm a god or something. I can't handle it. Hagrid keeps calling me by name. I don't remember him. I don't trust him.'

'You shouldn't trust him Adder. Anyone who doesn't see who you are inside can't be trusted. Listen to what I say, keep your friends close and enemies closer. Someone wants you to be seen as a hero. We have to find out who. I want to know who sent you to stay with those horrible Muggles and let you be hurt.'

'Draco, Hagrid said Dumbledore left me in my aunt and uncle's care. Hagrid said Dumbledore said I'd be safe there. They were my family."

'Dumbledore? That old fool. If he knows what they've done to you I'll have him ruined. Unless he hoped that you would become his pawn. I won't let anyone do that to you Harry. You're my Adder, my little snake and I'll look out for you.'

'I know you will. I just hope that we don't have to play this game. I don't like this.'

"No more'n four ter a boat!" Hagrid called, pointing to a fleet of little boats sitting in the water by the shore. Harry and Ron were followed into their boat by the boy who lost his toad and Hermione.

Harry cursed to himself and then blushed, he saw Draco joined by Crabbe, Goyle and some brunette who tried to cling to him only to be glared at. Seeing Draco glare at her made him happy.

"Everyone in?" shouted Hagrid, who had a boat to himself. "Right then. FORWARD!"

And the fleet of little boats moved off all at once, gliding across the lake, which was as smooth as glass. Everyone was silent, staring up at the great castle overhead. It towered over them as they sailed nearer and nearer to the cliff on which it stood.

"Duck."

The students collectively bowed, to avoid hitting their heads which they didn't need to; only Hagrid had to bend almost double to avoid hitting his head on a rocky ledge. The ledge was the over hang to an entrance beneath the castle. They were carried along a dark tunnel, which seemed to be taking them right underneath the castle, until they reached a kind of underground harbor, where they clambered out onto rocks and pebbles.

Hagrid raised a gigantic fist and knocked three times on the castle door.
Chapter 6- Sorting and more confusion

The door swung open at once. A tall, black-haired witch in emerald-green robes stood there. She had a very stern face and Harry's first thought was that this was not someone to cross.

"The firs' years, Professor McGonagall," said Hagrid.

"Thank you, Hagrid. I will take them from here." Professor McGonagall opened the door wide.

Harry was overwhelmed, the entrance hall was bigger then Gringotts. He swore both the Dursleys and Ms. Figgs' house would have fit in there and still had room left over. He barely glanced at the marble staircase before being led across a large stone flagged floor. He could heard the sound of hundreds of voices and he was starting to get overwhelmed again. He clutched his pairing journal and searched for Draco.

'Peace Adder. I'm here. You're safe. Relax. I'm won't let them hurt you.'

He heard Draco in his mind again. 'I can't do this Draco. It's too much.'

Professor McGonagall showed the first years into a small, empty chamber off the hall. They crowded in, standing rather closer together than they would usually have done, peering about nervously.

"Welcome to Hogwarts," Professor McGonagall said. "The start-of-term banquet will begin shortly, but before you take your seats in the Great Hall, you will be sorted into your houses. The Sorting is a very important ceremony because, while you are here, your house will be something like your family within Hogwarts. You will have classes with the rest of your house, sleep in your house dormitory, and spend free time in your house common room.

The four houses are called Gryffindor, Hufflepuff, Ravenclaw, and Slytherin. Each house has its own noble history and each has produced outstanding witches and wizards. While you are at Hogwarts, your triumphs will earn your house points, while any rule-breaking will lose house points. At the end of the year, the house with the most points is awarded the house cup, a great honor. I hope each of you will be a credit to whichever house becomes yours. The Sorting Ceremony will take place in a few minutes in front of the rest of the school. I suggest you all smarten yourselves up as much as you can while you are waiting."

Harry twisted his fingers into his robes, his hair was a lost cause and he didn't waste time with it.
Draco caught his eyes, 'Sorting in painless. You'll be fine Adder. Hopefully we'll end up in the same house. Either way I'll look out for you.'

The comfort Draco's words gave him helped calm his nerves, he'd been bordering on panic. Then something happened that made him jump about a foot in the air — several people behind him screamed.

"What the…"

He gasped. So did the people around him. About twenty ghosts had just streamed through the back wall. Pearly-white and slightly transparent, they glided across the room talking to one another and hardly glancing at the first years. They seemed to be arguing. What looked like a fat little monk was saying: "Forgive and forget, I say, we ought to give him a second chance…"

"My dear Friar, haven't we given Peeves all the chances he deserves? He gives us all a bad name and you know, he's not really even a ghost; I say, what are you all doing here?"

A ghost wearing a ruff and tights had suddenly noticed the first years.

Nobody answered.

"New students!" said the Fat Friar, smiling around at them. "About to be Sorted, I suppose?"

A few people nodded mutely.

"Hope to see you in Hufflepuff!" said the Friar. "My old house, you know."

"Move along now," said a sharp voice. "The Sorting Ceremony's about to start." Professor McGonagall had returned.

One by one, the ghosts floated away through the opposite wall.

"Now, form a line," Professor McGonagall told the first years, "and follow me."

Feeling oddly as though his legs had turned to lead, Harry got into line behind a boy with sandy hair, with Ron behind him, and they walked out of the chamber, back across the hall, and through a pair of double doors into the Great Hall.

Harry had never even imagined such a strange and splendid place- he didn't feel worth to be here at all. It was lit by thousands and thousands of candles that were floating in midair over four long tables, where the rest of the students were sitting. These tables were laid with glittering golden plates and goblets. At the top of the hall was another long table where the teachers were sitting. Professor McGonagall led the first years up here, so that they came to a halt in a line facing the other students, with the teachers behind them. The hundreds of faces staring at them looked like pale lanterns in the flickering candlelight. Dotted here and there among the students, the ghosts shone misty silver. Harry shook a little, Draco was only a few students away, he clutched his journal and allowed the closeness of both to calm him. He didn't like being in front of all these people.

Harry quickly looked up a little as Professor McGonagall silently placed a four-legged stool in front of the first years. On top of the stool she put a pointed wizard's hat. This hat was patched and frayed and extremely dirty. Aunt Petunia wouldn't have let it in the house. The magic it radiated surprised him…

Maybe they had to try and get a rabbit out of it, Harry thought wildly, that seemed the sort of thing. Then noticing that everyone in the hall was now staring at the hat, he stared at it, too- mostly because
he didn't want to stand out. For a few seconds, there was complete silence. Then the hat twitched. A rip near the brim opened wide like a mouth and the hat began to sing:

"Oh, you may not think I'm pretty,  
But don't judge on what you see,  
I'll eat myself if you can find  
A smarter hat than me.  

You can keep your bowlers black,  
Your top hats sleek and tall,  
For I'm the Hogwarts Sorting Hat  
And I can cap them all.  

There's nothing hidden in your head  
The Sorting Hat can't see,  
So try me on and I will tell you  
Where you ought to be.  

You might belong in Gryffindor,  
Where dwell the brave at heart,  
Their daring, nerve, and chivalry  
Set Gryffindors apart;  

You might belong in Hufflepuff,  
Where they are just and loyal,  
Those patient Hufflepuffs are true  
And unafraid of toil;  

Or yet in wise old Ravenclaw,  
if you've a ready mind,  
Where those of wit and learning,  
Will always find their kind;  

Or perhaps in Slytherin  
You'll make your real friends,  
Those cunning folk use any means  
To achieve their ends.  

So put me on! Don't be afraid!  
And don't get in a flap!  
You're in safe hands (though I have none)  
For I'm a Thinking Cap!"

The whole hall burst into applause as the hat finished its song. It bowed to each of the four tables and then became quite still again.

The hat seemed to be asking rather a lot; Harry didn't feel brave or quick-witted or any of it at the moment. If only the hat had mentioned a house for people who felt a bit queasy, that would have been the one for him.

Professor McGonagall now stepped forward holding a long roll of parchment.

"When I call your name, you will put on the hat and sit on the stool to be sorted," she said. "Abbott, Hannah!"
A pink-faced girl with blonde pigtails stumbled out of line, put on the hat, which fell right down over her eyes, and sat down. A moment's pause —

"HUFFLEPUFF!" shouted the hat.

The table on the right cheered and clapped as Hannah went to sit down at the Hufflepuff table.

Harry saw the ghost of the Fat Friar waving merrily at her.

"Bones, Susan!"

"HUFFLEPUFF!" shouted the hat again, and Susan scuttled off to sit next to Hannah.

"Boot, Terry!"

"RAVENCLAW!"

The table second from the left clapped this time; several Ravenclaws stood up to shake hands with Terry as he joined them.

"Brocklehurst, Mandy" went to Ravenclaw too, but "Brown, Lavender" became the first new Gryffindor, and the table on the far left exploded with cheers; Harry could see Ron's twin brothers catcalling.

"Bulstrode, Millicent" then became a Slytherin.

He was starting to feel definitely sick now. He remembered being picked for teams during gym at his old school. He had always been last to be chosen, not because he was no good, but because no one wanted Dudley to think they liked him. He wasn't liked at all except by Draco, he hoped he was Sorted somewhere. He would hate to be sent away because he didn't belong anyway.

"Finch-Fletchley, Justin!"

"HUFFLEPUFF!"

Sometimes, Harry noticed, the hat shouted out the house at once, but at others it took a little while to decide. "Finnegan, Seamus," the sandy-haired boy next to Harry in the line, sat on the stool for almost a whole minute before the hat declared him a Gryffindor.

"Granger, Hermione!"

Hermione almost ran to the stool and jammed the hat eagerly on her head.

"GRYFFINDOR!" shouted the hat. Ron groaned- not that Harry cared where they went.

A horrible thought struck Harry, as horrible thoughts always do when you're very nervous. What if he wasn't chosen at all? What if he just sat there with the hat over his eyes for ages, until Professor McGonagall jerked it off his head and said there had obviously been a mistake and he'd better get back on the train?

When Neville Longbottom, the boy who kept losing his toad, was called, he fell over on his way to the stool. The hat took a long time to decide with Neville. When it finally shouted, "GRYFFINDOR," Neville ran off still wearing it, and had to jog back amid gales of laughter to give it to "MacDougal, Morag."

Draco winked at him before he swaggered forward when his name was called and got his wish at
once: the hat had barely touched his head when it screamed, "SLYTHERIN!"

Harry smiled at him, he wanted to be with Draco so much even if it meant he had to be around his scary friends Crabbe and Goyle.

There weren't many people left now. "Moon"…, "Nott"…, "Parkinson"…, then a pair of twin girls, "Patil" and "Patil"…, then "Perks, Sally-Anne"…, and then, at last the moment he was dreading…

"Potter, Harry!"

As Harry stepped forward, whispers suddenly broke out like little hissing fires all over the hall.

"Potter, did she say?"

"The Harry Potter?"

The last thing Harry saw before the hat- which was far too large for him was Draco's smile of encouragement.

"Interesting." came the voice in his head,

He liked Draco's voice better.

'Draco? Young Mister Malfoy?'

Harry blushed, 'nothing really.'

'You're a difficult one. Behind all your fear beats a brave heart. You aren't stupid either though you think you are. You want to hide in the shadows and avoid your destiny. You could be great, with power like yours.'

Harry clenched his fists, 'Don't lie to me. I'm not smart. I'm not brave and I'm not powerful.'

The hat laughed at him, 'So you don't want to be great then. Are you sure? You could be great, you know, it's all here in your head, and Slytherin will help you on the way to greatness, no doubt about that. Oh well wouldn't want two students in the same year with that kind of power together anyway. The best choice is. 'The hat yelled, GRYFFINDOR!"

Harry heard the hat shout the last word to the whole hall. His heart sank, no…not there…he dropped that hat on the stool trying not to cry as he avoided Draco's eyes. He didn't want to see the disappointment. He'd be stuck with the Know-It-All girl and the boy who lost his toad. He was alone. He was scared. How could that hat put him here? The worst place for him to be…they'd treat him like a god. Draco…why couldn't be with you? Was it because I didn't want to be great and powerful? It must be, which made his mistaken sorting his own fault. He suddenly wasn't hungry, he felt ill…

He took off the hat and walked shakily toward the Gryffindor table. He hardly noticed that he was getting the loudest cheer yet. A red-head with a large red P badge got up and shook his hand vigorously, while the red-headed twins yelled, "We got Potter! We got Potter!"

He could see the High Table properly now. At the end nearest him sat Hagrid, who caught his eye and gave him the thumbs up. Harry attempted to grin back but his heart wasn't in it and Draco seemed so far away. And there, in the center of the High Table, in a large gold chair, sat Albus Dumbledore. Harry recognized him at once from the books on Hogwarts he'd purchased at Flourish
There were only about five more names called, Harry didn't really notice when Ron's name was called. He was trying to hide in a ball, if he knew where anything was he'd run as far from here as he could get. Harry wasn't happy when Ron's larger frame tried to squeeze next time. His heart twisted when Draco welcomed the last name called Blaise Zabini' as a Slytherin. It should have been him…

Albus Dumbledore had gotten to his feet. He was beaming at the students, his arms opened wide, as if nothing could have pleased him more than to see them all there. "Welcome," he said. "Welcome to a new year at Hogwarts! Before we begin our banquet, I would like to say a few words. And here they are: Nitwit! Blubber! Oddment! Tweak! Thank you!"

He sat back down. Everybody clapped and cheered. Harry was too shaken to even consider laughing, he wanted to be far away. He wanted his cupboard, he clutched his journal tightly…

Harry's mouth fell open. The dishes in front of him were now piled with food. He had never seen so many things he liked to eat on one table: roast beef, roast chicken, pork chops and lamb chops, sausages, bacon and steak, boiled potatoes, roast potatoes, fries, Yorkshire pudding, peas, carrots, gravy, ketchup, and, for some strange reason, peppermint humbugs. Yet, he still wasn't hungry…his stomach in knots. He'd just take a potion later.

XoooooX

Draco could sense Harry's confusion the moment the hat covered his startling green eyes, he hoped Harry would end up in Slytherin with him. The Hat took a long time to decide like he expected but to have his Adder Sorted into Gryffindor angered him. He should have been in Slytherin with power like his. Someone was pulling strings and Draco was furious. Harry, his Adder wouldn't look at him at all. He was shaking, Harry's eyes were shimmering with unshed tears. Could no one see how upset he was? Those foolish Gryffindors were celebrating they had gotten the 'Great Harry Potter'.

Adder was shaking on his seat, curled up as small as he could get. His little friend was clutching the journal he gave him and wouldn't look him in the eye. Draco barely remembered to rouse himself from his musing when his old friend Blaise joined Pansy, Vince, Greg and himself as Slytherins. Harry should be here and it angered him.

He ate with polite gusto, he had to wait for the right moment. He needed to speak with his godfather and gain his permission to use the seventh year potions labs for his own private brewing. He could brew at the level of a third year after all…
Plotting and questions

Title: Truth behind the name and the lies
Pairing: DracoxHarry,
Fandom : HP
Notes: An abused boy finds out he's a wizard and a hero; his tormented mind rebels. One person sees through the misconceptions to the real Harry and treats him the way he deserves. Why Harry never fights back from personal attacks...why does he crave more? Because he isn't a hero, he isn't brave, he's hiding behind the shadow of the boy they all believe him to be. -yes I did rename the story. the title wasn't fitting...

"..." is spoken.

'...' is mind to mind communication.

Chapter 7- Plotting and questions

Draco and his fellow First year Slytherins had been escorted to their new dungeon home by the Slytherins prefects and their Head of House, his godfather Severus Snape. He waited until the other boys headed to their dormitory, before approaching his head of House, "Professor, might I speak to you?" he needed Uncle Sev's help, more then anything but he had to test his godfather's sense of justice.

Severus Snape raised an eyebrow at his godson, "Draco? Are you sure you don't want to go up with your friends?"

Draco shook his head, "I need to speak with you. It is a matter of the utmost important. I wouldn't bother you otherwise."

"Come." his robes billowing behind him in a highly familiar manner.

Draco followed his godfather to his rooms in the Dungeons.

"Asphodel."

Ah, the password, Draco thought as he followed his godfather inside.

Severus Snape took a seat, his robe pooling around him, "What did you want?" he half-sneered.

Draco sighed, forgetting the reaction was undignified. "What would your reaction to finding a student was using a full body glamour to hide formerly broken and badly healed fingers as well as other scars? Was probably starved, Uncle Sev. That they are terrified of people and are prone to near panic attacks? They believe they cause trouble for others but do little in reality. Were convinced their father killed their mother and it was their fault. Had their inheritance to a powerful ancient magical line hidden until they turned eleven and they were visited by a member of the school staff."

His godfather stared at him, "What in Slytherin's name are you going on about Draco?"

Draco snapped, "Answer me. I know what lies beneath your glamour. I told him about the glamour you created and taught him through letters how to use it."
Severus glared, "He sounds abused. What does it matter? This is hypothetical, isn't it?"

Draco shook his head, "It isn't. I asked what you would do. Something is going on here Uncle Sev and you're the only one I trust. What I told you is all true. There is a student like that here. A first year. No one but myself can see the truth because I'm not blinded by lies. I've been in his mind Uncle Sev. He can hide nothing from me. He needs help. Will you help me?"

Severus glared, "If I knew there was a student like this, I would be very distraught. I would try to help them as much as I could. Give me a name."

Draco opened his mind and tentatively reached for his godfather's, just enough to draw Severus into his own mind.

Severus delved in, he saw the memory of a tiny scared boy overwhelmed by the attention of being practically worshiped. Those eyes, the ones that haunted his dreams and that hair that reminded him of the man he hated but he couldn't hate this boy. He could feel the fear Lily Evans' son had, he could feel his godson's presence calm him. Severus watched the memory of his godson noticing the crooked fingers, he knew how they could have been broken. Beneath his own glamour were similar fingers, he saw how tiny and impossibly thin Lily's son was. He sneered, Petunia that Muggle woman. She did this… he knew that Draco wasn't lying to him, in his mind he felt Draco's concern and desire to protect the Potter boy.

He saw them exchange letters and then the pairing journals Draco made himself- brilliant boy well taught. He saw and heard a terrified Harry begging Draco not to choose the farce of their animosity. Draco was right, given Lucius' status as a former Death Eater no one would allow them to be friends. He knew a Weasley would attach themselves to Potter. The only ones worth anything were Fred and George, not that he would admit it but he enjoyed the way they kept him on edge.

Severus sighed, pinching his nose, "You're treading a dangerous road Draco. It could backfire. If he's in Gryffindor, he'll be hard to watch out for." He may still hate James Potter despite the life debt but Lily, her son was in trouble. "Tell me what you need. I sort of feel sorry for glaring at the boy."

"We need a plan. I know you don't like the Potters much. We need to find excuses to keep him close. Detentions. He needs potions. Adder needs help with his studies. I want us to get a look at his scars, perhaps with the right healing spells or potions we can repair them. Or course you'll allow me to brew as my schedule permits."

Severus shook his head, "The longer he's had them the more permanent they are- I ought to know. The best we can do is perhaps rebreak his fingers and the like so we can magically make them mend properly. You're a future Potions Master, I would never forbid you to brew as long as you followed the rules I've always set."

Draco winced, inflicting pain on Harry was the last thing he wanted to do.

"I'll help. I'll find excuses to give him detention or partner you. I will have to act as if I detest him outside detention."

Draco smiled, "Thank you uncle Sev. I knew you would help. Dumbledore put him with his aunt. He should have been Sorted in Slytherin. His power guaranteed it but he was put in Gryffindor. Someone is pulling strings. I don't like it. The first thing he needs to learn is Occumency. He has to be able to guard his mind. I don't want him to be manipulated because his abuse."

Severus sneered, "You care for him. Such a surprise. You are very different then I expected you to be. I expected the pompous brat I taught."
Draco stood. "I am. In some ways. Adder needs me to protect him, I merely play the role everyone expects, so no one will think to look for what I really feel for him. Well it is late. I should go. We should talk soon." he headed immediately for the First Years' boys dormitory, opened his trunk pulled out his night clothes to change into them. He curled up on his bed, closed the green velvet curtains before he opened his journal and wrote to his Adder.

**Adder, it's me. Talk to me. I'm not upset. I'm worried. How are they treating you in Gryffindor? I'm still your friend. Adder, I need to know you're alright.**

XoooooX

"Percy Weasley, Prefect. Come with me and I'll show you the way to Gryffindor tower."

Harry glanced at Draco once more, the separation was already hurting him. They'd been forced to stay apart all day, when all he wanted was to be sheltered in the blonde's arms. He had no memories of being held gently, comforted and Draco made him feel safe. To Draco, he was Adder, his little snake. To Harry, Draco was his only friend, his protector, his secret-keeper of sorts. Yet, he kept the extent of his abuse from his family to himself. He was worried about how Draco would react to that truth.

The Gryffindor First Years followed Percy through the chattering crowds, out of the Great Hall, and up the marble staircase. Harry's legs were like lead again, but only because he was so tired and emotionally exhausted- the last place he wanted to be was with Gryffindors who acted like they worshiped him, especially people like Ron and Hermione. He was too sleepy even to be surprised that the people in the portraits along the corridors whispered and pointed as they passed, or that twice Percy led them through doorways hidden behind sliding panels and hanging tapestries. They climbed more staircases, yawning and dragging their feet, and Harry was just wondering how much farther they had to go when they came to a sudden halt.

A bundle of walking sticks was floating in midair ahead of them, and as Percy took a step toward them they started throwing themselves at him.

"Peeves," Percy whispered to the first years. "A poltergeist." He raised his voice, "Peeves — show yourself."

A loud, rude sound, like the air being let out of a balloon, answered.

"Do you want me to go to the Bloody Baron?"

There was a pop, and a little man with wicked, dark eyes and a wide mouth appeared, floating cross-legged in the air, clutching the walking sticks.

"Ooooooooh!" he said, with an evil cackle. "Ickle Firsties! What fun!"

He swooped suddenly at them. They all ducked.

"Go away, Peeves, or the Baron'll hear about this, I mean it!" barked Percy.

Peeves stuck out his tongue and vanished, dropping the walking sticks on Neville's head. They heard him zooming away, rattling coats of armor as he passed.
"You want to watch out for Peeves," said Percy, as they set off again. "The Bloody Baron's the only one who can control him, he won't even listen to us prefects. Here we are."

At the very end of the corridor hung a portrait of a very fat woman in a pink silk dress.

"Password?" she said.

"Caput Draconis," said Percy, and the portrait swung forward to reveal a round hole in the wall which they all scrambled through it. Though Neville needed a leg up, while Harry reluctantly found himself in the Gryffindor common room, a cozy, round room full of squashy armchairs.

The password had brought a slight smile to Harry's white face, Caput Draconis- Draco...

He followed Percy up the spiral staircase to a room with five four-posters hung with deep red, velvet curtains, their trunks had already been brought up. Too tired to talk much, the other boys pulled on their pajamas and fell into bed. Harry tested the strength of his glamour before he dared change.

Harry clutched his journal to his chest, he wanted Draco...it wasn't fair. He cast a privacy charm and started to sob. He wanted Draco...what had he done to end up with one friend but it was someone no one would allow him to be friends with.

Just as he was about to drift off the journal warmed slightly. He read reluctantly, so sure Draco would sound upset.

Adder, it's me. Talk to me. I'm not upset. I'm worried. How are they treating you in Gryffindor? I'm still your friend. Adder, I need to know you're alright.

Harry pulled the pre-inked quill Draco sent him and wrote a reply.

Draco. I'm sorry. It's all my fault. I told the hat 'Don't lie to me. I'm not smart. I'm not brave and I'm not powerful.' it told me: So you don't want to be great then. Are you sure? You could be great, you know, it's all here in your head, and Slytherin will help you on the way to greatness, no doubt about that. Oh well wouldn't want two students in the same year with that kind of power together anyway. The best choice is and it put me in Gryffindor. Why would it lie? Why did it say I was powerful? Draco, I'm sorry. I wanted to be in Slytherin with you. The attention is too much. They see me as some kind of hero. They fawn on me and its too much.

XoooooX

Draco read the reply, sighing, Adder was overreacting again but who could blame him? He wrote back.

Someone didn't want two students with that kind of power together anyway? It proves my theory that you were supposed to be in Slytherin. Merlin I love being right. Gryffindor was the wrong place. If you were a different sort of boy, it would re-enforce you thinking you're entitled to respect or adoration as the hero of the Wizarding world. As a person you deserve to be respected. We have a supporter. My godfather. He knew your mother very well and promised to help us. Like me he will act mean in public. He promised to partner us in Potions
so I can help you or give you Detentions often so you have a break from being everyone's hero. Distrust anyone who tries to get close to you. If I haven't told you they are safe, keep them at a distance. They want to get close to you because of who they think you are. I'll watch over you as best I can. We won't share all our classes but if you really need me, you know I'll come. I care about you, my little snake. Get some sleep Adder. I'm here with you.

XoooooX

Harry watched the words form on the page and blushed from the kindness behind Draco's words. His friend cared, promised to look out for him. Warned him to be safe. Gained them an ally. A friend of his mother? Draco must be telling the truth, he would feel it if it were a lie. If he needed Draco he would come, he smiled scribbling a reply before pulling the journal to his chest, beneath his glamour.

**Good night Draco. Thank you for not being angry with me for being Sorted here. I'll be happy for anyone who knows the truth. Get some rest my Dragon. I know you'll protect me.**

XoooooX

Draco smiled, brushing the shaky writing as he read it. He could still sense Harry, his little snake was starting to relax and went to sleep. They weren't too far apart, he could sense their connection growing due to their closeness. Whatever the connection between himself and Harry was, it was increasing. If that meant he could protect his little snake better he would accept it. He placed the journal beneath his pillow and went to sleep, perhaps, he might enjoy his rest more now that Harry was so close.
Chapter 8- Professor Snape and more

"There, look."

"Where?"

"Next to the tall kid with the red hair."

"Wearing the glasses?"

"Did you see his face?"

"Did you see his scar?"

Honestly, could they stop? Harry couldn't remember how to get to the Great Hall from the tower if they kept this up. He needed to see Draco, first day of classes and he was already shaking.

People lining up outside classrooms stood on tiptoe to get a look at him, or doubled back to pass him in the corridors again, staring. It was very hard to remember where anything was, because it all seemed to move around a lot. The people in the portraits kept going to visit each other, and Harry was sure the coats of armor could walk. He got lost on the way to the great hall and then again on his way to class.

He learned quickly that Peeves the Poltergeist was worth two locked doors and a trick staircase if you met him when you were late for class. He would drop wastepaper baskets on your head, pull rugs from under your feet, pelt you with bits of chalk, or sneak up behind you, invisible, grab your nose, and screech, "GOT YOUR CONK!"

Even worse than Peeves, if that was possible, was the caretaker, Argus Filch. Harry managed to get on the wrong side of him on his way to class he was lost. Filch found him trying to force his way through a door that unluckily turned out to be the entrance to the out-of-bounds corridor on the third floor. He wouldn't believe he were lost, was sure they were trying to break into it on purpose, and was threatening to lock them in the dungeons.
A deep yet raspy voice came from behind him, "I'll take care of the brat. He'll have a healthy respect for the rules when I'm done with him. Dinner. Detention. The Potions classroom."

Harry nodded glumly.

Draco was pleased when he heard Uncle Sev had given Harry a detention. He asked for a house elf to bring dinner to the Potions' dungeons. He smiled as he made his way back to the Potions classroom. He found Harry on his way, he looked into those scared eyes and smiled. 'Adder'.

Harry's eyes opened in shocked, 'Draco.'

'Come along. I'll show you to uncle Sev's classroom.'

Harry smiled, 'It's nice to see you.'

Draco led the way, closing the door of the Potions Classroom behind them and pulling Harry into his arms. 'You're safe Adder.'

Harry stiffened and then relaxed, this was Draco who made him feel safe…who promised to always look out for him.

"You're Lily's son. Let me see you boy." it was the Professor who gave him detention.

Harry shivered slightly.

Draco rubbed his back, the way his mother had when he was young and had nightmares. 'He promised to help look after you. This is my godfather, Severus Snape.' he spoke out loud for Uncle Sev's benefit and well, apparently their connection allowed for mental communication if they had eye contact.

"I did promise Draco that I would." calling him Potter reminded him of James, he'd rather remember Lily. There were a few reasons he agreed to this; his life debt, his responsibility for Lily's death and his own memories of his tormented childhood. Snape stood dropping his robe and his glamour. His nose wasn't hooked it was actually broken many times and hadn't been set properly. He held out his formerly smashed fingers and his crooked arms, honestly Snape walked with a slight limp that his glamour covered. He turned so they could see the numerous scars on his back and chest, "I created Glamorous Magnus to cover these and project what I wanted them to see while using as little magic as possible." His hair wasn't greasy but did hang limply at his shoulders as if it too was defeated. "I use spells and charms to lighten loads or use house elves because I've never manage to gain the strength in this arm properly. I've had to work twice as hard at everything, one to prove that I deserved to be here and that no one could hurt me again. I didn't count on your father and his friends. We never did get along, probably because we both cared for your mother. Rivals rarely are friends…” he'd glossed it over, Harry didn't need to know the whole truth yet…

Harry said quietly as he saw all the scars, "You…are a professor? How? Surely…they told you how worthless you were when they did that."

Snape nodded, "Of course they did. I decided early that I wouldn't let them win. My father beat me and my mother because we had magic and he didn't. He couldn't change reality. I wasn't stupid
because I could do things he couldn't. Then I met Lily and I told her she was witch. Petunia hated me, I think she blames me for making Lily a witch though that is preposterous."

Harry glanced up at the no longer scary-looking Professor, "You think…I can be smart too…"

Draco thought to himself, before replying, "I think Adder should do well on homework and perhaps tests but only apply himself in certain classes. Potions, he should pretend to not be good in class but when we are alone and he isn't surrounded by people he can relax and focus. I want to teach him to guard his mind, I don't want anyone to be able to manipulate him ever." he still hadn't let go of the tiny boy that was cradled against his chest, "I'm good with Potions, Charms and History."

Snape snorted, "That's because I am. I'm keen at Defense against the Dark Arts as well as the Dark Arts. The Dark Arts are misunderstood mind you. Though I would never teach anything truly Dark to Lily's son. I've made enough mistakes with her friendship…"

"What about Transfiguration? I can handle Astronomy, it's a Black Family passion after all."

"I'll tutor him in Transfiguration as well as Herbology, one can't be a decent Potioneer without an understanding of plants and their uses."

Harry said quietly, "What do you mean?"

Draco smirked, "We're going to prove that you belong in our house, we're going to teach you how to use the mind that you and your Muggle relatives say you don't have. We're going to teach you how to use your magic so it seems weaker then it is but you are stronger then you appear. In short, we'll teach you to be sneaky. We are going to turn a Gryffindor Lion into an Undercover Slytherin Snake."

Harry gasped, "You think…I can really learn?"

Snape snorted, "I was in the same year as your parents, your mother was the smartest witch of her generation despite being Muggleborn and your father came from an ancient line of powerful witches and wizards- in fact either your grandmother or your great grandmother was a Black, which makes you related to Draco. I supposed you're cousins of a sort, Draco can sense your magic-it's a pureblood thing. I think with the right training Harry, you can become even more powerful then I am. You may not believe in yourself Harry but as your parents' child you have potential."

XooooooX

And then, once you had managed to find them, there were the classes themselves. There was a lot more to magic, as Harry quickly found out, than waving your wand and saying a few funny words.

They had to study the night skies through their telescopes every Wednesday at midnight and learn the names of different stars and the movements of the planets- Harry was thankful Draco had promised to help. Three times a week, they went out to the greenhouses behind the castle to study Herbology, with a dumpy little witch called Professor Sprout, where they learned how to take care of all the strange plants and fungi, and found out what they were used for. Snape took a list of what plants and fungi he learned the previous Herbology lesson and showed him how to brew potions using them as ingredients- hands on seemed to be an easier way to learn. The most boring class was History of Magic, which was the only one taught by a ghost. Professor Binns droned on and on while they scribbled down names and dates. Harry got Emetic the Evil and Uric the Oddball mixed
up, quills and a note appeared in his lap, he opened it.

This is a dictation quill. Use it for History. I'll explain your notes later.

There was a small dragon at the end of the note.

Harry smiled, Draco, always looking out for him.

Professor Flitwick, the Charms teacher, was a tiny little wizard- between his height and his pointed ears Harry wondered if he was part goblin, who had to stand on a pile of books to see over his desk. At the start of their first class he took the roll call, and when he reached Harry's name he gave an excited squeak and toppled out of sight. Harry wanted to disappear and swore to hide in the back of ever class

Professor McGonagall was different in her own way. Harry had been quite right to think she wasn't a teacher to cross. Strict and clever, she gave them a talking-to the moment they sat down in her first class.

The class Harry had been looking forward to the least was Defense Against the Dark Arts, but Professor Quirrell's lessons turned out to be a bit of a joke. He left class feeling like he learned NOTHING… thank god Snape promised to teach him the essentials.

Harry was very relieved to find out that he wasn't miles behind everyone else. Lots of people had come from Muggle families and like him, hadn't had any idea that they were witches and wizards. There was so much to learn that even people like Ron didn't have much of a head start. Though with the reading he'd done and Draco's tutoring in August and the guidance he was still receiving from Snape and Draco, he felt more confident.

Friday was Harry's first day of not getting lost first thing in the morning. He was greeted with complaining by the other First Year Gryffindors.

"Double Potions with the Slytherins," said Ron. "Snape's Head of Slytherin House. Fred and George say he always favors them — we'll be able to see if it's true."

"Wish McGonagall favored us," Seamus shrugged.

Professor McGonagall was head of Gryffindor House, but it hadn't stopped her from giving them a huge pile of homework the first day of classes- which between Draco and Professor Snape he'd manage to accomplish. Snape was always finding excuses to extend his detention from the first day to keep him in the Potions lab where they could help him.

Harry spotted Draco and smiled at him before picking at his food, he'd already swallowed his nutrition and energy potions. Finally, he would have a real class with Draco…he missed his friend.

Just then, the mail arrived, Hedwig hadn't brought Harry anything so far. This morning, however, she fluttered down between the marmalade and the sugar bowl and dropped a note onto Harry's plate. Harry tore it open at once. It said, in a very untidy scrawl:

Dear Harry,

I know ya git Friday afternoons off, so would ya like ter come and have a cup of tea with me around three?

I wanna to hear all about yer first week. Send us an answer back with Hedwig.
Harry sighed, he glanced at Draco, trying to catch his eye and falling into the older boy's mind. 'Hagrid wants to see me. He wants me to come for tea at three. Should I? I was hoping to come study…'

'I'll talk to uncle Sev. Give the man an uncommitted answer. Tell him it depends on your homework load from Potions. The homework is really hard and you're struggling.'

'Thanks Draco. There is something about him I don't trust. He…used my money to buy me my birthday present. It hurt…'

'He did what? Oh Adder. When was your birthday?' that half-giant used Adder's money to buy a present? That was thievery. He'd come up with a way to pay him back for that.

'Just before we met.'

'Then consider your journal a real birthday present. I made it myself.' Draco smirked, Harry deserved many nice things. Eventually, he had to teach Harry what to do with his wardrobe. Those clothes he had outside of class were worse then anything worn by Weasleys,

'Draco…you made it? It's so beautiful. Thank you.' Harry blushed, his eyes shining.

'You deserve to be treated well. You are a descendant of the house of Black after all.' Draco wiped his mouth. 'I'll go see Uncle Sev. You can reply but don't promise to met that creep.'

'I'll see you in class Draco. I promise to send what you said.' Harry started to eat a little now that he was more relaxed but his stomach was rather small.

**Dear Hagrid,**

**Whether I can met you for tea depends on my homework load from Potions. The homework is really hard and I'm already struggling to keep up. It's very different from what I experienced at Grammar school.**

**Harry**

Harry picked up his bag with his potions text, parchment, quills, scales, and potions making ingredients. He cast a levitation charm on his cauldron and tugged it behind him, forgetting he hadn't done the charm properly in class.

Professor McGonagall lifted an eyebrow, there was something about the Potter boy…

Harry made his way to the dungeons and the now familiar Potions Classroom. He took a seat near the back.

Snape had explained previously that he would at outside of detentions to loathe Harry and Harry tried to steal himself from the pain of being treated badly by his only loyal companions. Harry took a position near the front this time…but off to the side.

Snape started the class by taking the roll call, he paused at Harry's name, a smirk on his face. "Ah, Yes," he said softly, "Harry Potter. Our new — celebrity."

The Slytherins snickered but when Harry caught Draco's eye, he winked.
Harry felt a little better.

Snape finished calling the names and looked up at the class. His eyes were black like Hagrid's, but they had none of Hagrid's feigned warmth. They were cold and empty and made you think of dark tunnels unless Snape was alone in the potions lab with only Draco and Harry for company then there was a slight glimmer of affection. Having seen beneath Snape's glamour, Harry trusted him to understand better then anyone even Draco. Sometimes he could see beneath the glamour just because he used it himself. He was sure that Snape could see beneath his own glamour if he tried, after all the man created the glamour though he wasn't sure how.

"You are here to learn the subtle science and exact art of potionmaking," he began. He spoke in barely more than a whisper, but they caught every word, Snape had the gift of keeping a class silent without effort. "As there is little foolish wand-waving here, many of you will hardly believe this is magic. I don't expect you will really understand the beauty of the softly simmering cauldron with its shimmering fumes, the delicate power of liquids that creep through human veins, bewitching the mind, ensnaring the senses… I can teach you how to bottle fame, brew glory, even stopper death; if you aren't as big a bunch of dunderheads as I usually have to teach."

More silence followed this little speech.

Harry smiled taking his professor's words to heart, he believed him. Potion making was magic, to take something like a lily and use it for to make medicine or to make the potions he hide in his room. If Snape could teach him to bottle fame, brew glory or even stopper death then he must be a really good teacher. He liked the one on one tutoring he received from Draco and Snape. If he did really well Snape told him stories about his mother, Harry did try hard but he really didn't believe him that he was smart yet.

Ron exchanged looks with Seamus and raised eyebrows, both trying to catch Harry's eyes but Harry ignored him. He wasn't even really sitting with Gryffindors, he was sort of in the middle of the Slytherins and the Gryffindors. Hermione Granger was on the edge of her seat and looked desperate to start proving that she wasn't a dunderhead.

"Potter!" said Snape suddenly. "What would I get if I added powdered root of asphodel to an infusion of wormwood?"

For a second Harry wasn't going to answer but seeing Granger's hand upset him. He wasn't going to lose to her. "Asphodel and wormwood? I think I read they make a sleeping potion but I don't remember which one." he didn't remember everything his tutors tried to teach him this week.

"Decent answer, they make a sleeping potion so powerful it is known as the Draught of Living Death. Apparently, you take after your mother as a Know-It-All, which is better then taking after your father who didn't care about marks. What about a Bezoar…"

Harry was not happy with Hermione's attempts to get Snape's attention by waving her hand like that. He caught Draco's eye.

'It's okay Adder, you can do well here. Tell him. We discussed them earlier this week.'

Harry smiled at Snape, "I think a bezoar is a stone taken from a goat's stomach and it will save you from most poisons if you can't find an antidote fast enough."

Snape snorted, "Tell me since you know so much,"

Harry's heart swelled with pride, waiting for the question.
"…what are monkshood and wolfs bane?"

Harry smiled, Snape and Draco had told him this before. "Aren't they the same plant? I think I remember reading that."

Snape sneered, "A Gryffindor who isn't a dunderhead, what a surprise. Perhaps, you've been missorted Potter. As for monkshood and wolfsbane, they are indeed the same plant, which also goes by the name of aconite." he glared at the rest of the class including Granger, "Well? Why aren't you all copying that down? You think I ask questions for my own amusement?"

There was a sudden rummaging for quills and parchment. Over the noise, Snape said, "A point will be taken from Gryffindor House for your cheek, Granger. Ten for Potter for actually knowing answers. I don't take kindly to volunteering. I will call on you if I want to hear your voices. Learn to speak only when I call on you or I will take away points." he split them into pairing, integrating the Houses.

"Granger, Goyle."
"Weasley, Crabbe."
"Finnegan, Zabini."
"Potter, Malfoy."
"Brown. Bulstrode."
"Patil. Parkinson."
"Longbottom, Nott."

And so on, until they were all paired.

All the students groaned except for Harry and Draco.

Harry was happy to be paired with his friend and tried to hide it.

Draco's eyes sparkled with amusement, facing away as he spoke, "Just because he knows half answers doesn't mean he is decent enough to be my partner."

"Malfoy." Snape snapped, "Behavior. Don't make me take points from my own house for rudeness. I don't take kindly to having my instruction methods questioned."

Draco smirked, "Yes Professor."

Harry stiffened, the words hurt even though he knew Draco didn't really mean them.

"Well Potter, are you going to help me or am I going to have to do this potion myself."

Harry hurried to Draco's side.

Snape snorted, "Since you all finally decided to pair up, I expect you to use the rest of the time before lunch to brew a simple potion to cure boils.

He swept around in his long black cloak, watching them weigh dried nettles and crush snake fangs, criticizing almost everyone except Malfoy, whom he seemed to like. He was just telling everyone to look at the perfect way Malfoy and Potter had stewed their horned slugs when clouds of acid green
smoke and a loud hissing filled the dungeon.

Neville had somehow managed to melt Theo Nott's cauldron into a twisted blob, and their potion was seeping across the stone floor, burning holes in people's shoes.

Draco levitated Harry to a stool the moment the potion started to melt Theo's cauldron. He made a mental note to be sure Uncle Sev never partnered Harry with Neville. He jumped on his own stool while charming their stools to be more resistant to acid.

Within seconds, the whole class was standing on their stools while Neville, who had been drenched in the potion when the cauldron collapsed, moaned in pain as angry red boils sprang up all over his arms and legs.

"Idiot boy!" snarled Snape, clearing the spilled potion away with one wave of his wand. "I suppose you added the porcupine quills before taking the cauldron off the fire? Your Father was Head Boy and Quidditch Captain but even he could brew a decent potion. I've never seen such pathetic brewing since Remus Lupin who was in my year."

Hermione yelled in his defense, "But Professor, how do you know it's his fault?"

Draco snorted, "Because, Theo can brew a potion as well as most Second Years. He would never make such a juvenile mistake."

"Thank you Malfoy but we don't need to embarrass these Lions at how much behind a Snake they really are. If you are so keen to help, Ms. Granger why don't you levitate Longbottom to the infirmary?"

"We aren't allow to use magic in the halls." Granger gasped.

"You are allowed with permission from a Professor. One look at Longbottom and I doubt even Filch will fault you. One couldn't expect a dunderhead like him to walk in his condition. Now the both of you get out of my lab." he turned to Nott, "My office. Now." he glanced at Draco, "You're in charge. I expect you to respect him as if he were a Professor. He is no doubt the most talented Potioneer in this room."

Draco made sure the potion hadn't damaged too much of the floor or the cauldrons. He managed to repair some of the damage the potion had done. "Very well you heard the Professor. Continue. Don't make me put your names on a list for him to take points off." He glanced at Harry, 'Adder. The potion is fine. Let it simmer and don't touch it okay.'

Harry nodded. 'I'll leave it be.'

Draco smirked, 'Don't touch. I won't have my marks on the line because you ruined my perfect potions.'

"I'm not going to mess up our potion. I'm not that stupid." Harry sighed as Draco walked off to be junior Snape. He was proud that his friend was trusted by his godfather so much.

Ron leaned over, "How do you stand being around that git?"

Harry hissed, "The same way I stand being around you. I can't stand you. When will you learn I don't need any friends. I'm not worth being friends with anyway."

"Ten points for disrespecting the acting professor."
Harry smirked to himself, Ron was getting punished and he was pleased.

Draco walked up to heard find Granger who had returned rather quickly insulting Crabbe, "Excuse me Granger, Crabbe has been doing potions longer then you've know you were a witch. Seriously, I wonder why you think you belong. Being a Know-It-All won't make up for the lack of power being born to an ancient bloodline provides."

"Blood has nothing to do with ability."

Snape emerged with a chastised Theo. "Wrong Miss Granger. Blood has nearly everything to do with Ability. Those from ancient Bloodlines are the best for a reason, though there are minor exceptions like Lily Evans who was in my year. I watched her become a very great witch, you Miss Granger are no Lily Evans."

Harry was enjoying listening to his mother getting complimented.

Snape perused the caldrons, "Malfoy and Potter- full marks."

"Nott and Longbottom- fail."

"Granger, Goyle- Half marks."

Hermione's jaw dropped, Harry smirked, the girl must never have gotten less then full marks in her life.

"Weasley, Crabbe- half marks. Crabbe I expected you to keep this Gryffindor from destroying your potion this much."

Ron turned as red as his hair and started muttering.

"Two points from Gryffindor for your cheek Weasley."

"Finnegan, Zabini. Full marks."


And so on…

Snape assigned them homework on the various potions similar to the one they'd made in class, "Finnegan I hope you tell Longbottom he isn't exempt from the homework. Nott? I expect you to accomplish that assignment I gave you and I want in in my office before Monday morning."

Theo bowed, "Yes Professor."

"Malfoy, Potter. I'm thinking of training you to be my assistants. If you think you have the time."

The Gryffindors gasped, there hadn't been a Lion potions assistant for years.

When the others climbed the steps out of the dungeon a few minutes later, Harry's mind was racing and his spirits were rising. Assistant? To Snape? He got to study with Draco? Openly? He smiled, "Sure…I'll be glad to study more. If you think I can learn."

"If you take after your mother, I doubt you will waste my time or Malfoy's. I expect you back here right back after lunch for me to assign readings and homework so that you stay ahead."
Draco smirked, "If he dares waste my time, it will be his worst mistake."

Harry chuckled, "Like I could waste your time Draco." so much for tea with Hagrid…

He was glad to get out of it.
Title: Truth behind the name and the lies  
Pairing: DracoxHarry,  
Fandom : HP  
Notes: An abused boy finds out he's a wizard and a hero; his tormented mind rebels. One person sees through the misconceptions to the real Harry and treats him the way he deserves. Why Harry never fights back from personal attacks...why does he crave more? Because he isn't a hero, he isn't brave, he's hiding behind the shadow of the boy they all believe him to be. -yes I did rename the story. the title wasn't fitting...  
"..." is spoken.  
'...' is mind to mind communication.  

Chapter 9- Threats, Lies, Half-truths, Revelations and Terror  

Draco couldn't sleep well these days knowing Adder was trapped in the Lions' Den. He had finished his homework hours ago, he was scribbling everything he knew about Adder.  

* Orphaned  
* Broken Fingers- full body glamour.  

After all he hadn't seen beneath Harry's glamour, though he had been shocked to see beneath Uncle Sev's glamour. He hadn't expected to see that many scars, he knew about the hands and arm but not the legs. His little snake hadn't been shocked, he'd merely accepted did the scars and badly healed bones. What did Adder look like beneath the glamour without his shirt? What had they done to the tiny boy besides practically starve him and tell him lies?  

* Prone to near panic attacks  
* Relaxes in my presence  
* Communicates with me in his mind  

Or was it him in my mind?  

* They aren't allowing us to be friends  
* Someone is pulling strings.  

He needed to find out what their connection was. Why could he sense when Harry was upset? He had an intense need to protect his little snake.  

Then there was the flashback that haunted him; the maniacal laugh, the scream that sounded like Adder's and ripped at his heart, not to mention a voice that felt like his own yelling, 'No.'  

He had the impression that if his little snake was in mortal peril that he would find himself at Harry's side. When he saw Harry panicking or on the verge of panicking, he felt a need to comfort him, to hold him. He didn't get to hold him often, only when they were in the potions lab before Uncle Sev made them start studying or made them work on more potions.
Harry's isolation from him and the worship from Adder's adoring Gryffindor and Hufflepuff fans was tearing Harry apart. Only himself and Uncle Sev could see the truth behind the name 'Harry Potter'. Someone had to protect the tiny boy and he would allow no one to usurp his place. Harry was his best friend…his little snake who had so little confidence.

Draco felt a pressure on his chest, a swirl of alien emotions; fear, horror, terror, loneliness, embarrassment.

That meant one thing. Harry was in trouble. With that revelation the connection between them strengthened. He could almost hear Harry calling for him, needing his protection. There was a strong tug to where Harry was…the strange warmth of a tower and the coldness of the dungeons made him feel like he was being pulled in two directions.

XoooooX

Harry finished his homework and went up to his room, putting his things before changing in the privacy of his curtained bed. He was too tired to worry about whether his glamour was working.

"Oh look, still hiding from us Harry? Or do you think you're better then us because you're the assistant to Snape."

Harry shook, "No. I just want to study. I can't hope to do well at all if I don't. I don't know how to deal with people."

"Really? The great Harry Potter can't deal with people? Too good for your fans…"

"I didn't ask for fans. I just want to go to school like a normal boy."

"My dear boy, you will never be a normal boy. You are the Boy-Who-Lived after all."

Harry shook at the voice, he held onto his journal. He tightened his glamour, reinforcing it. It's Dumbledore…no…what was he doing here? In Gryffindor Tower…

"It's Dumbledore!"

"In Gryffindor Tower."

"I heard Harry you haven't spent any time with Hagrid. He is quite upset. He is such a gentle person and he cares a lot of you."

Harry clutched his journal, he'd avoided them both. He said in a shaky voice, "But Professor…I've been studying." he stayed behind his curtains.

"I am surprised Snape has seemed to take to you Harry."

Harry stammered, "Snape doesn't like me. He asked me to be his assistant in class because he thinks I'm decent at potions."

"Your marks in that class is better then I expected. Honestly, I expected him to dislike you."

Harry clutched his journal, "He doesn't like me. He calls me Potter after all. Ask any first year."
"I want to see you in my office Harry. Tomorrow."

"Professor. I didn't break any rules. I just."

"Harry this is non-negotiable. I need to speak with you."

Harry shook, "I have classes professor...homework."

"Very well then. I will keep what I have from your father. It was your birthright." the strange Headmaster disappeared as quickly as he came.

Harry opened the journal to find a note.

**Adder? Are you okay? You feel Terrified. I…could feel your need for me. I…felt torn between the dungeon and the tower. What's going on?**

Harry gulped and scribbled,

**Draco. It's Dumbledore. The headmaster showed up in the tower. He wants me to see him. Tomorrow. He is surprised Snape likes me. I told him that he doesn't. I said the only reason he is training me is because of my marks. Dumbledore is upset I'm ignoring Hagrid. He isn't listening to my excuse about homework. Tell me what to do. He said he was going to give me something. Something that is my birthright. Something from my father. It felt both true and false at the same time. I'm scared. The boys believe I think I'm better then them. I'm not.**

XooooooX

After feeling Harry's panic growing, and the sensation of being torn between the tower and his dungeon common room Draco could hardly breathe. It took a long time for Adder to reply. The handwriting was shaky. Worse then normal and the fear radiating off of his little snake was nearly suffocating him.

The reply didn't help. Draco tore out of Slytherin ignoring Prefects and stormed towards Uncle Sev's apartment via his offic.

"Asphodel." he entered, "Professor. I need you."

Severus was pouring over a pile of parchment from his older years, "What. You better have a good reason for this Draco." he sneered.

Draco held out the pairing journal, "Our bluff has been called."

The magic that went into that journal was more then Severus Snape expected, it was nothing like any pairing journal he'd ever heard of. What was the connection between these boys? He growled, "Dumbledore. Draco…your connection with Adder. How strong is it?"

Draco bit his lip, "I…was almost pulled into the tower when he started to panic."

Snape blinked, "That's impossible…Apparation isn't possible with the wards."

"I didn't say it was Apparation did I? Uncle Sev…this is so…confusing. When I read that I
understood what I felt. Uncle Sev…what can I do? He needs me. The old coot is up to something. I don't trust him. He's trying to manipulate Harry. I can feel it. Harry won't play by his rules and the old man wants to know why."

Snape glared, "We should have taught him Occumency instead of potions. He can't protect his mind. I wonder…can he come to you? You almost went to him."

Draco shrugged, "I don't know. I don't think so. I think I went to him once. Years ago. When his life was in danger. I…was there…I don't know why. There two terrible sounds in the world. One is the Dark Lord's laughter and the other is…Harry screaming…"

Snape turned pale, "How could you know what that sounds like? What the Dark Lord's laughter sounds like…"

"I'm sure I was there. I didn't Apparate I don't think. I think Harry being in danger pulled me there."

Snape shook, "You couldn't have been there. I…would have known." he looked at Draco in shame and terror.

Draco was in shock, "How would you know?" his godfather was a man of secrets…

"I sold my soul to two devils. I have to live with my misdeeds. The one thing I wanted more then anything I could never have. I loved her or thought I did but to her I was never more then a friend. Now…all I have left of her is her son. I have to protect him because I couldn't protect her not even from myself."

"What are you talking about?"

Snape pulled deep inside himself, "I'll tell you when you are strong enough to hear it. I was a fool." how could he have hated a baby? Harry's abused, terrified existence was his fault. He would never have wished a childhood like his own on anyway much less Lily's son. Little Harry deserved justice, he would make himself worth of Harry. He would protect him, then perhaps his debts to Lily and James would be paid in full.

"Fine. Don't tell me." His uncle never looked like this, he'd seen into the man's soul. He was as battered as Harry. Whatever Uncle Sev had done, he had tormented himself plenty. He stalked out. What was he going to do now? Adder needed him and they couldn't touch, he couldn't hold Harry until the boy calmed down. He went to the potions lab, he probably wouldn't sleep tonight. Harry needed a calming potion that prevented panic attacks and hysteria, a potion that strengthened one's mind from Occumency and Legilimency, and lastly a potion that would allow Draco and Harry to share the same mind. He wanted to find out what Dumbledore wanted with his Adder, he was going to have his way. Dumbledore made an enemy of him, if he found something that proved the Headmaster was unfit he would pass it on to his father. Whether the Lord or his heir saw things the same way or not didn't matter, if they both wanted Dumbledore gone, they would find a way to make it happen.
Discoveries, Secrets, Trust and Comfort

Title: Truth behind the name and the lies

Pairing: DracoxHarry,
Fandom : HP
Notes: An abused boy finds out he's a wizard and a hero; his tormented mind rebels. One person sees through the misconceptions to the real Harry and treats him the way he deserves. Why Harry never fights back from personal attacks...why does he crave more? Because he isn't a hero, he isn't brave, he's hiding behind the shadow of the boy they all believe him to be. -yes I did rename the story. the title wasn't fitting...

"..." is spoken.

'...' is mind to mind communication.

Chapter 10- Discoveries, Secrets, Trust and Comfort

It was 6 am on another Friday morning, Draco had been up all night making potions. Stretching his knowledge and expertise to an extent he never had before, proving his conviction he would do anything to protect his little snake. He stared at the potions, how to get them to Adder? He held the potions in his hand, the vials had long since been charmed unbreakable, the cool glass separated from his skin by his uniform shirt. He closed his eyes, half-afraid it wouldn't work as he focused on his little snake.

He felt the strange sensation of being physically tugged back and forth as if with a faulty Portkey. Draco could feel unease and fear radiating from his friend pulling on him more. When the unpleasant sensation of feeling torn into subsided he finally looked around was pleased to find himself surrounded by red velvet curtains. He spotted a bit of dark hair beneath the white sheets and coverlet. Adder...he thought. He cast a nonverbal wandless privacy spell before moving to lay beside the boy and pull him to his chest. He rest his cheek against the tiny boy's hair. "Adder...I'm here...you're safe." this was what they both needed...he knew that. He longed to take away Harry's nervousness, pain and loneliness and give him courage, pride and conviction.

Harry woke slowly, he felt the familiar arms and was comforted. "If this is a dream...don't want to wake up."

"It's not a dream Adder...I'm here..."

Harry felt all the loneliness, fear and worthlessness overwhelm him, he started to sob quietly, "Draco...you're here...I needed you so much...I've been so lonely."

"I know Adder. I know. I could feel it remember." he lay there in the Lions' Den, holding the shaking boy and rubbing his back. "You're safe. I promise."

It took Harry a while to calm down, "I'm okay now. Thank you..."

Draco moved his hand from behind Harry's back, vanishing the lid of the calming potion, "Drink this."

Harry let Draco feed him the potion, drinking before he asked, "What is it?"
"It's a calming potion, it won't make you drowsy though. Drink this." he held the second potion, the one that would shield Harry's mind from Legilimency or any other mental magic.

"Okay…I trust you." drinking the potion despite his revulsion at the taste.

"This will prevent anyone from using magic to get inside your mind and control you."

Harry gasped, "Can that really happen?"

Draco nodded, holding the boy close, "Yes, but I won't let that happen. I promised to protect you. Uncle Sev taught me how to protect my mind. It would be very hard to manipulate me that way." he held two vials between their face, "This one is your choice. It would enhance the connection between our minds," or so he thought, "so when you go see Dumbledore you won't be alone. If the potion fails, I should be able to create walls in your mind to shield it."

Harry covered Draco's hand with his own, smiling up at him, 'You're in my mind already. What would change…"

Draco was a Malfoy; the son of a school governor, the heir to a seat in the Wizengamot, an extension of his father's ambition. He'd never really given his own choices about his future any thought until Harry walked into his life. The meeting in Madam Malkin's robe shop changed Draco forever. He thought about someone else's needs, was consumed with protecting them, caring for them. Harry needed him, but he didn't just want to protect him, he wanted to make Harry strong.

Harry sighed, "Do we have to get up…"

Draco shook his head, "Not yet…I wasn't even sure I could get in here without a password and no Gryffindor would ever give me the password."

Harry snuggled into the older boy's arms, "It's nice to be held like this. I don't think anyone has ever done this for me."

"Not even when you were sick…" Draco asked quietly when he was sick his father left him to his mother's care. She didn't coddle him but she did spoil him with attention, toys, books and food when he was ill.

Harry shook his head before hiding his face in Draco's chest, "If I was sick…I was usually ignored. If it got to be too much of an annoyance I was taken to the doctor, then I was to make sure the medicine was taken."

Draco's heart twisted, broken fingers, never held or reassured, "I promise…I'll do my best to keep you safe. Somehow. If it was in my power you would never go back there." he was just a child and his father's hatred of Harry Potter was well-known in their house- when he was drunk at least.

Harry smiled, enjoying the scent of vanilla and lavender that always seemed to surround Draco. "I trust you."

The warmth of Harry's bed and the boy in his arms was the last thing Draco needed, he drifted off.

XoooooX
Draco woke with a start and cast a tempus charm, he cursed nudging Harry, "Adder…wake up. We have ten minutes to make it to class." now he had a problem…he knew how to get to Harry but…not how to leave his side. Bollocks he needed to figure out what their connection was and how to control it.

Harry woke, turning red, "I…didn't mean to fall asleep."

Draco smiled, "It's okay…I am just as at fault. I was up all night."

Harry blushed, "You…Draco, you shouldn't have." he wasn't worth that.

Draco shook his head, "keeping you safe makes me happy." he ruffled the boy's already messy hair, "Get dressed." he cast freshening charms and others to starch and clean his clothes. He cast a spell that combed his hair and smirked, he should look presentable for having been up all night and napping in the Lions' Den.

XoooooX

After class, Harry disappeared into Snape's office, "I don't want to do this." he said softly, "I don't want to see him. He scares me. The Headmaster sent me there." meaning to his Aunt Petunia.

The office was a gloomy and dimly-lit room found in the school dungeons. The shadowy walls were lined with shelves of large glass jars filled with slimy, revolting things, such as bits of animals and plants, floating in potions of varying colours.

It had a fireplace which lit itself as they entered.

In one corner, there was a cupboard that Draco knew contained Snape's private stock of Potions ingredients- he had used some last night and would have to replace them. He tensed, thinking about the scars on his friend's back…were they all over his tiny body? The only damage his father caused was internal with the Cruciatus Curse, usually only enough to make him scream. His father had never cast it enough to make him like the Longbottoms, merely enough to cause him pain and keep him in submission. When Draco knew he was strong enough, his father would never cause him that kind of pain. They weren't meant as anything other then punishments…or at least that is what he told himself. Behind his father's mask, Lucius does care…he had to. Snape made them both sit far away from one another which was tearing Harry apart, they were partnered again when they both managed to arrive late. Snape had lectured and glared at them all period. "Food and then I'll be forced to send you to your meeting with Dumbledore." he summoned a house elf as was his usual routine on a Friday.

Draco cast every ward he could think of to keep their conversation private, "The old goat will insist he spend time with Hagrid. Guilt him into it. He'll tell him he's here to make friends…when he really means alliances. I can already tell he picked the Know-It-All Mud…"

Snape snarled, "Do not use that word in private in my presence. It is not to be spoken in my quarters or office. It's caused me enough trouble. Being Slytherin of course you can see who would be the best allies for the Great Harry Potter. I can too. Ron Weasley- who is good at nothing and the Granger brat who thinks she has the ability to rival Lily. They are not fit companions for the Supposed Savior of the Wizarding World. He'd be better off with the twins- unlike Ron they might actually not be Dunderheads."
Draco smirked, "If they received that kind of a recommendation perhaps I should consider taking them into the circle. We will need more supporters…"

Snape snorted, "Magic would disappear from the world before the Weasleys would abandon Dumbledore…"

Draco nodded, "I have to figure out how we are connected and how to use it to my advantage. I have to stay as many steps ahead of that manipulative git. I don't trust him…I swear when I go into the Ministry or the Wizengamot the first thing I will do is start a branch that deals with mixed Matings and orphans raised by Muggle relatives to prevent young witches and wizards children from being hurt like you have."

Snape stared, "Draco…are you made? Your father will kill you…"

Draco chuckled, "I'll tell him its to protect Half-bloods who at least have some status. He can assume I won't care about Mu…Muggleborns. He won't take kindly to a Half-blood descended from a powerful ancient bloodline being treated like Harry has. He knows about Adder in general terms…I left out details like his real name and I call his aunt a squib."

Snape snorted, "Petunia? A Squib? That is rich! I suppose her jealousy of Lily's magic was Squib like. The way Petunia has treated Harry is…very reminiscent of how some ancient families have treated Squibs in the past. It would be interesting if Muggleborns were descended from exiled Squibs. They can't live in our world so they go to the Muggle World. I suppose if two people have Squibs in their ancestry a powerful witch like Lily and…" he sneered, "…perhaps, Miss Granger. Lily was far more powerful…if you are talking about ability, Lily has strong enough magic to marry into the Potter line though her blood status was less then desirable."

Harry sighed, he hated it when people talked about him like he wasn't here…

Draco turned Harry, "It's okay Adder."

"What's a Squib? I think Neville mentioned he was thought to be a Squib…" even after being around the Wizarding world since his birthday he had so many questions."

Draco shrugged, "A Squib is someone born to magical Parents but has no magic themselves or they have very little. It can vary. They tend to be removed from the family tree at some point. Hidden away or sent, it doesn't matter now."

Harry said softly, "To be sent away from your family because you aren't good enough is really sad."

"I suppose." Draco acknowledged, Harry had a point.

Snape checked the grandfather clock in his office, "We should be sending Harry on his way."

Draco walked over and placed the vial of purple potion in Harry's hand, "I'll be with you."

"What is that? Draco…" it couldn't be what he thought it was…or had he not realized the extent of Draco's Potioneer abilities?

Draco shrugged, "It's the mind-sharing potion. I brewed three potions after I left you last night."

"He didn't sleep…that's why we were late. I woke up and he was holding me. He gave me two potions when I woke and then we fell asleep." Harry whispered.

Snape blinked, "You're a first year…I know you can brew at the level of most third years but a mind
"I made him the mind protection potion and a calming draught that doesn't cause drowsiness. I thought he needed all the protection he could get before he went to see Dumbledore. If we use this potion, I can be semi-present and witness the Headmaster's actions."

Snape sighed, "Take them." it wasn't like he could dissuade Draco from this path. "How did you end up in the Tower of the Lions..."

"I don't know. I sensed Harry was a little upset and he needed me. I focused and...ended up kneeling on his bed. I used a Notice-Me-Not charm to leave the tower with him."

"You're playing a dangerous game Draco...neither Dumbledore or your father will be pleased."

Draco sneered, "I don't care. Harry needs me and that's what matters." he smiled up at the tiny boy perched on a chair too large for him, "Drink okay?"

Harry nodded drinking the potion first.

Draco squeezed his hand before curling up in the other chair, "When I take it, I'll look like I'm napping but I'll be with you in your mind."

Harry was okay with this because they sort of did this when they looked into each other's eyes.

Snape sighed, "You know where the Headmaster's office is?"

Harry shook his head, "No..."

"The Headmaster's Tower is on the 5th floor this year, its accessible by a large stone gargoyle. You need a password. This week I'm sure it's Acid Pops- or it was earlier this week."

"Thank you, Professor."

"At least you have your mother's politeness." Snape smirked, but his eyes were sad. "I'll keep an eye on Draco's body."

Draco smiled, "I knew you would." He drank the potion, his mind separating from his body. Then he was in Harry's mind, 'We have to be back within two hours Adder. The potion will run out and we need to get my mind back to my body."

'I'll do my best. You know the castle better so help me find the office.'

Draco gave him simple directions and they made it there in fifteen minutes.

The knocker on the office door of the Headmaster's office was brass and in the shape of a Griffin.

Harry felt nervous, 'Draco...I don't want to do this...'

'I'm here Adder you aren't alone.' was the reply he heard from his mind.

He reluctantly knocked on the door, the door swept open seemingly of it's own accord.

Then came the strange Headmaster's voice who made Harry so uncomfortable, "Come in Harry. I wasn't sure you would make it."

'Lying arrogant old goat.' Draco sneered.
'Hush Draco please…I have to think." he was always braver near Draco.

The headmaster's office itself is a large circular room with many windows and many portraits of people.

'Former Headmasters and Headmistresses, Adder.'

There portrait of the immediate predecessor of the current headmaster hangs behind the headmaster's desk. It is was the largest of the paintings in the room.

'I think that is Armando Dippet. Father said he met him once but he preferred Dumbledore, because Professor Dippet was a moron.'

'I see…'

The office had a number of spindly tables upon which were set delicate looking silver instruments that whirred and emitted small puffs of smoke, as well as an incredible collection of books- which Draco would have envied but recognized most of them from the Manor's library. There was a Pensieve and the phoenix.

"Harry, my boy, do sit. Can I offer you tea? Pumpkin juice? A biscuit? Or perhaps, a lemon drop? I am quite mad about them despite being a Muggle sweet."

Tell him you are quite full from Lunch but you appreciate the offer.' Draco gently prodded Harry.

Harry repeated his friend's words, "I am quite full from Lunch but I appreciate the offer, Professor."

Dumbledore frowned, sensing strange magic, "I see. I am quite worried Harry. You do not seem to be acclimating well. You have not formed any friendships with your housemates, your attempts in most classes are apparently below par. You have high marks in Potions, progressing decently in Herbology, Astronomy and Charms, yet doing miserably in History and Transfiguration."

Harry pouted, "That's strange…" that didn't sound right…

'It's a lie. You've got high marks in Potions and Herbology, progressing decently in Astronomy and History but we're letting you barely pass Charms and Transfiguration.

Harry tilted his head confused, "I thought I had high marks in Potions and Herbology, was progressing decently in Astronomy and History but barely passing Charms and Transfiguration."

"My dear boy, as headmaster surely my knowledge of your marks would be superior to yours." that arrogance was…suffocating…

Draco sneered, 'I know your word Adder. He's misinformed.'

'I trust your word Draco.' he smiled sheepishly at the headmaster, "The work is rather hard, I can tell some of the other students catch on better then I do. I spend most of my time studying…"

"Harry, Harry, you can't spend all your time studying. We wouldn't want you to turn into a Percy Weasley, one of them in Hogwarts is plenty. We know you aren't a Ravenclaw, you're Gryffindor and you are supposed to have fun. The Weasley twins are great examples of Gryffindors…"

'He's trying to convince you to spend time with that family. Ugh…' Draco growled.

'I know, I wouldn't mind Ron if he didn't try to insult us both.' he sighed, "I suppose the twins are nice, they helped me with my trunk at Kings Cross twice. Percy is alright, a little rule-focused. I don't
like Ron. He has a temper and says mean things. I don't trust people like that."

"Harry, Ron is just a boy. He'll grow out of it. He would make a very loyal friend if you gave him a chance."

Draco didn't realize he'd done it, "He's a braggart with no self-confidence. He thinks he's invisible compared to his brothers. Why would he make a loyal friend? He doesn't need me, he tends to led the other first year boys though he thinks he doesn't have a way to stand out. He's always trying to cause trouble by whispering in class."

Harry didn't say those words but they came out of his mouth, he protested, 'Draco…that's not something I would say.'

'Sorry Adder. I don't know what happened. I'll be quiet."

Harry said quietly, "I…didn't mean to say all that…it just…slipped out." he blushed, "I…have a hard time trusting people."

Dumbledore smiled, "Of course you do." he had that irritating twinkle, "You just need to relax and make some friends. If your studies are so difficult…you should…try to befriend Miss Granger. She does have really high marks, she reminds me of your mother."

'How dare he? That…bastard…' Draco snarled.

"I'm sure she would be quite helpful if you gave her a chance."

'I knew it. He picked Granger and Ron Weasley to be your little shadows. What else does he want?"

"I told Hagrid that I would send you down for a visit."

Harry worried, 'Draco…do we have time for that?'

Draco winced, '…probably not…"

Harry sighed, 'Professor I have a lot of homework. Between Potions, Transfiguration and History I don't see how I have the time."

"Surely, thirty minutes wouldn't be too much of a bother. Hagrid's been blubbering in his hut because he thinks you don't like him."

'I don't.' Harry thought, 'I don't trust him either."

'You shouldn't. He was expelled. Had his wand snapped. I don't know why. Father never figured it out."

"Harry my boy, are you listening?"

"Yes, Professor. Sorry…just…distracted by my…Transfiguration essay…"

"Ah yes Minerva learned her high standards from me. She did inherit the position when I became Headmaster."

Draco growled.

Harry smiled, "I wouldn't know sir. No one has ever discussed your teaching methods." he would hate to be Dumbledore's student, it would be harder to fool him.
"I should let you go meet with Hagrid." Dumbledore stood and shuffled books looking for something, "Ah yes. Wait a moment. I had this in my possession when your father died. I quite imagine he'd approve of you having it. I'm not acting as Headmaster but as a friend of your father's Harry, I'll thank you to remember that." he held out a shimmering fabric, "His invisibility cloak. He used it often, more often then I approved of when I found out later. If he had had it the night he died perhaps, things wouldn't have turned out this way."

There was something in his tone Draco did not trust.

Harry took the cloak with shaking hands, "Professor…"

"Go on now…don't forget to visit Hagrid. He's expecting you at three."

Harry nodded reluctantly, "I'll go…I just have to pick up my books from Professor Snape's office and return them to the tower." and get Draco back to his body...

XoooooX

At five to three Harry left the castle and made his way reluctantly across the grounds. Hagrid lived in a small wooden house on the edge of the forbidden forest. A crossbow and a pair of galoshes were outside the front door.

Draco at his side, hidden by a Notice-Me-Not spell and the Invisibility cloak, he didn't trust it not yet. If it belonged to Harry's father it had to be wearing out...

When Harry knocked they heard a frantic scrabbling from inside and several booming barks. Then Hagrid's voice rang out, saying, "Back, Fang —back."

Hagrid's big, hairy face appeared in the crack as he pulled the door open.

"Harry! I've been hoping you'd finally have time ter stop by. Hang on," he said. "Back, Fang."

He let them in, struggling to keep a hold on the collar of an enormous black boarhound.

There was only one room inside. Hams and pheasants were hanging from the ceiling, a copper kettle was boiling on the open fire, and in the corner stood a massive bed with a patchwork quilt over it.

Draco sneered, how common. What did you expect from a half-giant? He cast a spell to hide his scent from the dog. He'd forgotten about Fang...

"Make yerself at home," said Hagrid, letting go of Fang, who bounded straight at Harry and started licking his ears. Like Hagrid, Fang was clearly not as fierce as he looked. Not that Harry really trusted that...Harry's experience with dogs were Aunt Marge's spoiled rotten dogs he swore were trained to hate him. They enjoyed Treeing him so he ended up locked outside...

"Sorry it took me so long to visit..." Harry told Hagrid, who was pouring boiling water into a large teapot and putting rock cakes onto a plate. He was trying to be polite when he wanted to turn around and bury himself in his books or at least find a safe place to meet Draco. He wanted to study while Draco's arm rested on his shoulders relaxing him.

"Glad ye finally came Harry. Been wanting ter interduce ya to Fang here."
The rock cakes were shapeless lumps with raisins that almost broke his teeth, but Harry pretended to be enjoying them as he told Hagrid an edited summary of his first few weeks at Hogwarts while Fang rested his head on Harry's knee and drooled all over his robes.

"Yer saying Snape actually likes ya?"

Harry shook his head, "Of course not..."

Draco caught his eye, 'Careful...he's Dumbledore's man.'

'I know.' Harry continued, "I said I'm his class assistant, one of them anyway. I'm tied for Marks with Malfoy. He says at least I inherited my mother's ability at potions and not my father's."

"James Potter and his friends were like Fred and George Weasley if they were four people instead er two. Yer father was quite ter one fer pranks, his favorite person to prank were Snape. I'm surprised he took ter ya. They were quite funny ter watch..."

Draco winced, that didn't sound like pranking...and Snape's dislike of James Potter was almost up there with his godfather's hatred of his own parents.

Harry picked up a piece of paper when Hagrid went to get more tea, that was lying on the table under the tea cozy. It was a cutting from the Daily Prophet:

**GRINGOTTS BREAK-IN LATEST**

*Investigations continue into the break-in at Gringotts on 31 July, widely believed to be the work of Dark wizards or witches unknown. Gringotts goblins today insisted that nothing had been taken. The vault that was searched had in fact been emptied the same day.*

"But we're not telling you what was in there, so keep your noses out if you know what's good for you," said a Gringotts spokesgoblin this afternoon.

"Hagrid!" said Harry, "that Gringotts break-in happened the day we were in Diagon Alley! It might've been happening while we were there!"

There was no doubt about it, Hagrid definitely didn't meet Harry's eyes at all. He grunted and offered him another rock cake. Harry read the story again. The vault that was searched had in fact been emptied earlier that same day. Hagrid had emptied vault seven hundred and thirteen, if you could call it emptying, taking out that grubby little package. Had that been what the thieves were looking for? He'd have to talk to Draco about it when they were alone.

As Harry and Draco walked back to the castle for dinner, Harry's pockets weighed down with rock cakes he'd been too polite to refuse, Harry thought that none of the lessons he'd had so far had given him as much to think about as tea with Hagrid. Had Hagrid collected that package just in time? Where was it now? And why did Hagrid say things like that about Snape and his father? Was he trying to make Harry think badly about his father or Snape?

Draco slipped his hand into Harry's, "That...was interesting..."

Harry sighed, "I really don't want to do that again. Dumbledore frightens me and I just don't trust Hagrid..."

"I understand Adder. Though the old goat is right, you could do with a few more allies, both smart and well-connected."
Flying Lessons, Remembralls, Stunts and Quidditch

Title: The truth behind the Name and the lies  
Pairing: DracoxHarry,  
Fandom : HP  
Notes: An abused boy finds out he's a wizard and a hero; his tormented mind rebels. One person sees through the misconceptions to the real Harry and treats him the way he deserves. Why Harry never fights back from personal attacks...why does he crave more? Because he isn't a hero, he isn't brave, he's hiding behind the shadow of the boy they all believe him to be. -yes I did rename the story. the title wasn't fitting...

"..." is spoken.

'...' is mind to mind communication.

Chapter 11- Flying Lessons, Remembralls, Stunts and Quidditch

Harry had never believed he would meet a boy he hated more than Dudley, but that was before he met Ron Weasley- who bullied him and made fun of him. So what if he was tiny and shy? Harry was saddened that first-year Gryffindors only had Potions with the Slytherins, which seemed to please Ron, who couldn't say anything nice about Draco. Due to their schedule, Ron didn't have to put up with Malfoy much but Harry was getting annoyed with Ron.

Ron groaned the loudest when he read the notice pinned up in the Gryffindor common room that made all of them but Harry groan. Flying lessons would be starting on Thursday — and Gryffindor and Slytherin would be learning together.

"Typical," said Harry darkly. "Just what I always wanted. To make a fool of myself on a broomstick in front of half of my year." he wished Draco could have given him lessons so he wouldn't embarrass himself.

He had been looking forward to learning to fly more than anything else.

"You don't know that you'll make a fool of yourself," said Neville reasonably. "Can't be worse then me. Gran wouldn't even let one in the house when I was growing up."

Neville was one of the few Gryffindor First Year boys who didn't mind Harry's shyness. Privately, Harry felt she'd had good reason, because Neville managed to have an extraordinary number of accidents even with both feet on the ground.

Ron said loudly, "Anyway, I know Malfoy's always going on about how good he is at Quidditch, but I bet that's all talk."

Draco certainly did talk about flying a lot, when they weren't pouring over homework and textbooks in Snape's office at the table he reserved for them. He complained loudly about first years never getting in the house Quidditch teams. Sometimes he told long stories that always seemed to end with him narrowly escaping Muggles in helicopters, which had Harry's heart beating in excitement.

He wasn't the only one, though: the way Seamus Finnegan told it, he'd spent most of his childhood
zooming around the Irish countryside on his broomstick- which Harry was rather jealous of.

Even Ron would tell anyone who'd listen about the time he'd almost hit a hang glider on Charlie's old broom. Everyone from Wizarding families apparently talked about Quidditch constantly. Ron had already had a big argument with Dean Thomas, who shared their dormitory, about football or footie as the taller First Year called it. Ron couldn't see what was exciting about a game with only one ball where no one was allowed to fly.

Harry had caught Ron prodding Dean's poster of West Ham football team, trying to make the players move but said nothing. Dean was technically a Halfblood but tended to be treated like a Muggleborn because he hadn't known until his letter that his father was a wizard and Harry understood the other boy's unease here.

Hermione Granger, little Miss Know-It-All was almost as nervous about flying as Neville was. This was something you couldn't learn by heart out of a book, which seemed to irritate her.

Dean teased that she could read about football but that didn't mean she could play which irritated her even more.

XoooooX

At breakfast on Thursday, Hermione bored them all with flying tips she'd gotten out of a library book called Quidditch Through the Ages.

Neville was hanging on to her every word, desperate for anything that might help him hang onto his broomstick later.

Everybody else was very pleased when Hermione's lecture was interrupted by the arrival of the mail.

Harry hadn't had a single letter since Hagrid's note, something that Draco had been quick to notice, of course since his only real friend had a radar for him. Draco's eagle owl was always bringing him packages of sweets from home, which he opened gloatingly at the Slytherin table only to share them later with Harry during their tutoring sessions with Snape.

A barn owl brought Neville a small package from his grandmother. He opened it excitedly and showed them a glass ball the size of a large marble, which seemed to be full of white smoke. "It's a Remembrall!" he explained. "Gran knows I forget things — this tells you if there's something you've forgotten to do. Look, you hold it tight like this and if it turns red…oh…" His face fell, because the Remembrall had suddenly glowed scarlet, "…you've forgotten something…"

Neville was trying to remember what he'd forgotten when Draco, who was passing the Gryffindor table, snatched the Remembrall out of his hand.

Harry sighed, these posturing actions of Draco's were annoying, though his friend insisted that he had to behave like this.

Dean and Seamus jumped to their feet, but Professor McGonagall was there in a flash.

"What's going on?"

"Malfoy's got my Remembrall, Professor."
There was a scowl on Draco's face but his eyes were sparkling like he had an agenda, Draco quickly dropped the Remembrall back on the table. "Just looking," he said, and he slipped away with Crabbe and Goyle behind him.

Harry watched him go and wished fervently that he could follow.

XoooooX

At three-thirty that afternoon, Harry and the other Gryffindors hurried down the front steps onto the grounds for their first flying lesson. It was a clear, breezy day, and the grass rippled under their feet as they marched down the sloping lawns toward a smooth, flat lawn on the opposite side of the grounds to the Forbidden Forest, whose trees were swaying darkly in the distance.

The Slytherins were already there, and so were twenty broomsticks lying in neat lines on the ground. Harry had heard Fred and George Weasley complain about the school brooms, saying that some of them started to vibrate if you flew too high, or always flew slightly to the left.

Their teacher, Madam Hooch, arrived. She had short, gray hair, and yellow eyes like a hawk. "Well, what are you all waiting for?" she barked. "Everyone stand by a broomstick. Come on, hurry up."

Harry glanced down at his broom. It was old and some of the twigs stuck out at odd angles.

"Stick out your right hand over your broom," called Madam Hooch at the front, "and say 'Up!'"

"UP" everyone shouted.

Harry's broom jumped into his hand at once, but it was one of the few that did. Hermione Granger's had simply rolled over on the ground, and Neville's hadn't moved at all. Perhaps brooms, like horses, could tell when you were afraid, thought Harry; there was a quaver in Neville's voice that said only too clearly that he wanted to keep his feet on the ground.

Madam Hooch then showed them how to mount their brooms without sliding off the end, and walked up and down the rows correcting their grips. Harry was delighted when she told Ron he'd been doing it wrong for years.

"Now, when I blow my whistle, you kick off from the ground, hard," said Madam Hooch. "Keep your brooms steady, rise a few feet, and then come straight back down by leaning forward slightly. On my whistle — three — two —"

But Neville, nervous and jumpy and frightened of being left on the ground, pushed off hard before the whistle had touched Madam Hooch's lips.

"Come back, boy!" she shouted, but Neville was rising straight up like a cork shot out of a bottle — twelve feet — twenty feet. Harry saw his scared white face look down at the ground falling away, saw him gasp, slip sideways off the broom and —

WHAM! There was a thud and a nasty crack.

Neville lay facedown on the grass in a heap. His broomstick was still rising higher and higher, and started to drift lazily toward the Forbidden Forest and out of sight.
Madam Hooch was bending over Neville, her face as white as his.

"Broken wrist," Harry heard her mutter. "Come on, boy, it's all right, up you get."

She turned to the rest of the class. "None of you is to move while I take this boy to the hospital wing! You leave those brooms where they are or you'll be out of Hogwarts before you can say 'Quidditch.' Come on, dear."

Neville, his face tear-streaked, clutching his wrist, hobbled off with Madam Hooch, who had her arm around him.

No sooner were they out of earshot than Nott burst into laughter. "Did you see his face, the great lump?"

Harry supposed the brooding burly Slytherin hadn't forgiven Neville for ruining their potion and getting him in trouble with Snape.

The other Slytherins joined in, Draco seemed less enthusiastic.

"Shut up, Nott," Parvati Patil snapped.

"Ooh, sticking up for Longbottom?" said Pansy Parkinson, a hard-faced Slytherin girl. "Never thought you'd like fat little crybabies, Parvati."

"Look!" said Malfoy, darting forward and snatching something out of the grass. "It's that stupid thing Longbottom's gran sent him." The Remembrall glittered in the sun as he held it up.

"Give that here, Malfoy," said Harry quietly, he didn't want to stage another fight.

Everyone stopped talking to watch.

Draco smiled nastily, his eyes slightly pained. "I think I'll leave it somewhere for Longbottom to find—how about...up a tree..."

"Give to me." Harry repeated, but Draco had leapt onto his broomstick and taken off. He hadn't been lying- then again Draco didn't lie to him; he could fly well. Hovering level with the topmost branches of an oak he called, "Come and get it, Potter!"

Harry grabbed his broom.

"No!" shouted Hermione Granger. "Madam Hooch told us not to move. You'll get us all into trouble."

Harry ignored her, wanting to follow his friend into the sky not caring much for rules. Blood was pounding in his ears as he mounted the broom and kicked hard against the ground. Up he soared; air rushed through his hair, and his robes whipped out behind him and in a rush of fierce joy, he realized he'd found something he could do without being taught- that no one told him he would be terrible at. This was easy, this was wonderful. He pulled his broomstick up a little to take it even higher, and heard screams and gasps of girls back on the ground and an admiring whoop from Dean and Seamus.

He turned his broomstick sharply to face Draco in midair and Draco looked stunned.

'Give it back, Draco.' Harry asked his softly before he called out, "or I'll knock you off that broom!"

"Oh, yeah?" Draco said, trying to sneer, but looking worried; if Adder tried such a stunt they could
both be hurt.

Harry knew, somehow, what to do. He leaned forward and grasped the broom tightly in both hands, and it shot toward Draco like a javelin—it was like he wasn't in control of himself.

Draco only just got out of the way in time—what was up with Harry?

Harry made a sharp about-face and held the broom steady.

A few people below were clapping.

"No Crabbe and Goyle up there to save your neck, Malfoy," Ron called from the ground.

The comment broke their concentration—or was it Harry's attack?

Draco dropped the Remembrall and the words fell from his lips. "Catch it if you can, then!" the glass ball streaked back toward the ground.

Harry saw as the ball rise up in the air a little and then start to fall. He leaned forward and pointed his broom handle down out of reflex, the next second he was gathering speed in a steep dive. He was racing the wind, which whistled in his ears, mingled with the screams of people watching. He stretched out his hand—a foot from the ground he caught it, just in time to pull his broom straight, and he toppled gently onto the grass with the Remembrall clutched safely in his fist.

"HARRY POTTER!"

His heart sank faster than he'd just dived. Professor McGonagall was running toward them. He got to his feet, trembling.

"Never, in all my time at Hogwarts..." Professor McGonagall was almost speechless with shock, and her glasses flashed furiously, "...how dare you...you might have broken your neck..."

Harry gulped, trying to catch Draco's eye but his friend wouldn't look at him. He was shaking.

"It wasn't his fault, Professor —"

"Be quiet, Miss Patil —"

"But Malfoy —"

"That's enough, Mr. Thomas. Potter, follow me, now."

Harry caught sight of Nott, Crabbe, and Goyle's triumphant faces as he left but Draco looked shaken not that anyone else would notice. He was walking numbly in Professor McGonagall's wake as she strode toward the castle. He was going to be expelled, he just knew it. He wanted to say something to defend himself, but as usual he couldn't. What if he was beaten for talking back to a professor? Professor McGonagall was sweeping along without even looking at him; he had to jog to keep up. Now he'd done it. He hadn't even lasted a month. He'd be packing his bags in ten minutes. What would the Dursleys say when he turned up on the doorstep?

Through the large front doors, up the marble staircase but still Professor McGonagall didn't speak to him. She wrenched open doors and marched along corridors with Harry trotting miserably behind her. Maybe she was taking him to Dumbledore—he barely noticed it wasn't the right way. He thought of Hagrid, expelled but allowed to stay on as gamekeeper. Would it be worse to be assigned as Hagrid's assistant? His stomach twisted as he imagined it, watching the other First Years becoming
wizards, while he stumped around the grounds carrying Hagrid's bag, miserable and unhappy.

Professor McGonagall stopped outside a classroom. She opened the door and poked her head inside.

"Excuse me, Professor Flitwick, could I borrow Wood for a moment?"

Wood? thought Harry, bewildered; was Wood a cane she was going to use on him? Oh, he could take being caned. He'd endured it more times then he could remember.

Wood turned out to be a burly fifth-year boy who came out of Flitwick's class looking confused.

"Follow me." said Professor McGonagall, and they marched on up the corridor, Wood looking curiously at Harry.

"In here." Professor McGonagall pointed them into a classroom that was empty except for Peeves, who was busy writing rude words on the blackboard. "Out, Peeves!" she barked. Peeves threw the chalk into a bin, which clanged loudly, and he swooped out cursing. Professor McGonagall slammed the door behind him and turned to face the two boys. "Potter, this is Oliver Wood. Wood, I've found you a Seeker."

Wood's expression changed from puzzlement to delight. "Are you serious, Professor?"

"Absolutely," said Professor McGonagall crisply, her tone brokering not arguments. "The boy's a natural. I've never seen anything like it. Was that your first time on a broomstick, Potter?"

Harry nodded silently. He didn't have a clue what was going on, but he didn't seem to be being expelled.

"He caught that thing in his hand after a fifty-foot dive," Professor McGonagall told Wood. "Didn't even scratch himself. Charlie Weasley couldn't have done it."

Weasley? Oh great, now he was being compared to one of them. Why him? Fifty feet? No wonder he got yelled at and Draco looked scared.

Oliver Wood was bouncing, "Ever seen a game of Quidditch, Potter."

"No. I only know what I've overheard from my housemates." it was true…sort of. Draco had told him about games he had attended with his father.

"Wood is the captain of our House's team."

Harry nodded slowly, still expecting to be punished for disobeying Madam Hooch.

"He's built perfectly for a Seeker." Wood said, as he walked around Harry taking a good look at him. "He's tiny and probably quick. He'll need a decent broom, Professor. Perhaps, a Nimbus Two Thousand or a Cleansweep Seven.."

"I shall speak to Professor Dumbledore, I'm sure he'll agree to bend the first-year rule regarding Flying. Merlin knows, we need a better team this year. We've been flattened by Slytherin so often, during Quidditch season I can hardly look Severus Snape in the face…" Professor McGonagall peered sternly over her glasses at Harry. "I better hear you're training hard, Potter, or I may change my mind about punishing you." Then she suddenly smiled. "Your father would have been proud," she said. "He was an excellent Quidditch player himself."

Harry stared, he wasn't going to be beaten or expelled for his stunt with a broom? They were going
to let him fly? He frowned at the mention of his father. It seemed like he getting off because of what
his name was. He clenched his fists in his sleeves, "I'll play. I don't know how good I'll be. I've…
ever played any sport before." he said softly.

Wood chuckled, "I'll be sure to whip you into shape. Don't worry. Besides, the team is a great way
to make friends." he patted Harry on the back as they headed to the door.

Harry stiffened.

"Sit with me at dinner and I'll introduce you to the team. They know you but you don't know them."

A slight allusion to his celebrity status in the tower, great. Harry shrugged, "Okay." it sounded like
an order and he had to please Wood or Professor McGonagall would have him expelled.

They exited the classroom and went in different directions.

XooooooX

Harry walked into the Great Hall and headed reluctantly for the Gryffindor table.

"Potter."

Harry looked up to see Wood waving, he head towards him.

"This is Katerina Bell, we call her Katie." Wood indicated the tall girl with honey colored hair next
to him.

"Alicia Spinnet, Chaser." she was tan as if she spent a out of time outside.

A pretty dark-skinned girl smiled at him, "Angelina Johnson. I'm also a Chaser."

"We already know you." chorused behind his head.

"Fred Weasley."

"George Weasley."

"We're Beaters."

Oliver snorted, "Strongest ones to ever try out and accurate too or I wouldn't keep these trouble-
makers around."

"We love you too Ollie. As much as we'd love to stay and chat, we already have arrangements to
meet Lee."

Oliver sighed, "Try to stay out of trouble. Our reserves are practically worthless compared to you. I
can't have you in detention all the time during practice or games. Please stay away from Snape and
Filch."

"Good ole Ollie. All he cares about is Quidditch." Harry thought that was George.

"That's why we love him." Would that make that Fred?
"If only he put as much effort into his studies as his beloved Quidditch…" the Gryffindor Prefect Percy said.

"Careful now Perce. You sound like a wife." one of the twins said that in a whisper before running off.

Percy turned as red as his hair and Oliver smirked.

Fred and George had hardly disappeared, so Harry didn't have a chance to realize what it was they implied when someone more welcome turned up; Draco but he was flanked by Crabbe and Goyle.

"Having a last meal, Potter? When are you getting the train back to the Muggles?" the words seemed cruel but the concern in his friend's eyes tore at Harry's heart.

"You're a lot braver now that you're back on the ground and you've got your friends with you," said Harry coolly, he didn't mean much of what he said but he wasn't as good at saying mean things as Draco seemed to.

Crabbe and Goyle could do more than crack their knuckles and scowl with the High Table so close full of teachers.

"Whatever. I was hoping that the Great Harry Potter would end up expelled so we would be able to focus on our studies without the distractions of a celebrity."

Now that had to be the meanest thing Draco had said to him while pretending to be his enemy.

"Really? I wonder, what sort of punishment did you get for riding after Madam Hooch told us not to."

Draco scowled, "Scrubbing Cauldrons. By the way, Professor Snape is quite upset that you would do such a foolish stunt. He was afraid he'd have to replace you with Nott as a potions assistant. He said you better stay after class tomorrow…"

"I'll have Professor McGonagall discuss that with Snape, he'll be quite busy in the Afternoons soon. That will take precedence over whatever Snape needs…"

Harry paled, no…he wouldn't be forced to give up his tutoring would he? He bit his lip, he needed that…he didn't want to play but he did want to fly. He was glad Draco gave him a taste…but he would have preferred to scrub cauldrons then to lose his tutoring.

Draco spotted the fear and shock in Harry's eyes, "I'm sure you'll end up scrubbing cauldrons or powdering beetles as well. He doesn't enjoy being embarrassed by his assistants."

Harry glanced up at the Head table to see Snape actually glaring, McGonagall looking smug and Dumbledore had that twinkle. Oh no…he stammered, "I've got to go…homework." He grabbed a sandwich, knowing he had to eat…but he'd lost his appetite…
Nighttime Adventures, Brooms and Flying

Harry managed to make it look as if he went to bed early, a few weeks after the Flying Incident as Snape called it. Professor Snape was not happy when he heard about Harry becoming Gryffindor House's new Seeker. It wasn't like he could keep it a secret from his favorite professor and Draco. Draco was jealous, he wanted to fly for his House and well, Snape had gotten used to winning the Quidditch cup. Honestly, Harry preferred Snape to McGonagall and would rather fly for Slytherin.

He'd closed his curtains, put on his bathrobe and tugged on his father's Invisibility cloak- Draco and Snape had checked it for tracking Charms and other things before agreeing it was safe to wear. He weaved his way out of the tower exiting as someone else came in. He made his way down to Snape's office, knowing he wouldn't get caught. Well, unless he came across Mrs. Norris…that cat could smell through charms or so the twins said.

He walked into Snape's office and opened the door. Draco was sitting before the fire and Harry went to climb into his lap.

Draco yelped when something invisible climbed into his lap.

Harry giggled, "Silly…it's just me." popping out of thin air as he let the cloak fall from his shoulders.

Draco sighed, "That cloak I swear…it's like nothing I've ever seen before."

Harry smiled, "It lets me sneak down here without being noticed."

Draco chuckled, "I do like that. Thought I wonder why the old goat gave it to you."

"I'd like to know that too." came a familiar voice that was almost a hiss.

Snape…

"You two look weird together. A lion and a snake." Snape said with a sneer.

"He should have Sorted into our House and you know it." Draco protested.

"Wonder what his mother would have thought if he had been. I hope she would have trusted me to look after him." came the quiet response.
"If she ever saw how you were with me as a child, she would have trusted you." Draco tried to reassure his godfather.

"Well, she never thought much of your father or his group of followers."

Draco snorted, "I don't think much of Father and his friends. I'm not sure how much of his beliefs I agree with. Personally, I think witches and wizards should be judged on merit and ability. Usually, Purebloods are better because they are more comfortable with their magic so they are better. Bribes can be a little over the top, donations are fine; but bribes should be used sparingly."

Snape gasped, "You do realize, you've managed to disagree with everything Lucius stands for…"

Draco shrugged, "So what? At some point, I will have to break away from father and prove I am my own person. I'm grateful that he managed to give us a better image after the war but I don't think he's done enough. I intend to do more."

Harry snuggled, "I'm glad. I don't know your father Draco, but I wish he could be proud of you. You're so brave."

"No, my little snake. I'm sneaky and calculating. I think that befriending Harry Potter even in secret and helping him adjust to our world is the best political move I've ever made. Not to mention, this is the closest friendship I've ever had. I only spend time with Nott, Pansy, Millie, Crabbe and Goyle because our parents are friends. Their being allied with the Prince of Slytherin is good for them too but the person who matters most to me is you."

Harry blushed and rest his cheek on Draco's perfectly starched shirt, "It's nice to matter to someone."

Snape was heard muttering, "Its nice to have someone who knows your secrets who you can trust. I miss her…"

They stayed like that for a while…

"Go on. Get out. Some of us have to be up early."

They were getting kicked out, Draco checked the clock, "Oh no…I better get you back up to the tower before the Slytherin Prefects are done with their rounds. They'll forgive me for wandering the corridors."

Harry reached for the cloak, letting Draco use it to cover them both.

They headed back to the tower, it was a little late for First Years to be out of their houses so they had to be careful.

They were just passing the trophy room when they heard:

"Sniff around, my sweet, they might be lurking in a corner."

It was Filch speaking to Mrs. Norris.

Horror-struck, Harry clutched Draco's hand beneath the cloak.

They scurried silently down the corridor, away from Filch's voice.

"I'm sure they're around here somewhere," they heard him mutter.

"This way!" Draco hissed in his ear as they began to creep down a long gallery full of suits of armor.
They could hear Filch getting nearer.

They swung around the doorpost, hurrying down first one corridor and then another.

Draco was leading but he didn't think he just tugged Harry along, without any idea where they were or where they were going. They ripped through a tapestry and found themselves in a hidden passageway, hurtled along it and came out near their Charms classroom, which Draco knew was miles from the trophy room.

"I think we've lost him," Harry panted, leaning against the cold wall and wiping his forehead.

"We've got to get you back to Gryffindor tower," Draco whispered, holding him close, "as quickly as possible."

"You're right. Let's go."

It wasn't going to be that simple. They hadn't gone more than a dozen paces when a doorknob rattled and something came shooting out of a classroom in front of them.

It was Peeves.

Draco cursed silently, trying to keep out of the poltergeist's way, this was the last thing he needed. All hell would break loose if Draco Malfoy was found wandering the corridors after curfew with Harry Potter. He pulled Harry against him, hoping the cloak would continue to hide them.

Peeves cackled. "I hear breathing. Someone's out of bed…wandering around after ten. Who could it be? Ickle Firsties? Tut, tut, tut. Naughty, naughty, you'll get caughty." looking around, "Why can't I see you?"

Draco rubbed Harry's back to keep him calm, he'd read up on charms that work on Poltergeists. He was just about to jinx him when he heard another sound.

Filch. Had to be.

Draco slowly cast a wandless hover charm so they floated down the hallways as not to make a sound. He noticed a nearby door, not wanting to see if it was locked he cast a nonverbal "Alohomora!"

The lock clicked and the door swung open — they piled through it, shut it quickly, and pressed their ears against it, listening.

"Which way did they go, Peeves? I'm sure there was someone." Filch was saying. "Quick, tell me."

"Say 'please.'"

"Don't mess with me, Peeves, now where did they go?"

"Shan't say nothing if you don't say please," said Peeves in his annoying singsong voice.

"All right! Please."

"NOTHING! Ha haaa! Told you I wouldn't say nothing if you didn't say please! Ha ha! Haaaaaa!"

And they heard the sound of Peeves whooshing away and Filch cursing in rage.

"He thinks this door is locked," Draco whispered. "I think we'll be okay until Filch leaves."
Harry turned around — and saw, quite clearly, what. For a moment, he was sure he'd walked into a nightmare — this was too much, on top of everything that had happened so far.

They weren't in a room, as he had expected, they were in a corridor. The forbidden corridor on the third floor and now they knew why it was forbidden.

They were looking straight into the eyes of a monstrous dog, a dog that filled the whole space between ceiling and floor. It had three heads. Three pairs of rolling, mad eyes; three noses, twitching and quivering in their direction; three drooling mouths, saliva hanging in slippery ropes from yellowish fangs.

Draco cursed, must be one of that oaf's pets. Only this one didn't seem less dangerous then one of it's size would be. A Cerberus, a three headed dog. It was standing quite still, all six eyes staring at them, and Draco knew that the only reason they weren't already dead was that the door's sudden opening and closing had taken it by surprise, but it was quickly getting over that, there was no mistaking what those thunderous growls meant. It smelled them, it didn't like being disturbed even by something invisible. Music calmed them right? He cast a spell that played a soft waltz, thank god his mother was obsessed with astronomy and mythology.

It didn't take long for the dog to calm down and sleep.

Draco sighed with relief.

Harry whispered, "Why didn't we run?"

Draco smiled ruffling the tiny boy's hair, "Because I knew what it was and how to calm it. Thank Merlin for the Black obsession with Astronomy and Mythology."

Harry held onto Draco, "That was scary…"

"I wouldn't have let it hurt you." he realized quickly the dozing dog was sitting on a trapdoor. "Now that's weird…" he shrugged, "Never mind, we need to get you back to the tower. Sounds like Filch is gone…"

They exited the Forbidden Corridor, looked up and down the corridor before Harry led the way up to the Tower. Filch must have hurried off to look for them somewhere else, because they didn't see him anywhere, but they hardly cared. All Draco wanted to do was put as much space as possible between Harry and that monster. They didn't stop hurrying until they reached the portrait of the Fat Lady on the seventh floor. Draco cast a Notice-Me-Not spell slipping from the cloak, hugging a still very invisible Harry, whispering, "Take care."

"Be safe…" Harry murmured, "Thank you for protecting me." unwrapping the cloak and hiding it under his bathrobe.

"I always will." Draco said before hurrying back in the direction of the dungeon.

"Where on earth have you been?" the Fat Lady asked, "Do you know what time it is? When did you leave? I never saw you leave…"

"Never mind that, please. Pig snout." stammered Harry, and the portrait swung forward.

Harry wrapped his cloak back around himself before heading up to his bed and collapsing in it.

The dog…it was standing on a trapdoor. It was obviously guarding something. The dog was guarding something… What had Hagrid said? Gringotts was the safest place in the world for
something you wanted to hide, except perhaps Hogwarts. It looked as though Harry had found out where the grubby little package from vault seven hundred and thirteen was. He couldn't wait to tell Draco…

XoooooX

Indeed, by the next morning, Harry and Draco thought that meeting the three-headed dog had been an excellent adventure, and they were quite keen to have another one. Well, it was more Draco's idea…

Harry was sitting by himself and writing in his journal to Draco while sipping pumpkin juice. Retelling Draco about the package that seemed to have been moved from Gringotts to Hogwarts.

They spent a lot of time wondering and writing what could possibly need such heavy protection.

**Adder, whatever it is either really valuable or really dangerous.**

**Or both.** Harry wrote in reply. *All I know for sure about the mysterious object was that it was about two inches long and wrapped in brown paper. It was lumpy.*

That's helpful. We don't have much chance of guessing what it was without further clues.

XoooooX

A week later…

The owls flooded into the Great Hall as usual, everyone's attention was caught at once by a long, thin package carried by six large screech owls. Harry was just as interested as everyone else to see what was in this large parcel, and was amazed when the owls soared down and dropped it right in front of him, knocking his bacon to the floor. They had hardly fluttered out of the way when another owl dropped a letter on top of the parcel.

Harry ripped open the letter first, which was lucky, because it said:

**DO NOT OPEN THE PARCEL AT THE TABLE.**

It contains your new Nimbus Two Thousand, but I don't want everybody knowing you've got a broomstick or they'll all want one. Oliver Wood will meet you tonight on the Quidditch field at seven o'clock for your first training session.

**Professor McGonagall**

Harry had difficulty hiding his glee as well as the note which one of the twins stole.

They blinked at him, poke the other, bent their heads together doing a type of silent communication that reminded him of himself and Draco.
One, George? said, "A Nimbus Two Thousand!"

The other hissed, "I've never even touched one."

One leaned over, placed an arm on his shoulder, "If we take you to into a secret passage that lets you out,"

"Near the tower, can we see it?"

Harry nodded, "Just a second." closing his journal and forgetting to tell Draco about the broom.

They left the hall quickly, wanting to unwrap the broomstick in private before their first class, but halfway across the entrance hall they found the way upstairs barred by Crabbe and Goyle.

Harry knew Draco was upset with him.

Draco seized the package from Harry and felt it. "That's a broomstick," he said, throwing it back to Harry with a mixture of jealousy and fury on his face. "You'll be in for it this time, Potter, first years aren't allowed them."

George couldn't resist it. "It's not any old broomstick,"

Fred continued, "It's a Nimbus Two Thousand. What did you say you've got at home, Malfoy, a Comet Two Sixty?"

George grinned at Harry. "Comets look flashy, but they're not in the same league as the Nimbus."

"What would you know about it, Weasley, you couldn't afford half the handle," Draco snapped back. "I suppose you and your brothers have to save up twig by twig."

Harry hated when Draco acted like that…

Before either red-headed twin could answer, Professor Flitwick appeared at Malfoy's elbow.

"Not arguing, I hope, boys?" he squeaked.

"Potter's been sent a broomstick, Professor," said Draco quickly, seeming like he half regretted his words.

"Yes, yes, that's right," said Professor Flitwick, beaming at Harry. "Professor McGonagall told me all about the special circumstances, Potter. And what model is it?"

"A Nimbus Two Thousand, it is," George said proudly.

Both twins were fighting not to laugh at the look of horror on Malfoy's face.

"It's really thanks to Malfoy here that I've got it," Harry added, referring the Flying Incident and trying to soothe the blow. He really should be showing to Draco first…

The twins giggled dragging him upstairs, not smothering their laughter at Dracoy's obvious rage and confusion.

Which did upset Harry, …but he didn’t dare tell them not to. He'd apologize later.

"Well, it's true," Harry said softly as they reached the top of the marble staircase, "If he hadn't stolen Neville's Remembrall I wouldn't be on the team with you…" he wasn't even sure that was exactly
true...he would rather have his study sessions but he couldn't tell the twins that.

"So I suppose you think that's a reward for breaking rules?" came an angry voice from just behind them. Hermione was stomping up the stairs, looking disapprovingly at the package in Harry's hand.

"Is she lecturing us on the rules Fred?"

"I'm afraid so George."

"My dear girl," came the snarky Fred Weasley' version of Dumbledore's pet phrase.

"Don't you realize rules were made to be broken?" George finished.

Hermione marched away with her nose in the air.

They finally reached the tower, Harry led the twins to his dormitory.

They all sat on Harry's bed with the curtains closed, it was different from when he and Draco were curled up here but it wasn't...terrifying.

"Hurry up."

"We don't have much time."

Harry tore open the package; even Harry, who knew nothing about the different brooms, thought it looked wonderful. Sleek and shiny, with a mahogany handle, it had a long tail of neat, straight twigs and Nimbus Two Thousand written in gold near the top.

"Bloody Merlin..."

"It's amazing."

One of the Twins whistled, "I'd give up pranks for a month to have one..."

"You and me both Georgie."

It was nice to have someone to share it with but Harry wished he could have shared this with Draco. If he'd been a Slytherin, he'd be playing for that House/ Surely Snape would have let him...

XoooooX

Harry had a lot of trouble keeping his mind on his lessons that day. It kept wandering up to the dormitory where his new broomstick was lying under his bed, or how he should apologize to Draco.

Harry cast a Notice-Me-Not spell on the broom, his invisibility cloak hiding beneath his robe, his books, parchment and quills before he hurried down to the dungeons to try to find Draco. Hopefully, he was in Snape's office.

Draco was sitting at their table surrounded by homework and didn't seem to notice he came in. He was nibbling on a sandwich, a platter with more sandwiches and apples were near the center of the table.
Harry sent down his things and sat on his chair, swinging his feet, "Sorry…I should have told you first. They stole the note, read it and proceeded to drag me off. I wanted to show you first."

"They're your teammates, of course they wanted to see first." Draco sneered.

The sneer broke Harry's heart, he closed his eyes, "I'm sorry…don't hate me Draco. You're the only friend I have."

Draco winced at the pain in Harry's voice. "It's okay. I was jealous because you got a broom and we're First Years. A Nimbus Two Thousand? Harry that's the best broom in the world. Father wouldn't let me have one because I wouldn't be able to use it…" his voice thick with yearning.

Harry cast a Finite Incantation on the broom, and held it out to Draco. "Well…you can look at it…"

Draco whistled, "It's beautiful…you really are a good flyer." He said quietly, "I…was terrified when you went for a dive after that stupid ball. If I'd been responsible for breaking it I would have sent him a new one."

Harry sighed, "I was foolish, I don't know why I followed you into the air or went after the Remembrall. It's not like Neville and I are friends…"

"It was a gift from someone he cared about. I shouldn't have done what I did. Its not like the boy doesn't have enough problems without me making more."

They studied for a while nibbling on the sandwiches and apples, Draco correcting his spelling and handwriting as well as explaining terms.

Harry sighed, realizing it was ten to seven. He smiled at his friend, "I didn't share the broom with you first…but would you like to come with me for my first Quidditch lesson? You can offer me tips afterwards…" besides, at least Draco already knew how to fly. Harry was sure what happened was only beginner's luck.

Draco blinked, "Are you serious? I'm a Slytherin…"

Harry reached for his hand, "I trust you. No one else will know. Please…you can use the cloak…" he gave Draco a look, begging him to come.

Draco ruffled his hair, "When you look at me like that I can't refuse you." he straighten up their books and parchments. "Uncle Sev," he called out.

The familiar profile of their favorite teacher was seen entering the room from his personal lab. "What?"

"I'm going with Adder to his Quidditch lesson. He wanted to make it up to me for not showing me the broom first."

Snape sighed, "You will use the cloak."

Harry nodded pulling it out from beneath his school robe, "Of course. I don't want Draco in trouble because of me."

Draco putting it on and disappearing from sight, "I'll be careful. I just want to keep an eye on him."

"You can't be attached to him all the time Draco. You're neglecting your duties as the Prince. You'll lose status…"
Draco sighed, "When I find people to look after him sometimes, I'll spend more time with my House. They think I'm your little pet anyway."

Harry handed Draco the broom, "Can you hold it for me while we walk to the field? I don't want everyone see it and cause a ruckus."

"Very well." the broom disappeared beneath the robe, Draco walked beside him, "Let's go."

It was getting closer to seven o'clock when Harry and Draco left the castle, setting off in the dusk toward the Quidditch field. Held never been inside the stadium before. Hundreds of seats were raised in stands around the field so that the spectators were high enough to see what was going on. At either end of the field were three golden poles with hoops on the end. They reminded Harry of the little plastic sticks Muggle children blew bubbles through, except that they were fifty feet high.

Though he was eager to fly again, Harry decided to wait with Draco. The broom beside him, his hand clinging to Draco's beneath the cloak.

Draco whispered in his ear, "You want to fly…go ahead my little snake. Show me what you've got."

If Draco wasn't here, he would have been too eager to wait for Wood and would have just gone up. Harry did as Draco urged, he mounted his broomstick and kicked off from the ground. What a feeling! He remembered how he had swooped in air before. He was soon flying in and out of the goal posts and then sped up and down the field. The Nimbus Two Thousand turned wherever he wanted at his lightest touch.

"Hey, Potter, come down!" Oliver Wood had arrived. He was carrying a large wooden crate under his arm.

Harry landed next to him, it was a better landing then last time. He was sure Draco would have been happy for him.

"Very nice," said Wood, his eyes glinting. "I see what McGonagall meant… you really are a natural. I'm just going to teach you the rules this evening, then you'll be joining team practice three times a week."

Harry sighed, "I see. It will cut into my study time. Professor Snape is already unhappy and I haven't really started playing yet."

"I heard he made you an assistant. It's been a long time since one of us Lions were one. He doesn't like us much. Though his House trounces us on the field." Wood said darkly, as he opened the crate. Inside were four different-sized balls. "Right," said Wood. "Now, Quidditch is easy enough to understand, even if it's not too easy to play. There are seven players on each side. Three of them are called Chasers."

"Three Chasers, Alicia, Katie and Angelina." Harry repeated, as Wood took out a bright red ball about the size of a soccer ball.

"This ball's called the Quaffle," said Wood. "The Chasers throw the Quaffle to each other and try and get it through one of the hoops to score a goal. Ten points every time the Quaffle goes through one of the hoops. Follow me? The Chasers throw the Quaffle and put it through the hoops to score. Now, there's another player on each side who's called the Keeper; I'm Keeper for Gryffindor. I have to fly around our hoops and stop the other team from scoring."

"Three Chasers, one Keeper," said Harry, who was determined to remember it all- despite Draco's attempt to explain it before. It made more sense looking at the Quaffle, and remembering the players
faces. "And they play with the Quaffle. Okay, got that. So what are they for?" He pointed at the three balls left inside the box.

"I'll show you now," said Wood. "Take this."

He handed Harry a small club, it reminded him of small cricket bat.

"I'm going to show you what the Bludgers do," Wood said. "These two are the Bludgers."

He showed Harry two identical balls, jet black and slightly smaller than the red Quaffle. Harry noticed that they seemed to be straining to escape the straps holding them inside the box.

"Stand back," Wood warned Harry as he bent down and freed one of the Bludgers.

At once, the black ball rose high in the air and then pelted straight at Harry's face. Harry yelped and swung wildly at it with the bat to stop it from breaking his nose. All he did was send it zigzagging away into the air. It zoomed around their heads and then shot at Wood, who dived on top of it and managed to pin it to the ground.

"See?" Wood panted, forcing the struggling Bludger back into the crate and strapping it down safely.

"The Bludgers rocket around, trying to knock players off their brooms. That's why you have two Beaters on each team, we have the Weasley twins. They make it hell for the opposing team, it's their job to protect us from the Bludgers, they try to knock them toward the other team. Do think you've got all that…"

"Three Chasers try and score with the Quaffle; the Keeper guards the goal posts; the Beaters keep the Bludgers away from their team," Harry repeated rather proud of himself.

"Decent."

"Do…Bludgers ever really hurt anyone…" Harry asked, hoping he sounded offhand.

"None on has ever died from them at Hogwarts. We've had a couple of broken jaws but nothing worse than that. Now, the last member of the team is the Seeker. That's you. And you don't have to worry about the Quaffle or the Bludgers,"

"Well unless they crack my head open." Harry said with a shiver.

"Don't worry, the twins are more than a match for the Bludgers. What I mean is they're like a pair of human Bludgers themselves."

Harry shivered at the visual of being chased around by Fred and George…

Wood reached into the crate and took out the fourth and last ball. Compared with the Quaffle and the Bludgers, it was tiny, about the size of a large walnut. It was bright gold and had little fluttering silver wings.

"This," said Wood, "is the Golden Snitch, and it's the most important ball of the lot. It's very hard to catch because it's so fast and difficult to see. It's the Seeker's job to catch it. You've got to weave in and out of the Chasers, Beaters, Bludgers, and Quaffle to get it before the other team's Seeker, because whichever Seeker catches the Snitch wins his team an extra hundred and fifty points, so they nearly always win. That's why Seekers get fouled so much. A game of Quidditch only ends when the Snitch is caught, so it can go on for ages. I think the record is three months, they had to keep bringing on substitutes so the players could get some sleep. Well, that's it any questions?"
Harry shook his head. He understood what he had to do all right, it was doing it that was going to be the problem.

"We won't practice with the Snitch yet," said Wood, carefully shutting it back inside the crate, "it's too dark, we might lose it. Let's try you out with a few of these." He pulled a bag of ordinary golf balls out of his pocket.

A few minutes later, he and Harry were up in the air, Wood throwing the golf balls as hard as he could in every direction for Harry to catch.

Harry didn't miss a single one, and Wood was delighted. After half an hour, night had really fallen and they couldn't carry on.

"Well it's too dark to continue. Think you can head back yourself? I've got to put these back." indicating the crate of balls.

Harry nodded, "I'll be fine. I still owe Professor Snape a half hour or so."

"Alright then. That Quidditch Cup'll have our name on it this year. Be sure to make it to the tower by curfew…" Wood said before heading off.

There was silence for a bit and then a whisper, "Merlin Adder…you really are amazing…"

Harry smiled turning in the direction of the whisper, "Thank you but I wouldn't be on the team if it weren't for you."

Draco placed a hand on his back, still hidden by the cloak, "Adder, you are a far better flyer then I am…"

They trudged back up to the castle, returning to retrieve their books.

Draco hugged Harry, "Be safe okay? I liked seeing you fly tonight. You looked so happy…someday we'll fly together I promise…” Slytherin would have to fight for the cup since Harry was Sorted into Gryffindor.

"I'd like that…” Harry smiled before he turned to return reluctantly to the Tower. His broom under the Notice-Me-Not charm and the cloak hiding once more under his robe.
Halloween- Trick or Treat? Friend or Foe?

Title: The truth behind the Name and the lies
Pairing: DracoxHarry,
Fandom : HP
Notes: An abused boy finds out he's a wizard and a hero; his tormented mind rebels. One person sees through the misconceptions to the real Harry and treats him the way he deserves. Why Harry never fights back from personal attacks...why does he crave more? Because he isn't a hero, he isn't brave, he's hiding behind the shadow of the boy they all believe him to be. -yes I did rename the story. the title wasn't fitting...

"..." is spoken.

'...' is mind to mind communication.

Chapter 13- Halloween- Trick or Treat? Friend or Foe?

Perhaps it was because he was now so busy, what with Quidditch practice three evenings a week on top of all his homework and study session, but Harry could hardly believe it when he realized that he'd already been at Hogwarts two months. The castle felt more like home than Privet Drive ever had; that might be because Professor Snape had become a sort of parental figure and he had Draco who was his friend and a protective brother figure. His lessons, too, were becoming more and more interesting now that they had mastered the basics and with Snape and Draco explaining things again..

On Halloween morning they woke to the delicious smell of baking pumpkin wafting through the corridors. Even better, Professor Flitwick announced in Charms that he thought they were ready to start making objects fly, something Harry had been dying to try since they'd seen him make Neville's toad zoom around the classroom and he'd begged Draco to teach him last week. So the lesson was far too easy for him but he made sure to not pronounce it correctly nor to use his wand properly until his fifth try. Which was just as well since his partner Seamus managed to make it explode.

That annoying git Ron was partnered with Hermione, served them right. He didn't like either of them. It was hard to tell whether Ron or Hermione was angrier about this. She hadn't spoken to him since the day Harry's broomstick had arrived.

Ron, at the next table, wasn't having much more luck. "Wingardium Leviosa!" he shouted, waving his long arms like a windmill.

"You're saying it wrong," Harry heard Hermione snap. "It's Wing-gar-dium Levi-o-sa, make the 'gar' nice and long."

"You do it, then, if you're so clever," Ron snarled.

Hermione rolled up the sleeves of her gown, flicked her wand, and said, "Wingardium Leviosa!"

Their feather rose off the desk and hovered about four feet above their heads.

"Oh, well done!" cried Professor Flitwick, clapping. "Everyone see here, Miss Granger's done it!"

Needless to say Ron was in a very bad mood by the end of the class and Harry didn't care.
"It's no wonder no one can stand her," Ron said to Dean as they pushed their way into the crowded corridor, "she's a nightmare, honestly."

Someone knocked into Harry as they hurried past him. It was Hermione. Harry caught a glimpse of her face — and was startled to see that she was in tears.

"I think she heard you." he said quietly.

"So?" Ron hissed, "She must've noticed she's got no friends."

Hermione didn't turn up for the next class and wasn't seen all afternoon. On his way down to the Great Hall for the Halloween feast, Harry overheard Parvati Patil telling her friend Lavender that Hermione was crying in the girls' bathroom and wanted to be left alone. Harry felt even more awkward at this, but by the time he had entered the Great Hall, where the Halloween decorations put Hermione out of his minds.

A thousand live bats fluttered from the walls and ceiling while a thousand more swooped over the tables in low black clouds, making the candles in the pumpkins stutter. The feast appeared suddenly on the golden plates, as it had at the start-of-term banquet.

Harry was just helping himself to a baked potato when Professor Quirrell came sprinting into the hall, his turban askew and terror on his face. Everyone stared as he reached Professor Dumbledore's chair, slumped against the table and gasped, "Troll in the dungeons. Thought you ought to know." He then sank to the floor in a dead faint.

There was an uproar. It took several purple firecrackers exploding from the end of Professor Dumbledore's wand to bring silence.

"Prefects, lead your Houses back to the dormitories immediately!" Dumbledore was in his element.

Percy leapt to his feet, "Follow me! Stick together, first years! No need to fear the troll if you follow my orders! Stay close behind me, now. Make way, first years coming through! Excuse me, I'm a prefect!"

The Houses all followed their Prefects…

"How could a troll get in?" Harry asked as twins who happened to be beside him as they climbed the stairs.

"Don't ask me, they're supposed to be really stupid," George shrugged.

"Wasn't us. Maybe Peeves let it in for a Halloween joke." Fred added.

They passed different groups of people hurrying in different directions. As they jostled their way through a crowd of confused Hufflepuffs, Harry suddenly grabbed George's arm- at least he thought it was George.

"Oh no…Hermione…"

"What about her? Wait who is that?" George replied, Fred stopping in front of him on the stair as if sensing him stopping.

"The girl who complained about my broom. She doesn't know about the troll."

"Oh, all right."
"An adventure. Rescue the Princess from the evil troll."

Harry rolled his eyes as they slipped down, they joined the Hufflepuffs going the other way, slipped down a deserted side corridor, and hurried off toward the girls' bathroom. They had just turned the corner when they heard quick footsteps behind them.

"Hide," hissed Fred, pulling Harry and George behind a large stone griffin.

Peering around it, however, they saw not Percy but Snape. He crossed the corridor and disappeared from view.

"What's he doing?" George whispered.

"Why isn't he down in the dungeons with the rest of the teachers?" Fred answered.

"Search me." Harry was confused but dared not give a different answer.

Quietly as possible, they crept along the next corridor after Snape's fading footsteps.

"He's heading for the third floor," Fred said, but George held up his hand.

"Can you smell something?"

Harry sniffed and a foul stench reached his nostrils, a mixture of old socks and the kind of public toilet no one seems to clean. He made a sour face.

Then they heard it; a low grunting, and the shuffling footfalls of gigantic feet. George pointed, at the end of a passage to the left, something huge was moving toward them. They shrank into the shadows and watched as it emerged into a patch of moonlight.

It was a horrible sight. Twelve feet tall, its skin was a dull, granite gray, its great lumpy body like a boulder with its small bald head perched on top like a coconut. It had short legs thick as tree trunks with flat, horny feet. The smell coming from it was incredible. It was holding a huge wooden club, which dragged along the floor because its arms were so long.

The troll stopped next to a doorway and peered inside. It waggled its long ears, making up its tiny mind, then slouched slowly into the room.

"The keys in the lock." Fred muttered.

"We could lock it in." George whispered back.

"Good idea," Harry said nervously, he wanted Draco. He felt a shimmer of emotion and turned. Oh shite…Draco.

Draco hissed, "What are you doing Adder? I was in the Dungeon…” he glanced around spotted the troll and curse. "Mordred…you got yourself in trouble."

The twins blinked, "Malfoy? Where did you come from?"

"Explain later. Promise…just tell me what's going on."

"Hermione is in trouble. She's crying in the girls bathroom because of something Ron said after Charms." Harry whispered reaching for Draco's hand out of reflex. "She didn't know about the troll. I didn't want her to get hurt or scared. Fred and George came with me."
Fred and George edged toward the open door, mouths dry, praying the troll wasn't about to come out of it. With one great leap, Fred managed to grab the key, while George slammed the door, and Fred locked it.

Draco pulled Harry to his chest, "What you tried to do was very brave…"

"Yes!" the twins cursed punching their fists in the air.

Flushed with their victory, the four unlikely allies started to run back up the passage, but as they reached the corner they heard something that made their hearts stop; a high, petrified scream and it was coming from the chamber the twins just locked.

"Oh, no," said Fred, suddenly pale as the Bloody Baron.

"That was the girls' bathroom!" Harry gasped in horror.

"Hermione!" they all said together.

It was the last thing they wanted to do, but what choice did they have? Wheeling around, they sprinted back to the door and George turned the key, fumbling in his panic. Fred pulled the door open and they ran inside.

Hermione Granger was shrinking against the wall opposite, looking as if she was about to faint. The troll was advancing on her, knocking the sinks off the walls as it went.

"Confuse it!" Draco said desperately to the twins, trying to keep Harry in the corridor behind him and seizing a tap, he threw it as hard as he could against the wall.

The troll stopped a few feet from Hermione. It lumbered around, blinking stupidly, to see what had made the noise. Its mean little eyes saw Harry and Draco. It hesitated, then made for them instead, lifting its club as it went.

"Oy, pea-brain!" Fred and George yelled from the other side of the chamber, as they threw metal pipes at it. The troll didn't even seem to notice the pipe hitting its shoulder, but it heard the yells and paused again, turning its ugly snout toward the instead, giving Draco time to run around it.

"Come on, run, run!" Harry yelled at Hermione, while Draco was trying to pull her toward the door, but she couldn't move, she was still flat against the wall, her mouth open with terror.

The shouting and the echoes seemed to be driving the troll berserk. It roared again and started toward George, who was nearest and had no way to escape.

Fred then did something that was both very brave and very stupid: He took a great running jump and managed to fasten his arms around the troll's neck from behind. The troll couldn't feel Fred hanging there, but even a troll will notice if you stick a long bit of wood up its nose, and Fred's wand had still been in his hand when he'd jumped – it had gone straight up one of the troll's nostrils.

Howling with pain, the troll twisted and flailed its club, with Fred clinging on for dear life; any second, the troll was going to rip him off or catch him a terrible blow with the club.

Hermione had sunk to the floor in fright while Draco tried to drag her out.

Harry entered the bathroom, he pulled out his own wand, not knowing what he was going to do then he heard himself cry the first spell that came into his head, "Wingardium Leviosa!"
The club flew suddenly out of the troll's hand, rose high, high up into the air, turned slowly over and dropped, with a sickening crack, onto its owner's head. The troll swayed on the spot and then fell flat on its face, with a thud that made the whole room tremble.

Fred got to his feet, he was shaking and out of breath but his eyes were shining with excitement, "Never wanted to ride a troll but that was fun."

George tackled him, "You great stupid git. You scared me. I thought I would lose you.

Harry was standing there with his wand still raised, staring at what he had done.

It was Hermione who spoke first from Draco's arms since the boy had finally manage to get to her feet and to the door.

"Is it — dead?"

"I don't think so," Fred said.

George shrugged, "I think it's just been knocked out."

Fred bent down and pulled his wand out of the troll's nose. It was covered in what looked like lumpy gray glue. "Urgh — troll boogers." He wiped it on the troll's trousers.

A sudden slamming and loud footsteps made the five of them look up, Draco let go of Hermione pushing her into Harry's arms and casting a Notice-Me-Not spell before he could be recognized. They hadn't realized what a racket they had been making, but of course, someone downstairs must have heard the crashes and the troll's roars. A moment later, Professor McGonagall had come bursting into the room, closely followed by Snape, with Quirrell bringing up the rear. Quirrell took one look at the troll, let out a faint whimper, and sat quickly down on a toilet, clutching his heart.

Snape bent over the troll. Professor McGonagall was looking at the twins and Harry. Harry had never seen her look so angry. Her lips were white.

"What on earth were you thinking of?" said Professor McGonagall, with cold fury in her voice. The twins looked at Harry whose wand in the air was now at his side with an armful of a shaken formerly hysterical Muggleborn witch. "You're lucky you weren't killed. Why aren't you in your dormitory?"

Snape gave Harry a swift, piercing look.

Harry looked at the floor, he'd manage to upset his favorite Professor again …

Then a small voice came from Harry's arms.

"Please, Professor McGonagall, they were looking for me."

"Miss Granger!"

Hermione had managed to get on her own feet at last. "I went looking for the troll because I…well I thought I could deal with it on my own, you know, because I've read all about them."

Harry dropped his wand. Hermione Granger, telling a downright lie to a teacher?

"If they hadn't found me, I'd be dead now. The twins tried to distract it when it came after me. Then when it tried to attack one twin, the other jumped on it's back and stuck his wand up its nose. Harry managed to knock it out with its own club."
Harry was pleased she didn't mention Draco, he was still here, he could sense.

Hermione continued, "They didn't have time to come and fetch anyone. It was about to finish me off when they arrived."

Harry and the twins tried to look as though this story wasn't new to them.

"Well — in that case..." said Professor McGonagall, staring at the three of them, "Miss Granger, you foolish girl, how could you think of tackling a mountain troll on your own?"

Hermione hung her head. Harry was speechless. Hermione was the last person to do anything against the rules, and here she was, pretending she had, to get them out of trouble. It was as if Filch had started handing out sweets.

"Miss Granger, five points will be taken from Gryffindor for this," said Professor McGonagall. "I'm very disappointed in you. If you're not hurt at all, you'd better get off to Gryffindor tower. Students are finishing the feast in their houses."

Hermione left.

Professor McGonagall turned to Harry and the twins.

"Well, I still say you were lucky, I would never have expected you two to play hero Weasleys but I am glad you didn't let Potter come on his own. Not many first years could have taken on a full-grown mountain troll. You each win Gryffindor five points. Professor Dumbledore will be informed of this. You may go."

They hurried out of the chamber and didn't speak at all until they had climbed two floors up. It was a relief to be away from the smell of the troll, quite apart from anything else.

"We should have gotten more than fifteen points," Fred grumbled.

"Ten, you mean, once she's taken off Hermione's." George chuckled.

"Good of her to get us out of trouble like that," Harry said softly.

"Mind you, we did save her." came Draco's voice, which caused them to pause.

"She might not have needed saving if we hadn't locked the thing in with her," Fred sighed.

George remembered, "Malfoy, you promised to explain..."

Draco sighed, "Get us a safe place to talk and I will.

There came a soft voice, "I'd like to hear too." Hermione Granger didn't seem to have gone far after all.

Draco grumbled, "Great."

They were tugged by Fred and George into a secret passage, which the twins cast multiple spells to hide them.

Draco cast Finite Incantum to cancel his Notice-Me-Not spell.

Fred and George chorused as Draco became visible, "Explain. We're waiting."
Draco glanced at Harry, looking into his eyes, 'What can I tell them.'

Harry shifted nervously, 'Whatever you feel they need to know.'

Draco coughed, "What I'm going to tell you can't be repeated. I met Harry in Diagon Alley the day Gringotts was broken into. We met in the Madam Malkin's and we discovered a connection. We... have what seems like telepathic conversations. I ended up seeing a memory of his from just before we met. It changed my opinion of the Great Harry Potter."

"What was it?" Hermione asked curious

"Harry's introduction to the Wizarding World. The oaf Hagrid showed him off in The Leaky Cauldron and he was overwhelmed by the attention." he pulled Harry into his lap, sensing the boy's discomfort. "I decided to be his friend," he paused whispering, "Harry shut off the glamour for a second. Please."

Harry trusted him, closing his eyes.

Draco held out the hands with the badly healed fingers.

Hermione and twins gasped.

"Oh Harry..." Hermione whispered.

Fred stared, "Can you,"

"...catch a snitch," George continued the thought.

"...with those?" Which Fred finished.

Draco smiled, "He has the reflexes to." probably from trying to avoid being hit, he thought darkly. "I've been advising him since then through letters and our journals. I've also been helping him with his studies. He had as much catching up to me as you did Granger."

"Call me Hermione, please. You did help save me."

"You kept Adder out of trouble, for that I thank you. You also didn't mention I was there."

Hermione blushed, "I didn't realize it was you until I left."

"Well, the Muggles Harry is living with are terrible people. They... tried to scare the magic out of him- which is impossible after all. He is so tiny... I can't understand how anyone could hurt him."

Fred and George looked at each other, doing their own silent communication thing. Then Fred nodded, "We'll keep these secrets."

Draco said sadly holding Harry close, "As for how I ended up there... whatever the connection between Harry and I is, I can also sense when he upset. Sometimes, I immediately find myself with him. Once... he was having a nightmare and I found myself kneeling on his bed in the Tower."

Hermione squealed and then covered her mouth.

"You were,"

"...in Gryffindor Tower."
The twins asked.

Draco nodded, "It was a little disturbing to be there but it calmed him. He was scared this time, I felt it and then...I was standing beside you three."

Hermione said quietly, "You...hate Mudbloods...but you helped me and didn't run to wash your hand right after."

Draco shrugged, "Becoming the friend and protector of a Half-blood has changed my mind about a lot of things. My current beliefs must stay a secret until the correct time to reveal them. So I ask that you remember that while I do see purebloods usually as better skilled, ability can sometimes be ascribed to those with less pure blood. Interesting, the heir to one of the most powerful ancient bloodline has taken a Muggleborn and two supposed Bloodtraitors into his confidence. My ancestors must be rolling in the Malfoy Mausoleum in shock. Harry is my most important person, someone...is trying to pull strings. I don't like it...Dumbledore treats him weirdly...Hagrid says one thing but does another. Dumbledore said that Hermione and Ron would be the best choices for Harry to befriend."

Harry muttered from his comforting place in Draco's arms, "Don't like Ron...he's mean."

Fred and George laughed, "He is a prat. We're happy to be in the lets protect Harry club. We'll look out for him during practice."

Hermione piped up, "I'll keep an eye on him in the classes we have with Hufflepuff and Ravenclaw. I can also help him study when you can't."

Draco smiled, "Harry isn't the brave Hero everyone thinks he is. Not yet anyway. Nor is he the stuck up git Ron has accused him of. I want him to be braver. I wouldn't mind the help," he sighed, "I would prefer if the next time I pick a staged fight if one of you were there. He hates it when I do that because it still hurts him even if he knows I don't mean it. We all know that no one would let me be friends with him. I'm glad the hat decided to misSort him. No one in Slytherin would dare help him besides me."

"MisSort? That's impossible." Hermione protested.

"So is a former Death Eater's son being best friends with the Boy-Who-Lived. Or you lying to a teacher. As I was saying, he should have been in Slytherin. Someone made that hat Sort him into Gryffindor."

"So you're saying he was sent to live with Muggles who abused him. He didn't know anything about the Wizarding World until this summer like me. Someone caused a independent magical item to misSort a student..." Hermione stared.

Draco nodded, "Did you hear that Dumbledore appeared in Gryffindor tower a few weeks back? Harry had politely refused tea with the oaf. The oaf used Harry's money to buy his owl and had the audacity to call it Harry's birthday present from him. so Harry didn't want to have tea with him. Dumbledore showed up and insisted Harry visit him in his office the next day despite Harry's polite refusal. He was so upset...I fell pulled to him. I...didn't sleep that night. I was up brewing potions to calm him."

Harry winced, while the other three gasped in outrage.

"I liked Hagrid." Fred stammered.

"Charlie always said he was decent person." George murmured.
Hermione shrugged, "I don't know anything about this Hagrid but that was a terrible thing to do to Harry. I didn't realize you were the person who gave him his pairing journal. I do apologize for what I said about it. I don't think Draco would do anything that would actually get Harry hurt. Thought I am tempted to disagree with my own analysis now that I remember our first Flying Lesson."

"I didn't mean to drop the Remembrall. Ron startled me. Honestly, I wasn't really myself…Harry wasn't either. It was…weird. If it had ended up broken, I would have sent Longbottom a replacement anonymously." Draco protested.

"Draco is really nice…he explains things nice and slow until I get it. He's tutoring me when we are in Snape's office." Harry said quietly.

"So…the reason you knew the answers the first Day of Potions class was because Draco helped you study ahead."

Draco smiled, "He catches on quickly, he isn't stupid or slow."

"So…you were missing up that charm today on purpose."

Harry blushed, "If you know how to do it right…you can do it wrong."

"How many times did you purposely do it wrong before you did it right." Draco asked curious.

Harry shrugged, "Five times wrong. Then once right and after that Seamus blew up our feather."

"So…you got it right before I did and no one noticed…" Hermione said in shock.

Harry bit his lip, "Yes…I…don't want anyone to know that much about me. I was raised to be stupid. I wonder who might have wanted a childhood like that for me." he said softly. "I could have marks like yours and Draco's but…we decided to do well in Potions and Herbology, do mediocre in Astronomy and History then barely pass Charms and Transfiguration."

Draco snorted, "The Headmaster can't even keep track of Harry's grades properly. He said Adder had marks in Potions, progressing decently in Herbology, Astronomy and Charms, yet doing miserably in History and Transfiguration."

Hermione blinked, "Even I know that isn't right."

The twins sighed, "The man is OLD…."

Draco cast a tempus spell when he heard a soft snore, "Oh dear. It's late. Harry's drifting off…"

Fred picked him up, "We'll put him to bed. Don't worry. We'll look after him better then we would Ron or Ginny."

"Why better…" Draco asked.

"Simple. We like Harry better."

Hermione held out her hand after they stood, "Thank you for saving me. I wish you could have gotten points."

The three older Gryffindors headed off to the Tower while Fred carried Harry. After a while they had reached the portrait of the Fat Lady.

"Pig snout," Hermione said and they entered.
The common room was still packed and noisy. Everyone was eating the food that had been sent up. Hermione, paused alone by the door, waiting for the boys. There was a very embarrassed pause. Then, none of them looking at each other, they all said "Thanks," Hermione and George hurried off to get plates while Fred went to put Harry to bed.

But from that moment on, Hermione Granger, Fred and George became Harry and Draco's friends. There are some things you can't share without ending up liking each other, and knocking out a twelve-foot mountain troll is one of them.
Chapter Fourteen- Snitches, Seeking, Curses, Jinxes and Loyalty

As they entered November, the weather turned very cold. The mountains around the school became icy gray and the lake like chilled steel. Every morning the ground was covered in frost. Hagrid could be seen from the upstairs windows defrosting broomsticks on the Quidditch field, bundled up in a long moleskin overcoat, rabbit fur gloves, and enormous beaverskin boots.

The Quidditch season had begun. On Saturday, Harry would be playing in his first match after weeks of training: Gryffindor versus Slytherin. If Gryffindor won, they would move up into second place in the house championship.

Hardly anyone had seen Harry play because Wood had decided that, as their secret weapon, Harry should be kept, well, secret. But the news that he was playing Seeker had leaked out somehow, and Harry didn't know which was worse — people telling him he'd be brilliant or people telling him they'd be running around underneath him holding a mattress.

It was really lucky that Harry now had Hermione as a friend as well as Malfoy. He didn't know how he'd have gotten through all his homework without both of them, what with all the last-minute Quidditch practice Wood was making them do. She had also lent him Quidditch Through the Ages, which turned out to be a very interesting read.

Draco had explained there were seven hundred ways of committing a Quidditch foul and that all of them had happened during the World Cup match in 1473; that Seekers were usually the smallest and fastest players, and that most serious Quidditch accidents seemed to happen to them; that people rarely died playing.

Hermione had become a bit more relaxed about breaking rules since Harry, the twins and Draco had saved her from the mountain troll, and she was much nicer for it. The day before Harry's first Quidditch match the five of them were out in the freezing courtyard during break-Draco was hidden beneath the cloak, and Draco had conjured them up a bright blue fire that could be carried around in a jam jar. They were standing with their backs to it, getting warm, when Snape crossed the yard. Harry noticed at once that Snape was limping, was his glamour weakened?

Draco called out, worried, "Professor."
Snape started, then turned around to see the four. He headed towards them sneering. "What."

Draco glanced around, there was no one close, he popped opened the cloak so his face was visible. He gave his uncle a worried expression, forgetting proper decorum. "Uncle Sev…are you alright…"

The Twins and Hermione gasped. Uncle Sev? He dared call Professor Snape, the dungeon bat so informally.

Snape seemed to gulp, "Draco…"

"Come here. Please. I want to help."

Snape shook his head.

Draco extended a tiny mental finger at his godfather's mind, 'Uncle Sev, is it your glamour? Is it malfunctioning?'

Snape sneered, 'The Glamour I created? Malfunction? Are you as mad as your Aunt Bella?'

Draco pulled Harry into his own mind with a glance, 'Uncle Sev please. We're worried about you.'

Harry smiled, 'You're the closest thing to a father I have.'

Snape gulped, 'Father? Harry. You can't mean that.'

Harry nodded, 'I don't remember my dad. You look out for me. Protect me and teach me. Isn't that what a dad is supposed to do…'

Draco froze at the comment, that was what a dad was supposed to do? Wait, what? His father was none of those things.

Fred sighed, "Excuse me."

"Earth to you three."

Harry blushed, "Oh sorry. Just worried about Professor Snape."

Draco nodded, "He's hurt. I've never seen him hurt…" well hurt beyond what his glamour could hide. "I know some spells, mother taught me. Let me help."

"Fine. Move over. Let me sit and try to hold onto your stomachs. Don't you dare mention this to anyone." Snape acquiesced.

Draco cast a charm that would hide them all from being seen.

The magic he was cast was far more powerful then perhaps, even the Weasley twins could Cast and they were Third Years.

Snape lifted his robe above his knees, one of his legs was bloody and mangled.

Draco sighed, "Dog bite. Seen them before. Father's used the dogs punish house elves once or twice. Uncle Sev, why didn't you get this treated sooner? Mother would have fixed it and told no one if you didn't want to ask Madam Pomfrey."

"Oh shut up and fix me." he muttered, "Blasted thing! How are you supposed to keep your eyes on all three heads at once? Who in there right mind would call that monster Fluffy?"
Harry's eyes narrowed, "Three heads? You mean that scary dog?"

"What scary dog?" the twins asked in one voice.

"Nothing important." Draco said, using a spell to clean the wound, "surely you could have brewed a potion to heal this."

"Harry! What were you doing in the Forbidden Corridor?" Snape thundered.

"Could ask you the same question."

"Something is after it."

He glanced at Harry, "Has your curse scar been aching? Because...if it has...I can understand. My mark does on occasion."

Mark? Harry was confused.

Draco shook his head at his godfather, 'You're overwhelming him.'

Snape sighed, "Sorry Harry." his eyes softened, not longer resembling dark empty tunnels. "If it hurts, don't keep it to yourself. Tell Draco. It could be important. I don't want to betray Lily's memory anymore then I already has.

The others gasped, Harry? The supposedly heartless professor had a soft spot for the son of one of the most infamous Death Eaters and the Boy-Who-Lived.

Draco sighed, managing to heal the wound so it wouldn't get worse. He managed to get most of the flesh to bond but there was an angry red scar. "I can't do any better. It was reacting like a scar from a curse. Very hard to heal. Will your glamour hid it now?"

Hermione blinked, "You're wearing a glamour? Why?"

Snape sneered, "Because some things should stay private. As long as Harry doesn't show you what is beneath his..."

"They've only seen his hands. They haven't seen more." but I have...and it angers me, Draco thought.

"Well then. I have my reasons. Trust me. No one would want to see beneath my glamour." He glanced around, "I've wasted too much time. I have to go." he stepped from their circle and hurried away.

Only Harry and Draco noticed the slight limp, Snape would have to strengthen his glamour.

If it was acting like a curse scar, then it wouldn't hide it; would it?

"Would someone explain what was going on?" Hermione asked exasperated.

"Professor Snape s my godfather. When he was our age, he was best friends with Harry's mother. He promised to protected my little snake for Lily's sake but I think he actually cares about him." his eyes flashed, "That is not to leave this circle. As far as anyone needs to know he tolerates him because of his marks but doesn't really care for him."

The twins put their hands up in defense, "Geez, we get it."
Hermione sighed, "I just wish he didn't act like he hates me."

Harry said quietly, "Should we follow him? I'm worried…"

Draco glanced in the direction his godfather went, "He'll be fine." I hope…

XoooooX

The next morning dawned very bright and cold. The Great Hall was full of the delicious smell of fried sausages and the cheerful chatter of everyone looking forward to a good Quidditch match.

"You've got to eat some breakfast." the twins insisted.

"I don't want anything." Harry said quietly.

"Just a bit of toast," wheedled Hermione.

"I'm not hungry."

Harry was so nervous, what if he messed up and embarrassed the whole house? He'll end up hated… in an hour's time he'd be walking onto the field.

"Harry, you need your strength," George said sagely

Fred nodded, "You know that Seekers are always the ones who get clobbered by the other team."

"Thanks, guys," Harry said as the twins filled his plate with toast, eggs and sausages.

By eleven o'clock the whole school seemed to be out in the stands around the Quidditch pitch. Many students had binoculars. The seats might be raised high in the air, but it was still difficult to see what was going on sometimes.

Hermione joined Neville, Seamus, and Dean the West Ham fan up in the top row. As a surprise for Harry, they had painted a large banner on one of the sheets Scabbers had ruined. It said Go Harry, and Dean, who was good at drawing, had done a large Gryffindor lion underneath. Then Hermione had performed a tricky little charm so that the paint flashed different colors.

Hermione was shocked to feel a tickle in her head.

'It's me Draco. Don't give me away.'

'How are you doing this?'

Draco snorted, 'Legilimency. Now please, may I sit next to you?'

Hermione nodded, 'Okay…'

'Just try not to let anyone you know, sit on me.'

Ron was pouting over with Percy who wasn't pleased that a boy who broke the rules seemed to be getting rewarded. Ron was just jealous Harry Potter was on the team playing for their House. Ron clenched his hands into fists, why was he getting all the attention? What was so special about him?
He didn't like anyone, except for his troublesome twin brothers and that Know-It-All bitch he had no friends. He wished someone would teach pathetic little wanna-be super idol of Hogwarts.

XoooooX

Meanwhile, in the locker room, Harry and the rest of the team were changing into their scarlet Quidditch robes (Slytherin would be playing in green).

Wood cleared his throat for silence. "Okay, men," he said.

"And women," said Chaser Angelina Johnson.

"And women," Wood agreed. "This is it."

"The big one," said Fred Weasley.

"The one we've all been waiting for," said George.

"We know Oliver's speech by heart," Fred told Harry, "we were on the team last year."

"Shut up, you two," said Wood. "This is the best team Gryffindor's had in years. We're going to win. I know it."

He glared at them all as if to say, "Or else." "Right. It's time. Good luck, all of you."

Harry followed Fred and George out of the locker room and, hoping his knees weren't going to give way, walked onto the field to loud cheers.

Madam Hooch was refereeing. She stood in the middle of the field waiting for the two teams, her broom in her hand.

"Now, I want a nice fair game, all of you," she said, once they were all gathered around her. Harry noticed that she seemed to be speaking particularly to the Slytherin Captain, Marcus Flint, a sixth year. Harry thought Flint looked as if he had some troll blood in him. Out of the corner of his eye he saw the fluttering banner high above, flashing Potter for President over the crowd. His heart skipped. He felt braver.

"Mount your brooms, please."

Harry clambered onto his Nimbus Two Thousand.

Madam Hooch gave a loud blast on her silver whistle.

Fifteen brooms rose up, high, high into the air. They were off.

The Weasley twins' friend, Lee Jordan, was doing the commentary for the match, closely watched by Professor McGonagall.

"Angelina Johnson is really belting along up there. Now here come a neat pass to Alicia Spinnnet. Now that Spinnnet was a good find of Oliver Wood's. Why just last year, she was only a reserve. The Quaffle heads back to Johnson and. No, wait the Slytherins have taken the Quaffle. Slytherin Captain Marcus Flint gains the Quaffle and off he goes. Flint is flying like an eagle up there. I think
he's going to sc…no, He was stopped by an excellent move by Gryffindor Keeper Wood and the Gryffindors take the Quaffle. That's Chaser Katie Bell of Gryffindor there, nice dive around Flint, off up the field. OUCH! That must have hurt. Chaser Bell is hit in the back of the head by a Bludger. Now the Quaffle taken by the Slytherins. I believe that's Adrian Pucey speeding off toward the goal posts, but he's blocked by a second Bludger. It was sent his way by Fred or George Weasley, can't tell which- even though I'm their best friend. That is one nice play by a Gryffindor Beater, anyway, and Johnson back in possession of the Quaffle, a clear field ahead and off she goes. She's really flying. Look she's dodging a speeding Bludger. The goal posts are ahead. Come on, now, Angelina! Keeper Bletchley dives. He misses! GRYFFINDORS SCORE!

Gryffindor cheers filled the cold air, with howls and moans from the Slytherins.

"Aren't you one of Harry's friends?"

Hermione sighed, "Yes. I supposed you could say that."

Draco growled under his breath, "I hope you choke on your own tongue."

"Well then budge up ther, move along. Let me sit fer while."

Hermione reached for her wand, "There isn't enough room. Hmm…expandous." the front row lengthened and there was more then enough room for the half-giant. She didn't like him, he used Harry's money to buy him that owl while calling it a present.

"Bin watchin' from me hut," said Hagrid, patting a large pair of binoculars around his neck, "But isn't ter same as bein' in the crowd. No sign of the Snitch yet, eh?"

"Nope," Hermione sighed.

Seamus grinned, "Harry hasn't had much to do yet."

"Kept outta trouble, though, that's somethin'," said Hagrid, raising his binoculars and peering skyward at the speck that was Harry.

Way up above them, Harry was gliding over the game, squinting about for some sign of the Snitch. This was part of his and Wood's game plan.

Harry was supposed to keep out of the way until he caught sight of the Snitch. He didn't want to be attacked before you had to be.

While Angelina had scored, Harry did a couple of loop-the-loops to calm down. Now that he was calm he was looking around for the Snitch. He thought he saw a flash of gold, he sighed when he realized it was just a reflection from one of the Weasley's wristwatches.

A Bludger decided to come straight for him like a cannonball, but Harry did his best to dodge it and Fred Weasley came chasing after it.

"You all right, Harry? Sorry. Should have been faster." he had time to yell, as he beat the Bludger furiously toward Marcus Flint. Hopefully, Draco wouldn't kill him for nearly letting Harry get hurt.

"Slytherin is in possession, as you can see Chaser Pucey ducks two Bludgers, two Weasleys, and Chaser Bell. What reflexes." Lee Jordan was saying, "Pucey is speed toward the. Wait just a moment! Was that the Snitch? About time it made an appearance."

A murmur ran through the crowd.
Adrian Pucey dropped the Quaffle, because he was too busy looking over his shoulder at the flash of gold that had passed his left ear.

Harry saw it, in a great rush of excitement he dived downward after the streak of gold.

But Slytherin Seeker Terence Higgs had seen it, too.

Neck and neck they hurtled toward the Snitch. Chasers on both sides seemed to have forgotten what they were supposed to be doing as they stopped to watch.

Harry was faster than Higgs, he could see the little round ball, its wings were fluttering and it was darting up ahead. He started to put on an extra spurt of speed.

WHAM!

A roar of rage echoed from the Gryffindors below.

Marcus Flint blocked Harry.

Harry's broom spun off course, while was Harry holding on for dear life.

"Foul!" screamed the Gryffindors.

Draco's scream, "Adder." was drowned out. He was being tugged to Harry but if he let himself be pulled there, they would both get hurt or killed.

Madam Hooch yelled, "Captain Flint! How dare you! Blatant foul. Free throw for Gryffindor. Watch yourself Flint."

In all the confusion, of course, the Golden Snitch had disappeared from sight again.

Draco shook wildly, Adder, please be safe. Bloody Merlin Weasleys, keep him safe.

"They oughta change the rules. Flint coulda knocked Harry outta the air."

Lee Jordan, the commentator was finding it difficult not to take sides. "After such an obvious and disgusting bit of cheating."

"Jordan!" growled Professor McGonagall.

"Sorry, after that open and revolting foul."

"Jordan."

"Fine! Flint nearly kills Gryffindor's Seeker. I'm sure, that could happen to anyone." the sarcasm was thick in his voice.

So Gryffindor get a penalty which taken is by Spinner. Nice play Spinner. The game goes on. Gryffindor is still in possession."

Harry dodged another Bludger, it went spinning dangerously past his head. He didn't even have time to relax when it happened. The Nimbus broom gave a sudden, frightening lurch.

Draco screamed, "Harry. No." for a split second, Draco thought he was going to fall.

Harry leaned over gripping the broom tightly with both his hands and knees, trying desperately to not to fall. He was so scared and in pain, 'Draco…help me…'
'Harry, don't think that. I can't come.' Draco thought desperately, why was he hurting?

It happened again, the broom was really trying to throw him off.

Draco knew Nimbus Two Thousands did not suddenly decide to buck their riders off.

Harry tried to turn back toward the Gryffindor goal-posts, he wanted Wood to call time-out.

Draco realized when the Nimbus refused to turn that Harry's broom was completely out of his control, the tiny Gryffindor Seeker simply couldn't turn it. The Nimbus was zigzagging through the air, making violent swishing movements that almost unseated him. "Merlin No!"

"What is Harry doing?" Seamus muttered.

Neville gasped, "It looks like Harry lost control of his broom…but he can't have…"

Suddenly, people were pointing up at Harry all over the stands.

Draco stormed to his feet, Harry's broom had started to roll over and over, with him only just managing to hold on.

Then the whole crowd gasped.

Harry's broom had given a wild jerk and Harry swung off it. He was now dangling from it, holding on with only one hand while whimpering with fear and pain.

"Adder no…"

"Did something happen to it when Flint blocked him?" Hermione whispered to the invisible Draco.

"It's impossible," Draco said, his voice shaking. "Nothing can interfere with a broomstick except powerful Dark magic. The only kid who could do that to a Nimbus Two Thousand is me but I wouldn't." he had been taught Dark Arts for years and having them used against his Adder was making him angry.

At these words, Hermione seized Hagrid's binoculars, but instead of looking up at Harry, she started looking frantically at the crowd. Hermione gasped, "Snape — look."

"What ter ya doin' Harry…" Hagrid groaned, his skin ashen.

The invisible Draco grabbed the binoculars. His godfather was in the middle of Slytherin stands opposite them. He had his eyes fixed on Harry and was muttering nonstop under his breath.

"He's muttering something. He must be jinxing the broom," said Hermione.

Draco hit her, hissing, "Uncle Sev would do no such thing. He is a man of honor. He promised me he would protect Harry and he wouldn't betray a Malfoy." he focused his magic using it to read his godfather's lips. "I knew it. Counter-jinxes. Powerful ones. I know he's doing his best but I've had enough of seeing Adder's broom trying to kill him and feeling his terror. I don't care who is doing this but they are going to stop right now."

Hermione gasped, "The broom is…actually trying to kill him."

Harry's broom was vibrating so hard, it was almost impossible for him to hang on much longer.

The whole crowd was on its feet watching and terrified.
The Weasley twins kept flying close to try pull Harry safely onto one of their brooms. The jinxes made it impossible, every time they got near him, the broom merely jumped higher. They dropped lower and circled beneath him, obviously hoping to catch him if he fell.

Marcus Flint seized the Quaffle and attempted to score.

"That's it." Draco cast a Notice-Me-Not charm on himself, dropping the cloak, before he muttered a long complex shield and anti-jinx against Dark Magic on Harry's broom. Then he turned towards Flint. "Confundo. That's for trying to take advantage of Adder's attack."

Hermione blinked, what had he done? The magic radiating from Draco was intense.

Draco's magic was obviously enough, because Harry's broom stopped thrashing about like an angry Dragon.

Draco reached out to Harry and put him back on the broom, catching his eye, 'Promised I would protect you. Now catch that snitch. Flint doesn't deserve to win.'

'Thank you Draco.' Harry spotted a flash of gold, soon he was speeding toward the ground when the crowd saw him clap his hand to his mouth like he was going to be sick. Harry hit the field on all fours, rolling off his broom, coughing then something gold fell into his hand. "I've got the Snitch!" he shouted, waving it above his head, and the game ended in complete confusion.

Lee Jordan happily shouted the results, "Despite the foul by Slytherin Captain Flint and the strange behavior of Gryffindor's Seeker's broom; Gryffindor has won by one hundred and seventy points to sixty."

Harry was joined by the Twins who checked him out to see if he was okay before pulling him into a double bear hug. "Merlin Harry. You scared us."

Wood growled, "That was some stunt. You nearly cost us both you and the match."

Hermione growled, "Shut up Wood! Harry had nothing to do with his broom trying to kill him. Don't you know that only Dark Magic can do that to a broom? Someone was trying to jinx it with dark curses. It took two powerful wizards to save Harry. Both who put aside their pride to do the right thing. I don't know who was jinxing the Nimbus but I'd like to have a piece of them." she glanced up at the twins, "Get Harry. I want him checked out. Hopefully one of those jinxes weren't miscast and hit Harry."

Draco stood off to the side…

Fred held onto Harry, holding the tiny boy. "Let's get you looked at."

Draco hurried to his godfather, hiding long enough to take the cloak off and hid it in his robes. "Professor. Can I talk to you? In Private…"


The twins and Hermione followed Draco as he headed after the potions master.

They all managed to reach the dungeons without being caught.

Snape growled, "What is this? A Lions Conclave?"

Draco held out his arms for Harry, "Can you check him over and see if those Dark Jinxes hurt him?"
"You knew about those."

Draco nodded, "Only Dark Magic could make a broom act like that. I know spells that might do what the Nimbus did but I would never do that to Harry. I know you were casting Counter-jinxes. Granger thought you were casting the jinxes at first. I set her straight. I knew you were trying but I had enough and Adder was going to fall. I cast the most powerful Shield charm I know and then an anti-jinx that would make the Nimbus unjinxable."

"How many Slytherins can cast magic like Draco?" Hermione asked.

Draco smirked, "None. They don't call us Malfoys the Princes of Slytherins for no reason."

Harry said quietly, "You asked earlier if my scar ever hurt. It was the moment the broom went out of control that it ached. I wanted Draco…” he curled up in the blonde's lap, clutching his robes. "I was so scared…you saved me. I know you did."

"Of course I did Adder." he rocked him, glancing at his godfather, "why would his scar cause him pain?"

Snape rubbed his left arm. "Same reason my mark flared."

"You can't be serious." Draco stammered.

"Can't I? Only a very powerful wizard could affect a broom like that."

Draco sneered, "Really? I could do it. So could you. Dumbledore, the old goat might be able to if he dared cast such spells. I'm not sure if father could."

"HE could. That would explain the pain from Harry's curse scar and my mark."

"Impossible." Hermione gasped

"How do you know? No one found a body. There is no proof he is gone. He may just be recovering from the attack that night." Snap snarled.

Draco clutched at Harry, feeling the flash back hit him again.

*Flashback*

Maniacal laughter. "Avada…”

Harry was screaming

His own voice shouting, "No. Obscuro Reflectus."

The laughter turned to screams and then darkness.

*End Flashback*
Harry shook, "Draco..." there was a quiver in his voice that threatened sobs.

Draco looked into his little snake's eyes, they'd shared the same experience. Bollocks...

"Malfoy?"

"Are you okay mate?"

Draco replied in a hoarse voice, "No. Harry isn't either." he glanced at his godfather. "I had..." he corrected himself, "I mean we had that flashback again. It was more detailed this time." he looked into Snape's eyes, lowering his mental shields and showing him the memory.

Snape stammered, 'You were there... you did it... how? Why...'

'I don't know. I think he was in danger. He was scared. That must have pulled me there.'

'But the Fildius Charm...'

'I don't understand either. It's not Apparation. It's sort of like a Portkey... Harry's need for me pulls me to him.'

'If Harry is the Boy-Who-Lived, who are you?'

'His avenging shadow. I reflected the killing curse back on the Dark Lord. I destroyed my Father's master.'

'Draco. No one can know.'

'Of course not. I'm not a Hufflepuff.'

'What will you tell them?'

'The experience of Harry's near accident and my spell work to save him drained us.' he broke the link with his godfather, "I think Harry is exhausted. Fred, will you take him to bed? Perhaps George can get something for him to eat later? Like fruit or a sandwich that can be placed in stasis until he wakes and is hungry."

"Draco... don't leave me."

Draco hugged him gently, "You're safe. I'll protect you and so will the twins. Go rest. If you need me, I'll come."
Plotting, allies and weak links

Title: The truth behind the Name and the lies  
Pairing: DracoxHarry,  
Fandom: HP  
Notes: An abused boy finds out he's a wizard and a hero; his tormented mind rebels. One person sees through the misconceptions to the real Harry and treats him the way he deserves. Why Harry never fights back from personal attacks...why does he crave more? Because he isn't a hero, he isn't brave, he's hiding behind the shadow of the boy they all believe him to be. -yes I did rename the story. the title wasn't fitting...  
"..." is spoken.  
'...' is mind to mind communication.  

Chapter 15- Plotting, allies and weak links  

It was getting closer to term exams, barely three days but Harry and Draco wanted to know what it was that that the three headed dog named Fluffy of all things was guarding. What it was that Snape was trying to protect…  

It would also be Christmas soon. Leaving Harry behind, would make Draco worry considerably but Uncle Sev's office had a floo connection to the Manor so…well Draco could stick his head in and ask if everything was alright. Besides, he was sure the twins could look after him. They better, or he would be very angry.  

Now what to get Harry for Christmas? He had access to an unlimited amount of money but what could he buy his little snake? He deserved a real present. Something that would show how much he cared, that was worthy of the pure soul that lay beneath Harry's bruised, scared tiny body.  

They also needed to find out what was so important that Uncle Sev would chance being hurt like that. What Fluffy was guarding. What was in the package that Harry saw.  

Hagrid appeared to be a weak link, they'd have to make use of it if they wanted to learn anything.  

They made plans to meet after dinner in the secret passage that Fred and George had taken them after the incident with the troll- its entrance was behind the statue of Gregory the Smarmy.  

Draco had been forced to deal with his wavering status in Slytherin. He had to call on favors and duties certain 'friends' of his owed him; he kept the other snakes from finding out Blaisé was half Veela, that Pansy was the daughter her father had after an affair with HUFFLEPUFF of all things but was blood adopted, that Flint really did have troll blood or that Goyle had a Squib great-aunt and there was minotaur blood in his veins. Secrets that would destroy their standing in Slytherin. Draco grumbled, he hated manipulating them like that but what choice did he have?  

Flint would never be trustworthy but he had hope that he could bring Blaisé to his side as long as he didn't use his insight into the Veela blood flowing through his friend's veins too much. His absences were becoming too well-known by his own House and he had to deal with that before it got back to his father. Being Veela, his family had been neutral during the War, though there was creature blood
Draco sighed, being away from Harry's side was irritating him. He was more snappy then usual, letting his pureblood arrogance out nearly full-force. He didn't throw scathing comments about Harry, the twins or Hermione but he verbally assaulted others like Ron. He didn't feel guilty about the words he threw at Ron, none of Harry's circle liked him. Draco calmed himself before he let himself into the passage.

He was greeted with an armful of Harry who leapt on him.

Harry snuggled into Draco's arms, "You're here, I was scared you wouldn't come. You've been avoiding us for days…"

Draco sat with his adder in his arms, "Hush now. I was just repairing my standing in my House. I've been neglecting them and some were threatening to usurp my position." he growled, "One being Theo Nott. We'll have to be careful of him. The moment he discovers, I've been your friend Adder he'll turn on me. He was raised by his father who went to school with the Dark Lord and was one of his first followers. Frederick Oran Nott was not happy to be replaced by people like Father and Uncle Sev."

"So, you were being the manipulative git everyone says…" Fred said thoughtfully.

Draco growled, "I need to be sure that my house won't turn on me. If anyone tries to attack me, I'd prefer they were for me rather then against me."

Hermione nodded, "So you are keeping your friends close and enemies closer."

Draco nodded curtly, "Correct. It's only natural…"

"So are you."

"Going to explain"

"About the big scary dog."

Draco looked at Harry, who smiled and sat with his cheek pressed to the blonde's chest. "Well Harry said when he went to Diagon Alley with Hagrid." he grimaced, "the oaf removed something from Vault seven hundred and thirteen."

"Yeah. It was a grubby little package wrapped up in brown paper." Harry added.

Draco played with Harry's messy locks, "I wonder…if we pretended Uncle Sev WAS cursing Harry's broom. perhaps we could trick information out of Hagrid."

Harry said quietly, "Are you sure that's nice? Professor Snape is a nice person…"

Hermione smiled, "It might work. Hagrid is probably the only one we could accuse Snape to."

Draco nodded, "He did say Snape wasn't very nice. didn't he? I was hiding under the cloak that afternoon."
Harry nodded sadly, "He said that my father and Snape weren't friends or something like that. Before that Professor Dumbledore expected Snape to hate me, but I don't understand."

Draco shrugged, "I know he was a Death Eater but he was cleared. That doesn't leave this passage."

George and Fred smirked, "We're in. It's like a prank right? Acting like Snape is that bad guy?"

Draco chuckled, "Maybe you two should have been Slytherins."

"The hat did consider it. But decided to make us Lions because we're Weasleys."

Hermione tilted her head, "It briefly considered me for Ravenclaw but then said I'd be of more use in Gryffindor."

"Meddling Hat- doesn't place people where they belong. Bet you were put in Gryffindor because you were chosen to be a friend of Harry's."

Hermione smiled, "Well, among the Ravenclaws I'd just be another brain. Among the Gryffindors, I'll stand out more." her eyes took a sad cast, "I…never had friends before you guys."

Draco blinked, "Why?"

"Because, no one likes a Know-It-All." was her whispered reply.

Harry smiled at her, "I know what it's like to have no friends. I was the kid who was always bullied or ignored. Dudley hated me, he and his friend liked to use me for a punching bag as well as chase me all over. I almost wish Draco and I had met sooner. I might would have learned that I was a wizard sooner. I would have liked to have a friend then."

XoooooX

After more plotting and planning, they made their way to Hagrid's hut, Draco hiding beneath the invisibility cloak once more.

Harry knocked, already upset about their imminent subterfuge. There was a frantic scrabbling from inside and several booming barks. Then Hagrid's voice rang out, saying, "Back, Fang. Back." Hagrid's big, hairy face appeared in the crack as he pulled the door open. "Harry! Hermione! Fred and George! I've been hoping you'd come by. Worried bout 'cha I was. The game wer heart stoppin' it wer. Hang on," he said. "Back, Fang." He let them in, struggling to keep a hold on his strange boarhound. "Do yer knew what 'appened ter ya broom."

"It was Snape," George was explaining, "We saw him."

"Yeah, he was cursing your broomstick, muttering," Fred added.

"He wouldn't take his eyes off Harry." George finished.

"Rubbish," said Hagrid, who clearly hadn't heard a word of what had gone on next to him in the stands during the Quidditch match. "Why would Snape do somethin' like that?"

George, Fred, and Hermione looked at one another, pretending they wondering whether to tell him or not- they were acting like the brains of the outfit; when it was really Draco.
Harry decided on the truth, speaking quietly, "We found out something about him," he told Hagrid. "He tried to get past that three-headed dog, Fluffy on Halloween. It bit him."

"Yeah."

"His leg was all messed up."

Hermione nodded, "'We think he was trying to steal whatever it's guarding."

Hagrid dropped the teapot. "How der ya know 'bout Fluffy?"

"Why would you call that thing Fluffy?" Hermione asked, "It's a Cerberus of all things."

"'course he's mine. I bought 'm off a Greek chap I met in tha pub las' year. I lent him ter Dumbledore to guard tha."

"Yes?" said Fred eagerly.

"Don'cha ask me no more," said Hagrid gruffly. "That thers top secret, that is. If I tell ya, I could lose me job."

"But Snape's trying to steal it." George pouted.

"Rubbish," Hagrid muttered, "Snape's a Hogwarts teacher, he'd do nothin' of the sort."

"Really? Then why did he try and kill Harry at the Quidditch match?" Hermione insisted, though there was a guilty look in her eyes.

Draco was not happy about accusing his godfather like this, it was rather Slytherin to twist facts to suit when interrogating a suspect or witness. Yes, Snape was muttering and Harry was in danger but not from Uncle Sev.

Hermione continued, "I know a jinx when I see one, Hagrid, I've read all about them! You've got to keep eye contact, and Snape wasn't blinking at all, I saw him! Besides, brooms only act like that due to powerful Dark Magic. It's a known fact."

"I'm tellin' yeh, yer wrong!" said Hagrid hotly. "I don' know why Harry's broom acted like that, but Snape wouldn' try an' kill a student! Now, listen to me, all four of yeh — yer meddlin' in things that don' concern yeh. It's dangerous. You forget ter 'bout Fluffy, an' you forget what it's guardin', that's between Professor Dumbledore an' Nicolas Flamel —"

"Aha!" Fred smirked.

"So there's someone called Nicolas Flamel involved, is there?" George winked bouncing up.

Hagrid looked furious with himself.

The four traipsed out, "Thanks Hagrid. You're really helpful."

Draco wondered, what would be so important that it would be guarded by Fluffy? He was sure he'd heard of Flamel, what could the connection between Dumbledore and Flamel be?
Questions, Exams and New Allies

Title: The truth behind the Name and the lies
Pairing: DracoXHarry,
Fandom : HP
Notes: An abused boy finds out he's a wizard and a hero; his tormented mind rebels. One person sees through the misconceptions to the real Harry and treats him the way he deserves. Why Harry never fights back from personal attacks...why does he crave more? Because he isn't a hero, he isn't brave, he's hiding behind the shadow of the boy they all believe him to be. -yes I did rename the story. the title wasn't fitting...
"..." is spoken.
'...' is mind to mind communication.

Chapter 16- Questions, Exams and New Allies

Christmas was coming, one morning in mid-December, Hogwarts residents woke to find everywhere covered in several feet of snow. The lake had froze solid, Fred and George thought it was great fun to bewitching several snowballs so that they followed Professor Quirrell around, bouncing off the back of his turban which they were punished for. Any owls that managed to battle their way through the blizzard to deliver mail had to be nursed back to health by Hagrid before they could fly off again.

No one could wait for the holidays to start, except Harry who was sure he'd be alone. While the Gryffindor common room and the Great Hall had roaring fires, the drafty corridors had become icy and a bitter wind rattled the windows in the classrooms. Worst of all were Professor Snape's classes down in the dungeons, where their breath rose in a mist before them and they kept as close as possible to their hot cauldrons.

But Draco's closeness helped Harry not notice the cold so much, especially since the older boy kept casting warming charms on them both. Once in a while he cast one on Hermione when no one was looking…

Draco was planning epic presents for his friends, Harry deserved something perfect, the twins something useful, not expensive or flashy, Hermione would receive a book of course…

After class Draco caught Harry's eye, 'I'm going to take a chance with something. I'll meet you in four in the passage. Use Notice-Me-Not charms and the cloak.' He cornered Blaisé, 'Come. I wish to speak to you." he dismissed Crabbe and Goyle, their loyalties were the same as their fathers. Crabbe was almost as untrustworthy as Nott.

Blaisé nodded sharply, taking a stand at Draco's side, "As you wish."

Hermione was led out by Harry, "Come on then."

Harry would tell her and the twins.

When they reached the passage, Draco crossed his arms, "Do you trust me."

Blaisé stared, "You're a snake, of course I don't."
Draco snorted, "If I made a choice, would you abide by it."

Blaisé snickered, "If I didn't you would just out my Heritage to our house. Some members don't think much of my kind of wizards at present. I'll take my chances with the Prince of Slytherin and let the chips fall where they may."

Draco held out his hand, "Welcome to my inner circle Blaisé," he smirked, "You can reveal yourselves."

There was a shimmer, Harry, Hermione and the twins appeared.

Harry shyly walked up to take Draco's hand, "Hi Blaisé."

Blaisé blinked, "You're friends with Harry Potter, a Muggleborn and Bloodtraitors? You know your father will have a fit."

Draco shrugged, "I have my reasons, I know you don't agree with my Father's ideals. You don't fit within a more conservative pureblood's idea of blood purity."

Blaisé sneered, "Of course not. I like what I am thank you. Though, it wouldn't be bad to have me around. After all, my allure might come in handy."

Hermione blinked, "Allure…"

Blaisé bowed, "Blaisé Zabini. Half-Veela."

The twins shrieked, "You're a what?"

Draco cast privacy charms on the passage, "Quiet. It isn't common knowledge. He is the person I was considering introducing to our circle. Harry and the twins were supposed to be snakes. The hat's been flummoxed. Powerful people are trying to control Harry and I don't like it. There is something being hidden in the school in the Forbidden Corridor and it's protected by a Cerberus, that oaf has a three-head dog named Fluffy as a pet. He's almost foolish due to his giant blood as Flint and Goyle are."

Blaisé snorted, "Trolls. They smell like them too. That's why we give Goyle cologne for presents."

"Two true Slytherins."

"Three nearly Slytherins."

"And one lost Ravenclaw."

"Interesting group we are."

The twins were finishing each other's sentences as usual.

"Indeed." Draco nodded.

Blaisé conjured a chair for himself, "So, we have something hidden by the Professors, guarded by a monster dog."

"Oh, someone tried to kill my Adder."

"During the Quidditch match between Slytherin and Gryffindor right? I was suspicious of that." Blaisé's eyes narrowed, "You stopped the attack on Potter's broom didn't you, Draco."
"Uncle Sev's attempts to counter the Dark Jinxes weren't working. I was angry. No one puts my little snake in danger." Draco's eye flashed dangerously.

"Professor Snape would be one of the few wizards who would know those particular jinxes. He used to tell use stories about Jinxing Marauder brooms, when he was a student. He really does care about Potter doesn't he…"

Harry smiled, "He's the closest thing to a dad I have…"

"The Professor has always been good to our House…"

The twins grinned, "Thought we'd tell you the good news, mum and dad went to spend time with our older brother Charlie in Romania where he's working with Dragons. So we're staying over the holidays. If sharing your dorm with Ron gets to be too much you can curl up with us. We're not Draco but it's better then being alone."

"Really? That's good. I don't have to worry about Harry being alone." Draco conjured a bench for himself and pulled Harry into his lap.

Blaisé made himself useful and cast a cushioning charm for his Prince.

Harry blushed, "You'll let me sleep with you…"

Fred puffed out his chest, "You are the Boy-Who-Lived. We're your friends. If you need us to treat you like an adorable little brother we'll be happy to. Percy won't care as long as we don't get you in trouble."

Hermione smiled, "I was worried about him. Like Draco I'm an only child, I wouldn't want to hurt my parents by not coming home for the holidays."

"We know about Fluffy." Draco mused, "I overheard Uncle Sev muttering about the professors providing protection for something. I'm sure he knew I was listening. Whatever they are hiding is between the old goat and Nicolas Flamel. I know I've heard the name Flamel before.."

Blaisé closed his eyes thinking, "Flamel…Flamel…"

Draco tilted his head, playing with Adder's hair, "The name is French…I know that much."

Hermione sighed, "I don't like Dumbledore but he is the Headmaster and deserves respect Draco."

Draco sneered, "He is Headmaster just as you are a Mudblood and the twins can be called Bloodtraitors. I don't have to respect him, you don't know that pain he's allowed Adder to suffer. When you were sick your mothers took care of you didn't they? Fed you food that would help you get healthy? Gave you medicine? Had you seen by a Healer? Brought you more blankets when you were cold? My little snake was ignored, left to suffer on his own. Until he met me, no one ever held him. No one dried his tears, told him he was safe. What kind of life is that for the supposed Savior of the Wizarding world…"

Hermione was about to protest the insult about her blood status, but what Draco told them next broke her heart, "Oh Harry…your hands and this too…" she started to sob, "It's too horrible, how could anyone treat him like that? He's so tiny and vulnerable."

Harry smiled, "I'm okay, I have friends now. They said I wasn't good enough and no one would like me. See? They were wrong, they said I had no family but them. I have Snape who is like my father, the twins are like my big brothers and Hermione is like a big sister. Draco is my best friend. I don't
Blaisé stared, this tiny boy had his hands broken? Was ignored when he was ill? How could he smile like that? He'd noticed a change in Draco since Summer and hadn't realized how great it was, but seeing him with Potter explained it. Draco learned to care about someone besides himself, he learned to see beyond the stories and rumors. His old friend was making allies; befriending Potter, bringing the creative and conniving inventor/pranksters to his circle and the Granger girl who had marks second only to Draco. "I'll do anything I can to help Draco, a Slytherin chooses who to back and I choose you and yours." he paused, "My Veela nature assures me this is the right choice, great things will happen because of the choice you made when you became Potter's friend. You've chosen a difficult path, hard but ultimately rewarding."

XoooooX

After the introduction of Blaise Zabini, Veela to their group they spent a few days apart doing research.

When they left the dungeons at the end of Potions, Harry and Hermione found a large fir tree blocking the corridor ahead. Two enormous feet sticking out at the bottom and a loud puffing sound told them that Hagrid was behind it.

"Hi, Hagrid." Fred greeted the Groundskeeper, they seemed to appear out of nowhere..

"Want any help?" George asked, also sticking his head through the branches.

"Nah, 'm all right, thanks, ya two."

"Would you mind moving out of the way?" came Draco's seemingly cold drawl from behind them. "Are you trying to earn some extra money, Weasleys? Hoping to be gamekeeper yourself when you leave Hogwarts, I suppose — that hut of Hagrid's must seem like a palace compared to what your family's used to."

Fred and George ignored him knowing it was all pretense. "Whatever. Can't you come up with something original…"

Ron who no one noticed previously dove at Malfoy just as Snape came up the stairs from the dungeons.

"WEASLEY!"

Ron let go of the front of Draco's robes, "Malfoy…"

"He wer provoked, Professor Snape," said Hagrid, sticking his huge hairy face out from behind the tree. "Malfoy wer insultin' his family."

"Be that as it may, fighting is against Hogwarts rules, Hagrid," said Snape silkily. "Five points from Gryffindor, Weasley, and be grateful it isn't more. Move along, all of you."

Draco, Blaisé, Crabbe, and Goyle pushed roughly past the tree, scattering needles everywhere and snickering.

Draco and Blaisé smirked, winking at George and Fred.

Percy would be furious…
"I'll get him," said Ron, grinding his teeth at Draco's back, "one of these days, I'll get him! And Snape too."

Percy snapped, "Ronald! You will be getting no one. Fighting? Are you crazy? Mother will be so angry. You're embarrassing me."

Ron stalked off, "Whatever, it's easy to see you prefer Oliver to your own family. Fred and George replaced us too. They have a new little brother and a sister."

Harry winced, whispering, "I didn't mean to cause a problem."

Fred shrugged, "That's just Ron being Ron."

"Yeah, though we did prank him a lot when we were younger." George added.

Hermione smiled at him, "Ron is a git. He says hurtful things and doesn't care. He is the one with no friends. He bullies you and Neville, irritates Dean and Seamus. I think only Lavender likes him…"

"Okay." Harry sniffled.

"Cum on, cheer up, it's nearly Christmas," said Hagrid. "Tell yeh what, come wit me an' see ter Great Hall, looks a treat."

So the three of them followed Hagrid and his tree off to the Great Hall, where Professor McGonagall and Professor Flitwick were busy with the Christmas decorations.

"Ah, Hagrid. That's the last tree, put it in the far corner, would you."

The hall looked spectacular. Festoons of holly and mistletoe hung all around the walls, and no less than twelve towering Christmas trees stood around the room, some sparkling with tiny icicles, some glittering with hundreds of candles.

"How many days ya got left until yer holidays?" Hagrid asked.

"Just one," Hermione said with an air of superiority. "That reminds me, Harry, Fred and you too George, we've got half an hour before lunch, we should be in the library."

"Oh yeah, you're right," Harry said quietly, tearing his eyes away from Professor Flitwick, who had golden bubbles blossoming out of his wand and was trailing them over the branches of the new tree.

"Ter library?" said Hagrid, following them out of the hall. "Just before ter holidays? Bit keen, aren't yeh?"

"Oh, we're not working," Fred smirked.

George snickered, "Since you mentioned Nicolas Flamel we've been trying to find out who he is."

"Yer what?" Hagrid looked shocked and hissed. "Listin ere, I've told yeh drop it. It's nothin' to ye what me dog's guardin'."

"We just want to know who Nicolas Flamel is, that's all." said Hermione.

"Unless you'd like to tell us and save us the trouble." George winked,

Fred added. "We must've been through hundreds of books already and we can't find him anywhere."
Harry gave him a pout, "Please just give us a hint. We think we've read his name somewhere. We just don't remember where" we meant Draco…he was their leader after all. They didn't call him the Prince fo Slytherin for no reason.

"I got nothin' ter say." said Hagrid flatly.

"Just have to find out for ourselves, then," Hermione said as they left Hagrid looking irritating while they hurried towards the library.

They had indeed been searching books for Flamel's name ever since Hagrid had let it slip, because how else were they going to find out what Snape was trying to steal? The trouble was, it was very hard to know where to begin, not knowing what Flamel might have done to get himself into a book. He wasn't in Great Wizards of the Twentieth Century, or Notable Magical Names of Our Time; he was missing, too, from Important Modern Magical Discoveries, and A Study of Recent Developments in Wizardry. And then, of course, there was the sheer size of the library; tens of thousands of books; thousands of shelves; hundreds of narrow rows.

Hermione took out a list of subjects and titles she had decided to search while the twins strode off down a row of books and started pulling them off the shelves at random. Harry wandered over to the Restricted Section, Draco had been wondering for a while if Flamel wasn't somewhere in there. Unfortunately, you needed a specially signed note from one of the teachers to look in any of the restricted books, and he knew he'd never get one- there was the cloak but he wasn't sure he wanted to try to get in there with all these students. These were the books containing powerful Dark Magic never taught at Hogwarts, and only read by older students studying advanced Defense Against the Dark Arts. Dark Magic scared him after the incident at the match against Slytherin, Draco said his broom was now protected against such attacks but it took him weeks to feel comfortable riding it. He turned and headed back to his friends before Ms. Pince thought he was up to no good.

Draco had already decided they'd better not ask Madam Pince where they could find Flamel. Draco was sure she might tell Hermione, but they couldn't risk the mystery person hearing what they were up to.

Harry headed towards the table where Fred, George and Hermione were but he wasn't very hopeful. They had been looking for two weeks, after all, but as they only had odd moments between lessons it wasn't surprising they'd found nothing. What they really needed was a nice long search without Madam Pince breathing down their necks.

Five minutes later, the twins and Hermione gave up, shaking their heads and they went off to lunch.

XooooooX

"You won't stop looking while I'm away, will you?" Hermione asked, looking concerned. "Do send me an owl if you find anything." her eyes shining at the thought of owls from friends

They were in their passage way once more to say goodbye for the holidays.

"Well you could ask your parents if they know who Flamel is," George interjected.

"It'd be safe to ask them." Fred chuckled.

"Very safe, they're both dentists," said Hermione.

Harry smiled, "If they're anything like you they're both smart and really kind."

Hermione hugged Harry, "You're too cute. You be careful okay." she glared at Fred and George,
"You keep an eye on him. Don't let Ron bully him."

The twins had an innocently wounded look, "We treat him better then our own brother. We promise no acid pops, no unbreakable vows and no turning his teddy into a spider."

Draco retrieved Harry from Hermione and held the boy close, "Be careful alright? Stay with Fred and George they'll keep you safe. If you're really scared or in danger you know I'll come." He was a little wary of being pulled to Harry's side from a long distance but the day Harry's parents died he'd done it and somehow ended up safe at home in his crib after.

Harry said quietly, "I wish you didn't have to go. I'll miss you."

Draco smiled ruffling his messy black hair, "I'll miss you too my little snake, you have your journal you can write to me anytime. You'll always have me Adder don't forget."

Harry smiled in Draco's arms, "Can't forget. You're my first friend."

Blaise stood off to the side, "Mother decided to travel again. She's in Italy and won't let me join her. So I'll be staying. I'll meet you here sometimes."

Fred grinned, "So few students stay for the holidays they only have one table so you can sit close enough to drop a note. It would be easier for you to leave notes for us then us to you."

"Fine. I should go now. Wouldn't want anyone to figure things who just yet..." Blaise sneered before stalking off.

Hermione had already left, Draco sighed, "I have to go now. The carriages will be leaving soon. I'll see you after the holidays. I'll try to talk to you through Uncle Sev's floo. Be safe Adder." Draco hugged him tightly, before he reluctantly let him go and headed out so he could leave with the other students. If only he could stay. His presents would have to make up for his absence...

Harry felt alone, Draco was leaving him behind...it hurt...

Sensing the problem the twins moved closer.

Fred knelt, "Let's go see if the house elves will let us have a snack. I'm sure you could use some hot chocolate and cake.

Harry sighed, "If you think that's the best idea..."

George nodded, "Of course it is. Didn't you know? Chocolate makes you happy."

Harry gave them a weak smile, "Alright." he climbed on Fred's back, "Let's go then..."
Chapter 17- Christmas, presents, new memories and making a stand

Once the holidays had started, the twins, Blaisé and Harry were having too good a time to think much about Flamel. The twins and Harry had the Third Year dormitory to themselves and the common room was far emptier than usual, so they were able to get the good armchairs by the fire. They sat by the hour eating anything they could spear on a toasting fork; bread, English muffins, marshmallows, as well as plotting ways of getting Ron in trouble with a Professor and Percy, which were fun to talk about even if they wouldn't work.

Blaisé also started teaching Harry wizard chess. This was exactly like Muggle chess except that the figures were alive, which made it a lot like directing troops in battle. Blaisé had a gold and silver set was very old and obviously priceless. They had been a gift from one of his mother's late husbands, Blaise knew them so well he never had trouble getting them to do what he wanted. Harry had issues with remembering the could move themselves. The twins picked sides to cheer on, though they usually forgot who they were actually cheering for.

Harry had give Snape a list of what gifts he wanted to buy for his friends.

For Hermione, was a book she'd been eyeing from the library…

For Blaisé, A book on the Wizarding Chess games of Phineas Nigellus Black, who was a former headmaster. He was supposed to be an ancestor of Draco.

For the twins, he got them sort of a certificate to Zonko's for 100 Galleons worth of trick, pranks and candy knowing they could put it to good use.

For Percy, he asked for an Always Sharp quill and Oliver got a new pair of Keeper gloves.

When it came to a present for Draco, he didn't know what would be good enough he asked Snape to find something would be perfect. Snape had purchased silver dragon pendant that would protect one from the most powerful curses, hexes and jinxes. Harry thought it was just right, then Draco would always be safe…

He asked Draco to buy something for Snape from him, preferably potions ingredients or rare books.
Draco had gone shopping with Uncle Sev for everyone. He picked matching watches not much more expensive looking than the Weasleys could afford but they were charmed and shielded against most common curses, hexes and jinxes. They were imitation gold with a creature that resembled a cross between a lion and a dragon. He was sure they would approve, the magic cost more than the watches themselves after all.

Adder would receive a silver snake pendant that would protect him the same way. It was beautiful, just like his little snake. Something worthy of The Boy Who Lived…

Blaise was keen on Transfiguration and he choose a book for him on that- rare of course. Veelas appreciated such things.

He picked up a book on Famous Muggleborns, he thought she would approve. He let Uncle Sev send that with a School owl.

Goyle got his customary cologne and Pansy got a Veela Romance novel, they were rubbish but she loved them.

Crabbe? He'd forgotten who he sent to the cretin.

Nott? A cloak, green of course…

He bought potion ingredients and rare books from himself and Harry. That brought a smile to his lips, a joint gift to his beloved godfather.

His father received a new ring with the Malfoy crest, it would protect him from the most common curses, hexes and jinxes. It was green and silver of course.

His mother received the sheet music from Celestina's latest album for her to play at her leisure. If Mother hadn't become Lady Malfoy perhaps, she could have made her living as a musician. She practically lived in her music room…

On Christmas Eve, Harry went to bed looking forward to the next day for the food and the fun, but not expecting any presents at all out of reflex. When he woke early in the morning, however, the first thing he saw was the large pile of packages at the foot of Fred's bed. They had enlarge Fred's bed to fit the three of them the first night of their holidays and it was nice falling asleep talking knowing that he was safe.

Harry dove off the bed, he giggled when he found his name on presents, "Presents? For me?"

"Merry Christmas," Fred yawned.

"What did you expect, turnips?" George tumbled off the bed.
"No, I've never had real presents before. Except for the pairing journal from Draco of course."

Harry picked up the top parcel. It was wrapped in thick brown paper and scrawled across it was To 
Harry, from Hagrid. Inside was a roughly cut wooden flute. Hagrid had obviously whittled it 
himself. Harry blew it and it sounded a bit like an owl.

A second, very small parcel contained a note.

**We received your message and enclose your Christmas present. From Uncle Vernon and 
Aunt Petunia.**

Taped to the note was a fifty-pence piece.

Harry gulped, "They…actually sent me a present…" he dropped the note as if burned, twisting his 
hands, "I…never got anything like that from them…"

"Weird!" George said.

'What a shape! This is money?" Fred asked.

"I...don't want it...you can have it...it's supposed to be metal. Transfigure it to...anything..."

**To Adder, From Draco.**

He tore open the green paper after tugging off the silver bow, he blushed, "Oh…it's too pretty. It 
looks expensive." it was a silver snake pendant on a matching chain, it came enclosed with a note.

**Happy Christmas Adder. This little snake pendant is charmed to protect you from harmful 
magic, it's a way for me to protect you. I care for you a lot. I am sorry I can't be with you right 
now but I promise, some Christmas in the future we'll share together.**

"A gift from Mum! We told her you didn't expect any presents." Fred yawned

George snickered, "She even made you a Weasley sweater."

Harry had torn open the parcel to find a thick, hand-knitted sweater in emerald green; it matched his 
eyes and Slytherin's colors. It was warm, there was also a large box of homemade fudge.

"Every year she makes us a sweater," George said, unwrapping his own.

"Ours are always blue with a large yellow F on it, George's has a G. Though we like to swap. Don't 
tell." Fred chuckled tossing his at George so they could swap.

"You haven't got a letter on yours," George observed. "I suppose she thinks you don't forget your 
name. But we're not stupid, we know we're called Gred and Forge."

"That's really nice of her," Harry smiled trying not to laugh at their joke, "They are warm." he tried 
the fudge, which was very tasty. He'd never had fudge before…

His next present also candy, it was a large box of Chocolate Frogs from Hermione.

The twins were examining each bean they extracted from their boxes of Every Flavor Beans they'd 
each gotten from Hermione before deciding if it was safe to eat.
"Harry's is better than ours, though," said Fred, looking Harry's sweater. "She obviously makes more of an effort if you're not family."

George finally dug out a large green and silver package, "To Fred and George. From DM. We know who this is from. Wonder how it got here."

Harry smiled, "Snape. He promised to give Draco my present."

"Don't hog it Georgie…I want to see."

George opened it and stared, "They're watches…really nice ones too, nicer then the ones we have." He read the note, "Dear Twins, I got these. Hope you don't hate them. I tried to spend less on these then I did on my other gifts. If anyone asks, you can say they're from Harry. They don't look expensive but I had them charmed and shielded against most common curses, hexes and jinxes. These are gold plated with a creature that resembles a cross between a lion and a dragon. I was sure you would approve, since you both are an intriguing mix between Lions and snakes…"

Fred blinked, "They're…shields? That git… he didn't want to make us feel bad so he spent more money on the charms and shields then the actual watches themselves." He took one and buckled it to his brother's arm before holding out his own wrist, "He's a decent bloke for a snake."

George put the matching watch on Fred, "He is a decent bloke."

Harry held out his gift, "I hope you like it."

The twins tore the paper off, "A certificate to Zonko's for a 100 Galleons…"

"Harry…" Fred tackled him, "Do you know how much stuff we could buy with this?"

"Yeah, Mum would faint…" George bear hugged him too.

"What's all this noise?" Percy walked through the door, looking disapproving dragging a disgruntled Ron. They had clearly gotten halfway through unwrapping their presents as they too had a lumpy sweater over his arm, which Fred seized.

"P for prefect! Get it on, Percy, come on, we're all wearing ours, even Harry got one."

It was yellow with a bright red P.

"Whichever one you are, I don't want to wear it. They're embarrassing." Percy thickly, as the twins forced the sweater over his head, knocking his glasses askew.

"You're not sitting with the prefects today." said George. "Christmas is a time for family."

"Family…" Ron sneered, "Like you remember the meaning of the word. You replaced us."

"No we didn't." George said hotly.

"Yeah, Harry is a decent kid if you get to know him."

"Don't want to know him. He's stuck up. He's worse then Percy."

Percy turned red like his hair, "I forgot…Oliver left me a present I didn't unwrap. I'll see you at breakfast. I'll just put the sweater on properly."

"No way. I'll…"
"Oh no. I want to open my present alone."

"Aww wonder what your husband sent you."

"Shut up, twins. What my BEST FRIEND sends me as a gift is none of your concern." Percy turned on his heel, "I'll see you at breakfast."

Ron glowered at the pile of presents, noticing the watches, "Who got you those?"

Fred and George looked at each other, "Harry."

"I see, so he buys your friendship with expensive gifts."

Harry bit his lip, "If you were nicer, I would have bought you one. Percy even got one. I'll have to send your mother something in exchange for the sweater."

"Whatever. I can't believe you went from thinking you're too good for everyone to best mates with my horrible brothers and that Know-It-All."

"You don't know Hermione. She's really nice and helpful with lessons."

Fred cheerfully, "We received credit at Zonko's from Lee. Want to go with us tomorrow? We can go shopping…"

The offer was of course in jest, First Years weren't allowed to visit Hogsmeade even if it were the holidays...

Ron gave him a death glare, "Don't need charity." then stomped off.

George sighed, "Guess the only presents he got were from Mum."

XoooooX

Harry had never in all his life been to such a Christmas dinner, dozens of fat, roast turkeys; mountains of roast and mashed potatoes; tureens of buttered peas, silver boats of thick, rich gravy and cranberry sauce. There were stacks of wizard crackers every few feet along the table. These fantastic party favors were nothing like the feeble Muggle ones the Dursleys usually bought, with their little plastic toys and their flimsy paper hats inside. Harry pulled a wizard cracker with Fred and it didn't just bang, it went off with a blast like a cannon and engulfed them all in a cloud of blue smoke, while from the inside exploded a rear admiral's hat and several live, white mice. Up at the High Table, Dumbledore had swapped his pointed wizard's hat for a flowered bonnet, and was chuckling merrily at a joke Professor Flitwick had just read him.

Flaming Christmas puddings followed the turkey. Percy nearly broke his teeth on a silver sickle embedded in his slice. Harry watched Hagrid getting redder and redder in the face as he called for more wine, finally kissing Professor McGonagall on the cheek, who, to Harry's amazement, giggled and blushed, her top hat lopsided. He grimaced, what a couple…

When Harry finally left the table, the twins were carrying most of their things from out of the crackers, including a pack of non-explodable, luminous balloons, a Grow-Your-Own-Warts kit and other things. He had his own new wizard chess set now, it was from Blaisé, it wasn't an expensive one at all but it was his. The white mice had disappeared and Harry had a nasty feeling they were going to end up as Mrs. Norris's Christmas dinner.

Harry and the twins spent a happy afternoon having a furious snowball fight on the grounds against a
reluctant Ron and Percy who lost miserably. Then, cold, wet, and gasping for breath, they returned to the fire in the Gryffindor common room, where they had steaming cups of cocoa and biscuits from the oven.

XoooooX

Draco woke up Christmas morning, leaving his room after throwing on a green velvet dressing gown and making his way to the Drawing room where they had their tree. He dug through presents hoping to find something from Adder.

"Looking for this?"

Draco turned around, grinning, "Uncle Sev!"

"A little snake asked me to give this to you." Snape smiled ruffling Draco's hair, "He really misses you."

Draco said quietly, "I miss him too."

Snape gave him a piercing look, "Go open your present before your parents come down."

Draco almost didn't stop himself from skipping as he made his way to the comfortable armchair near the roaring morning fire. He tore open the silver package with green ribbon, to find silver dragon pendant on a gold and silver chain. With a note,

Draco,

I didn't know what you would like. It's hard to think of something you don't already have. I asked Snape and he said something with a dragon, sp I asked if we could get something that would keep you safe. He says this would protect you from the most powerful curses, hexes and jinxes. I thought it was just right, I hope you like it. I miss you. Fred and George are nice, but I'd rather sleep in your arms. Can you come spend the night when you come back?

Adder

Harry was so cute, he missed him… he smiled, he wouldn't mind staying with Harry if it made him happy. Draco slid the note in his pocket and put on the pendant. They thought alike, both wanting to protect the other.

"Happy Christmas darling."

Draco stood and bowed, "Happy Christmas mother. Did you sleep well?"

There was a pop and two house elves Apparated into the Drawing room to place three comfortable chairs in front of the tree. Draco took his customary seat on the floor between Uncle Sev and his mother after he handed Mother his package. "I hope you like it. I hope Father hasn't given you this already." knowing the chances of that were slim…

Narcissa Malfoy delicately unwrapped the present, gasping, "Draco darling. The entire Album from Celestina? You managed to get the score book?"

Draco smiled, "Of course, being a Malfoy makes it easy. Plus I doubled her donation to the St. Mungos' children's ward this year. The donation was in your name though, they promised a plaque."

Narcissa hugged him, "You wonderful boy."
Snape raised an eyebrow, Harry had had a bigger effect on him then he expected.

Draco recomposed his mask, before he handed his gift to his father. "I hope you like it. I spent hours trying to find out that was worthy of the Lord of the House of Malfoy. When I couldn't, I commissioned one."

"Smart choice, Draco."

Lucius opened the box, "A ring, Draco."

Draco shifted nervously, "It has our crest with our House colors, it's also enchanted. It will guard you against most curses, jinxes and hexes; well I couldn't find anyone who could make it capable of shielding you from Unforgivables."

Lucius smirked, "Wise choice. I do hold views that my fellow members of the Wizengamot don't. I have many enemies, a son who protects his father is a wise son indeed."

Draco gestured at the two house elves to carry the large wooden box to his uncle and the package tied with twine. "These are for you. I couldn't decide which you would like better, so I bought both."

Snape levitated the crate and opened it to find it filled with plants in stasis and other potions ingredients. He stared at his godson, "Do you know how much these cost?"

Draco nodded, "They aren't necessarily rare, just uncommon. If I needed to be an adult or a potions master to purchase them. I didn't. I hoped they would be appreciated."

Snape untied the package to find rather rare books and scrolls on Potions, poisons, draughts, antidotes.

"I thought you'd like that one. The poisons of ancient Egypt, the bookseller didn't read the titles too closely." Draco smirked, "Might of confounded him a little."

Snape looked at Draco, his normally cold eyes a light with warmth, "Thank you."

Narcissa blinked, "Draco, you haven't opened any of your presents yet."

Snape pulled one from his robe, "He can open this."

Draco had opened a present, it hung under his velvet pajama shirt, it was between himself, Adder and Snape that he received it. He opened the parcel, grinning at the title, "Common Potions for one's health." it would have energy potions, nutrient potions, vitamin potions, pain potions, calming draughts and more. He smiled, "Thank you Uncle Sev."

"Is that a text for Healers Severus? I will not have my son become a Healer. He is going into Politics."

"No Lucius, it is a potions book for an adult. I discovered to my pleasure that Draco can brew at the Level of Fifth Year. Draco would pass his O.W.L.S. for Potions now. There is a reason he is my assistant. He is excellent, he would make an excellent potions master if he choose. It is always more preferable to brew for yourself then to trust another."

"I'm not going into Politics right away father. I want to be a barrister, which does have politics of it's own."

Snape stared at Draco, he was going to announce such a thing now?
Narcissa beamed, "A barrister? We haven't had a Barrister in ages. We have had Aurors, Professors, professional Wizard Chess champions and even a Headmaster before."

Lucius shrugged, "A barrister? Why?"

"Surely we can agree that there are many problems in our world that perhaps using law we can change. Like for instance, Halfbloods, there are more now then before. I think that it should be illegal to allow orphaned Halfbloods to be raised by Muggle relatives. What do they know about raising a magical child? They have enacted terrible things to our kinds for eons, what if a child is tormented for being what they are?"

Lucius stared, "You want it to be illegal for halfbloods to be raised by Muggles?" he sneered, "Muggles know nothing about the Wizarding world and they should never be allowed to raise a magical child."

Draco smirked, "They can be Obliviated into thinking the child is dead or something. I think the closest relation on the pureblood parent's side should take the child." he turned to his uncle. "Uncle Sev, if something had happened to your mother as a child, would you have wanted to live with her family? Where your magic would be understood and not feared? Where you would be more like to be encouraged rather then scorned?"

Snape glared at him, Draco was treading on dangerous ground. "Of course I would rather have been raised by the Princes. Not that they really wanted me either. My mother went a little off after I was born." Lucius didn't know the truth of his blood status, he tried to keep it to himself. Lily knew, so did Draco and Harry but he knew they wouldn't tell.

Lucius was confused, "Severus, what does he mean?"

Draco hastily said, "Uncle Sev's parents were unbalanced. He told me so. That they didn't like him using magic because..." he stammered, "he was far more adept then they were. He is well-rounded in his knowledge."

Snape bit his lip, "It is true. I told Draco to toughen him up. He tried complaining about a punishment when he was a lot younger and I told him about a similar situation from my childhood as well as how I was punished."

Draco stared at the floor, "I...realized I was merely whinging. You were merely meting out a punishment as any father would."

"Is this interest in halfbloods have anything to do with the friend you made this past summer?"

Draco nodded, "Yes Father."

"Tell me. What would make you so adamant he should be raised by a different relative."

Draco lost his temper, "That woman! That Squib! She married a Muggle, a horrible man. He..." his fists clenched, in his lap.

"Draco, now is not the time..." Snape tried to calm him.

"The boy is passionate about something, intriguing." Lucius sneered.

Narcissa put a hand on her husband's arm, "Draco, you can tell us."

Draco stiffened, "I'm sorry. I shouldn't ruin Christmas with such tales. Though father if my friend
were in anyway related to you, I would say it would be in your political best interest to have him remanded to your custody. He'd be far better off as your ward then being treated as house elf."

Narcissa gasped, "A wizard? Treated as a house elf? The horrors…"

Draco reach for a long package and opened it, pasting a grin on his face, "A Nimbus 2000? Father, it was exactly what I wanted…” Now he could fly with Adder, under the right charms of course. He found a new chess set from Blaisé, silver and green rather then red and white. He had other presents from his father and mother; a set of new quills, green and black ink, a scroll of never ending parchment- which was doubtful but would last a while at least.

They retired to a large breakfast, Draco wondered briefly if Harry would remember to eat properly while he was gone. The Weasley twins ate like they were starving so he doubted they would let Harry eat less then a bird.

XoooooX

Harry curled up in front of the fire in the Common room with his journal from Draco, picking up his self-inking quill and writing.

**Draco,**

**Happy Christmas. I got your gift. Thanks. I love it, it's so pretty. I miss you. Did Snape like my gift? What did you get him from me? Did you like my gift? Was it nice enough?**

I hope you had a nice Christmas. I did. I never got presents before and I got a lot of them. I had one from you, Blaisé- my own chess set he is teaching me to play, Hermione- chocolate frogs, the twins gave me some of their inventions, and the twins' mother sent me a sweater and fudge.

**Adder**

He held the journal to his chest, pulling it beneath the glamour and closed his eyes, smiling, This was the best Christmas ever…

The only way it would have been more amazing would have been if he had Draco with him…
Exploring, terror, a strange mirror and a creepy Headmaster.

Title: The truth behind the Name and the lies

Pairing: DracoxHarry,
Fandom : HP
Notes: An abused boy finds out he's a wizard and a hero; his tormented mind rebels. One person sees through the misconceptions to the real Harry and treats him the way he deserves. Why Harry never fights back from personal attacks...why does he crave more? Because he isn't a hero, he isn't brave, he's hiding behind the shadow of the boy they all believe him to be. -yes I did rename the story. the title wasn't fitting...

"..." is spoken.

'...' is mind to mind communication.

Chapter 18- Exploring, terror, a strange mirror and a creepy Headmaster.

Harry couldn't sleep, so Fred convinced him to go on an adventure. They crept out of the dormitory, down the stairs, across the common room, and climbed through the portrait hole.

"Who's there?" squawked the Fat Lady.

Harry said nothing and neither did Fred, between the notice-me-not charm and the cloak they were invisible.

Fred walked quickly down the corridor, carrying Harry.

Where should they go? Fred stopped, his heart racing, and thought. And then it came to him. The Restricted Section in the library. They'd be able to read as long as they liked, as long as it took to find out who Flamel was. He set off, drawing the invisibility cloak tight around them as he walked.

The library was pitch-black and very eerie. Fred cast a charm with Harry's hand on his wand, that lit a lamp to see their way along the rows of books but was only visible to them. The lamp looked as to them if it was floating along in midair.

Though Harry could feel his arm supporting it, the sight gave him the creeps.

The Restricted Section was right at the back of the library. Fred lifted Harry over the rope before stepping carefully over the rope that separated these books from the rest of the library to avoid ringing the bell on it.

Harry handed Fred the lamp because he was taller.

Fred held up his lamp to read the titles.

They didn't tell them much. Their peeling, faded gold letters spelled words in languages neither couldn't understand. Some had no title at all. One book had a dark stain on it that looked horribly like blood.

The hairs on the back of Harry's neck prickled. Maybe he was imagining it, maybe not, but he thought a faint whispering was coming from the books, as though they knew someone was there.
They had to start somewhere, setting the lamp down carefully on the floor, he looked along the bottom shelf for an interesting looking book. A large black and silver volume caught his eye. He pulled it out with difficulty, because it was very heavy, and, balancing it on his knee, let it fall open.

A piercing, blood-curdling shriek split the silence. The book was screaming! Harry snapped it shut, but the shriek went on and on repeating one high, unbroken, ear-splitting note.

Fred took the book from him as the tiny Gryffindor stumbled backward and knocked over their lamp, which went out at once. Panicking, he heard footsteps coming down the corridor outside. He stuffed the shrieking book back on the shelf, grabbed Harry and the cloak before he ran for it. He waited for Filch to pass them in the doorway; Filch's pale, wild eyes never saw them, they slipped behind Filch's outstretched arm and streaked off up the corridor, the book's shrieks still ringing in their ears.

Fred came to a sudden halt in front of a tall suit of armor, he had been so busy getting away from the library, he hadn't paid attention to where he was going. He tried to remember where they might be so he could get them back to the tower.

Harry clutched Fred's sweater, it was dark so he didn't recognize where he was at all. There was a suit of armor near the kitchens, he was, but weren't they five floors above there?

"You asked me to come directly to you, Professor, if anyone was wandering around at night, and somebody's been in the library in the Restricted Section."

Wherever he was, Filch must know a shortcut, because his soft, greasy voice was getting nearer, and to his horror, it was Draco's godfather Professor Snape who replied, "The Restricted Section? Well, they can't be far, we'll catch them."

Harry knew that voice, Snape. Oh, he would be disappointed and blame Fred. Why did he open that book and ruin everything?

Fred stood rooted to the spot as Filch and Snape came around the corner ahead. They couldn't see them, of course, but the corridor was narrow and if they came close they'd knock right into them. Surely the cloak didn't stop them from being solid.

Fred walked away slowly, as quietly as he could. there was a door stood ajar to his left. It was their only hope. He squeezed through it barely, holding his breath, trying not to move it, and to his relief he managed to get inside the room being notice.

They walked straight past and Harry leaned Fred's warm chest, breathing deeply, listening to their footsteps dying away. That had been close, very close. It was a few seconds before he noticed anything about the room Fred had hidden them in.

It looked like an unused classroom, there were the dark shapes of desks and chairs were piled against the walls. Propped against the wall facing him was something that didn't look seem to belong there, as it was put there as an afterthought.

It was a magnificent mirror, as high as the ceiling, with an ornate gold frame, standing on two clawed feet. There was an inscription carved around the top: Erised stra ehru oyt ube cafru oyt on wohsi. His panic fading now that there was no sound of Filch and Snape- he was lucky he hadn't accidentally dragged Draco to their side, It might have gotten them caught. Harry moved nearer to the mirror, to get a closer look. When he stepped in front of it, he gasped.
It was himself at Christmas time, in a place he'd never seen.

Snape was nearby sipping what looked like coffee.

Fred and George were there.

Oliver and Percy were sitting really close.

Hermione was reading a book near the fire.

Draco was playing chess with Blaise but Harry was in his lap snuggling.

Harry blinked, it was so…different…not like a regular mirror at all. He looked around. His heart was pounding far more furiously than when the book had screamed.

But the room was empty. Breathing very fast, he turned slowly back to the mirror. To see the same sight.

Fred walked towards him, whispering, "What's the matter Harry?"

"I…see all of us in the mirror. We're spending Christmas together. There is a tree…Snape is sipping what looks like coffee. You and George are there but I don't see what you're doing. Oliver and Percy are sitting really close. Hermione is reading a book near the fire. Draco is playing chess with Blaise but I'm in Draco's lap snuggling."

Fred blinked, "That's a strange thing to see in a mirror. Let me look."

Harry reluctantly moved.

Fred stood in front of the mirror, his arm was around George, they were laughing and standing outside their dream. Their own joke shop, called Weasleys' Wizard Wheezes…the name they finally agreed on. It was amazing…he glanced at the writing tilted his head a bit, "Oh…I see…" the sneaky Weasley twins could read English right-side up, upside-down, side-ways and even backwards. "I show you know your face but your heart's desire. You see your desire for a family Christmas…I see the joke shop George and I want to have someday."

"Quite right Fred."

Harry stiffened, "Professor…"

Fred glanced, there on the previously empty desk was none other than Albus Dumbledore. They must have walked straight past him, Harry had been so interested in the mirror he hadn't noticed him.

"I…I didn't see you, sir." Harry said nervously.

"Strange how near-sighted being invisible can make you," said Dumbledore.

Harry winced when he saw he was smiling.

"So," said Dumbledore, slipping off the desk to stand between Fred and Harry, "You, like hundreds before you, have discovered the delights of the Mirror of Erised."

"I didn't know it was called that, Sir," Fred said quietly. "It showed me the dream George and I share. It is our hearts desire that I saw. Why couldn't we see you before?"

"I don't need a cloak to become invisible," said Dumbledore airily. "So you understand how it
works."

Harry nodded slowly.

Dumbledore went merrily along, "Let me explain. The happiest man on earth would be able to use the Mirror of Erised like a normal mirror, that is, he would look into it and see himself exactly as he is. Does that help?"

Fred thought for a while before he said slowly, "It shows us what we want… whatever we want…"

"Yes and no," said Dumbledore quietly. "It shows us nothing more or less than the deepest, most desperate desire of our hearts. Harry, you, who have never known your family, see those you know from Hogwarts standing around you and Fred sees his shop."

Something like that Harry thought. Let the old goat twist his words…he was upset he had been so careless…

"Forgive me professor. It is late. I shouldn't have taken Harry out of the Tower but he couldn't sleep." Fred interjected.

Dumbledore ignored him, "However, this mirror will give us neither knowledge or truth. Men have wasted away before it, entranced by what they have seen, or been driven mad, not knowing if what it shows is real or even possible. The Mirror will be moved to a new home tomorrow, Harry, and I ask you not to go looking for it. If you ever do run across it, you will now be prepared. It does not do to dwell on dreams and forget to live, remember that. Now, why don't you put that admirable cloak back on and you two get off to bed?"

Fred tried not to glare that the rude man, "Of course, Professor. Harry looks so exhausted. I'll be happy to put him to bed myself."

"See that you do. The corridors at night are not a safe place for a child. One never knows who or what they might encounter."

Fred scooped Harry in his arms covered them with the cloak and let Harry hold the lamp before scurrying away as quick as he could to put as much distance between them and that old creeper.

They were both more then happy to curl up with George and sleep.
Family, Confrontations, and Nightmares

Title: The truth behind the Name and the lies

Pairing: DracoXHarry,
Fandom: HP

Notes: An abused boy finds out he's a wizard and a hero; his tormented mind rebels. One person sees through the misconceptions to the real Harry and treats him the way he deserves. Why Harry never fights back from personal attacks...why does he crave more? Because he isn't a hero, he isn't brave, he's hiding behind the shadow of the boy they all believe him to be. -yes I did rename the story. the title wasn't fitting...

"..." is spoken.

'...' is mind to mind communication.

Chapter 19- Family, Confrontations, and Nightmares

Draco was called into his father's study after breakfast two days after Christmas to discuss his marks. Draco had managed to beat all the marks in Slytherin, Hufflepuff and remarkably Ravenclaw- though he had tied with Hermione at Charms. Father would not be pleased...

Lucius sneered, "Not quite the marks I expected. Tied with the Mudblood Granger in Charms? How embarrassing. Potions, the closest marks to yours are Potter's. Potter's? His father was abysmal at Potions, he wasn't worthy of being Headboy. It should have been Severus. With marks like these, you do you actually expect that Dumbledore will allow you to be a Prefect much less Head Boy?"

Draco took a seat, "I could careless what that old goat thinks or allows. If I have my way, you'll have him gone before they can make the decisions. The last thing that school needs is Dumbledore, he is a manipulative old fool who cares only for power. He will sacrifice anyone for his aspirations."

delivering a scathing diatribe dripping with disdain.

His father stared at him, "You...want him removed? Who would replace him? A large portion of the Wizarding world revere him as the Greatest Wizard of all time."

"Hogwash. The greatest wizard is Merlin, he too went a bit dodgy in the end. I mean it, I want him gone. He abuses his position. I heard a rumor...that he went in the First Year boys' dormitory. I've overheard some talk that he's bent. You don't think...he'd abuse his position like that would you?" letting his father's own mind work with what he choose to dole out.

Lucius blinked, "Dumbledore? Bent?" he recovered, "Oh I did hear that. I've heard rumors that he's been involved with Elphias Doge for decades. Don't see the attraction. Why would the Headmaster be in...oh the great Chosen One is in Gryffindor."

Draco growled, "Was supposed to be in Slytherin."

"What?!!" Lucius lost his composure.

Draco sighed, "I may have made the interesting choice to offer my friendship to him. He needed guidance, our world terrified him. The old goat had him raised by that aunt of his and her Muggle husband then sent that oaf Hagrid to tell him about Hogwarts and take him to Diagon Alley. A
terrible choice."

"You befriended the Potter boy?"

"Not publicly. Too smart for that. I play my cards close to my chest. A trait I learned from you father." Draco acknowledged.

"But he trusts you…?" the voice was dripping with disbelief.

Draco nodded, "And he trusts Uncle Sev."

Lucius smirked, "Of course. I trust him with my life."

"Things aren't safe at the castle, Father. I didn't write because I wanted to be sure our conversation was private and safe. A troll was let loose in the castle on Halloween. There is also a three-headed dog on the third floor we aren't supposed to know about. Then there was an attempt on a student's life during the first Quidditch match of the year between Slytherin and Gryffindor. It took two powerful wizards to counter it."

"Who was the student?"

"Adder, I mean Harry Potter. Someone was using very dark jinxes on it, it nearly shook him off so he fell over 75 feet to the ground. I recognized the jinxes and so did Uncle Sev. He countered the jinxes, it wasn't working well enough so I…made it impossible to jinx that broom that way again. I didn't see who did was jinxing it, but I stopped them. I think Uncle Sev knows but can't tell."

"If someone wants Harry Potter dead, why did you stop them?"

"Because he's my friend." Draco's eyes flashed, "I've seen him at his weakest. I know his secrets. He needs me. I promised that I would protect him. I know the truth. I know that which Dumbledore would use to manipulate Harry. Harry is terrified of him. He distrusts Hagrid, but he trusts me. Harry did a very brave thing. A girl in his class was being tormented by a useless excuse for a wizard child, she was hiding in a bathroom because she didn't want to deal with people. When they heard there was a Troll in the castle, Harry insisted she would be in danger. He was right. Two boys from the Quidditch team went with him." Draco left out that they were the bloodtraitor Weasleys, his fists clenched, "Harry got scared…father, his fear pulled me from the Dungeon to where he was near the girls bathroom. When he is scared I find myself beside him. I had to fight not to be pulled up to the sky where his broom was trying to kill him. It was difficult. He nearly pulled me there when the Headmaster showed up in his dormitory."

"So…you have a strange connection to the Potter boy. Interesting, you have to protect him…any other secrets you've failed to tell me?"

"Just one. Thought I doubt you'll enjoy the news. Tell me father, do you honestly support the Dark Lord? Or would you back someone more powerful?"

"I…don't know. I don't trust Muggleborns…"

"I don't think much of Muggles when I've seen what they can do to a child. Someone they are supposed to protect."

"What have they done to that angers you so?"

"When I heard about Harry Potter I expected a boy like myself, one spoiled but told every day of his life he was a hero and had saved the Wizarding world. Father, that couldn't be farther from the truth."
The boy I met in Madam Malkin's was shattered, terrified and desperate for affection. I care for him.
Father, I can't let him be in danger." he reached beneath his shirt and pulled out his gift. "He gave me this." holding the silver dragon, "It's like your ring. It is for protection. He looks eight...they practically starved him. No one cares for him when he's sick. They beat him, break his bones and don't let him heal right." his eyes filled with pain, "I've seen the scars on his body. They are terrible. I don't want him to be hurt again."

Lucius looked thoughtful, "You believe what you are saying." his eleven-year-old son was growing up fast, gone was the son his wife raised to be a pure-blood heir who believed the world was at his feet and his to order. Here was a boy who had decided his destiny, he had chosen a side that his father was unsure if he could follow. His son might very well be a better man then himself.

"If I made a stand would you stand with me Father or would we be enemies? I would rather have you on my side. We can rise higher if you did."

"If the Dark Lord returns,"

Draco smirked, "Trust me. He will not be pleased to see you. If I were you father I would permanently defect to Harry's side. Unless you want to be forced to fight Uncle Sev, my godfather has already chosen Harry. He's abandoned the Dark Lord. I want you."

Lucius caressed the head of his staff, "What do you know?"

Draco shrugged, "What every Death Eater wants to know. What happened that night at the Potters, just before Harry received his curse scar."

Lucius gulped, "What? How do you know?"

Draco snickered, "I was there. Wonder how that happened? I think I'll let you consider what I've shared so far. If I'm lucky you'll guess and then I don't have to tell you. Having an ally among the school governors when I want to be rid of a senile Headmaster would be a blessing." he shrugged and turned to go, "Think about it. I'll give you as much time as you need unless of course, it becomes too dangerous to wait."

Lucius stared after his son, his son had changed. He'd grown up while he'd been at school, he still had the trademark Malfoy arrogance but Draco had grown up. He maybe eleven but he wasn't acting that way. He had all the zeal of a seventeen-year-old wizard who thought he could take on the world. The question was, could he? Draco's magic had strengthened, could having something, someone to protect really give a person that much power? The one thing a Slytherin and a Malfoy understood was power, and Draco had it. What was the secret of the Dark Lord's defeat was Draco hiding? He hated having his son keep secrets from him...

XooooooX

Dumbledore the creepy as Fred had dubbed the Headmaster had more then convinced Harry not to go looking for the Mirror of Erised again, and for the rest of the Christmas holidays the invisibility cloak stayed folded at the bottom of his trunk. Harry just wasn't brave enough to use it again without Draco. Besides, the headmaster's ability to make himself invisible scared him because that meant he could always be watching. Soon after Harry started having nightmares, he dreamed about people he assumed were his parents; a woman with his eyes and a man with his messy black hair who he had no memories or real feeling for disappearing in a flash of green light, while a high voice cackled with bone-chilling laughter, his own voice screaming, then Draco's stern but caring voice trying to calm him. Then a loud mess of curses, jinxes and hexes before Draco yelled no.
"Adder wake up. Please…” Draco's concerned voice came from the end of Fred's bed.

Harry woke sobbing, "Draco…”

"It's okay, I'm here."

"It was so awful…”

"Hush. You're safe."

That was awkward, George had dragged Fred to his bed after that. Harry's nightmares were too much for them to handle.

If Draco was around then Harry was his responsibility.
Title: The truth behind the Name and the lies

Pairing: DracoxHarry,
Fandom: HP

Notes: An abused boy finds out he's a wizard and a hero; his tormented mind rebels. One person sees through the misconceptions to the real Harry and treats him the way he deserves. Why Harry never fights back from personal attacks...why does he crave more? Because he isn't a hero, he isn't brave, he's hiding behind the shadow of the boy they all believe him to be. -yes I did rename the story. the title wasn't fitting...

"..." is spoken.

'...’ is mind to mind communication.

Chapter 20- Nightmares, Nicolas Flamel and more questions

Draco had agreed to floo to Uncle Sev's office after he was pulled out of the Manor and into the bed Harry was sharing with the twins the night of the first nightmare. Draco arranged to have his bedroom fireplace have a connection to his godfather's office so at night George or Fred met him with the cloak. He would spend a few hours holding Harry, trying to relax the boy.

It didn't work well for long because they started to share the dreams by the second night…

Harry would wake in tears and Draco would try to soothe him, it was difficult for Harry to calm down. They'd always cast strong privacy and silencing wards to keep Harry's screams from disturbing the rest of the tower.

When Hermione came back the day before term started, she had a different view of things. She was torn between horror at the idea of Harry being out of bed, roaming the school late at night with Fred ("Fred! How could you? What if Filch had caught you!") and disappointment that neither Harry, Blaise nor the twins hadn't at least found out who Nicolas Flamel was. When she found out about the nightmares, she paced and lectured asking why they hadn't told Madam Pomfrey. Draco simply didn't trust her, only Uncle Sev knew and that was enough. He didn't want the old goat or the Head of Gryffindor House to know, knowledge was power and the less of it Dumbledore had the better Draco liked it.

They had almost given up hope of ever finding Flamel in a library book, even though Draco was still sure he'd read the name somewhere. Once term had started, they were back to skimming through books for ten minutes during their breaks.

Harry and the twins had even less time than the other three, because Quidditch practice had started again as well as his private study sessions.

Wood was working the team harder than ever, even the pouring rain couldn't dampen his spirits. Fred and George complained that Wood was becoming a fanatic, threatening to make Percy force Wood to study something other then Quidditch. If they won their next match, against Hufflepuff, they would overtake Slytherin in the house championship for the first time in seven years- Harry wasn't so sure he cared about beating Slytherin. Harry found that he had fewer nightmares when he was tired out after training, but he still needed Draco holding him at night to feel safe.
Were the nightmares a delayed reaction to the incident during his first Quidditch match? Or a reaction to Dumbledore's spying? The Headmaster frightened him...he couldn't trust him. He only trusted Draco and those who Draco choose to trust.

XoooooX

Harry was curled up in a chair before the fire in Snape's office sharing his chocolate frogs with Draco.

Draco unwrapped another frog and placed it in his little snake's hand.

Harry smiled, nibbling on the chocolate. It was moments like this where he forgot about the Dursleys or the nightmares.

Draco grinned at him, he was so cute...how could anyone want to hurt him? He glanced at the card inside the chocolate frog, he sneered, Dumbledore, then he gasped. He stared at the back of the card. Then he looked up at Harry. "I've found him!" he whispered. "I've found Flamel! I told you I'd read the name somewhere before, I read it on Chocolate frog card a while ago — listen to this: 'Dumbledore is particularly famous for his defeat of the dark wizard Grindelwald in 1945, for the discovery of the twelve uses of dragon's blood, and his work on alchemy with his partner, Nicolas Flamel!"

Snape stiffened from his place at his desk reading potions essays. "Boys...it's too dangerous, please. I don't want you to get hurt. Harry how can I look your mother, my best friend in the eyes when I finally die knowing I let you get hurt. Draco, your mother would be so angry. I'm your godfather, I'm supposed to protect you."

Draco sighed, holding Harry close, "Whoever is out there tried to kill my Adder. I'm going to make them pay." his eyes flashed, "I hold them responsible for your leg too. Between the nightmares and the pain from Harry's scar, he can barely sleep and neither can I. It's got to stop. Harry's had to deal with enough pain."

XooooooX

They were meeting in the hidden passage just twenty minutes before curfew, Draco was excited to tell the others what he'd discovered and showed up early. He and Harry made it there first, Draco conjured a chair and sat with Harry in his lap.

Blaise showed up first, he always was quite punctual.

Then Hermione.

And finally the twins who came in huffing and puffing as if they'd run all that way.

"Sorry."

"Percy caught us."

"was trying to give us a lecture."

Draco snorted, "You're lucky. I almost shared my good news before you could be here to hear it; I found Nicolas Flamel." he pulled out the card and read it out loud again. "Dumbledore is particularly famous for his defeat of the dark wizard Grindelwald in 1945, for the discovery of the twelve uses of dragon's blood, and his work on alchemy with his partner, Nicolas Flamel'. Didn't remember where I'd read his name before because I don't like the old goat."
Hermione jumped to her feet.

Harry hadn't seen her look so excited since they'd gotten back the marks for their very first piece of homework.

"Accio History of Alchemy."

The four boys barely had time to exchange mystified looks before an enormous old book zoomed into her arms.

"I never thought to look in here!" she whispered excitedly. "I got this out of the library weeks ago for a bit of light reading."

"Light?" George gasped.

Blaisé and Draco snorted, the Mudblood had an interesting view on the concept of 'light reading'.

Hermione told him, "Oh George do be quiet until I've looked something up." and started flicking frantically through the pages, muttering to herself. At last she found what she was looking for. "I knew it! I knew it!"

"Are we allowed to speak yet?" Fred asked grumpily.

Hermione ignored him, "Nicolas Flamel," she whispered dramatically, "is the only known maker of the Sorcerer's Stone!" This didn't have quite the effect she'd expected.

Blaisé nodded, "Ah yes. I should have realized that when I saw the title. The ancient study of alchemy is concerned with making the Sorcerer's Stone, a legendary substance with astonishing powers. The stone is said transform any metal into pure gold and it also produces the Elixir of Life, which will make the drinker immortal. It's the highest apex of Transfiguration besides animagi." he snickered, "Guess you aren't bad for a Muggleborn."

"A stone that makes gold and stops you from ever dying!" Fred said reverently.

"No wonder someone's after it! Anyone would want it." George continued.

Hermione blushed, before reading, "There have been many reports of the Sorcerer's Stone over the centuries, but the only Stone currently in existence belongs to Mr. Nicolas Flamel, the noted alchemist and opera lover. Mr. Flamel, who celebrated his six hundred and sixty-fifth birthday last year, enjoys a quiet life in Devon with his wife, Perenelle who is six hundred and fifty-eight.' See?"

Draco smirked, "The dog must be guarding Flamel's Sorcerer's Stone! I guess he asked the old goat to keep it safe for him, because they're friends and he knew someone was after it. That's why he wanted the Stone moved out of Gringotts!"

"And no wonder we couldn't find Flamel in that Study of Recent Developments in Wizardry," Fred said sardonically.

"Yeah, he's not exactly recent if he's six hundred and sixty-five, is he?" George snickered.

Snape had agreed to referee the next Quidditch match to keep Harry safe, it was apparently the least he could do for Lily's son.

As the match drew nearer by the hour, Harry became more and more nervous, whatever he told
Fred, George and Hermione. The rest of the team wasn't too calm, either. The idea of overtaking Slytherin in the house championship was wonderful, no one had done it for seven years, but would they be allowed to, with such a biased referee? The twins and Harry let them think that, it wouldn't do any good to out Snape for his soft spot for Harry.

Back in the locker room, Wood had taken Harry aside.

"Don't want to pressure you, Potter, but if we ever need an early capture of the Snitch it's now. Finish the game before Snape can favor Hufflepuff too much."

"The whole school's out there!" said Fred Weasley, peering out of the door.

George peeked out too, "Even, blimey, Dumbledore's come to watch!"

Harry's heart did a somersault in fear, "Dumbledore?" he said, dashing to the door to make sure. Fred was right. There was no mistaking that silver beard, at least he was visible right? Unless…it was Dumbledore trying to hurt him…

Perhaps that was why Snape was looking so angry as the teams marched onto the field, something that even Neville noticed, too.

"I've never seen Snape look so mean," he told Hermione. "Look — they're off. Ouch!"

Someone had poked Neville in the back of the head. It was Draco.

"Oh, sorry, Longbottom, didn't see you there." Draco grinned broadly at Crabbe and Goyle, while smirking at Hermione.

"Wonder how long Potter's going to stay on his broom this time? Anyone want a bet? What about you, Granger?"

Hermione didn't answer; Snape had just awarded Hufflepuff a penalty because George Weasley had hit a Bludger at him accidentally. She had all her fingers crossed in her lap, was squinting fixedly at Harry, who was circling the game like a hawk, looking for the Snitch. She was worried about him, the last few days had left him shaken, without Draco she was sure he'd have fallen apart.

"You know how I think they choose people for the Gryffindor team?" Draco said loudly a few minutes later, as Snape awarded Hufflepuff another penalty for no reason at all then to keep his anti-Harry cover intact. "It's people they feel sorry for. See, there's Potter, who's got no parents, then there's the Weasleys, who've got no money. Hey, you should be on the team, Longbottom, you've got no brains."

Hermione glanced at him, "Malfoy…" her voice thick with disdain, he'd gone too far, "Keep that up and you could be on the team. You'll have no friends."

Draco stiffened understanding her meaning, "Whatever, like the Prince of Slytherin should have to listen to the likes of you." implying his presumed opinion on her blood status without saying it out loud, "Let's go." he took off, Goyle and Crabbe in his wake, one eye on the sky and Harry…

Harry had suddenly gone into a spectacular dive, which drew gasps and cheers from the crowd.

Hermione stood up, biting her nails, as Harry streaked toward the ground like a bullet. "Come on, Harry!" Hermione screamed, leaping onto her seat to watch as Harry sped straight at Snape

Draco's heart was in his throat, pull up…pull up. He was terrified Harry was going to crash…
Up in the air, Snape turned on his broomstick just in time to see something scarlet shoot past him, missing him by inches.

Within the next second, Harry had pulled out of the dive, his arm raised in triumph, the Snitch clasped in his hand.

Draco took a few breaths to calm himself, Harry was safe.

"The game's over! Harry's won! We've won! Gryffindor is in the lead." Hermione shrieked, dancing up and down on her seat and hugging Neville.

Harry jumped off his broom, a foot from the ground. He couldn't believe it. He'd done it — the game was over; it had barely lasted five minutes. As Gryffindors came spilling onto the field, he saw Snape land nearby, white-faced and tight-lipped, then Harry felt a hand on his shoulder and looked up into Dumbledore's smiling face and he understood why.

"Well done," said Dumbledore quietly, so that only Harry could hear. "Nice to see you haven't been brooding about that mirror… been keeping busy… excellent…"

Harry stiffened at the touch, wanting to be far away from Dumbledore the creepy.

Snape spat bitterly on the ground.

Harry couldn't ever remember feeling happier except in Draco's arms in front of Snape's fire being fed chocolates. He'd really done something to be proud of now, no one could say he was just a famous name anymore. The evening air had never smelled so sweet. He walked over the damp grass, reliving the last hour in his head, which was a happy blur: the twins running to lift him onto their shoulders; Neville and Hermione in the distance, jumping up and down, Ron was glaring. Percy had blushed as he walked up to Wood and shook his hand in congratulations before squeezing Harry's shoulder. Draco would probably be upset with him for being alone right now…

The stands erupted; it had to be a record, no one could ever remember the Snitch being caught so quickly.

A figure in a dark hooded cloak came swiftly down the front steps of the castle, clearly they did not want to be seen. They walked as fast as possible toward the Forbidden Forest. Harry's victory faded from his mind as he watched. He recognized the figure's prowling walk, Snape, sneaking into the forest while everyone else was at dinner; what was going on? Could it have something to do with the Sorcerer's Stone?

Harry jumped back on his Nimbus Two Thousand and took off. Gliding silently over the castle he saw Snape enter the forest at a run. He followed.

The trees were so thick he couldn't see where Snape had gone. He flew in circles, lower and lower, brushing the top branches of trees until he heard voices. He glided toward them and landed noiselessly in a towering beech tree.

He climbed carefully along one of the branches, holding tight to his broomstick, trying to see through the leaves.

Below, in a shadowy clearing, stood Snape, but he wasn't alone. Professor Quirrell was there, too. Harry couldn't make out the look on his face, but he was stuttering worse than ever. Harry strained to catch what they were saying.

"… d-don't know why you wanted t-t-to meet here of all p-places, Severus…"
"Oh, I thought we'd keep this private," Snape sneered, his voice icy and filled with disdain. "Students aren't supposed to know about the Sorcerer's Stone, after all."

Harry leaned forward.

Quirrell was mumbling something.

Then Snape interrupted him.

"Have you found out how to get past that oaf's beast yet?"

"B-b-but Severus, I —"

"You don't want me as your enemy, Quirrell." said Snape, taking a step toward him.

"I-I don't know what you—"

"You know perfectly well what I mean."

Harry's scar ached, and he nearly fell out of the tree in shock. He steadied himself in time to hear Snape say, "— your little bit of hocus-pocus. I'm waiting."

"B-but I d-d-don't —"

"Very well," Snape cut in. "We'll have another little chat soon, when you've had time to think things over and decided where your loyalties lie."

He threw his cloak over his head and strode out of the clearing. It was almost dark now, but Harry could see Quirrell, standing quite still as though he was petrified. He didn't trust him despite that look and flew back to the broom shed, ditched his broom and ran towards the castle.

"Harry, where have you been?" Hermione squeaked when he entered the castle. "Talk about beating the pants off of Hufflepuff! Everyone's waiting for you in the common room, we're having a party, Fred and George stole some cakes and stuff from the kitchens."

Harry felt warm familiar arms around his waist and leaned back, "Draco…" he whispered, relaxing now. He really shouldn't do things on his own, shaking slightly, "Never mind that now," said Harry breathlessly. "Let's go to our place, you wait 'til you hear this…"

Draco made sure Peeves wasn't inside their passage before conjuring a bench for himself and Harry and uncasting the Notice-Me-Not charm on himself. "Why are you so nervous Adder?"

"We were right, it is the Sorcerer's Stone, I overheard Snape yelling at Quirrell. I wonder if Quirrell might be the one trying to take it."

Draco sneered, "He was a Slytherin, I can see him knowing those Dark hexes and jinxes. What would be his motive?"

Harry said quickly, "Snape asked if he knew how to get past Fluffy. Then he said something about Quirrell's 'hocus pocus' I remember Snape asking Quirrell to decide where his loyalties lie."

Draco nodded, "I know Uncle Sev is protecting the stone. I reckon there are other things guarding the stone apart from Fluffy, loads of enchantments, probably. I don't understand, what where his loyalties lie would mean though." Draco's eyes widened, "Adder…did your scar hurt when you were near them?"
Harry blinked, "Yes…nearly fell out of a tree…"

"Uncle Sev's mark burning. Harry's scar hurting him. There is some powerful evil wizard out there who might want to live forever or at least have his life back."

Harry shook, the memories of their nightmares fresh in his mind, "Our nightmare…"

Hermione coughed, "I really hope you're wrong Draco, otherwise Harry's in danger."

"Of course Adder's in danger. From Dumbledore. From former Death Eaters. From Quirrell. From the Dark Lord if he shows his face. The only people he is safe with is you, me, Blaisé, Uncle Sev and the twins." and someday, hopefully, his father…if Lucius Malfoy was even redeemable…
Unicorns, Forbidden Forest, Danger, Answers and More Questions

Title: The truth behind the Name and the lies
Pairing: DracoxHarry,
Fandom : HP
Notes: An abused boy finds out he's a wizard and a hero; his tormented mind rebels. One person sees through the misconceptions to the real Harry and treats him the way he deserves. Why Harry never fights back from personal attacks...why does he crave more? Because he isn't a hero, he isn't brave, he's hiding behind the shadow of the boy they all believe him to be. -yes I did rename the story. the title wasn't fitting...

"..." is spoken.

'...' is mind to mind communication.

Chapter 21- Unicorns, Forbidden Forest, Danger, Answers and More Questions

"Uh…Professor Dumbledore? We need ter talk…" Hagrid shifted nervously.

Draco paused, grabbing Blaisé's sleeve.

Blaisé turned to snarl at him but the look in Draco's eyes warned him not to.

"Ah Hagrid…is Harry still not visiting you?"

"No sir. It's more important then that. It's the unicorns sir. Somethins' bin attacking them. I've found more then one injured…"

Draco dragged Blaisé to their secret passage meeting place, "You're the magical creatures expert. Tell me what can injure a unicorn."

Blaisé glared, "Just because I'm a Veela doesn't mean I know everything about Magical Creatures."

"Werewolves? I heard there might be some in the forest."

"Werewolves? Are you insane? They aren't fast enough. I don't even think a full-blood Veela could harm one. What do you know about unicorns anyway?"

"They are one of the purest magical creatures, we only use their horns and hair in potions."

"Do you know what they say about unicorn blood?"

Draco shook his head, "No, should I?"

Blaisé sneered, "Drinking it grants one a type of immortality. But it is a cursed life…to slay an animal so pure eats away at your soul."

Draco's jaw dropped, he whispered in shock, "Only the Dark Lord would dare do such a thing. He isn't human enough to care. I doubt he even has a soul left."

Blaisé smirked, "What do you say to a little late night adventure? Perhaps we can discover the culprit
ourselves."

Draco chuckled, "I suppose Harry could do without me for one night. Fred can watch him."

XooooooX

Eager for adventure and yet nervous about leaving Harry alone for a night, Draco joined Blaisé sneaking out of the castle wearing powerful Notice-Me-Not charms.

Blaisé muttered, "Stick close to me. It is safer that way. Few creatures will challenge a Veela. Lumos."

Light shown from the tip of his wand.

Draco followed Blaisé deeper into the Forbidden Forest.

They careful followed the path.

Draco clutched Blaisé's arm, "There is something evil in that direction."

"Then that is where we are going." Blaisé sneered.

Draco followed his Veela best friend, the sensation getting stronger. If Harry had come, his little snake would have passed out already he was sure of it.

They walked past a mossy tree stump. Draco could hear running water; there must be a stream somewhere close by. There were still spots of unicorn blood here and there along the winding path.

Blaisé heard a sound and hissed, "Back up Draco." his body started to change, his torso lengthened, his clothes tore, his skin became a mixture of scales and feathers. His wings, glowed with an opalescent sheen as they exploded from his body. His claws digging deep into the forest floor.

Draco choked back a shout of surprise, he'd never seen Blaisé fully transform before. Sure he'd seen Blaisé with claws and talons once or twice when he was angry but this…was frightening. He was more then gleeful that Blaisé was on his side.

Blaisé snarled, "Show yourself, I'm armed."

And into the clearing came a centaur, to the waist he was a man, with red hair and beard, but below that was a horse's gleaming chestnut body with a long, reddish tail.

"Oh, it's you, Ronan," Blaisé sighed in relief that he would never admit to.

"Young Zabini. You would do well to avoid the forest these days. Something evil had descended upon us."

Blaisé sneered, "Even a Veela needs to stretch his wings."

"You have brought the Malfoy heir. Very dangerous." the centaur looked to the sky, "Mars is bright tonight. Bad omen."

Draco bowed, "I heard about the unicorns being injured. I worried it would mean that Harry Potter was in more grievous danger."

The centaur nodded, "I heard from Hagrid about the Quidditch match." he gave Draco a penetrating look, "You did it. You saved his life."
A second centaur emerged from the thick grove of trees, this one looked younger; he had white-blond hair and a palomino body. "Of course he did. Dumbledore would never want to hear it. They were born soul bonded. The Dragon could not allow the Lion to be hurt without causing himself injury."

Draco bit his lip to prevent a gasp from escaping but fainted to contain it all, "Soul-bonded...how is that possible?"

"The stars have ordained that the Dragon would rise as a protector to the Lion. He would make the Lion a force to be reckoned with."

A third centaur crashed through the trees, "Firenze, be silent.." this centaur was black-haired and -bodied and wilder-looking than Ronan. "You should not share the secrets of the stars with foals. Especially human ones with a pedigree like theirs."

"Bane, one's worth is not decided by their pedigree but by the strength of their character. The Potter heir and the Malfoy heir's destiny is written in the stars. As is Zabini, Granger and the Gemini Weasleys' destinies, their fates are bound up with that of the entire Wizarding World."

One blow after another, Draco was staggering, the questions he had been searching for answers to had lead to more questions.

"We should go. We have little time." Blaisé insisted.

Firenze fixed them with a stare, "Do not proceed. It is folly."

"Do not lecture impudent foals. Leave the human and the Veela alone. They will make their own choices and suffer the consequences of such." Bane nudged the other two centaurs back and away from the children.

An insulted Blaisé set off into the heart of the forest with Draco in toe. They walked for nearly half an hour, deeper and deeper into the forest, until the path became almost impossible to follow because the trees were so thick. Blaisé thought the blood spills seemed to be getting thicker and the overwhelming sense of pain, terrible pain was mixed with fear. There were splashes of purple blood on the roots of a tree, as though the poor creature had been thrashing around in pain close by. Blaisé could see a clearing ahead, through the tangled branches of an ancient oak.

"Look —" he murmured, holding out his clawed hand out to stop Draco.

Something bright white was gleaming on the ground. They inched closer.

It was the unicorn all right, and it was dead. Blaisé had never seen anything so beautiful and sad. Its long, slender legs were stuck out at odd angles where it had fallen and its mane was spread pearly-white on the dark leaves.

Blaisé had taken one step toward it when a slithering sound made him freeze where he stood.

A bush on the edge of the clearing quivered...

Then, out of the shadows, a hooded figure came crawling across the ground like some stalking beast.

Blaisé and Draco stood transfixed. The cloaked figure reached the unicorn, lowered its head over the wound in the animal's side, and began to drink its blood.

The hooded figure raised its head and looked right at Draco, unicorn blood was dribbling down its
front. It got to its feet and came swiftly toward both of them.

Blaisé hissed, "Climb on my back, quick as you can. I'm getting us out of here." the terror and pain from the unicorn was dissipating but it being replaced by a cloying sense of evil. Blaise took to wing, his opalescent wings filling the dark forest with light and causing the hooded figure to screech.

Draco did as he was bidden, Blaisé would protect him.

They flew, Blaisé's claws and talons ripping through the trees to clear a path to the sky. They landed in the Astronomy tower and cast disillusionment charms on themselves as soon as Blaisé had returned to his human form.

Blaisé gasped, nearly collapsing in Draco's arms, "I...I've only gone full Veela once. I'd forgotten how draining it could be."

Draco smiled, "Hush now. I'll get you back to the dungeons. Trust me."

They stealthily made their way to the dungeons, Draco deposited Blaisé in his bed.

The half Veela was asleep in seconds.

Draco was glad he'd had Blaisé with him, he'd hate imagine what would have occurred without him.

It didn't take long for him to drift off either.
Chapter 22- Exams and Through the Trapdoor

Without Draco, Hermione, Snape and Blaisé Harry was sure he would never have made it to the exams. Blaisé was keen at Transfiguration, Snape was a god at potions with Draco a close second but he also helped Harry with Herbology, Draco helped him with Astronomy and History of Magic while Hermione was left with Charms. After their friendship grew following saving her from a troll she had been only too happy to help him with his studies.

Between Draco, Hermione and Blaisé even the twins' marks were up.

Draco acted as if he half expected Voldemort to come bursting through the door at any moment. Yet the days crept by, and there could be no doubt that Fluffy was still alive and well behind the locked door.

It was sweltering hot, especially in the large classroom where they did their written papers. They had been given special, new quills for the exams, which had been bewitched with an Anti-cheating spell.

They had practical exams as well. Professor Flitwick called them one by one into his class to see if they could make a pineapple tap dance across a desk. Professor McGonagall watched them turn a mouse into a snuffbox — points were given for how pretty the snuffbox was, but taken away if it had whiskers. Snape tried to make them all nervous, breathing down their necks while they tried to remember how to make a Forgetfulness potion.

Draco and Snape had given Harry permission to do well; mostly out of spite because of Dumbledore's misguessing Harry's mark.

His pineapple tapped danced to a tune he'd overheard on the telly once, the Tapioca. His mouse turned into a beautiful snuff box with silver dragons while his Forgetfulness potion managed to get higher marks then Draco's which embarrassed Harry to no end.

Their very last exam was History of Magic. One hour of answering questions such as one about batty old wizards who'd invented self-stirring cauldrons and they'd be free, free for a whole wonderful week until their exam results came out. When the ghost of Professor Binns told them to put down their quills and roll up their parchment, Harry couldn't help cheering with the rest.
Harry had taken to sneaking down to the dungeons to sleep with Draco because his nightmares were so terrible. Ron accused him of trying to get attention. Neville swore it was nerves. He'd actually woken Dean up screaming one night and the boy slept like a log. Hermione and the twins were worried…

Blaisé was even worried, Snape tried not to show it but he kept trying to offer Harry Dreamless sleep potions.

"That was far easier than I thought it would be," said Hermione as they joined the crowds flocking out onto the sunny grounds. "I overstudied as usual, I needn't have learned about the 1637 Werewolf Code of Conduct or the uprising of Elfric the Eager."

Hermione always liked to go through their exam papers afterward, Harry was too exhausted to care or complain so they wandered down to the lake and flopped under a tree. The Weasley twins and Lee Jordan were tickling the tentacles of a giant squid, which was basking in the warm shallows.

"No more studying," Harry sighed happily, stretching out on the grass before rubbing his forehead. "I wish I knew what this means!" he hissed. "My scar keeps hurting; it's happened before, but never as often as this."

"I would say go to Madam Pomfrey," Hermione suggested. "But Draco doesn't trust her. He must have a good reason."

"I'm not ill," said Harry. "I think it's a warning… that it means danger's coming…"

"He's right. It is. We never did discuss what Blaisé and I discovered in our adventure in the forest."

Hermione's hand flew to her chest, "You were in the forest."

Harry shook, "Draco…"

Warm, familiar invisible arms wrapped around him. "Hush now. I was safe. I had Blaisé."

"Yes, and you were well protected. I was in full Veela form; wings, talons and claws."

"Well. Was it worth the danger?" Hermione tried to look stern, she was the mother hen of their little group.

"Someone was attacking and killing unicorns. Of course we had to check it out."

Hermione gasped, "Attacking unicorns… how horrible!"

Blaisé took up the string of conversation, "It is a very terrible thing to kill a unicorn. It taints one's soul dreadfully but to drink it's blood is a crime against one's very magic." he snarled.

"Peace Blaisé. We sensed a great evil from that person."

Blaisé spoke up again, "What was it the centaur called Firenze called you both…"

Draco spoke with awe, "He called us soul-bonded from birth. He said the Dragon could not allow the Lion to be hurt without causing himself injury. And the stars have ordained that the Dragon would rise as a protector to the Lion. He would make the Lion a force to be reckoned with. He could only have meant us Adder."

Blaisé nodded, "I remember Firenze saying that one's worth is not decided by their pedigree but by the strength of their character. The Potter heir and the Malfoy heir's destiny is written in the stars. As
is Zabini, Granger and the Gemini Weasleys' destinies, their fates are bound up with that of the entire Wizarding World. I don't know if I like that... but I have given my allegiance and I must stand by it."

Harry asked softly, "Soul-bonded? What does that mean?"

Draco said quietly, "I'm not entirely sure my little snake. Apparently, it explains why I come to your aid when you are hurt or scared. I want to help make you strong Adder. You could be a force to be reckoned with. I want to help you believe in yourself."

Harry blushed, "I'm thankful I have you Draco to look out for me. You were my first friend. Then I gained George and Fred who were kind to me at the station and accepted me onto the Quidditch team. We all became friends with Hermione after we subdued the Troll. You brought us Blaisé..."

Blaisé tilted his head, "If the oaf couldn't keep you from tricking information about the stone out of him what would keep him from telling anyone how to get past 'Fluffy' if he had the right encouragement."

The thought staggered all of them, Hermione shouted for the twins and they took off for Hagrid's shack, the Slytherins still disillusioned.

Hagrid was sitting in an armchair outside his house; his trousers and sleeves were rolled up, and he was shelling peas into a large bowl. "Hullo," he said, smiling. "Finished yer exams? Got time fer a drink?"

"Yes, please," Fred tried to say, but Hermione cut him off.

"No, we're in a hurry. Hagrid, I've got to ask you something. Have any of your drinking buddies recently been overly curious about Hogwarts?"

"It's not that unusual, yeh get a lot o' funny folk in the Hog's Head. That's one of the pub down in the village. Yeh, one? I never saw his face, he kept his hood up."

Harry sank down next to the bowl of peas. "What did you talk to him about, Hagrid? Did you mention Hogwarts at all?"

"We set about to play cards fer a bit... I did brag a bit about my abilities with animals. I raised Acromantulas, Thestrals- I proly have ter only trained herd in Britain, and me Hippogriffs. I guess I told him, about Fluffy as well..."

"And did he — did he seem interested in Fluffy?" Hermion asked, trying to keep her voice calm.

Harry stood to the side letting Hermione deal with Hagrid, he wanted to be far away.

"Well — yeah — how many three-headed dogs d'ye meet, even around Hogwarts? So I told him, Fluffy's a piece o' cake if yeh know how to calm him down, jus' play him a bit o' music an' he'll go straight off ter sleep —" Hagrid suddenly looked horrified. "I shouldn'ta told yeh that!" he blurted out. "Forget I said it! Hey — where're yeh goin'?"

George laughed, "Thanks for telling us something we already knew. That music calms the savage beast."

"Yeah and for reinforcing our view you couldn't keep a secret to save your life." Fred chuckled.

Draco growled, "Worthless oaf. We need to speak with Uncle Sev. Dumbledore's useless, that unreliable, manipulative old goat."
Hermione winced, "True or not, it's still disrespectful to talk about a Professor that way."

They stormed into the Castle and nearly crashed into Professor McGonagall who carrying a large pile of books.

"We want to see Professor Dumbledore," said Hermione, rather bravely though lying through her teeth.

"See Professor Dumbledore?" Professor McGonagall repeated, as though this was a very fishy thing to want to do. "Why?"

The other five let her run with the lie.

Harry swallowed; now what? "He was supposed to see me. My friends were going to escort me so I didn't lose my nerve." he said, but he wished at once he hadn't, because Professor McGonagall's nostrils flared.

"Professor Dumbledore left ten minutes ago," she said coldly. "He received an urgent owl from the Ministry of Magic and flew off for London at once. Surely, that takes precedence over your meeting. I'm sure he will reschedule when he returns."

"He's gone?" said Harry trying to hold back a sigh of relief as he sagged in Draco's invisible arms.

"Professor Dumbledore is a very great wizard, Potter, he has many demands on his time..."

"That's wonderful." Harry stammered, "Forget I asked. He can reschedule when he remembers. Surely as you said, he has more important matters then myself." He ran for the dungeons, stormed into Snape's office and collapsed before the fire.

"Who is it?" Snape thundered only to have his voice soften seeing Harry.

Draco ended his disillusionment charm when he reached his godfather's office, he pulled the shaking boy into his arms, "You're okay..."

"She's mean. Hagrid is creepy and I don't trust them..." Harry whispered into Draco's chest.

Draco glanced at his godfather, "I suppose we should tell you what we've learned so you can advise us."

"My advice to you is to forget about the stone and let me handle it. You're children. You may have magic beyond your years but you're still children."

"Children who according to the stars have their fate entwined with that of the Wizarding world." came Blaisé 's honeyed tones, "We are meant to deal with it. We have the sneakiest Gryffindors in recent years, a Veela, the smartest witch of her age and two of the most powerful wizards to cross the threshold of Hogwarts since the Dark Lord and the old goat."

Snape snarled, "I don't like this. I don't like this at all."

Draco stated simply, "The evil one will strike tonight. I'm suspicious of Quirrell. Would I be correct?"

Snape stiffened before giving him a sharp nod, "Would have thought you would have suspected me first."

Draco smirked, "If you hadn't sworn to protect my little snake I might have. Besides, only a Slytherin..."
might distrust poor stuttering Professor Quirrell. Especially after being close to him made Harry's scar hurt."

"There is nothing I can say to dissuade you from this foolishness?"

There were five curt nods and Harry's shy one.

Draco pet Harry's hair, "All I ask if that you wait up for us. If any of us is injured, we'll come straight here. I still don't trust Madam Pomfrey. Between you and Mother, we'll be fine."

Snape winced visible, "Your mother will curse me if she finds out I let her baby dragon put himself in harms way."

"Father already knows he can't control me. He has to accept that fact. I am suspicious that the old goat is connected to this but I don't know how much."

"Very well. When will you leave for the Forbidden Corridor?" Snape finally gave in, you cannot truly control a Malfoy, they always retain a sense of independence.

"At half-past curfew. Between disillusionment charms and the cloak we should be well hidden."

"Will you be returning to your Houses."

Draco shook his head, "No, not until we finish what we've started. You must wait for us here." he fixed his godfather with a piercing look, "Is it dangerous?"

"Yes." Snape admitted reluctantly.

"Can you tell us what we can expect."

Snape shook his head, "No. We were sworn to secrecy. I can tell you that there are six trials. One from Professor Sprout, Flitwick, McGonagall, then Quirrell, myself." he sneered, "and finally the Headmaster's."

Draco nodded, "So we must rely on our wits."

"Wits indeed. Though I wonder if the Weasleys will bring you down."

Draco shrugged, "They've proved their worth. We should rest and eat. We'll need to be at our best."

Snape hid them all with a powerful spell before he called for his supper. Once the house elf left he managed to make it feed them all. "You cannot create food from nothing. You can make it taste better with the right seasoning spells and you can managed to make a little go a long way. This should feed us all."

They all thanked him.

After dinner they took a short nap. Harry was curled up in an armchair near the fire in Draco's lap, Hermione had the settee, while Blaisé took the other armchair. The twins had taken the floor insisting it couldn't be much less comfortable then the cots they had at the Burrow.
Snape woke them at curfew, handing them all mild calming draughts to calm their nerves as well as energy potions to wake them up. "Go quickly. Be safe."

Draco said quietly, "The centaur was right. I could not let Adder be hurt. If I could leave him with you, I would. I know he must come. Even if it pains me. He must come."

Blaisé interrupted his Prince, "We must hurry. Time is short. We do not know if the enemy has a head start."

Blaisé, Hermione and the twins were quickly disillusioned while Harry and Draco were hidden beneath the cloak.

Despite the potions Harry was in a nervous state, every statue's shadow looked like Filch, every distant breath of wind sounded like Peeves swooping down on them. At the foot of the first set of stairs after leaving the dungeon, they spotted Mrs. Norris skulking near the top.

"Oh, let's kick her, just this once," the twins whispered in Draco's ear, who hissed, "No." As they climbed carefully around her, Mrs. Norris turned her lamplike eyes on them, but didn't do anything.

They didn't meet anyone else until they reached the staircase up to the third floor. Peeves was bobbing halfway up, loosening the carpet so that people would trip.

"Who's there?" he said suddenly as they climbed toward him. He narrowed his wicked black eyes. "Know you're there, even if I can't see you. Are you ghoulie or ghostie or wee student beastie?" He rose up in the air and floated there, squinting at them. "Should call Filch, I should, if something's a-creeping around unseen."

Draco smirked. "Peeves," he said, in a hoarse whisper, "the Bloody Baron has his own reasons for being invisible."

Peeves almost fell out of the air in shock. He caught himself in time and hovered about a foot off the stairs. "So sorry, your bloodiness, Mr. Baron, Sir," he said greasily. "My mistake, my mistake — I didn't see you — of course I didn't, you're invisible — forgive old Peevsie his little joke, sir."

"I have business here, Peeves," Draco sneered. "Stay away from this place tonight."

"I will, sir, I most certainly will," said Peeves, rising up in the air again. "Hope your business goes well, Baron, I'll not bother you." And he scooted off.

Draco snorted, "I'm sure even Salazar would forgive me for that."

A few seconds later, they were there, outside the third-floor corridor; and the door was already ajar.

"Well, there you are," Blaisé growled, "someone's beaten us already."

Seeing the open door somehow seemed to impress upon all five of them what was facing them.

Draco held Harry tight to his chest, "The rest of you can leave and I won't hold it against you. Uncle Sev said it was dangerous."

"Are you nuts?" Fred gasped.

"You think we'd let you two have all the fun?" George's rust colored eyebrows nearly disappeared into his hair.

"No way." Fred shook his head.
Blaisé snorted, "I won't let the Prince of Slytherin tread where I dare not after swearing my allegiance."

"Harry's my first friend. He saved me from a troll after all the terrible things he's been through. I won't let him go off into danger with just you. No offense Draco but I prefer to be at your side then waiting in the tower." Hermione said quietly.

Draco nodded, "Very well. We may need you all." then he pushed the door open.

As the door creaked, low, rumbling growls met their ears. All three of the dog's noses sniffed madly in their direction, even though it couldn't see them.

"What's that at its feet?" Hermione whispered.

"A harp." Blaisé sneered.

"Quirrell must have left it." Draco said quickly, "A Cerberus is soothed by music. Obviously they would wake if it stopped." he whispered a charm that his mother created that played his favorite song over and over. It had soothed him as a child hopefully it would soothe the beast.

Slowly, the dog'sgrowls ceased — it tottered on its paws and fell to its knees, then it slumped to the ground, fast asleep.

Draco warned Harry as they slipped out of the cloak and crept toward the trapdoor. They could feel the dog's hot, smelly breath as they approached the giant heads. "I think we'll be able to pull the door open," Draco said, peering over the dog's back. "Want to go first, Hermione?"

"No, I don't!"

"I'll go." Blaisé snapped.

"Then us." the twins said quickly.

"Then Harry. Hermione and I'll go last."

"We must be miles under the school," Draco observed.

"Lucky this plant thing's here, really," said the twins.

"Lucky!" Draco snorted, "Look at you all! You fools." He leapt up and struggled toward a damp wall. Draco had to struggle because the moment he had landed, the plant had started to twist snakelike tendrils around his ankles. As for Draco, he had managed to free himself before the plant got a firm grip on him. Now he watched in horror as the others attempted to fight to pull the plant off them, but the more they strained against it, the tighter and faster the plant wound around them. What was it? Draco couldn't remember. Harry was scared and in danger.

Then Hermione froze, "Stop moving!" Hermione ordered them. "I know what this is — it's Devil's Snare!"

"Oh, I'm so glad we know what it's called, that's a great help," Blaisé snarled, leaning back, trying to stop the plant from curling around his neck.

"Shut up, I'm trying to remember how to kill it!" said Hermione.

"Well, hurry up, I can't breathe!" Fred gasped, wrestling with it as it curled around his chest.
"Devil's Snare, Devil's Snare… what did Professor Sprout say? It likes the dark and the damp." Hermione panted as if trying to stave off panicking again.

"So light a fire!" George choked.

Harry was too frightened to say anything.

Draco yelled, "Lumos Maximus." he couldn't think about fire when he was too shaken to control it. So, he cast the most powerful light charm he knew.

The chamber filled with light, the Devil's snare withdrew dropping his friends to the ground.

Draco rushed forward and pulled Harry into his arms, "I'm sorry you were scared. It's okay now. I'm here."

Harry clung to him.

The other four groaned as they stood after impacting the cold stone floor.

"About time." Blaisé snarled.

"You try seeing your friends being choked to death and see how clearly you can think." Draco snapped back.

"Boys." Hermione coughed, "Calm down. You aren't helping Harry by fighting."

Chagrined the two Slytherins went silent.

The group pressed on, there was downward sloping passage led to another chamber filled with the sound of wings.

Blaisé closed his eyes, "Not birds. I'd know. Charms."

They reached the end of the passageway and saw before them a brilliantly lit chamber, its ceiling arching high above them. It was full of what appeared at first glance to be small, jewel-bright birds, fluttering and tumbling all around the room. They all looked up, the chamber had a high ceiling like the first, they saw what looked like flying keys.

Draco nodded, "Charmed by Professor Flitwick I shouldn't wonder."

There was a large wooden door presumably led to another chamber.

Hermione rashly cast Alohomora on the door but it did little.

"There wouldn't need to be flying keys if it was that simple Hermione." George chided her.

Hermione pouted, "Just checking. Having flying keys but not needing them would be a good trick."

Draco glanced around, "I see four brooms. I think our four best flyers should go up. That would be me, Adder and the twins."

"Just because I prefer my own wings to brooms doesn't make me a poor flyer." Blaisé snarled.

"Very well. Blaisé may join us in the air." Draco agreed without argument, "There isn't enough for Hermione and she isn't comfortable with a broom yet."
Blaisé removed his cloak and shirt, he flexed his shoulders once then large opalescent wings exploded from his body. "Let's fly." he flapped his wings and took to the air.

The other four boys pushed off the floor and into the air. Once airborne, the winged keys began to try and attack their pursuers

"What key are we looking for?" Fred asked dodging a flock of keys.

Blaisé had a keener eye due to his Veela blood, from his place in the air he examined the lock on the door. "We're looking for a big, old-fashioned one; probably silver, like the handle."

The boys were soaring into the midst of the cloud of keys. They grabbed and snatched, but the bewitched keys darted and dived so quickly it was almost impossible to catch one.

Not for nothing, though, was Harry the youngest Seeker in a century- pure talent that one if he had a bit more self-confidence. He had a knack for spotting things other people didn't. After a minute's weaving about through the whirl of rainbow feathers, he noticed a large silver key that had a bent wing, as if it had already been caught and stuffed roughly into the keyhole.

"That one!" Harry called to the others. "That big one! there! No, there with bright blue wings. The feathers are all crumpled on one side."

George went speeding in the direction that Harry was pointing, crashed into the ceiling, and nearly fell off his broom.

"We've got to close in on it!" Blaisé called, not taking his eyes off the key with the damaged wing once he'd spotted it. "I'll come at it from above with George, Fred you and Draco, stay below and stop it from going down and we'll try and catch it by cornering it. Harry you go right. Got it, NOW!"

George and Blaisé dived, Fred and Draco rocketed upward, the key dodged them both, and Harry streaked after it with a burst of confidence; it sped toward the wall, Harry leaned forward and with a nasty, crunching noise, pinned it against the stone with one hand. Hermione's cheers from the ground echoed around the high chamber.

They landed quickly, dropping the brooms while Blaisé stowed his wings and Harry ran to the door, the key struggling in his hand. He pushed it into the lock and turned, he giggled as he felt it move; it worked. The moment the lock had clicked open, the key took flight again, looking very battered now that it had been caught twice.

"Ready?" Harry asked the other two, his hand on the door handle. They nodded. He pulled the door open.

The next chamber was so dark they couldn't see anything at all. But as they stepped into it, light suddenly flooded the room to reveal an astonishing sight.

They were standing on the edge of a huge chessboard, behind the black chessmen, which were all taller than they were and carved from what looked like black stone. Facing them, way across the chamber, were the white pieces. The Gryffindors shivered slightly, the towering white chessmen had no faces.

"Now what do we do?" Hermione whispered.

"It's obvious, isn't it?" Blaisé snorted. "We've got to play our way across the room."
Behind the white pieces they could see another door.

"How?" said Hermione nervously.

"I think," Blaisé assumed a self-important air, "we're going to have to be chessmen."

He walked up to a black knight and put his hand out to touch the knight's horse. At once, the stone sprang to life. The horse pawed the ground and the knight turned his helmeted head to look down at Blaisé.

"We do have to join you to get across do we not?" Blaisé asked.

The black knight nodded.

Blaisé turned to the others "This needs thinking about…" he said. "I suppose we've got to take the place of six of the black pieces…"

Harry, Draco, the twins and Hermione stayed quiet, watching Blaisé think.

Finally Blaisé said, "Now, don't be offended or anything, but I am the best at chess. Even Draco knows it."

"We're not offended," said Harry quickly. "Just tell us what to do."

"Well, Harry and Fred, you take the place of the bishops, Draco will be our queen and Hermione and George you go there instead of those rooks."

"What about you?"

"I'm going to be a knight," Blaisé grinned, happy to contribute his best skill to Draco's service.

The chessmen seemed to have been listening, because at these words a knight, two bishops, a queen and two rooks turned their backs on the white pieces and walked off the board, leaving five empty squares that Draco, Blaisé, Hermione, Harry and the twins took.

"White always plays first in chess," Blaisé crossed his arms, peering across the board, the sequence of a chess match can be projected by the first moves of either opponent. "Yes… look…" there were multiple possibilities...

A white pawn had moved forward two squares.

Blaisé started to direct the black pieces. They moved silently wherever he sent them.

Harry's knees were trembling. What if they lost?

"Fred. I want you to move diagonally four squares to the right."

Their first real shock came when their other knight was taken. The white queen smashed him to the floor and flung him off the board, where he lay quite still, facedown.

"Had to let that happen," Blaisé said, fighting not to look shaken. "Leaves you free to take that bishop, George, go on."

Every time one of their men was lost, the white pieces showed no mercy. Blaisé knew that Hermione and Harry were their weakest and he kept them back; Draco he did not send out at all. Soon there was a huddle of limp black players, mostly pawns slumped along the wall. Twice, Blaisé only just
noticed in time that the twins were in danger. Blaisé's moves had them darting around the board, taking almost as many white pieces as they had lost black ones.

"We're nearly there," he muttered suddenly. "Let me think. Let me think…"

The white queen turned her blank face toward him.

"Yes..." Blaisé growled softly to himself, "It's the only way... I've got to be taken."

"NO!" Draco shouted.

"That's chess! You know that." Blaisé snapped. "We've got to make some sacrifices! I make my move and she'll take me; that leaves Draco free to checkmate the king."

"But..."

"Do you want to stop the enemy or not?"

"Blaisé..."

"Look, if you don't hurry up, he'll already have the Stone!"

There was no alternative.

"Ready?" Blaisé called, his face turning grey but determined. "Here I go. Don't you dare hang around once we've won."

He stepped forward, and the white queen pounced. She struck Blaisé hard across the head with her stone arm, and he crashed to the floor on top of the pile of 'killed' black chess pieces. Hermione and Harry screamed but stayed on their squares but the twins were shocked into silence. The white queen dragged Blaisé to one side. He looked as if he'd been knocked out.

Despite being shaken at his friend's ruthless assault by a chess piece, Draco moved into position.

The white king took off his crown and threw it at Draco's feet. They had won. The chessmen parted and bowed, leaving the door ahead clear. With one last desperate look back at Blaisé' tangled body, the others charged through the door and up the next passageway.

"What if he's..." Harry choked back a sob. He knew how bad it hurt to be hit like that.

"What do you reckon's next?" Fred said.

"We've had Sprout's, that was the Devil's Snare; Flitwick must've put charms on the keys; McGonagall transfigured the chessmen to make them alive; that leaves Quirrell's, Snape's and Dumbledore's." Hermione checked off.

They had reached another door.

"All right?" George whispered.

"Go on."

The twins pushed it open.

A disgusting smell filled their nostrils, making all of them pull their robes up over their noses. Eyes watering, they saw, flat on the floor in front of them, a troll even larger than the one they had tackled,
out cold with a bloody lump on its head.

"I'm glad we didn't have to fight that one," Fred whispered as they stepped carefully over one of its massive legs.

"Come on, I can't breathe." Draco coughed.

Fred pulled open the next door neither of them hardly daring to look at what came next - but there was nothing very frightening in here, just a table with seven differently shaped bottles standing on it in a line.

"Uncle Sev's," Draco said with conviction.

"Then what do we have to do?" Hermione asked

They stepped over the threshold, and immediately a fire sprang up behind them in the doorway. It wasn't ordinary fire either; it was purple. At the same instant, black flames shot up in the doorway leading onward. They were trapped.

"Look!" Draco seized a roll of paper lying next to the bottles.

The others looked over his shoulder to read it:

Danger lies before you, while safety lies behind,
Two of us will help you, which ever you would find,
One among us seven will let you move ahead,
Another will transport the drinker back instead,
Two among our number hold only nettle wine,
Three of us are killers, waiting bidden in line.
Choose, unless you wish to stay here forevermore,
To help you in your choice, we give you these clues four:
First, however slyly the poison tries to hide
You will always find some on nettle wine's left side;
Second, different are those who stand at either end,
But if you would move onward, neither is your friend;
But if you would move onward, neither is your friend;
Third, as you see clearly, all are different size,
Neither dwarf nor giant holds death in their insides;
Fourth, the second left and the second on the right
Are twins once you taste them, though different at first sight.

Draco snickered.

"Brilliant," said Hermione grinning.

The twins and Harry were confused.

"This isn't magic. It's a logic puzzle." Hermione nodded happily.

Draco sneered, "Uncle Sev knows that a lot of the greatest wizards haven't got an ounce of logic, they'd be stuck in here forever."
"But so will we, won't we?" Fred whined, thinking around corners was easy, so was planning pranks but logic?

"Of course not," said Hermione.

Draco interrupted her, "Everything we need is here on this paper. Seven bottles: three are poison; two are wine; one will get us safely through the black fire, and one will get us back through the purple."

"But how do we know which to drink?"

"Give me a minute." Draco said stepping to the side to read the paper several times. Then he walked up and down the line of bottles, muttering to himself and pointing at them. At last, he smirked, "Got it," Draco said. "The smallest bottle will get us through the black fire — toward the Stone."

Hermione looked at the tiny bottle. "There's only enough there for one of us," she said. "That's hardly one swallow."

They looked at each other.

Harry stiffened and then began to shake, of course he would he sent ahead through the black flames alone.

"Which one will get us back through the purple flames?" George asked

Draco pointed at a large squat bottle at the right end of the line.

"You three drink that," Draco said, when Hermione and the twins looked like they were about to protest, he plunged on, "No, listen, go back and get Blaisé. Grab brooms from the flying-key room, they'll get you out of the trapdoor and past Fluffy. Hopefully the music charm is still working. Go straight to the dungeon and try not to be seen. Tell Uncle Sev, Mother must look at Blaisé. Madam Pomfrey doesn't know he is part Veela and it isn't our place to tell her. Her treatment could be deadly if she doesn't understand his nature. Really my way is best. I'm going to have Adder drink this potion." he held it out to Adder.

"But Draco, what if You-Know-Who's with him?"

"Whenever my little snake is scared or in danger, I'm at his side or protecting him in someway." Draco said, pointing at his Adder's scar. "I faced him before. I saved Harry's life once. We might get lucky again."

Hermione's lip trembled, she suddenly dashed at Harry and Draco threw her arms around them.

"Hermione!" Draco coughed, embarrassed.

"Draco, you're a good person and a fine wizard, you know. Me," said Hermione. "Books and cleverness! There are more important things, like friendship and bravery. Oh you two, do be careful!"

"You drink first," Draco said.

"You are sure which is which, aren't you?" George asked shakingly

"Positive," Draco nodded.

Hermione took a drink from the round bottle Draco handed her before and shuddering before
handing it to the twins.

"It's not poison?" said Fred anxiously.

"No — but it's like ice." Hermione reassured him

"Quick, go, before it wears off." Draco pushed them towards the purple flames.

"Good luck." Fred called out.

"Please take care." George said before following his elder brother.

"GO!" Draco snapped.

Hermione was last as she turned and walked straight through the purple fire.

Draco pulled Harry to his chest, "I promise... I'll be beside you the moment you feel scared.

Harry took a deep breath and took the small bottle from Draco's. He turned to face the black flames.

"I guess I have to. Here I go." he said, and he drained the little bottle in one gulp. Hopefully Draco was right and he wouldn't be alone long.

Testing their bond like this left Draco's mouth with a sour taste.

It was indeed as though ice was flooding his body. He put the bottle back in Draco's hand and walked forward shaking; he braced himself, saw the black flames licking his body, but couldn't feel them — for a moment he could see nothing but dark fire — then he was on the other side, in the last chamber.

There was already someone there...
Chapter Notes

Only one more chapters left in Part 1. Let me know what you think.

Title: The truth behind the Name and the lies  
Pairing: DracoxHarry,  
Fandom : HP  
Notes: An abused boy finds out he's a wizard and a hero; his tormented mind rebels. One person sees through the misconceptions to the real Harry and treats him the way he deserves. Why Harry never fights back from personal attacks...why does he crave more? Because he isn't a hero, he isn't brave, he's hiding behind the shadow of the boy they all believe him to be. -yes I did rename the story. the title wasn't fitting...  
"..." is spoken.  
'...' is mind to mind communication.

Chapter 22- The last Chamber

It was Quirrell, and he was alone.  
"You!" gasped Harry.  
Quirrell smiled. His face wasn't twitching at all. "Me," he said calmly, "I wondered whether I'd be meeting you here, Potter."  
Harry stared to shake, they had been right. Quirrell had been after the stone.  
Draco had barely managed to disillusion himself before Harry's fear tugged him to his side.  
"Then you really were the one who tried to kill me." Harry said softly, "...but you're a teacher..."  
"Of course I tried to kill you. Another few seconds and I'd have got you off that broom. I'd have managed it before then if Snape hadn't been muttering a countercurse, trying to save you. Then that powerful shield against Dark Magic just appeared. It wasn't Snape's. Not sure who it was but they were powerful. He offered to referee the next match because he was trying to make sure I didn't do it again. Funny, really... he needn't have bothered. I couldn't do anything with Dumbledore watching. All the other teachers thought Snape was trying to stop Gryffindor from winning, he did make himself unpopular... and what a waste of time, when after all that, I'm going to kill you tonight."  
"I don't think Dumbledore would care. I won't play by his rules." Harry muttered.  
Quirrell snapped his fingers.
Draco cast a powerful shield bubble around them both, appearing out of the shadows. "Oh no you don't."

Ropes sprang out of thin air as it to wrap themselves tightly around Harry only to fall powerlessly to the ground.

"You're too nosy to live, Potter. Not sure what you're doing here Malfoy. Scurrying around the school on Halloween like that, for all I knew you'd seen me coming to look at what was guarding the Stone."

"Hermione was in danger." Harry whispered, "I couldn't let her be hurt."

"Me?" Draco assumed an innocent air, "I'm protecting my investment. So, it was you let the troll in?"

"Certainly. I have a special gift with trolls." the odious man bragged. "You must have seen what I did to the one in the chamber back there? Unfortunately, while everyone else was running around looking for it, Snape, who already suspected me, went straight to the third floor to head me off. Not only did my troll fail to beat you to death, that three-headed dog didn't even manage to bite Snape's leg off properly."

Draco growled, "I knew putting the blame of Uncle Sev's injury on you was the right choice. You will pay."

"What can you do little boy trapped behind that shield? Now, wait quietly, you two. I need to examine this interesting mirror."

It was only then that Harry realized what was standing behind Quirrell. It was the Mirror of Erised.

"This mirror is the key to finding the Stone," Quirrell murmured, tapping his way around the frame. "Trust Dumbledore to come up with something like this… but he's in London… I'll be far away by the time he gets back…"

All Harry could think of doing was to keep Quirrell talking and stop him from concentrating on the mirror. 'Draco…we have to stop him."

Draco looked into his eyes, 'You know this mirror.'

Harry nodded, 'Fred and I found it before we were interrupted by Dumbledore the creepy."

'What does it do?'

'It shows you your heart's desire. I don't know how Dumbledore is using it."

'Well to be safe, we have to distract him.'

Harry blurted out. "I saw you and Snape in the forest,"

"Yes," said Quirrell idly, walking around the mirror to look at the back. "He was on to me by that time, trying to find out how far I'd got. He suspected me all along. Tried to frighten me as though he could, when I had Lord Voldemort on my side…" Quirrell came back out from behind the mirror and stared hungrily into it. "I see the Stone… I'm presenting it to my master… but where is it?"

Harry shook at the mention of You-Know-Who's name. He had to keep Quirrell from giving his whole attention to the mirror. "But Snape always seemed to hate me so much."

A lie but a well-placed one.
"Oh, he does," said Quirrell casually, "heavens, yes. He was at Hogwarts with your father, didn't you know? They loathed each other. But he never wanted you dead."

Draco snarled, "Why would you serve such a loathsome master?"

"He is with me wherever I go," said Quirrell quietly. "I met him when I traveled around the world. A foolish young man I was then, full of ridiculous ideas about good and evil. Lord Voldemort showed me how wrong I was. There is no good and evil, there is only power, and those too weak to seek it. Since then, I have served him faithfully, although I have let him down many times. He has had to be very hard on me." Quirrell shivered suddenly. "He does not forgive mistakes easily. When I failed to steal the stone from Gringotts, he was most displeased. He punished me… and then decided he would have to keep a closer watch on me…" Quirrell's voice trailed away.

"Of course he doesn't forgive easily if ever. He's the Dark Lord and has no loyalty to anyone besides himself." Draco snorted, holding the shaking Harry to his chest.

Quirrell ignored him. He was still talking to himself. "What does this mirror do? How does it work? Help me, Master!"

And to Harry's horror and Draco's lack of amusement, a voice answered, and the voice seemed to come from Quirrell himself.

"You must use the Potter boy… Use the Potter boy…"

"But the shield master."

"She didn't die in vain, she held you off long enough so I could end up there and rebound your curse on you." Draco gloated.

"NEVER!" Harry yelled as clinging to Draco before he sprang toward the flame door, bursting out of Draco's shield.

Voldemort screamed "SEIZE HIM!" and the next second, Harry felt Quirrell's hand close on his wrist. At once, a needle-sharp pain seared across Harry's scar; his head felt as though it was about to split in two; he yelled, struggling with all his might, and to his surprise, Quirrell let go of him.

Draco was nearly suffocated again, feeling Harry's overwhelming terror and pain. He'd have to work on that.

The pain in Harry's head lessened, he looked around wildly to see where Quirrell had gone, and saw him hunched in pain, looking at his fingers. He could see they were blistering before his eyes.

Draco non-verbally cast the leg-locker curse on the two-faced evil, Locomotor Mortis. Then Expellimellius thus lighting his robes on fire since the enemy was distracted. All non-verbal of course. If possible all spells during a duel should be non-verbal to ensure a higher percentage of success. Uncle Sev taught him that early as did Father.

"Seize him! SEIZE HIM!" shrieked Voldemort again, but Quirrell fell when he tried to lunge failing to knock Harry clean off his feet.

"Master, I cannot reach him."

"Break the jinx then. It burns…"

It was interesting watching someone in the leg-locker curse attempting to roll over to put out flames.
"Then I shall..." Voldemort said as Quirrell's eyes went out of focus.

Harry's hand flew to his throat, panicking.

Draco yelled, "Obscuro Reflecto."

Harry slid to the floor is if in a dead faint.

The nonverbal, wandless strangling spell not only bounced off the shield, it's power multiplied.

Draco heard a choking attempt at a scream and then the snap of bone.

Voldemort had killed his host with a little help from the shield he'd used out of reflex that Halloween. He ignored the corpse, lifted Harry to his chest and ran from the chamber. The flames parting before his wild magic. He ran faster, when he reached the first chamber the light from his charm still glowed but it was weakening. He muttered. "Ascendio." on them both, causing them to rise. When they reached the third floor corridor. Fluffy was thankfully still asleep. The music charm was weakening.

Draco muttered, "Accio Harry's invisibility cloak." he hid them from sight, moved to the doorway, banished the harp and ended his music charm before letting his magic tug the door closed.

Draco made his way quickly to Snape's office.

Snape was pacing and muttering, "Narcissa and Lucius will kill me if Draco is harmed. Why did I let him go?"

Draco threw open the door. "Manor. Now." letting the cloak fall.

Snape pulled them into his arms, his eyes widening in horror at Harry's unconscious form. He pulled them into the fire place and yelled, "Malfoy Manor."

They tumbled out of the floo.

Draco was pulled into his mother's arms while Lucius had Snape by the neck, "Severus...what is the meaning of this? A Mudblood and two bloodtraitors show up unannounced at a unearthly hour frightening my house elves, terrifying my wife and they tell me you and my son sent them."

Draco snarled, "Father, he was merely doing as I told him. They all were. Blaisé needed special care. Mother has treated his injuries before. She would not have the same issues treating him as Madam Pomfrey. I trust Mother."

Lucius dropped his old friend, sneering, "Be grateful my son has supported you."

Draco sensed the glamours had collapsed, he looked to his godfather, "I didn't have time to check if he was alright. I just ran. Uncle Sev...the glamours...they're gone..."

Severus stiffened, "Narcissa. The boy in your arms. You must help him. He has been weakened."

Narcissa reluctantly let go of her son and looked at the tiny unconscious boy in his arms, "Oh Merlin... Dragon, who is this?"

"This is the boy known as Harry Potter. A professor possessed by the Dark Lord attempted to hurt him. He did not succeed. I cast the Dark Shielding charm known as the Shadow reflection."

Lucius gasped, "How did you learn such a spell? I never taught it to you. I've never mastered it."
Draco let his mother lift Harry out of his arms reluctantly, "I used it before to reflect the Killing curse. I used it against him again reflecting a nonverbal strangler hex that snapped Quirrell's neck. I feel no guilt. He hurt Adder. He had to pay for making my little snake scream like that." those cries of agony would haunt him…

Narcissa looked up, "His body has gone unconsciousness. He appears to have suffered great pain… like the Cruciatius curse." she glared at her husband, before turning to her son, "Tell me what happened Dragon."

"Quirrell touched him. The Dark Lord was trying to force Adder to his will. Harry broke away from me and ran. Before I could stop him or cast anything, the evil git grabbed Harry and they both screamed. Harry's curse scar was burning so badly even I could feel it while the hand that touched Harry blistered as if burned. I quickly nonverbally cast the leg-locker curse- childish but effective. Then I cast the Expellimelli hex lighting his clothes on fire which incapacitated Quirrell but didn't prevent the Dark Lord from using a wandless, nonverbal strangling hex on Harry. I used the Shadow Shield which reflected the hex to Quirrell only more powerfully. I watched Harry fall as the professor's neck snapped." his eyes filled with tears, "Mother, I can barely feel his magic. He's been through so much, I promised to protect him."

Draco wavered slightly, Severus rushed to his side, "You did. He's alive. Trust your mother with Harry like you trusted her with Blaisé. You don't deserve to punish yourself for a failure that does not exist. You are not a house elf. You're a Malfoy. You defeated the Dark Lord twice and protect Harry's life."

Draco steadied himself, his voice still choked with weak sobs, "Where are the others?"

Lucius snarled, "Tried to send the Mudblood and bloodtraitors back through but they wouldn't leave unless they knew Blaisé was safe. They insisted on your mother, they are both brave and foolish. Your mother treated Blaisé and gave the others a sleeping potions before sending them up to our spare rooms. The twins begged to share, the Mudblood received a room while Blaisé was removed to his usual room."

Draco sagged, "They're alright. I was so worried. Poor Blaisé…he was the knight…and the white queen she punched him before tossing him like a rag."

Lucius glanced at his friend, wondering if the stress of the night had gotten to his son.

Snape nodded, "The Third Chamber was a chess board conjured and animated by McGonagall." he tried to distract his godson, "Who solved mine?"

"Hermione and I both discovered it was a logic puzzle. I solved it by myself. I sent her and the twins back with one, sent Harry ahead with the other." he closed his eyes, "I had to let him get terrified before I was dragged to his side. It hurt me to do it."

Narcissa looked up, "You were pulled to him by his fear?" was such a thing possible?

Severus nodded, "The Forbidden Forest Centaurs called them soul-bonded at birth. That these six children's destinies were entwined with that of the Wizarding world. The Dragon will raise the Lion as a protector."

Draco reached for Harry's hand, "That's what I want, for him to believe in himself. After all, he's been through he insisted on braving a troll to warn a friend. He flew in the next Quidditch match after an attempt on his life. He's so little mother. I was his first friend. The first person who held him, cared about him, I told him about our world." he whispered, "Don't leave me Adder. I need you
Harry’s magic radiated wildly for a second, but the glamour didn't reassert itself.

"He seems stable. I'll cast a powerful sleep charm so he can rest. Come my dragon. We should get you both to bed. He relaxes around you."

Draco nodded, "Yes…he feels safe with me."

Snape and Lucius watched them go.

"So old friend. How shall you explain this?"

"Simple. They all collapsed unexplainably outside my offices. Knowing the Malfoy and Zabini’s insistence that their children see only their family's personal healer I transported all of them to the Manor. Hoping between the two healers that they might be able to discover a cause and reverse it. Zabini and Harry received it the worst, the others merely fainted. Cause unknown but they are treated and soon to return to school."

"Then you should owl McGonagall, Blaise’s mother and the Weasleys. The Weasleys will be most distraught to be beholden to either of us for the lives of their sons."

"Dumbledore and Minerva will be furious, I did not take them straight to the infirmary. I have a healing license under an alias. I shall vouch for myself and my conduct. I think they suffered inexplicably from Altitude sickness. They have concussions, all have fainted, one had his magic nearly collapse after he fell unconscious."

Narcissa stumbled back in, on her face was such utter shook, "Lucius…that poor boy. His body is covered from head to toe with burns and healed welts." she broke into sobs, "Lily's son…they tortured him. He's so tiny."

Snape nodded, "They treated him like a house elf Narcissa. He was starved and forced to sleep in a cupboard. His scars are less than my own. If the situation goes unchanged, he will ended up like me. I do not wish that for him. Lily's son deserves better."

Lucius was startled, "Scars, what scars? I've never seen any."

"Because I didn't wish you to. I wanted to look strong not weak." Snape closed his eyes, banished his robe and loose pants from his body to the floor before doing the last thing he ever dreamed of doing; he dropped the glamour. "If he is not saved, it will only get worse. I wouldn't wish this body on anyone, much less the child of the only person I ever loved before you put Draco in my arms asking me to be his godfather." he allowed his closest friends to see that his nose wasn't hooked but it was actually broken many times and hadn't been set properly. He held out his formerly smashed fingers and his crooked arms, he walked with a more pronounced limp that his glamour barely covered after Fluffy attacked him. He turned so they could see the numerous scars on his back and chest, "I created Glamorous Magnus to cover these and project what I wanted everyone to see while using as little magic as possible." His hair wasn't greasy but did hang limply at his shoulders as if it too was defeated. "I use spells and charms to lighten loads or use house elves because I've never manage to gain the strength in my arms properly. I've had to work twice as hard at everything, one, to prove that I deserved to be at Hogwarts and two, that no one could hurt me again. Does any child deserve this? To be told they're worthless. That they'll never amount to anything. When in truth they are stronger, their future brighter but this still taints one but Harry is redeemable. I'm...too far gone."

Narcissa sobbed pulling her old friend into her arms, "Severus…my friend…who did this?"
"My parents." Snape said dryly.

Lucius gaped at his best friend's battered and broken body, "Are they dead?"

"Murde-suicide, my father killed my mother and then himself just before my graduation from Hogwarts. Saved me the foolishness of destroying them and letting them win."

"I would have eliminated them myself. Who caused the marks on Harry?" Lucius asked, using the name reluctantly.

"Lily's sister, Petunia and more then likely her husband. Dumbledore in his foolishness sent him there. I suspected but could not prove. I would have attempted to counsel him against it. I knew Petunia. Heartless bitch that one, she tormented Lily after she went away with me to Hogwarts, was convinced I made her baby sister into a freak. The moment she married the twit, she cut Lily out of her life. It broke Lily's heart. I'm glad neither Lily nor James are alive to see what they've done to their son."

Narcissa sobbed softly, "Can't anything be done to heal the damage?"

"It's too late, everything healed wrong. I've looked into it, there's nothing aside from breaking every bone in my body and using Skele-grow but even that wouldn't heal everything. My only hope is to rescue him somehow, before they completely crush his spirit. It was Lily who saved me from being alone and friendless. I have to save her son."

"There is one option. We must allow Andromeda back into the Black family. When he is sent back to his Muggle family, he will no doubt be hurt at sometime. With Sirius- wasn't he Harry's godfather, imprisoned and Regulus dead; if Andromeda was reclaimed as a Black then she would be Mistress of the Black line by default. With her Muggle husband it will be easier, they wouldn't want you to have it Narcissa, because then Harry would fall to me and no one will allow that. Thus making Harry her ward if his aunt is declared unfit. Her daughter is studying to be an Auror, is she not? Between her Slytherin mother and Hufflepuff father, loyalty will be a big thing to her. When Harry is injured grievously as he no doubt will be,"

Narcissa's white face stared at him in horror.

"Trust me my dear if there was another way, I would use it. I will place a ward on him as soon as Andromeda is declared Mistress of the Black line that will alert her if he is in danger."

"I see. She will be drawn to St. Mungos. I think young Miss Granger should bring him in. It would be better for all of us."

Narcissa sobbed, "I know you're right Lucius but Merlin I hate you so much."

"Very well. I shall owl Minerva, the Weasleys and Blaise's grandmother. Though I should owl the Grangers to be safe. No use in owling the Dursleys. They won't care if he's taken ill. They'll wish we hadn't saved them." Snape let his robes and pants return to his frail body before recasting his glamour.

Lucius led Narcissa to bed, "Hush now. Leave everything to me. I've made my choice, I will support our son."
The first tentative steps of the Lion

Chapter 23- The first tentative steps of the Lion

Harry blinked once more at the metallic flash that woke him. It wasn't the Snitch at all. It was a pair of glasses. How strange.

He blinked again. The smiling face of Albus Dumbledore swam into view above him.

"Good afternoon, Harry," said Dumbledore.

Harry stared at him, worried and a little scared of the manipulative old man. Then he remembered, Quirrell! The stone. Blaise was hurt.

"Calm yourself, dear boy," said Dumbledore. No need to worry. You are a little behind the times, been sleeping for days it seems. The Malfoys' healer said you were suffering from an advanced form of Altitude sickness. Your body went into such a state of shock that your magic nearly collapsed. If you were wondering Quirrell does not have the Stone."

"Then who does? Sir, I,"

"Alas the stone was destroyed before I could discuss with Nicolas what we should do with it. The temptation was far to great. It seems you, Miss Granger and Mr. Weasley managed to save the stone."

Harry stared at the creepy old man, "What?" no mention of Draco, or Blaise, he'd only heard one Weasley.

"Harry, please relax, or Madam Pomfrey will have me thrown out."

Harry swallowed and looked around him. He realized he must be in the hospital wing. He was lying in a bed with white linen sheets, and next to him was a table piled high with what looked like half of a candy shop.

"Tokens from your friends and admirers," said Dumbledore, beaming. "What happened down in the dungeons between you and Professor Quirrell is a complete secret, so, naturally, the whole school
knows. I believe your friends Misters Fred and George Weasley were responsible for trying to send you a toilet seat. No doubt they thought it would amuse you, foolish boys. Madam Pomfrey, however, felt it might not be very hygienic, and confiscated it."

"How long have I been in here?"

"Three days. Mr. Ronald Weasley and Miss Granger will be most relieved you have come round, they have been extremely worried. By the way, I was most impressed at your marks. You managed to exceed my expectations at doing well under pressure.

"Ron? If he's worried its only because if I died he'd have one last person to bully. Hermione is more then welcome."

"Now, I suggest you make a start on these sweets. Ah! Bettie Bott's Every Flavor Beans! I was unfortunate enough in my youth to come across a vomit flavored one, and since then I'm afraid I've rather lost my liking for them — but I think I'll be safe with a nice toffee, don't you?" He smiled and popped the golden-brown bean into his mouth. Then he choked and said, "Alas! Ear wax!" the headmaster made a face.

Harry was annoyed the man had dared touch his presents. Ear wax? The man deserved a vomit-flavored bean if there truly was such a thing. The school nurse, was a nice woman, but very strict according to the twins and much distrusted by Draco. Why was he here?

Madam Pomfrey was trying to pull Hermione and the twins back to the door.

"Just five minutes," Harry pleaded when he saw them. Was Draco here too?

"Absolutely not."

"You let Professor Dumbledore in…"

"Well, of course, that was the headmaster, quite different. You need rest."

"I am resting, look, lying down and everything. Please Madam Pomfrey?" he begged unconsciously pouting at her.

"Oh, very well," she said. "But five minutes only."

And she let the twins and Hermione by.

"Harry!"

Hermione looked ready to fling her arms around him again, but Harry was glad she held herself in as his head was still very sore.

"Oh, Harry, we were sure you were going to,"

"Dumbledore was so worried,"

The twins panicked.

Harry felt a familiar hand in his, "I'm here Adder. You're safe." came the soft whisper, "I already told them what happened."

Harry smiled, "You saved me. Just like you promised."
"Of course I did."

"How's Blaise?"

"Fine. He had a concussion, mother kept an eye on him. Blaise's mother is gallivanting again. Probably looking for Husband number nine or is it eight?"

The twins caught Madam Pomfrey's glare, "We're glad you're feeling alright. Hurry up the tower misses you." Fred blabbed while George nodded enthusiastically.

At that moment, Madam Pomfrey bustled over. "You've had nearly fifteen minutes, now OUT!" she said firmly.

XooooooX

After a good night's sleep, Harry felt nearly back to normal. "I want to go to the feast," he told Madam Pomfrey as she straightened his many candy boxes. "I can, can't I?"

"Professor Dumbledore says you are to be allowed to go," she said stiffly, as though in her opinion Professor Dumbledore didn't realize how risky feasts could be after what Harry'd been through. "And you have another visitor."

"Oh, good," said Harry. "Who is it?"

Hagrid sidled through the door as he spoke, he had a sense of uneasiness rise as the half-giant neared him. As usual when he was indoors, Hagrid looked too big to be allowed because he might break things. He sat down next to Harry, took one look at him and burst into tears. "It's... all... my... fault..." he sobbed, his face in his hands. "I know tol' the evil git how ter get past Fluffy! I tol' him! It was the only thing he couldn't a know, an' I told him! Yeh could've died! All because o' a drunken boast. I'll never drink again! I should be chucked out an' made ter live as a Muggle."

"Hagrid." said Harry, shocked to see Hagrid shaking with grief and remorse, great tears leaking down into his beard. Yet not feeling very sorry for the man who used money he inherited from his parents to buy him a bloody birthday gift. Not to mention Dumbledore's instance he spend time with foolish, untrustworthy oaf. "Hagrid, he'd have found out somehow, this is the Dark Lord we're talking about, he'd have found out even if you hadn't told him."

Hagrid's face paled, "What dija call 'im? No one calls him that but Death Eaters..."

Harry rolled his eye, "Whatever. I don't care. The stone's gone- destroyed, he can't use it. Have a Chocolate Frog, I've got loads..." if only to shut him up. Those sobs were echoing through out the infirmary. It was a wonder the nurse didn't kick him out for it.

Hagrid wiped his nose on the back of his hand and said, "That reminds me. I've got yeh a present."

"It's not a stoat sandwich, is it?" said Harry anxiously, and at last Hagrid gave a weak chuckle.

"Nah. Dumbledore gave me the day off yesterday ter fix it. 'course, he shoulda sacked me instead — anyway, made yeh this..."

It seemed to be a handsome, leather-covered book. Harry opened it curiously. It was full of wizard photographs. Smiling and waving at him from every page were his mother and father. Harry gaped, what could the purpose of this be? He didn't trust Hagrid, not a bit, there had to be a catch?

"Sent owls off ter all yer parents' old school friends, askin' fer photos... knew yeh didn' have any..."
d'yeh like it?"

Harry nodded, dropping it on the bed. He would have Snape look at it after a bit just to make sure it was safe.

XooooooX

Harry made his way down to the end-of-year feast alone that night, he was more than a little disgruntled that he had been held up by Madam Pomfrey's fussing so the Great Hall was already full when he reached there. It was decked out in the Slytherin colors of green and silver to celebrate Slytherin's winning the house cup for the seventh year in a row. A huge banner showing the Slytherin serpent covered the wall behind the High Table.

When Harry walked in there was a sudden hush, and then everybody started talking loudly at once. He slipped into a seat between Fred and George with Hermione to his right beside George at the Gryffindor table and tried to ignore the fact that people were standing up to look at him. Not again….

Fortunately, Dumbledore arrived moments later. The babble died away.

"Another year gone!" Dumbledore said cheerfully. "And I must trouble you with an old man's wheezing waffle before we sink our teeth into our delicious feast. What a year it has been! Hopefully your heads are all a little fuller than they were… you have the whole summer ahead to get them nice and empty before next year starts… "Now, as I understand it, the house cup here needs awarding, and the points stand thus: In fourth place, Hufflepuff, with three hundred and fifty-two; in third, Ravenclaw has four hundred and twenty-six; Gryffindor has four hundred and fifty-six and Slytherin, four hundred and seventy-two."

Would the old duffer shut up? He was hungry and annoyed…

A storm of cheering and stamping broke out from the Slytherin table. Harry could see Draco and Blaise each banging his goblet on the table.

"Yes, Yes, well done, Slytherin," said Dumbledore. "However, recent events must be taken into account."

The room went very still. The Slytherins' smiles faded a little.

"Ahem," said Dumbledore. "I have a few last-minute points to dish out. Let me see. Yes…first — to Mr. Ronald Weasley…"

Ron went purple in the face; he looked like a radish with a bad sunburn.

"… for the best-played game of chess Hogwarts has seen in many years, I award Gryffindor house fifty points."

Gryffindor cheers nearly raised the bewitched ceiling; the stars overhead seemed to quiver. Percy could be heard telling the other prefects, "My brother, you know! My youngest brother! Got past McGonagall's giant chess set!"

Harry stormed to his feet, "Lies! Ron was nowhere near the Third Floor corridor. He didn't go with us. He was sleeping in his bed in the tower." he pointed his wand at the thing that kept track of points for Gryffindor, "In the interest of honesty and giving credit where it belongs."

"My dear boy this experience has upset you greatly you are confused."
"No Headmaster, you are," he glared at his Head of House, "You made that chess set, on your Gryffindor honor tell them who really beat your chess set. Tell them how sacrificed themselves at the risk of their own life."

McGonagall had been shocked at Albus' announcement and even more so at Potter's reaction. She stood, "As Assistant Headmistress it is my duty to correct the mistaken Headmaster. My Chess set was defeated by Mr. Blaise Zabini of Slytherin. I commend him and give him 15 points for standing by a friend and 50 points willing sacrificing himself for the greater good."

Dumbledore was furious.

Professor Spout stood, "To Ms. Hermione Granger I award 25 points for discovering the nature of my trap and to Mr. Draco Malfoy I award 25 points for rescuing his comrades with quick thinking and 10 point for using a spell I would never have thought of."

Professor Flitwick squeaked, "I award Misters Fred Weasley, George Weasley, Harry Potter, Draco Malfoy and Blaise Zabini 15 points a piece for their teamwork in overcoming my challenge."

Snape spoke quietly to the shocked Great Hall, "I award Draco Malfoy 20 points for correctly solving my riddle. Hermione Granger 5 points from discovering it was a riddle. 10 points each for Fred Weasley, George Weasley and Hermione Granger for seeing to it that their companion received treatment for his injuries." his voice dripping with false disdain. "20 points to Harry Potter for courage befitting a Gryffindor and 30 points for Draco Malfoy for going beyond what could be expected to protect a fellow student."

Dumbledore stood there angry at the reactions of his subordinates, how could they embarrass him like this? And Severus, after all he had done for the man he could betray him like this?

Hermione buried her face in her arms; Harry strongly suspected she had burst into tears. Gryffindors up and down the table were beside themselves. The twins were smirking.

Blaise and Draco were in shock.

McGonagall announced the new totals, "In fourth place, Hufflepuff, with three hundred and fifty-two; in third, Ravenclaw has four hundred and twenty-six; still in second, Gryffindor has six hundred and twenty-six and Slytherin, in first place for the eight year, wins the House Cup with six hundred and forty-two."

Someone standing outside the Great Hall might well have thought some sort of explosion had taken place, so loud was the noise that erupted from the Gryffindor and Slytherin tables. Gryffindor lost the house cup again this time but only by 16 points and they had held such high hopes at the beginning of the last minutes.

Slytherin roared.

"Which means," McGonagall reluctantly admitted, "we won't be needing any change of decoration."

The hangings stayed green and the huge Slytherin serpent hung proudly from the rafters.

Professor McGonagall was shaking Snape's hand, with a horrible, forced smile. "Close but fair."

Harry caught a smirk directed his way from Snape, the man who was the closest thing to a father to him was proud of him.

He caught Harry's eye and Harry knew at once that Snape's feelings toward him hadn't changed one
jot. This didn't worry Harry. It seemed as though life would be back to normal next year, or as normal as it ever was at Hogwarts.

It was the best evening of Harry's life, because he'd done the right thing. It didn't matter that he probably cost his House the cup but he'd made sure Blaise got what he deserved. That feeling better than winning at Quidditch, or Christmas, or knocking out mountain trolls… he would never, ever forget tonight.

Harry had almost forgotten that the exam results were still to come, but come they did. To their great surprise, both the twins passed with good marks; Hermione and Draco, of course, had the best grades of the first years having tied. Harry and Blaise right behind them; Harry's exams and papers had out weighed his classwork as Draco and Snape said. Harry had nearly managed to tie Draco's Potions grade. Even Neville scraped through, his good Herbology mark making up for his abysmal Potions one. They had hoped that Ron, who was almost as stupid as he was mean, might be thrown out, but he had passed, too. It was a shame, but as Fred sagely said, you couldn't have everything in life. Draco had seemed surprised that Crabbe or Goyle hadn't failed…

And suddenly, their wardrobes were empty, their trunks were packed, Neville's toad was found lurking in a corner of the toilets; notes were handed out to all students, warning them not to use magic over the holidays.

"I always hope they'll forget to give us these," said Fred Weasley sadly.

Hagrid was there to take them down to the fleet of boats that sailed across the lake; they were boarding the Hogwarts Express; talking and laughing as the countryside became greener and tidier; eating Bertie Bott's Every Flavor Beans as they sped past Muggle towns; pulling off their wizard robes and putting on jackets and coats; pulling into platform nine and three-quarters at King's Cross Station.

It took quite a while for them all to get off the platform. A wizened old guard was up by the ticket barrier, letting them go through the gate in twos and threes so they didn’t attract attention by all bursting out of a solid wall at once and alarming the Muggles.

"You must come and stay this summer," Hermione said quickly, hugging the tiny boy. "I'd say all of you but that might overwhelm my parents."

"Thanks," said Harry trying to smile, "I'll need something to look forward to."

People jostled them as they moved forward toward the gateway back to the Muggle world.

Some of them called out:

"Bye, Harry!"

"See you, Potter!"

"Still famous," said Fred, grinning at him ruffling his hair.

"Not where I'm going, I promise you," said Harry glumly

Draco held him close, "Write us. We'll worry if you don't. Try to stay safe. We care about you."

The twins, Hermione and Harry passed through the gateway together.

"There he is, Mom, there he is, look!"
It was Ginny Weasley, Ron's younger sister, but she wasn't pointing at Ron. "Harry Potter!" she squealed. "Look, Mom! I can see —"

"Be quiet, Ginny, and it's rude to point."

Mrs. Weasley smiled down at them. "Busy year?" she said.

"Very," said Harry. "Thanks for the fudge and the sweater, Mrs. Weasley."

"Oh, it was nothing, dear."

"Ready, are you?"

It was Uncle Vernon, still purple-faced, still mustached, still looking furious at the nerve of Harry, carrying an owl in a cage in a station full of ordinary people. Behind him stood Aunt Petunia and Dudley, looking terrified at the very sight of Harry.

Harry started to shake, "Yes, sir."

Fred walked towards them, "His trunk is a bit heavy. Let me give you a hand."

"No need. The boy can handle it."

"I insist. He saved my life it's the least I could do." he wasn't taking no for an answer, the fib was excusable compared to Harry trying to drag the trunk himself.

"You must be Harry's family!" said Mrs. Weasley.

"In a manner of speaking," said Uncle Vernon admitted reluctantly. "Hurry up, boy, we haven't got all day." He walked away.

Fred followed him, grateful Draco hadn't witnessed this. One hand on Harry's shoulder and the other pushing the trolley as they followed the Dursleys.

This would be a long summer…

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!