The Potter-Malfoy Problem

The first thing Harry saw was a pair of eyes. He'd never thought of eyes as being particularly expressive before – they were just there, eye-shaped and eye-positioned, designed for looking at things and not much more. Looking at these eyes though, he rapidly changed his mind. These eyes promised death – cold, drawn-out death. Or, at the very least, a bloody nose and a headache.

"Um," Harry said, blinking into the darkness. Where the hell was he? He'd just been minding his own business, lying on his bed in the Gryffindor tower. Maybe, he thought rather defensively, he should still have been helping out with the reconstruction of the Great Hall, but he'd been working for ten hours straight and he was exhausted. Was this, he wondered, some kind of dream? The eyes looked familiar. They looked like—

"Get out," a voice said. Harry presumed it was attached to the eyes. At least, not attached exactly, but belonging to the same owner.

"Um," Harry said again, for want of anything better. Get out where, exactly? He had no idea where he was. Besides, it was dark, and his legs didn't want to obey him.

"Get out!" the voice said again, this time with a hysterical edge.

Harry frowned. He knew that voice. He knew those eyes too, he thought. He blinked into the darkness, his vision beginning to adjust to the gloom. He thought he could make out the edges of a body, the sharp lines of a face. It was all terribly familiar.

"Um," Harry said, "I would if I knew where I was."

There was a sharp intake of breath from the figure in front of him. "You're—" the voice said. It had a disbelieving edge to it. Then it snorted, in a noise that was almost a sob. "It would be you, wouldn't it? Of all the people—" It broke off, breathing heavily.

"Er, Malfoy?" Harry said. It was a question to which he already knew the answer, but he thought he'd better be sure.

There was no reply.

"Where am I?" Harry said after a long, uncomfortable silence. He was glad that Malfoy hadn't leaped up and strangled him – at least, he thought he was. Now it came to it, he wished that Malfoy would, if only to cut through the awful tension in the dark room. He couldn't hurt Harry much, of course, because he didn't have a wand. This failed to make Harry feel better.

There was another snorting noise and a hard sniff, as if Malfoy were trying to stop himself from crying. Harry felt deeply, deeply uncomfortable. "You're the one with the magic wand, Potter," Malfoy said, in a cold, cutting voice. "Why don't you use it and find out?"

"Oh," Harry said, and fumbled for it. He was glad he'd shoved it in his pocket, rather than leaving it on his bedside table as he often did. He cast a quick spell and a ball of light hovered over his head, illuminating the area around him. "Oh," he said again. "We're here."

"Well spotted, Potter," Malfoy said, glaring at Harry so hard that Harry couldn't hold his gaze. "Once again you showcase your dazzling intelligence. We're here. Well done. Good boy. A masterful deduction. A—"

"That's enough," Harry said, taking a deep breath and trying not to murder Malfoy. He'd saved his life enough times. It would be wasteful to kill him now, with so little provocation. Malfoy was just being Malfoy, as usual. There was nothing that could be done about it.

Malfoy subsided and scrubbed the heel of one hand over his eyes, his gaze dropping and attempting to burn a hole into the floor.

"This is the room of requirement, right?" Harry said, looking round. He froze. "He's not—I mean, you

haven't seen—"

"No," Malfoy muttered. "He's not here. There are no remains, if that is what you're talking about, Potter." He looked up, his eyes glittering with malice. "Although you're free to look about, if you wish. Check to see you did your job thoroughly."

Harry took in a deep breath and counted to ten. He'd been learning patience over the past few awful, harrowing months. He'd never thought that patience was a lesson he could learn, but it turned out to be easier than he'd suspected. After the tears had come a calm numbness that he wondered if anyone could ever break. It was almost a relief to feel a hint of the usual irritation and frustration that looking at Malfoy made him feel.

"Don't," Harry said, as quietly as he could. "Don't."

Malfoy shut up again and Harry looked around at the burned out shell of the room. It was cleaner than he'd expected, the floor free of debris, but the walls were smoke-stained and the paint blistered and peeling.

"What are you doing here?" Malfoy said at last. He spoke in a hard, interrogatory tone that made Harry grit his teeth and bunch his hands into fists in his pockets. "I thought I was the only one who could get back in. No-one else has managed it, I hear."

"I didn't mean to be here," Harry said, trying to keep his temper. "I was lying on my bed, when I suddenly found myself looking at your ugly mug."

Malfoy curled his lip, his face contorting into a mask of fury, but he held his tongue.

"If you point out the door, then I'll be on my way," Harry said. "I didn't mean to interrupt your sulking."

"Are you blind or just moronic?" Malfoy asked, his voice cold and sweet. It was almost worse than his

usual cutting tone, Harry thought.

Harry glared at him. "No?" he said. "Whatever insult you're dying to say just spit it out, Malfoy, and we can get this over with."

Malfoy smirked, although it was without humour. "Can you see a door, Potter?" he asked.

Harry looked. The door was notable by its absence. "Er, no," he admitted.

"Then tell me, genius boy, exactly how do you intend to leave this room?"

Harry glared at him. "Well, you got in, didn't you? There must be a door."

"There was," Malfoy sniffed. "Until you showed up."

Harry frowned and stood up, looking around the room once more. "But that's stupid," he said. He could feel his frown deepening and the start of a headache grasping at his skull. "This is the room of requirement, after all." He cleared his throat. "I require a door," he announced.

"Well, that certainly worked like a charm," Malfoy said, contempt thick in his voice, when the door failed to materialise. "Congratulations, Potter."

"Shut up," Harry said. "If you're so clever, why don't you get us out of here?"

"Because," Malfoy said, his face turning an ugly blotchy colour, "someone took my wand, if you remember?"

"I gave it back," Harry said hotly.

"And a fucking lot of good that did!" Malfoy all but shouted. He'd risen to a standing position also, his posture tense. His hands were balled into tight fists by his sides and he was shaking with rage.

"It's not my fault, Malfoy," Harry said, quietly. "You know it's not."

Malfoy just stood there, his chest rising and falling at an unhealthily fast rate. He was half-crying again, Harry realised with some horror.

"Look, Malfoy," Harry said, trying to focus on a point just past Malfoy's face, "let's just get out of here, okay?"

"Fine by me," Malfoy snapped, folding his arms tight against his chest and just standing there.

Harry tried not to roll his eyes. He just needed to focus – and not on how annoying Malfoy was, just standing there watching him. He walked the perimeter of the room. It was smaller than it usually was – small and square, with a low ceiling and a total lack of windows or doors.

"Right," Harry said, retrieving his wand from his pocket again and aiming it at the wall. "Right." He cast a spell at the wall – hard. It should have blasted a hole in the wall. It should, Harry thought uncomfortably, have blasted the entire wall away. He was almost glad it hadn't, given that he didn't fancy the idea of lying under a heap of rubble. He'd been finding it hard to control his magic lately, each spell he cast more potent and strong than the last. Soon, Harry thought with some discomfort, it would become less of an irritation and more of a huge, enormous problem.

When he turned around, Malfoy was glaring at him. Again.

"What?" Harry said testily. "It's not my fault."

"This is the room of fucking requirement," Malfoy said. "You are Harry fucking Potter."

"So?"

"Just go ahead and require something," Malfoy yelled. "How hard can it be? Unless you're intentionally trying to keep me in here, out of some sick kind of revenge fantasy."

"I want," Harry said, very calmly – although he didn't feel very calm – "to get out of here." Why the hell did Malfoy think that asking the room for something would work now, when it hadn't the last time Harry had tried? He looked around. As expected, nothing had happened. Malfoy was still glaring though, his eyes red and puffy, so he turned his back on him and tried again. "I need a door." Again, nothing happened. "Or a window," Harry added, feeling Malfoy's gaze burning into his back. "Any form of exit at all?" He wheeled round to Malfoy, who was tapping his foot on the floor. It echoed throughout the room. "Will you stop that, Malfoy? Are you trying to drive me insane?"

"Yes," Malfoy said, continuing to tap his foot. "Because I really like the idea of being trapped in a room with an insane Gryffindor." He laughed without humour. "Oh look," he said, his voice high and displeased, "my wish has come true."

Harry stared at him. "Please tell me this wasn't your wish."

Malfoy frowned in confusion. "What?"

"I mean – you were here first. You weren't, you know, thinking about me, were you?"

"I would never sully myself with thoughts of—" Malfoy started, speaking very quickly. He wasn't looking at Harry now though – his eyes darting to the side of Harry's face.

"Malfoy," Harry interrupted. "Will you tell the truth for once in your life?"

Malfoy twitched, his expression shifting as if he was running through various conversations in his head. Two high spots of colour sprung up on his cheeks. "And what if I was?" he said after a moment, in a challenging voice. "Let me tell you, it was not in a favourable—"

"Malfoy," Harry interrupted again. He felt very weary so he dropped to the floor. It was cold and hard beneath him and he wished he tried harder in his Transfiguration classes. Not, he thought, that he had anything to actually transfigure into a sofa, even if he were capable of it. He suppressed the uncharitable thought that Malfoy himself, who was full of hot air, would be an enjoyable thing to place his full weight on and squash.

"I possibly thought," Malfoy said, sounding very disagreeable, "that I'd like to kill you, or at least beat you half to death."

"There," Harry said, "that wasn't so hard, was it?" He shook his head. "So you thought that charming thought, and I popped up here."

"Are you suggesting that the only way out of this room is if I kill you?" Malfoy asked. He sounded far too thoughtful for Harry's nerves.

"Or beat me half to death," Harry added, before he'd fully processed the words.

"I can do that," Malfoy said, sounding pleased. "Just lie still and I'll happily oblige."

Harry flinched as Malfoy came closer, sliding down to sit on the floor beside him.

"Er, I'd rather you didn't," Harry said, when Malfoy made no obvious move to cause him pain.

Malfoy's eyes glittered with sarcasm and his mouth twisted. "Then what do you suggest, oh mighty Potter?"

"Can't you just drop the attitude for a minute?" Harry asked, rather testily. He had no great fear of Malfoy's fists – it might hurt if Malfoy got a punch in when he wasn't expecting it, but he could soon immobilise him with a quick body bind. He didn't really want to though. Malfoy was an arse, but Harry felt no need to humiliate him further. The Ministry had already done that thoroughly enough when they'd forced the public apology out of him all those months ago.

Malfoy stared at him. For a brief moment Harry thought he really would strike him, but his face tensed up and he nodded. "Okay," he said, although it sounded like it caused him extreme pain. "What do you suggest we do?"

"I—" Harry started. Then he felt a lovely sense of relief. "I suggest we go out of that door, over there."

"What?" Malfoy asked, swivelling round to look in the same direction as Harry. Then he shot up. "Thank fuck," he said and half-ran towards it, opening the door with speed and slamming it behind him.

To Harry's relief the door remained, rather than trapping him in there once more with only his own thoughts for company. It was creepy in the room – and even Malfoy had been welcome company.

When he returned to his dormitory, Ron was there so Harry told him all about it. Ron didn't think much of it though - although he expressed his surprise that Harry hadn't punched Malfoy in the head – so Harry decided to just forget about it. It had been a freak accident, or some kind of coincidence, he was sure. As long as it didn’t happen again there was no need to worry.

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"You have got to be kidding me."

Malfoy was staring at him like he'd seen a ghost. His face was pale and his expression curiously open, before he tensed and his expression shifted into one of inexpressible hatred. "Potter," he spat, as if the name tasted foul on his tongue.

"Malfoy," Harry said, not sure what he was expected to say. The words "thinking about me again, were you?" came out of his mouth before his brain managed to claw them back.

The room was well-lit this time so Harry could see the hot, red flush that worked its way up Malfoy's neck and across his cheeks. It clashed with his pale skin, Harry thought, and made him look like a bit of a tit.

"I was getting ready for bed," Harry said. He thought it was a dumb thing to say, given that he was wearing his pyjamas, but he thought he'd point it out anyway. "What are you doing?"

Malfoy's cheeks flushed even redder. "I'm not doing anything," he said, obviously trying to sound haughty. "I just came in here to think."

"Right," Harry said, looking around. The room of requirement looked different – as if it had had a good paint job. The floor under his feet wasn't as hard and cold as he'd expected, and when he looked down he saw a thick, dark carpet. Malfoy was sitting on a sofa, and when Harry looked around further he saw other signs of domesticity.

"If you have time to add a side-table and a lamp, could you find it in your heart to require a door?" Malfoy snapped.

"What?"

Malfoy waved a hand around irritably. "These things weren't here before you arrived. It was how it was before – cold and dirty."

"Then why were you hanging out here?" Harry asked, bewildered.

"That's none of your business, Potter," Malfoy said, his voice low and tense. "Just get us out of here and we can forget it."

Harry looked around, checking for a door. "I thought we'd forgotten it last time," he muttered, scanning the walls for any hidden opening. "But here I am again."

"Just do what you did last time!" Malfoy said dismissively, still sitting in his tense position on the sofa. "Wave your wand, or think your special happy Gryffindor thoughts."

Harry frowned. "I don't have my wand on me. In case you hadn't noticed, I'm wearing my pyjamas. They don't come with a special wand pocket, you know."

"And why the fuck not?" Malfoy asked.

Harry stared at him. Then he attempted to sit down on the floor. Possibly to go to sleep forever, he thought, because then at least he wouldn't have to look at Malfoy's pinched, cross expression, with all the unpleasant memories that it aroused. He was prevented, however, by a hard press against the back of his calves and he half-fell backwards onto a sudden sofa. "Er," he said, trying to regain his composure.

"Quite," Malfoy said, wrinkling his nose. "How about the door, Potter, instead of making yourself comfortable?"

"Why don't you think about the door?" Harry replied. The answer came out sounding less tetchy than he intended – possibly because the sofa was comfy and he was very, very tired. He hadn't slept properly for a long time. "It's your turn," he said through a huge yawn.

"Ew, Potter, cover your mouth when you do that," Malfoy said. He didn't sound disgusted – he sounded vaguely fascinated, and when Harry looked at him, Malfoy was staring at him as if he were an exhibit in a

zoo.

Harry felt the blood rush to his face. "Don't look if you don’t want to see," he said defensively, tucking his legs up against his chest and wrapping his arms around them.

Malfoy pulled a face. "It's hard to look away, Potter. Every time I try, I keep getting hypnotised by your pyjamas."

"What's wrong with them?" Harry asked, looking down at himself. They were official Chudley Cannons colours and, while admittedly loud, they were a gift from Ron and they made him smile.

"Potter, it would take more time than there is in this world to explain the many ways in which those pyjamas violate the laws of taste and decency," Malfoy said with a shudder. "Can you just visualise the fucking door so I can leave sooner rather than later?"

"It's not like I want to be stuck in here with you," Harry muttered. He frowned. "How do you get in here anyway?"

Malfoy looked at him as if he were a total idiot. "Through the door," he said through clenched teeth.

"Yeah, but how do you get the door to appear?" Harry asked, trying not to lose his temper. "Don't be a git, you know what I mean. None of us have been able to get into the room – and we've tried."

"The same way I did before," Malfoy said, still looking at him as if he were an idiot. "I think about a room where I can – where I can…"

"Sulk," Harry supplied.

Malfoy narrowed his eyes and his lips tightened into a cross pout.

"Sorry," Harry said hastily. He didn't particularly want to apologise to Malfoy, but he suspected that the sooner he could get the truth out of him, the sooner they'd be able to get out of there. "Go on."

"I fail to see what this is going to achieve," Malfoy said. "I think about the fucking room, the door appears, I go in. End of story."

"Except it's not, is it?" Harry said. He tried to keep the sarcasm from his voice. Antagonising Malfoy would get them nowhere – and right now, anywhere but here would be a good start. "You keep dragging me here with you."

"Me?" Malfoy said, his voice high and indignant. "As if I want to spend time in your company. Really, Potter, if you think that's true then you're more of an idiot than I thought – and trust me when I say—"

"Give it a rest, Malfoy," Harry interrupted. He closed his eyes, running a hand through his hair. "We have to work out what's happening here, so we can stop it."

"You? Work something out without the help of the Mud—I mean, without Granger's help?"

"Malfoy," Harry said, not opening his eyes. If he opened his eyes then he'd have to look at Malfoy, and he couldn't be held responsible for the consequences. "How many times have you been in here?"

"Twice," Malfoy said.

Harry opened his eyes and stared at him. Malfoy had the decency to blush, although he held his chin up high and tried to outstare him. "Great," Harry said. "At least we know how to prevent this happening again. Though—" He paused, trying to think. His brain ached and he could feel his body screaming at him to go to sleep. He shook his head, attempting to clear his mind. "Though why the room thinks you

require me of all things, I don't know."

"What," Malfoy said, in a flat, murderous way that made Harry shiver. "Potter, let me assure you that, of all the things I require, you are absolutely not on my list."

Harry looked over at him, rather blearily. "Well, either the room thinks you need me – or you've been asking it for me." He shuddered. Either of the scenarios was a terrible thought. "Which do you prefer?"

Malfoy's mouth moved as if he was framing words, but nothing came out. His face had gone very pale – and then suddenly reddened, as if his heart had stopped and then restarted with a vengeance. "No," he said. Then he swallowed and his face twisted. "Actually yes, Potter, I do require you."

"Oh?" Harry said, feeling rather awkward. Malfoy had a nasty expression on his face. Harry braced himself.

"I require you to get my father out of Azkaban," Malfoy said. "I require you to get my mother freed from house arrest. I require you to restore mastery of my own fucking wand to me." His face had gone blotchy and cross again, and his eyes looked shiny. "I require you to—"

"Stop it, Malfoy," Harry interrupted.

"Why?" Malfoy shouted. "Feeling guilty?"

"No way!" Harry shouted back. "You deserved it, you stupid git. At least your parents are still alive."

"Awww, poor Potty missing his mum and—"

Harry launched himself off the sofa and punched Malfoy, his fist cracking hard against Malfoy's cheekbone. Malfoy's body bent under the blow and he slid off his seat, hands coming up to block any

further attack.

"You'll hear about this, Potter," Malfoy said, "my fat—" He broke off, one hand curled around his cheek, his whole body stilling.

Harry felt a strange pang of pity for Malfoy, before it was replaced by annoyance. Malfoy didn't deserve any sympathy. Still, Harry thought wearily, he shouldn't have hit him. Now he just felt mildly guilty, and he didn't want to feel guilty about Malfoy, of all people. He extended a hand.

Malfoy failed to take it.

"Come on, Malfoy, get up," Harry said, losing patience. He grabbed Malfoy by the arm and attempted to pull him to his feet.

Malfoy recoiled, shaking him off as if Harry's touch was repugnant to him. Which, Harry supposed, was the truth. Malfoy just continued to sit there, one hand up against his cheek, his body curled up around itself. Harry gave up and sat back down on the sofa.

"Look, Malfoy," Harry said eventually, then stopped. Malfoy raised his head to look at him, his eyes glittering with anger. Harry forgot what he was going to say in the face of Malfoy's hatred. It hadn't been anything worthwhile, anyway, he expected. "Er," he continued, feeling a bit stupid.

"What?"

"Nothing," Harry said rather helplessly, picking at a loose thread on his top. He didn't dare to look at Malfoy's face again, in case looks really could kill, after all. He sighed. "I never did thank you, did I?" he mumbled.

"I beg your pardon?"

"For not identifying me," Harry clarified, pulling hard at the thread. It slid out easily enough, the fabric bunching under his fingers. "You know, that time in the cellar. So, yeah. Thank you."

"I didn't do it for you, Potter," Malfoy said sharply.

Harry looked over at Malfoy. Malfoy was still sitting on the ground, his face hidden by his hair and his hands. Harry sighed and slid off the sofa, shuffling over to him. He tugged at Malfoy's hand, exposing his cheek. Malfoy stiffened but, to Harry's surprise, didn't move away. Harry ran a finger gently over Malfoy's high cheekbone. The skin over it was red and puffy, but he didn't feel an obvious break.

"You'll have a black eye," Harry said. He almost said sorry, but he didn't think Malfoy deserved it, so he didn't. "Is there anything I can do to help?"

Malfoy snorted, his eyes closed. "I hardly expect you to kiss it better, Potter," he said and then, inexplicably, coloured.

"Uh, yeah," Harry said. "Forget I said that."

"You could, however," Malfoy said, opening one eye to stare balefully at him, "get us out of here."

"How?" Harry asked. "Have you had any bright ideas?"

"Obviously you haven't," Draco muttered.

Harry took a deep breath and restrained himself from strangling Malfoy. It was difficult, given Malfoy's closeness. It was a fearful temptation. "How about we both think, really hard, about a door?"

Malfoy snorted. "I already spot a flaw in this plan."

"What do you mean?"

"It requires you to think, Potter, and we both know that to be a Herculean task where you are concerned."

"Ha ha," Harry said. "Count of three?"

"Very well," Malfoy said.

Harry counted to three, closed his eyes and thought, very hard, about a door appearing. When he opened his eyes again, nothing had happened.

"See, I told you it was hopeless," Malfoy said.

"Did you even try?" Harry snapped. "Let's go again."

They did. Again, a door failed to appear.

"Maybe we should," Harry tried not to shudder, "hold hands while we do it."

Malfoy turned an incredulous expression on him. "Hold hands?"

"Don't look at me like that," Harry protested. "It might focus our magic, or something."

"You're just making this up as you go along, aren't you?"

"If you have a better idea—"

Malfoy made a sharp noise then counted to three out loud. Harry was about to complain that they'd already tried that, when he felt cold fingers wrap around one of his hands. While Malfoy wasn't exactly holding on tight, his grip wasn't as loose as Harry would have predicted.

"It didn't work," Malfoy said, sounding very disagreeable.

Harry realised he hadn’t actually been thinking about creating a door. He'd just been thinking about the weight of Malfoy's hand in his own. "Er, let's try again," he said. "I was distracted."

Malfoy turned his face towards Harry. "What the hell do you mean?"

"Er," Harry said, uncomfortably aware that he was still holding hands with Malfoy. "Are you thinking about the door?"

"I'm thinking about how I'd like to throw you through a window," Malfoy snapped.

"At least I'd be out of here," Harry half-joked. "I'm sorry!" he said, very quickly, when he saw Malfoy's face change from angry to really, really angry.

"Do me the kindness of tearing your mind away from whatever higher plane it is currently occupying for a moment, Potter," Malfoy said. "Or are we just holding hands for fun?"

Harry blushed. He really, really didn't mean to blush. Once he'd started though, he couldn't stop – and the incredulous, sarcastic way that Malfoy was staring at him wasn't helping at all.

"Oh, oh, give it to me, baby," Malfoy said. His lips were twitching.

"Shut up," Harry muttered. He tried to pull his hand away from Malfoy's, but Malfoy's fingers tightened around his own.

"Going somewhere?" Malfoy asked.

Harry didn't reply – was, in fact, frozen to the spot. Malfoy was leaning over him, his expression sardonic. He tried to move away, but Malfoy twisted round and Harry's back came up hard against the sofa. "What—" he began, wetting his lips nervously. "What are you doing?"

Malfoy's lips quirked into something that wasn't quite a smile. He moved even closer, their faces almost colliding. Harry could feel Malfoy's breath, warm against his lips. For a heavy, tense moment Harry was certain that Malfoy was going to kiss him. To Harry's relief, however, Malfoy's mouth narrowly missed his own, pressing instead up against his ear.

"Think about the fucking door, Potter," Malfoy whispered.

Harry closed his eyes tight and did his best. His heart was pounding though, and Malfoy was close enough to feel it through his skin and he practically had a mouth full of Malfoy's fucking hair.

Malfoy broke away and Harry suddenly felt cold. When he dared open his ears, Malfoy was standing by the door, glaring at him. "You are such a wanker," Malfoy said then left, slamming the door behind him.

There didn't seem to be much he could say to that, Harry thought. He just hoped that Malfoy had no further urges to visit the room of requirement, because he didn't think his nerves could stand the strain.

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"What's the matter, pet?"

Draco let out a loud, heartrending sigh. As expected, Pansy pulled him closer, running her fingers through his hair and patting his cheek.

"Tell me all about it, darling. Let me know what I can do," Pansy continued.

Draco sighed again. "I hate him so much, Pans," he said piteously.

"I know you do," Pansy said, a hint of exasperation in her voice. "And you know I do too, Draco, but there's not much we can do about it, is there?"

Draco scowled. She was right – there wasn't. There wasn't anything he could do about anything, lately, and it was driving him insane. He didn't want to be at Hogwarts to help rebuild the school – but there was nowhere else he could go. His father was back in Azkaban and, while Draco had no doubt he'd weasel his way back to freedom in no time at all, that didn't help him right now. His mother was at Malfoy Manor, but the place was crawling with Aurors. Besides, the manor no longer reminded him of home – it reminded him of him. He'd rather be at school, heaving bricks about, than remembering certain things he was trying his hardest to forget.

"Have you been practising with your wand?" Pansy asked.

Draco frowned against her. He hadn't picked up his wand since Potter had given it back and he'd discovered that it no longer worked for him. "Give it a rest," he muttered.

"Sorry, Draco," Pansy said, patting him on the head. "But how do you expect to—"

"I said give it a rest, Pansy," Draco repeated.

Pansy's hand stilled. "I'm sorry," she said, rather stiffly.

Draco sighed. Pansy was only here at Hogwarts because he was, he knew that. She was a loyal friend – even if he suspected a significant portion of her support was due to Malfoy blood purity and wealth.

"No, I'm sorry," he said, sitting upright and pulling Pansy into a brief hug.

"That's okay," Pansy said, evidently mollified. "I still think you should go back to the room of requirement," she said.

Draco frowned, fiddling with his tie.

"Fixing the room has got to be better than manual labour," Pansy said. "You know I think the thing with Potter's a coincidence." She smiled. "Besides, it sounds like you're driving him mad, which can only be a good thing, darling."

"Hmm," Draco said, not convinced. The room seemed fixed enough to him – at least, it had been last time when Potter had arrived. The dank, burned room had shifted before his eyes to one of comfort. Fucking Potter, Draco thought. His mere presence seemed to fix the castle – even in those eyesores he called pyjamas.

"Come on, Draco," Pansy said, stroking his hair. "There's got to be a reason why the room will only open for you. Don't you want to find out what it is?"

Draco nodded and – and the room shifted and his insides turned inside out. He blinked and tried to catch his breath.

"Um, hello," Potter said, shifting from foot to foot.

Draco tried not to let his jaw drop like an idiot. He was back in the fucking room of requirement. But this time – he felt the thrill of victory. This time it was sodding Potter's fault and he couldn't possibly be blamed for it. He looked around and, to his delight, could see the door close at hand.

"Goodbye, Potter," Draco said, stalking through it and closing it firmly behind him.

It only occurred to him later that maybe this turn of events wasn't such a good thing. He fell asleep wondering exactly why the hell Potter had 'required' him, and what the fuck was going on with them both. He dreamed of a hand in his own, messy hair pressed against his face, and woke in a towering bad mood.

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"This is really not a good time, Malfoy," Harry said. He would have blushed if he weren't already so overheated from the boiling bath water. After a day's hard labour, the only thing that allowed his muscles – and his tired mind – to relax was a bath so hot it almost hurt. Being pulled from the bath, stark naked and dripping, to make small talk with Draco sodding Malfoy was not on his list of 'things to do today'.

Malfoy looked like someone had hit him on the head. He was staring, bug eyed, his eyes locked somewhere in the vicinity of Harry's chest. Which was better, Harry thought, than further down, but he still didn't much like it.

"Malfoy?" Harry said when Malfoy failed to respond, just continued staring at his chest. A clump of foam began to slide down his shoulder and along the muscles of his chest. Malfoy's eyes followed it. "Malfoy!" Harry squeaked, hands moving rapidly to attempt to cover himself. "Stop gawping at me, would you?"

Malfoy's lips twitched.

"Don't laugh," Harry admonished. "It's not funny."

"It is a bit," Malfoy managed, snorting as he evidently tried not to break into hysterical laughter.

Harry smiled, rather reluctantly. He'd laugh about it later, maybe, with Ron and Hermione. He could already picture the look on Ron's face when he told him that he'd been naked in Malfoy's company. Right now, however, he was more concerned about the naked and the Malfoy bit, than about the potential for a good anecdote.

"Just think about some clothes, why don't you?" Malfoy said when he'd got his breathing under control. "This is the room of requirement."

"I am," Harry said earnestly. "As hard as I can." He looked around, but none appeared. It was just his luck. He looked back over at Malfoy, who was smirking at him. Sodding Malfoy wasn't wearing his robe, so it wasn't like Harry could just nick that off him. He began to consider how much skin Malfoy's Slytherin jumper would cover. It wouldn't be nearly enough.

"Aren't you going to ask if I'll fetch you some clothing?" Malfoy asked.

"No," Harry said, as he realised there was yet another problem with the situation.

"No?" Malfoy raised an eyebrow.

"Well, firstly I bet you wouldn't," Harry said. He shivered. The room wasn't cold, but the water was turning chill on his skin. "And secondly," he continued, "you can't get out."

"What?" Malfoy said. He looked around then pulled a face. "Fabulous," he muttered. "We're stuck here again."

"You could at least turn your back," Harry said, tiring of his uncomfortable half-crouch posture. "If you're not going to share any of your clothes."

"My clothes happen to be otherwise engaged," Malfoy said. "Because, in case you hadn’t noticed, Potter, I'm wearing them."

Harry sighed and sat down on the sofa, doing his best to keep his privates covered with his hands. It wasn't that he was shy about his body, particularly, but he didn't fancy sitting with it all hanging out in front of Malfoy. Malfoy was almost certainly gearing up to make some rude remark about his body, and Harry didn't want to give him any more ammunition than necessary.

Malfoy, wearing a very disdainful expression, pulled off his jumper and tossed it in Harry's direction. "I'm certainly not holding your hand now," he said very pointedly, "so I suggest you start thinking of another way for us to get out of here."

Harry laughed, surprised that Malfoy had decided to help him out. And not only that – Malfoy had made a joke, and one that wasn't entirely at Harry's expense. Was Malfoy sickening for something? Harry spread the jumper over his lap and grinned. "It wouldn't kill you."

Malfoy shuddered. "No, perhaps not, but the bleach I'd be forced to use on my unfortunate hand afterwards might." Then, to Harry's even greater surprise, he smiled. It wasn't much of a smile, but it was the start of one. "Can't you transfigure that into some trousers?" Malfoy added, nodding at the jumper across Harry's lap.

"No wand," Harry said, waving his hands. "I don't take it into the bath with me, Malfoy." He grinned again. "People might talk."

Malfoy snorted. "You're hopeless, Potter."

"I dunno," Harry said, "I think I've done okay so far."

Malfoy said nothing, but he moved one hand up to pinch the bridge of his nose. His eyes fluttered shut.

"So, how do you think we get out this time?" Harry said after some time, bored of sitting still. His skin was drying and he was getting colder.

"If I knew that, I would hardly be sitting here listening to your riveting conversation," Malfoy replied, not opening his eyes.

"I wasn't saying anything," Harry said, annoyed.

"Precisely," Malfoy said with a snort.

"If you've got time to be a git," Harry said, "you've got time to think of ideas to get us out."

"I could say the same about you," Malfoy snapped back. "This is your fault."

"I don't see how you worked that one out."

"I just did."

"Really winning argument there, Malfoy," Harry said, leaning back against the sofa. "Full of convincing evidence."

"Stop arguing, Potter."

Harry snorted. "Yeah? Because you're being so reasonable?" He took a deep breath. "Look, we've done

best when we've worked together."

"I am not hugging you, Potter," Malfoy said. "I'd rather rot in here, thank you."

"Um, what?" Harry said. He wondered if Malfoy had to try to be so annoying, or if it just came naturally.

"Well, first it was agreeing to work together that got us out, and then it was holding hands. I'm only going by the next logical step," Malfoy sniffed. "And I'm telling you no. Nothing on Earth will compel me to—"

"That's it!" Harry said with a grin.

Malfoy eyed him suspiciously. "What's it? Were you listening at all to what I just said?"

"Being sort of nice to each other has got us out of here before. Maybe that's the condition that makes the door appear."

"But that's ridiculous."

"Yeah," Harry said, "but it's worth a go, don't you think?"

Malfoy waved a hand in Harry's direction. "I already gave you my jumper. I have absolutely reached my limit of 'nice' where you are concerned, Potter."

Harry thought about that. "I still won't be covered when I leave here, though," he said. "You're not going commando, are you?"

"I beg your pardon?"

"You're, er, wearing underpants, I mean?"

Malfoy stared at him. Then he must have twigged what Harry meant, because a muscle in his jaw twitched. He shook his head. "I'm not doing it. No way. Absolutely not."

"You could give me your pants and keep your trousers," Harry said, shrugging. "No-one would know."

Malfoy opened and shut his mouth like a beached fish gasping for air. "But then you'd be wearing my—" He pulled a face. "That's vile, Potter."

"Trust me," Harry said with feeling, "I like the idea about as much as you do."

Malfoy had gone very red in the face.

"Or, you know, don't," Harry said, giving up. "We can just sit here til the end of time."

Malfoy scowled.

"The world won't end if I wear your pants, Malfoy," Harry muttered. "For fuck's sake."

Malfoy rose and kicked off his shoes, yanking his school trousers down and over his feet. "Shut your eyes, Potter," he said sounding very sarcastic. "If you would be so kind."

Harry started and did so, trying to resist the temptation to peer through his eyelashes. He wasn't sure why he wanted to look, but he put it down to morbid curiosity. He expected that Malfoy had got a look

at his own equipment, so it was only fair that Harry got a look at Malfoy's in return. When he peered through half-shut eyelashes, however, Malfoy had turned around so Harry only got a glimpse of long bare legs and a hint of arse, peeking out from beneath the overlong shirt. Then Malfoy bent over and Harry screwed his eyes tight shut, because there were definite limits to his curiosity, after all.

"Here," Malfoy said, after some rustling.

Harry opened his eyes to see Malfoy standing in front of him, dangling a pair of black cotton boxers from his fingertips.

"Um, thanks," he said, taking them. Malfoy turned his back without even being asked, so Harry slipped them on, trying not to feel wierded out. They were just boxers – regular plain boxers – but they were Malfoy's boxers. Fresh from Malfoy's arse. It was entirely disconcerting.

"The door's not here," Malfoy said a few minutes later. He hadn't moved from where he stood, but Harry could tell he was annoyed by the line of his neck and shoulders.

"You can turn round now, you know," Harry said. He'd pulled the jumper on as well, so he was feeling substantially less naked.

"But then I'd have to look at you," Malfoy complained, but he turned, so Harry only had a brief wistful thought about punching him again.

"Maybe if you tried a bit harder to be nice, it would work," Harry muttered.

"You don't exactly make it easy," Malfoy said. He strode over and slumped down next to Harry on the sofa, crossing his arms.

Harry frowned, studying the side of Malfoy's face. "How do I make it difficult?"

Malfoy's lips moved, but he didn't say anything. Then he leaned back, closing his eyes. "You're just you, Potter. It annoys me."

"Well, sorry," Harry said. "I could say the same about you."

Malfoy smiled – a small, tight smile. "Then we're screwed, aren't we?"

"We could, er, try the hug?" Harry said. He meant it as a joke, but Malfoy turned and stared at him like he'd said something insane, so he felt compelled to justify it. "Well, we could," he continued. "It wouldn't kill us."

"Fine," Malfoy said through gritted teeth. "Go ahead."

Harry stared at him. He felt inexplicably nervous. He supposed it was because, when he'd thought of a hug, he'd meant it more as a mutual hug, rather than one initiated by himself.

Malfoy seemed amused by Harry's hesitation. He half-smiled and cocked his head to one side. "Coward," he said, very quietly.

Harry wasn't having any of that. He'd conquered Voldemort – he wasn’t going to be conquered by Malfoy, of all people. And over something as ridiculous as a hug, at that! So he shuffled closer to Malfoy and tugged him towards him, wrapping his arms loosely around Malfoy's thin frame.

They sat like that for what felt like forever – even though, logically, it couldn't have been more than thirty seconds. Harry tried not to shudder – thirty seconds of hugging Malfoy was thirty seconds too many, after all. Particularly when the Malfoy in question was just sitting there limply, making no move to hug back. Harry had never had any complaints about his hugs before - what the hell was wrong with Malfoy? Although, he thought with a sudden terror, it wasn't like he'd asked for feedback from his girlfriends. What if he was, of all things, bad at hugging? It would be just his luck – and here he was, being bad at

hugging in front of Malfoy, who'd be reminding him about it for the rest of his life.

Malfoy laughed. "So, this is working well, Potter."

"You're not hugging back," Harry pointed out, before he realised quite how needy that would sound. He wanted to take it back – but he couldn't think of a way to put it without sounding like an absolute idiot.

Malfoy rolled his eyes but slid his arms around Harry's waist, pulling him flush against his chest. Harry almost struggled, certain that Malfoy was taking the piss, but then he felt Malfoy's heart beat – strong and rapid against him. It was strangely reassuring, knowing that Malfoy was as disconcerted by this as he was. He tried to relax into the hug, letting his head fall against Malfoy's own. Malfoy was warm and solid against him. He smelled warm too, a hint of some kind of spice mixed with the natural scent of his body.

"This is really stupid," Malfoy said, but he didn't say it in his usual nasty tone of voice. He said it quietly, and for some reason he ran a hand along the centre of Harry's back, his palm settling resting in the hollow just above his arse.

"Shut up," Harry said. He felt strangely light-headed. "I almost like you when you're not talking."

Malfoy laughed. "Charmed, I'm sure."

There was a long, faintly uncomfortable silence. Harry wasn't sure what the correct procedure was in a situation like this. Was it an endurance test? He didn't think so – and if it was, then it was a pretty easy one. Malfoy fit nicely against him and he wasn't so objectionable when Harry couldn't see his face. Not that his face was unpleasant, really, but the expressions he pulled usually were.

After a while, Harry almost forgot that it was Malfoy in his arms. It was easy enough to do. Malfoy was hugging back, after all, which almost certainly meant that Harry was hallucinating – either that, or he'd gone completely insane. It was pleasant, though, being so close to someone – even it that someone was a hallucination - and something that he'd missed without even realising it.

Then the hallucination made a soft, breathy noise and – and Harry felt very much like he wasn't dreaming when he realised what exactly he was doing. Quite without the permission of his brain, one of his hands was stroking the small of Malfoy's back. He didn't dare stop, because if he stopped then Malfoy might notice that he'd started. Maybe, Harry thought frantically, Malfoy was asleep.

Harry's brain reminded him of the noise that Malfoy had made. It hadn't sounded like a sleep noise. It hadn't sounded like a noise of protest either. Which only left—Harry stopped dead and, as if reflecting his movement, Malfoy's body also stiffened. Malfoy wasn't making any noise at all now – and his body was completely still. Harry guessed he was holding his breath – either that, or the shock of being touched by a Potter had turned him to stone.

Harry weighed through his options in his mind. He couldn't move away, because he'd lost the use of all his muscles. He couldn't just sit there either, because his neck was already starting to ache – and if Malfoy didn't take a breath soon then the hideous prospect of mouth-to-mouth resuscitation loomed on the horizon. He wasn't sure of the exact technique, but Hermione had explained it to him, so he felt honour bound to use it if he had to. The only option left, then, was to—

Feeling like an absolute idiot, and wondering exactly how he'd come to that conclusion, Harry moved his hand again, very gently, against Malfoy's back. He had no idea what he was doing, or what he intended to achieve. He felt an incredible sense of relief, however, when Malfoy let out a shaky breath. He didn't move, or complain, or say anything at all. This made the relief Harry was feeling turn into something rather more like panic – but at least Malfoy was breathing again, taking quick gasps of air that sounded loud in the quiet of the room.

Then, without any warning at all, he shot up and dashed across the room. Harry swivelled in time to see the door shut behind him. He gaped at it for a while. What, in Merlin's name, had just happened? Had he really sat and hugged Malfoy, of all people? Worse still – had he really enjoyed hugging Malfoy – and found pleasure in stroking Malfoy's back - in a deeply uncomfortable kind of a way? He looked down and saw the undeniable evidence, straining at the borrowed black boxer shorts. Oh God. He had. He really, really had.

A short panic attack later – which had the merit, at least, of bringing his body back under his control and making it possible for him to leave the room – Harry peered around the door of the room. He was about to dash out and leg it to the Gryffindor tower when he nearly tripped over something on the ground. He

looked down. It was a pair of trousers. On it was pinned a note. In elegant handwriting someone had written 'I want them back well washed, Potter'. The words 'well washed' were underlined three times.

Harry stared at them for a moment. He daydreamed about sticking the pin into one of Malfoy's soft parts – stomach, perhaps, or the inside of his arm. Then he shook his head and pulled the trousers on, attempting to make his way to the Gryffindor tower before anyone could comment on his lack of shirt and shoes, or unusual choice of house colours.

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"You're wearing Malfoy's clothes," Ron said. He was evidently having trouble breathing, he was laughing so hard. "You're wearing Malfoy's clothes."

"It was either that or go naked," Harry said, breaking into a reluctant smile. He'd made it all the way to his dormitory without getting caught – but hadn't counted on finding Ron there, lying on his bed eating chocolate frogs with evident enjoyment.

"You're not wearing his—" Ron said, his eyes widening to epic proportions. He grabbed Harry by the front of his jumper and shook him. He looked down at Harry's crotch. "Please tell me you're not wearing his—"

Harry nodded, very solemnly. "I'm afraid so."

Ron let go with a howl of laughter, collapsing on his bed and slapping his thigh.

"It's not that funny," Harry muttered, stripping off his jumper and trousers.

Ron had almost calmed down. "Malfoy's pants!" he snorted and collapsed with laughter again. "Pants of evil!"

Harry rolled his eyes. "They're just boxers, Ron. They won't kill me."

"Were they—" Ron attempted to ask between snorts. His face was the same colour as his hair. "Were they warm when you put them on?"

"Ron," Harry gasped, trying not to die of embarrassment on the spot.

"Warm from Malfoy's arse," Ron managed. Then he looked disgusted with himself. "What a thought. Merlin." He shook his head, as if trying to shake the image out of it.

Harry changed quickly, folding up Malfoy's clothes and putting them in a pile on his bed. He'd figure out what to do with them later – the idea of putting them out with his usual laundry was hideously embarrassing, for some reason. What if the house elfs got the wrong idea? Or spread the news around the school? It wasn't like Malfoy's pants had his name embroidered into them or anything – but still. It was bad enough being Harry Potter, without being known as the Gryffindor who wore Slytherin underwear when no-one was looking. Even he had his limits.

*****

Draco frowned at Pansy. She was being particularly stupid today, and it was hard for him to keep his temper with her. Instead of being disgusted on his behalf and showing moral support about the horrendous fact that Potter - wearing Draco's worn boxer shorts - had held him tenderly in his arms, she was laughing. She was, in fact, laughing more heartily than he'd ever seen her laugh before – so much so that her eyes were watering.

"Oh, darling," Pansy said eventually, wiping her eyes with one hand and patting him on the head with the other. Draco refrained from pointing out that he was not a dog and simply dodged her hand, trying not to look as sulky as he felt.

"Oh, I'm sorry, darling," Pansy said, evidently attempting to compose herself. "But it is frightfully funny,

you have to admit."

"It's not," Draco said, glaring at her. "It's disgusting! Not to mention revolting and repellent and—"

"Well, I think it's lovely," Pansy said, holding back her giggles. "The room of requirement playing matchmaker – what more could you ask for?"

Draco stared at her wishing, for a moment, that he had laser eyes and could burn her smug smirk away. "I beg your pardon?"

Pansy composed her expression into something a little more solemn. "It was a joke, Draco, don't get cross." She patted his hand. "It must have been a very trying experience, seeing Potter all naked and soapy."

Draco peered at her suspiciously. Was she being sarcastic? "It—" he started then stopped, not sure how to end that sentence. It hadn't been unpleasant, particularly. It had been fucking hilarious, to tell the truth.

"You should put the memory in a Pensieve, so we can all live vicariously through you," Pansy suggested. She smiled wickedly. "We are still lacking the entertainment for Friday night's party – a picture show would do nicely."

Draco opened his mouth – then closed it. That would be cruel, wouldn't it? Ordinarily he'd have been all for it, but for some reason he didn't much like the idea. "And make myself a joke in the process?" he said, trying to sound airy. "I think not."

"Why not invite Potter himself to the party, then?" Pansy asked. She laughed, wrinkling her nose. "Call it 'inter-house cooperation' if you'd like. We can even ask Granger to make it look real. I bet she makes a hilarious drunk." Her expression turned dreamy. "We can have so much fun with them."

"You are such a bitch," Draco said approvingly.

Pansy beamed back. "That's agreed then." She bent over and kissed Draco on the cheek. "It'll be a night we won't forget." Then her smile turned more wicked. "I wonder how you'll get out of the room of requirement next time?"

Draco thought about that. The next logical step was – oh God. "I'm never going there ever again," he said firmly, a peculiar squirmy feeling in his stomach.

"Really?" Pansy said. "I wonder." Then, before Draco could – well, he didn't know what he wanted to do, but he wanted to do something to Pansy, who looked smug and amused with herself – Pansy jumped up. "See you later, Draco," she said. "Preparations to carry out for the party."

As she left, she blew Draco a kiss – and smiled, very sweetly. Draco put his face in his hands and groaned.

*****

"Could you not, you know, just keep out of the room of requirement?" Harry said.

At the unexpected sound Draco started and dropped the bottle in his hand. It broke, and a sweet, pungent smell filled the air.

"Fuck!" Draco said. Then he focused on Potter the git wizard. "What are you doing here?"

Harry crossed his arms and raised an eyebrow. "Me?" he said. He spoke slowly, as if talking to a toddler. "Why are you here?"

Draco blinked, swaying slightly. He clutched at the table to steady himself. "Pansy told me to fetch more alcohol," he said, almost as if he was talking to himself. "She told me to get them from the storeroom—"

He stopped. "There isn't a fucking storeroom in this corridor!" he all but shouted.

"Wow, you're pretty stupid for a Slytherin," Harry said. "Mind you, all of you seem a bit thick in the head. Did you really think that Hermione and I would go to your dumb party?"

Draco scowled at the insult – but, to his horror, realised that Potter did have a point. Only an idiot would have accepted the invitation. And Potter wasn't—Draco closed his eyes. Apparently Potter wasn't as big an idiot as he thought. It was a depressing and dreadful thing to realise. Draco also realised that he'd been outwitted, by Pansy of all people. Although what she was trying to prove, he had no idea. Did she want Draco to have to – to lock lips with Potter? Was she really that much of a sadist?

"Here," Potter said.

Draco convulsed when he opened his eyes to see Potter, far too close to him.

"Here," Potter said again, with a hint of impatience in his voice. "Take it. We might as well have a drink if we're stuck here again."

Draco looked at Potter's hand. He was holding out a glass, filled with alcohol. Draco took it and, almost automatically, took a sip. It was delicious – and slid down his throat with a warm, tingling sensation. He'd emptied the glass before he knew it, and held it out for more.

Potter filled it without comment, but when Draco motioned for a third refill he cleared his throat. "Take it easy, Malfoy," he said. "You'll make yourself sick."

Draco realised that Potter wasn't drinking much, his own glass practically untouched. "Too much of a baby to drink alcohol, are you?" he said. It had sounded wittier in his head. He already felt that fuzzy, loose feeling that drink provided – like he could do, or say, anything at all. He couldn't be drunk already though. That was ridiculous. He wasn't that much of a lightweight. Although… he furrowed his brow. He couldn't remember the last time he'd eaten. Maybe that didn't help. And he had had a few drinks already at the party – two or three, or could it have been four? And now Potter was saying something.

He tried to concentrate.

"Why would Pansy want us to be trapped in this room again?" Potter asked.

"She wants you to snog me," Draco said, after he'd grabbed the bottle from Potter's hand and refilled his glass. Some of the liquor spilled onto his trousers but he wiped it up with his fingers, sucking them clean. "Though fuck knows why," he added, just in case Potter got the wrong idea.

"Um, what?"

"You know," Draco said, waving the glass around. He watched with interest as some of it splashed onto the carpet. "Because the room's a matchmaker." When he looked over at Harry, he noticed how very green his eyes were. "Why're your eyes so bloody green?" he complained. "It's stupid."

When Harry attempted to take his glass away he swung back and nearly fell. He only managed to stay upright because Harry was holding on to him. Harry – not Potter, Draco's brain informed him.

Fucking, fucking hell.

"You do know you're not making any sense?" Harry said. At least, Draco thought that that's what he said. He was watching Harry's mouth and wondering if he'd like to be kissed by it. He'd have to be kissed by it after all – Pansy said so, and the room said so, so he might as well prepare himself for it. Being kissed by Harry would be practically like sexual assault, Draco thought, so the only way to fix it would be to kiss him first. Put like that it sounded entirely logical.

"Draco – how much have you had to drink?"

Draco blinked and eyed Harry's mouth. It was moving again and it sounded judgemental. He didn't like that. So he kissed it, rather sloppily. He noticed that Harry wasn't really kissing back, but he wasn't not kissing back either – and he was breathing in a strange way. Then he realised something. "You called me

Draco," he said, rather accusingly, pulling back. "I didn't give you permission."

"Um, you just kissed me," Harry said. He had a dazed look in his eye, but his cheeks were bright red.

"Better than you kissing me," Draco said. "Honestly, Potter, get with the programme."

"You – what?" Harry said. Then he shook his head and pushed Draco, not hard but hard enough. Draco stumbled and fell back onto the sofa. He felt very woozy. Harry was shoving at him, trying to make him lie down. He let him. He'd done his bit – kissing Harry, despite the disgustingness of it, so they could leave the room again. This time he was the hero, not Harry.

*****

Draco woke up feeling very dreadful. For a few seconds he didn't know where he was – and then, in a rush, he did. He opened his eyes a fraction to see if, by some miracle, he was alone in the room. He wasn't. He couldn't see a door, either, not even when he struggled to sit up.

"Morning," Potter said.

Draco wished he'd played dead – he did not want to interact with Potter, particularly when he felt this terrible. How much had he drunk last night, anyway? He scrubbed a hand over his face and glared blearily at Potter. Potter looked deeply uncomfortable, his arms folded across his body and his face turning a peculiar colour.

"Uh – how are you feeling?" Potter said. He motioned to a table. "There's some water there if you want it." He cleared his throat. "I could – ah – cast a couple of cleaning spells on you if you want, as there's no bathroom."

Draco nodded, feeling a bit like he was three years old. He didn't want to say no though – his mouth felt

like something had died in there.

Potter, very clumsily, cast the spells. Draco felt clean – very clean. He wondered if he'd squeak if he tried to move. He wondered if his skin was shining, it felt so tight and fresh. "Possibly a bit of an overkill," he muttered. "I didn't smell that bad."

"Sorry," Potter said. "My magic's been a bit of out of control recently."

Draco glared at him and Potter had the decency to look embarrassed. Did Potter have no tact at all?

"Yeah, sorry," Potter said. "I didn't think."

"You never do," Draco muttered. "Merlin."

They sat in silence for a while. Then, to Draco's horror, Potter moved over to sit beside him on the sofa.

"Um," Potter said.

Draco flinched. Soon Potter would ask 'why the fuck did you kiss me, you lunatic?' and he'd have no answer to that other than 'it felt like a good idea at the time'. It hadn’t been unpleasant, kissing him, but he'd been drunk and it hadn't had the desired effect anyway. They were still trapped – only now Potter must think him madman, on top of that. Not that he wanted Potter's good opinion though – not at all.

"You really think the room's playing matchmaker?" Potter asked, studiously not looking at Draco's face.

"Pansy does," Draco said, putting as much emphasis on the word Pansy as possible. It wasn't him – it was Pansy. It was all Pansy's fault, all of it.

"But what about you?"

Draco hadn’t got a fucking clue – not that he was going to admit that to Potter of all people.

"I mean, last night you—"

"Potter," Draco said wanting to get it clear, even if it didn't feel that clear in his own mind. "Last night I attempted to free us from this room. That's all. Nothing more. Do you understand?"

Potter nodded and Draco tried to suppress the urge to whack him over the head. It wasn't that he wanted Potter to have enjoyed it – but Draco didn't kiss many people, so a bit of gratitude would be nice.

"I wonder why it didn't work?" Harry mused.

Because you didn't kiss back Draco thought – and then wished he hadn't. It looked like the same realisation was dawning in Harry's eyes.

"Er, you were drunk," Harry said, as if he had to explain himself to Draco. And fuck, Draco thought, he was now thinking of Potter as Harry again. There must be something terribly wrong with his brain. "I didn't want to take advantage."

Draco gawped at him. He was aware that gawping probably wasn't a very attractive look, but it was the only thing he could manage at the moment. That almost sounded like… like Harry had wanted to kiss him back. Which was insane. Unthinkable. Ridiculous. Potters did not kiss Malfoys – and Malfoys certainly did not kiss Potters, except under the most ludicrous of circumstances. They didn't think about kissing them, either, unless put under extreme pressure.

Harry wet his lips. There, Draco thought, extreme pressure. Rather like the extreme pressure he could

suddenly feel in his trousers. He tried to think the problem away, but the more he thought about not thinking about it, the more pressure he was under.

"Shall we try again?" Harry said, very faintly, as if he couldn't quite believe that he was asking such a thing. Draco knew that he couldn't be asking such a thing. It was impossible.

Harry – swaying slightly, as if he were suffering from concussion – leaned forward, splaying the fingers of one hand clumsily around Draco's cheek and chin. Draco allowed himself to be tugged towards Harry's face, on the grounds that if he wasn't initiating it then he couldn't be embarrassed about it later. You started it he said in his head, closing his eyes and hoping that Harry wouldn't bash into him, it's all your fault.

When their lips bumped, Draco nearly fell off the sofa, which had the unfortunate consequence of Harry wrapping an arm around his waist, holding him in place. Unfortunate because Draco suddenly discovered that, what he really, really wanted to do was run away and hide. Harry's lips were chapped and he was pressing them against Draco's own so gently that every remaining drop of blood in his body dropped between his legs. Who would have thought that tenderness could be so fucking erotic, Draco thought, as he shifted in his seat and tried to think of disgusting things. Disgusting things like – like Potter, he told himself sternly. Potter who had – oh God - reached up to tangle one hand through Draco's hair, stroking down the back of his neck until he was shuddering and gasping against Harry's mouth.

The problem – or bonus, Draco's traitorous brain informed him – with gasping against someone's mouth was twofold. First, it was hideously embarrassing. Malfoys didn't gasp – they made other people gasp, and they did it in the comfort of a marriage bed (or so Draco's mother had inferred). Second, and most significant, gasping meant opening the mouth. And Draco opening his mouth had given Potter – Harry – the entirely erroneous impression that Draco wanted to meet Harry's tongue.

And now Draco had met Harry's tongue, he was introduced to an unexpected third problem: he was about to lose his mind. Harry was licking Draco's own tongue slowly, gently – moving in and out of his mouth with tiny, seductive flicks that caught on lips and teeth and sent shock waves throughout Draco's entire body. Then, before he could prevent it, Draco full out moaned.

Harry stilled for a moment – a moment during which Draco considered how he could kill them both without anyone noticing. Then he did a thing which Draco would have protested about, if Harry had

asked him in advance. He grabbed Draco's hip and practically picked him up, swivelling him around so that Draco fell heavily against him, straddling Harry's thighs.

Draco knew that he had a cock. He knew that Harry had a cock. These were two completely obvious facts, neither of which he'd doubted for a moment. Knowing and knowing felt different though, the moment their hips touched. Draco felt torn between embarrassment at his current position – vulnerable and sort of in charge at the same time – and the sheer pleasure of pressure against his aching cock.

Then there was the fact that harry was kissing like he meant it. One hand wrapped tight around the back of Draco's neck, pulling him down, and the other around Draco's arse, pulling him so close it was a bit uncomfortable. Harry's mouth was soft and wet and every now and then he bit gently on Draco's lower lip, the sting sending a wave of sensation directly to his crotch.

Out of the corner of his eye, Draco saw something that wasn't entirely welcome. "I – I can see the door," he managed, speaking against Harry's mouth. It wasn't that he wanted Harry to stop, exactly. He wanted—fuck, he didn't know what he wanted.

"Oh," Harry said and stilled. "Um, okay."

Draco looked at him. Harry was red faced and slightly sweaty, his hair a mess and his eyes wide and pupils dilated. His lips were pink and swollen. He'd stopped kissing but his hands were still gripping Draco possessively, one around his neck, one tight against his arse.

Still, these things were no reason to stay when the door had appeared, Draco thought. They were certainly no reason press more closely against Harry and lean in for another kiss. He did though – there seemed to be no way to stop himself. Only when he felt a hand against his back, reaching under his shirt, did he think that perhaps he was getting in too deep.

"What are you doing, Potter?" he asked, trying to sound sarcastic rather than out of his depth and petrified.

"Um," Harry said, moving so that Draco was more settled in his lap. "I'm not sure."

"You haven't done this before," Draco said with a snort. He hadn't done it, either with a guy or a girl, but that was beside the point in his opinion. There was no way that Harry of all people had done it. Harry practically walked hand in hoof with unicorns, for fucks sake.

"Well, yeah, I have," Harry said almost apologetically. "Not loads, but yeah."

Draco went through, in his mind, Harry's possible partners. Weasley was a likely candidate. As was, well, Weasley – only the male variety. Granger, if she'd been truly desperate. Or – anyone in the wizarding world ever, come to think of it. Who would say no to the boy who lived, after all?

"Just Ginny," Harry said, as if reading Draco's mind. Then, at Draco's look of scepticism, "well, and Ron. But just the once! And we were drunk! It really doesn't count."

Draco laughed at Harry's stricken look for all of a second, before he realised that he was expected to meet this sharing of confidences with sharing of his own.

"I am a pure blood," Draco said haughtily. It should have been enough. For any normal wizard, who'd been brought up right, it should have been enough.

"And?" Harry said.

Draco felt himself blush. "What do you mean, and? I'm a pure blood. We don't risk tainting our bloodlines." He raised his chin. Harry would have to be an idiot to misunderstand that.

"Oh," Harry said. "Right." Then he laughed. "It's not as if I can get you pregnant." Draco turned an outraged look upon him. "Or, you know, the other way around," Harry added hastily, "if we, you know. Oh, forget it."

"You want to—" Draco started, rather unbelieving.

"I was speaking hypothetically!" Harry protested.

Draco moved his hips experimentally and Harry's eyes almost crossed, his mouth slackening. "Fucking hell, Draco," he murmured.

"I'm going now," Draco said.

Harry blinked at him. "You are?"

"I am," Draco said firmly, not moving.

But then Harry kissed him again – and Draco decided to put the door off for just a few more minutes. Harry's kisses were sloppier and more needy this time, and Draco approved. At least – he personally didn't approve, but his lower regions liked them. They liked it when Harry stopped kissing him as well, tipping Draco's head and nuzzling at his neck, licking wet trails up to his earlobe and nipping at the tender skin there.

Draco froze when he felt hands at the opening of his trousers, but he spread his thighs as if his brain had no say in the matter, his hips pushing forward wildly. Harry pressed his palm against Draco's mouth and Draco lapped it before he entirely realised the point of it. Harry kissed him at the same moment he pushed his hand under the waistband of Draco's boxers, wrapping his damp hand around Draco's cock.

Draco nearly died – or, at least, he nearly came in Harry's hand on the first touch, which would have been embarrassing enough to kill him on the spot. Harry was kissing him so enthusiastically, and his hand was working with agonising slowness up and down Draco's cock, thumb swirling over the head on each pass. Draco decided that he was going so slowly because the elastic of his underwear was in the way, making it awkward going. This was a bad thing. He shoved his trousers and pants down to his knees,

trying not to mind that he was half-naked while Harry was fully clothed.

"Oh," Harry said against his mouth, and Draco felt Harry's other hand stroke his arse, moving low to stroke practically been his legs and up. Draco didn't think he wanted anyone's fingers near the crack of his arse, but Harry's other hand felt so good that he didn't want to move in case he stopped.

Then Harry moved, pushing at Draco so there was more space between them. Draco wet his lips nervously, but it was okay. Harry was only – he was only. Fucking hell. Harry pushed a finger into Draco's mouth, sliding it in and out in a suggestive way that did nothing for Draco's self control. Draco didn't like the thought of where Harry was going to put that finger so he sucked on it fiercely, almost biting in his eagerness to keep it in his mouth.

Harry's mouth was open and when he swallowed, Draco's lips parted and the finger slipped out. "May I?" Harry murmured.

Harry's hand was working between Draco's legs and Draco found himself nodding, not really knowing exactly what he was agreeing to. Then he felt a finger, slick and cool, slide between his arse cheeks, drawing a chill line up and over his skin. At the same time Harry kissed him again, his tongue sliding over Draco's own.

"Fuck," Draco managed when Harry's wet finger swirled around his arsehole. The pressure was light and almost ticklish. He wasn't sure he liked it, but his body said that it did, bucking against the sensation. Harry spat, rather disgustingly, into his palm and slicked up Draco's cock, working it harder. Draco pressed his head hard into the crook of Harry's neck, his breathing coming faster and faster. Harry's finger against his arse was still teasing and slow, and his fist was still moving at far too slow a pace for Draco's liking.

"Please," Draco whimpered, hating himself for being so needy. He wanted though – he wanted so bad.

"Okay," Harry murmured.

To Draco's discomfort, Harry's hand around his cock didn't tighten, or speed up. The pressure against his

arsehole increased. He tensed – but as soon as he relaxed, Harry's finger pressed against the ring of muscle and slipped inside. Draco gasped. Harry's finger wasn't deep, but it was there – and it was wrong. What was most wrong was how fucking arousing it was, though. Every time Draco relaxed, Harry pressed his finger deeper – and every time Draco's muscles tightened around the intrusion, it felt fan-fucking-tastic.

"Okay?" Harry said against his hair.

"Uhh," Draco said, moving his hips. He found that if he moved the right way he could almost direct Harry's actions – moving his hips faster pushed his cock in and out of Harry's hand faster. It also pushed himself faster up and down Harry's finger. In, out, up, down. His body was on fire.

"God," Harry said, and tugged Draco's head towards his own. Harry kissed him ferociously, his tongue swiping across Draco's own with such force that Draco almost choked.

The sensations were too overwhelming to bear – he felt over stimulated in every part of his body. Draco came hard, pumping several spurts into Harry's hand and against his school sweater. Harry drew out his orgasm until he had to push Harry's hands away. He was so sensitive it almost hurt – and so sweaty and strung out that he almost forgot to be embarrassed.

It occurred to Draco that he was probably expected to return the favour, but Harry wasn't trying to make him. In fact, Harry was holding him loosely as if Draco was something easy to break, kissing around his mouth and up his cheek. It was very nice, Draco thought, his heart beating ridiculously fast. Very nice indeed.

As he came down from his orgasm, however, Draco began to feel more and more uncomfortable. He was sitting, half naked in Harry Potter's lap - his come a white smear down the front of Harry's top. And he had, apparently, lost his mind earlier and told Harry that he was a vir—Draco shuddered. He felt a bit like fleeing – the door was there, so it was a perfectly reasonable option – but then that would draw attention to his state of undress.

"You okay?" Harry asked. Harry – who'd, just moments before, had his finger up Draco's… "Draco?"

Harry said. He sounded concerned.

"I feel disgusting," Draco said, still fixated on how embarrassed he felt. To be so sweaty and dishevelled in public – ugh, and he could smell himself. How vile.

"Oh," Harry said. "Right."

Draco processed that. Harry sounded small – and hurt. What the fuck? Draco reran the conversation they'd just had in his head. "Oh, don't be ridiculous," he said, running a hand over his hair in an attempt to feel less messy. "I didn't mean it like that." He wrinkled his nose. "I need a bath."

"Oh, right," Harry said again, but this time he sounded more cheerful. He reached for his wand, incanting several cleaning spells over them both.

Draco took advantage of Harry's momentary distraction to tug his boxers and trousers back up. His fingers fumbled with the buttons, but when he was done he felt much more normal, which was a relief.

"I really am going now" Draco said, finally feeling able to look Harry in the face.

Harry smiled at him a little uncertainly. "Okay?"

Draco slid off Harry's lap, feeling his dignity slide down another degree on the scale (sweet Merlin, he'd been sitting on Potter's lap) and headed to the door.

It would have been a lot slicker, Draco thought later, if he'd just closed the door behind him without looking back. He didn't though. He turned – not entirely sure why – and half-smiled at Harry, feeling sheepish. And Harry – fuck him – smiled back, and Draco's insides flipped. So, instead of leaving with the upper hand, Draco left with his heart pounding and his palms clammy.

He felt more nervous and disconcerted by that than by anything that had gone before.

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"Come on, Harry," Hermione said, poking him in the side. "I know there's something wrong. You might as well just tell me."

"Yeah, she'll work it out sooner or later," Ron said with a grin. "She's like a dog after a bone, mate. You've got no chance."

"Ron!" Hermione said.

Ron grinned wider. "Sorry, dearest."

Hermione reached over Harry, who was sitting between them on a sofa in the Gryffindor common room, and whacked Ron.

"Assault! Assault!" Ron said, cowering behind Harry and making a fake whimpering noise. "Domestic assault is a terrible thing, Harry. I hope you never discover what—"

"Ronald," Hermione said, her voice a dire warning.

"Sorry, sorry," Ron said, relaxing back against the sofa cushions and laughing. "So, what's up Harry? Not still brooding over Malfoy's boxer shorts, are you?"

"Shut up!" Harry hissed, as a few curious heads looked towards him. "Lower your voice, Ron!"

Ron sniggered. "Sorry. So, you are then?"

Harry wasn't sure what to say to that. Malfoy's boxers were a problem – but not quite in the way that Ron meant. They were a problem in that Harry wanted to get into them again, but preferably whilst Draco was still wearing them. Harry wasn't sure when his feelings for Draco had changed from irritation and mild hatred to – to irritation and mild hatred, but with a compelling need to push him down and kiss and kiss and kiss him. It wasn't what he'd call romantic, but then he'd been dumped by Ginny because of his apparent lack of romance. You're like my best friend, Ginny had said, and cried and kissed him on the cheek, and told him she hoped he'd be happy when he found the right person. Harry didn't see the problem with being best friends, to be honest – wasn't that a nice thing? – but he'd felt less saddened by their split than he'd expected, which saddened him more than the split itself.

Harry knew that he was a bit slow on the uptake, but he wasn't an idiot. He knew he could have pretty much any witch – or wizard – for the asking. That made him pretty much not want to date, ever. So it was nice, in a way, to be attracted to someone who didn't like him all that much. On the other hand it was fucking depressing. He didn't want to like someone who didn't like him – and he certainly didn't want to like Draco, who was irritating and childish and selfish.

And, right now, he really didn't want to tell Ron and Hermione all about it, because Ron would die from shock and Hermione would give him all sorts of wise advice that Harry wouldn't want to follow.

Ron nudged him. "Earth to Harry," he said. "We're waiting for your hideous confession." Then he pulled a face. "Merlin, Harry," he said, his gaze dropping down to between Harry's legs. "You're not wearing, you know, them right now are you?"

"No!" Harry protested, shoving Ron.

Ron yelped and fell off the sofa.

"Ronald, you really are incorrigible," Hermione sniffed. Then she pulled on Harry's arm. "We'll go and have a nice little chat without the village idiot, Harry."

Harry tried to pull away, but Hermione had his arm in too tight a grip. He soon found himself walking outside the castle, arm in arm with her. They sat by the lake. It was a chill late spring day, and no-one else was around.

"It is Malfoy that's bothering you, isn't it?" Hermione asked. She fixed Harry with a stare. It was almost, Harry thought, as if she was trying to hypnotise him into revealing his innermost secrets.

"Um," Harry said.

"Come on," Hermione said. "Tell me everything."

Harry gave up. He could either tell her now – or he could tell her in half an hour, after she'd lectured him into submission. So he told her everything. Everything, that is, apart from the exact details of his last 'meeting' with Draco. From the look on her face, though, she knew exactly what he was leaving out.

"It's certainly interesting," Hermione said when Harry was done.

"That's one way of putting it," Harry said gloomily. He felt no better now his secret was shared. He bet Hermione would tell Ron, and then Ron would call in professional help and try to get him put in a secure ward at St Mungo's. He probably belonged there, all things considered.

"No," Hermione said, waving a hand. "Not that part of it. I mean about the room of requirement. It's interesting that the door didn't disappear when you entered the room first, but it consistently disappears when Malfoy is the first to enter."

"Oh," Harry said. "I didn't think about that. I only went in there the once."

Hermione looked thoughtful, pursing her lips and tapping a finger against her leg. "There must be some connection between that, and between the conditions for leaving the room. It's strange that the room's

never acted like this before."

"I suppose it's never been gutted by Fiendfyre before," Harry said, shuddering. The memory was still a vivid, horrible one. He didn't need to try hard to recall the way Draco had clutched him, so tight it hurt, and the screams as—

Harry felt an arm around his waist and he leaned against Hermione. They were both silent for a moment, mourning the dead.

"I think," Hermione said after a while, "that we need to carry out a few experiments."

Harry tried not to flinch. Hermione with a plan was a terrifying thing. "Experiments?"

"Yes, experiments. We need to work out what the room intends. Put you and Malfoy back there and—"

"No way," Harry interrupted. "I'm not making the first move."

Hermione giggled and Harry felt his face flush.

"I didn't mean it like that!" Harry said, aware that he had kind of meant it like that. Still, he thought, he had his dignity – sort of. He wanted to hold on to it for as long as he could.

"Fine, we'll ask Malfoy in advance," Hermione amended. "Don't worry, Harry."

"Don't worry?" Harry echoed. "Don't worry?"

Hermione nodded. "You need to get this sorted out for your peace of mind – and for Malfoy's as well, I

expect."

Harry sighed. There wasn't much he could say to that.

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"Draco, darling, what have you been up to now?" Pansy said, entering the Slytherin common room and heading straight for him.

Draco looked up from his magazine. "Hmm?"

"The awful Granger is outside, right now, requesting your attendance."

"Granger?" Draco asked, wrinkling his nose. "What the hell does she want?"

"I don't know," Pansy said. "Apparently it's confidential. I think you should steer well clear. Nerdiness like that might well be contagious."

Draco frowned. Could Granger have found out about his – his liaison with Harry, and be here to blackmail him? No, he decided, that wasn't something a Gryffindor would do. She was probably here on behalf of Harry. Irritatingly, he found this intriguing. Did she have a message for him? He smirked to himself. Did Harry intend to beg to see him again? That would be a satisfying turn of events. He stood up.

"Where are you going?" Pansy said, narrowing her eyes.

"To see Granger."

Pansy linked her arm in his. "I'll come with you, to see you come to no harm."

"I think I'll be safe, Pansy," Draco said, trying to shake her off. "I'm not helpless, you know."

"You still haven't tried your wand again, though, have you?" Pansy said. "You might as well give in, Draco darling. I can't be swayed."

Draco felt like screaming. Did she have to keep reminding him that his issue with his wand still wasn't sorted? Being without a wand was like missing a limb – everything was complicated and laborious. In a school surrounded by wizards, to suddenly find ones' self as good as a Squib was a trial indeed.

Still, he thought, trying to keep his temper as Pansy led the way, it wouldn't hurt to have an ally with him. He doubted that Granger meant foul play, but Pansy was insightful, if bitchy, and possibly more likely to keep a clear head where Gryffindors were concerned.

"Where are we going?" Draco asked when they left the Slytherin dungeons and failed to encounter a Granger.

"Here," Pansy said, tugging Draco down a long corridor. A long corridor which contained – horrors – not just a Granger. Harry was there as well.

"Er, hello," Harry said like an idiot.

Draco felt marginally cheered. "Good evening," he said, composing his features into a knowing smirk. "Harry."

It was worth the strange look that Pansy gave him to see the expression on Harry's face at being called by his given name in company. His lips parted and he looked very discomposed, shifting from foot to foot and reaching up with one hand to scratch through his hair.

Draco nodded his head in Granger's direction. "Miss Granger," he said very formally. He noticed, raising an eyebrow, that she had a clipboard. A fucking clipboard.

"Malfoy," Granger said. She glanced, coldly, in Pansy's direction and back to Draco. "We're here to get to the bottom of recent events."

Draco felt himself go red. Get to the bottom - just what the fuck had Harry told her about the last time in the room of requirement? "What do you mean?" he said, aiming for frosty and supercilious rather than shrill, but aware he was missing by an octave.

Granger waved her free hand. "You know. Why the door comes and goes when you're both in the room. I've made some notes. I have some ideas. I'd like to try out a few things first though."

"What?" Draco said, very flatly.

"Harry, can you 'require' the room, please?" Granger asked, completely ignoring Draco.

The door slid into view.

"Interesting," Granger said. "I've been thinking about it for ten minutes and it had no effect for me." She made a note with her quill. "Harry, go in."

Harry blinked at her. "What?"

Granger rolled her eyes and pointed at the door. "In!"

Harry did as commanded. Draco hoped he'd never be so pussy-whipped. It was pathetic how little

resistance Harry put up. Was he man or mouse?

"Now you," Granger said, wheeling round to look Draco right in the eye.

"No," Draco said.

"Scared?" Granger said. She looked horribly sympathetic. "Don't worry, Draco, I'm sure it's perfectly safe."

Draco went in the room. He'd rather be trapped in a room with Harry than being patronised by Granger, all things considered. Once he was in, however, he found he wasn't trapped. The door was still there. He raised an eyebrow at Harry. "It appears we can leave."

"Yes," Harry said. Then he laughed. "Let's take a moment to recover before we get back to Hermione and her clipboard though, shall we?"

Draco found himself laughing back. Then he realised he was sharing a joke with Harry, and this disconcerted him so much that he decided that Granger was the better option after all.

"So, it was as I expected," Hermione said after she'd grilled them both on their experience. "Now for the next experiment."

"I think not," Draco said. "I've had quite enough of your Gryffindor games—" He broke off. "Pansy, what are you…"

Draco found himself in the room once more. Except this time he was in the room with Pansy. Who'd pushed him in there when he wasn't expecting it. "What the hell are you doing?" he said – or at least was about to say, when Hermione, clutching Harry's arm, shot into the room, dragging Harry behind her.

"WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING?" Draco said again, although this time at a much louder volume.

And then the door disappeared.

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It was half an hour later, and they were all still arguing. At least, Pansy and Granger were arguing, while Harry was displaying more sense than Draco expected and staying well out of it. Pansy had snatched Granger's clipboard and soon, Draco expected, would be attempting to beat Granger over the head with it. He was tempted to beat them both. After all, he wouldn't be there if Pansy hadn't cooperated with Granger in the first place, agreeing to the mad idea to put them all in the room together. Granger, it seemed, had hypothesised that the door wouldn't disappear because she and Pansy were present. Now they were fighting over who was the most idiotic and pathetic and feeble-minded. Draco would have enjoyed it, but he was too busy worrying over how they were going to get of the room once more. There was no way he was employing his and Harry’s tried and tested methods in front of the girls.

Then Granger sighed and said sorry, and whispered something in Pansy's ear. Pansy laughed – and Draco didn't like it. He didn't like the idea of Pansy and Granger being friends, or even acquaintances. Pansy's bitchery and Granger's brains – now that was a match made in hell. They could take over the world without even breaking a sweat.

Granger pulled out a fresh piece of paper and picked up her quill once more. She made some notes and drew some lines. "New experiment," she said. She bit on the feather of her quill. "We'll find out if it's affection that opens the door."

"How the fuck are we going to do that?" Draco found himself saying. "Sit in a circle holding hands and singing a happy song?"

Granger gave him a disapproving look. "I don't see why not," she said.

"I'm really bad at singing," Harry said sincerely. Then he grinned. "Though you all might bond through

the shared pain, or something."

Granger smiled at him. She didn't look quite so terrifying when she smiled like that, Draco thought. She was still pretty scary though. Particularly when she said the word 'affection' and had a clipboard and a quill. What the hell was she going to make them do?

"Let's go round the group and say something nice about each other," Granger announced. She didn't look like she quite believed what she was saying.

"I don't think lying will get us out," Pansy said and Draco grinned. She had a good point, his girl.

Granger glared at her. "We're not going to lie," she said. "I'm sure we can think of at least one nice thing to say about each other without it killing us."

Pansy, Draco was amused to see, looked highly dubious. "Go on then, Granger," he said. "You first."

Granger looked discomforted for a moment, looking down at her clipboard and twirling her quill in her hand. "Um… Pansy," she said and then stopped, pulling a face that Draco would have found hilarious under different circumstances.

"Nothing?" Pansy said after Granger remained silent. "How charming. Although, I must say, I'm drawing a blank when it comes to—"

"Give it a rest, you two," Harry said, suddenly joining the conversation. Draco glanced at him, unwillingly impressed. He was staying well out of this one, he decided. "I'll go first." He took a deep breath. "Hermione, you already know I love you, so I think I can miss you out."

Draco blinked. How could he say things like that without blushing? Granger was blushing, right up to the roots of her hair, but she didn't look displeased.

"Pansy," Harry started.

Pansy went stiff for a moment, before bringing a finger up to her mouth and chewing on a nail. That shocked Draco more than anything that had come before – Pansy never chewed her nails. That was a common thing to do, she often said, and a dreadful habit in which she never indulged.

"I admire your loyalty to your friends," Harry continued, and Pansy stiffened again, a strange look coming over her face. And then, horrors, Harry turned to Draco with a determined expression. Draco had no idea what he was going to say, and he felt almost more terrified to hear a compliment from Harry's lips, than he would have if he'd been expecting an insult. "And you're a git, Malfoy," Harry said.

"Harry!" Hermione interjected, and Harry frowned at her.

"I'm not done, Hermione. As I was saying, you're a git, Malfoy, but you're less of a git than you used to be. Andyouhavenicehair," he mumbled.

"I beg your pardon?" Draco said, not sure he'd heard the last bit right. Had Harry really just complimented him on his appearance? Was Harry a 12-year-old girl?

"I'm not saying it again," Harry said, frowning at Draco. "You should have had the courtesy to listen the first time around."

"And you should speak more distinctly," Draco started, but broke off when he saw the look on Granger's face. It looked like she was ready to start wreaking havoc with her clipboard, with possible bonus 'quill-eye-poking-out' action.

Five excruciating minutes later, Draco had learned that Pansy envied Hermione's thighs (dear God); that Hermione liked Pansy's haircut; and other similarly scintillating facts. Draco had already complimented the girls – a challenge, but not a terrible one – and now there was just Harry left. What could he possibly say that would fit the bill, and embarrass Harry horribly without harming his own sense of self-worth?

Ah!

"Your scar turns me on," he said and tried not to burst into laughter. As soon as he said it Pansy started giggling and, although Granger was evidently trying to look disapproving, her lips were twitching as if she was trying not to join in. Harry, however, looked a bit like he'd been hit in the face – his expression a mask of shock.

"Be serious," Pansy said, between splutters. "You're ruining Granger's little game."

"It's not a game, Parkinson," Granger said severely. "I'm trying to get us out of here, thank you." She turned to Draco. "Did you mean it?"

And suddenly the almost-joke wasn't quite so funny. Everyone was staring at Draco, and what the hell was he supposed to say now? "Er, yes?" he said. It was kind of true, he supposed. Harry's scar was a potent indicator of his magic, and there wasn't much that was sexier than natural power, Draco thought. Even the dark lord hadn't proved otherwise.

It wasn't like he wanted to lick it or anything, Draco thought, although the mental image was making him feel uncomfortable in a highly unacceptable way. He dug his fingernails into his thigh and the sharp pain quelled the sudden arousal that was swirling in his stomach. When he'd pulled himself together, he caught the tail-end of a look exchanged between the girls. He did not like the intrigued, amused expressions on their faces. Were the little bitches bonding through Draco's pain?

At least, Draco thought viciously, Harry didn't look amused – he was studiously ignoring Draco, hands jammed hard in his pockets and his mouth tight and almost upset. Draco blinked at that, but decided he must be imagining it. Surely, after all this time, Draco hadn't managed to finally find a foolproof way of getting under Harry's skin? Right when he no longer wanted to all that much, truth be told. It was too, too infuriating.

"Well," Granger said in a bright voice, consulting her clipboard. "That didn't exactly work. We'd better try something else."

"Has Potter told you how they got out before?" Pansy asked Granger.

Draco glared at her – his special death glare. "Pansy," he said, his voice a warning. "Don't be a bitch."

Pansy smiled sweetly at him. "I'm just helping with the experiment, darling."

"You're supposed to be on my side," Draco muttered.

"I am, Draco!" Pansy said, her eyes widening. "I just want what's best for you."

"I have a general idea," Granger said to Pansy, interrupting. Her cheeks had grown flushed.

"Then it looks like we're going to get to watch a show, Granger," Pansy smirked.

Harry said "no way" at the exact moment that Draco also declined, although slightly less politely. Fuck that, he thought. Absolutely no way in hell.

Granger wet her lips and looked down at her clipboard again, her forehead one big frown. "As a last resort," she said firmly. "And we'll turn our backs if it comes to that. It would be hardly appropriate for us to watch."

"You'd miss the chance to see—" Pansy started.

"If we're doing it, you two are doing it," Draco said before he'd thought it through. He shouldn't have even admitted the possibility of – of touching Harry in an inappropriate way in company. The Harry part made his pulse race in a disturbing way – but the idea of the girls had quite the opposite effect on his libido. Still, Draco thought as cheerfully as he could, there was no way Pansy would agree to touch a Mudblood in any fashion, so his and Harry's modesty was undoubtedly safe. Even if they would be stuck

in the room for the rest of eternity, damn it all.

Draco watched as Pansy and Granger exchanged a glance, part disgusted, part worried, from the looks of it, but to his unadulterated horror, Pansy nodded. "I'm up for it if Granger is," she said. Then she smirked. "The payoff would be worth it. Granger?"

Granger flushed the funniest scarlet colour and then tilted her chin up, nose in the air. It was a chilling sight, Draco thought. "If we must," Granger said. "Strictly as part of the experiments, you understand. I'm still determined to get to the bottom of this mystery."

"Hermione," Harry said. "Ron will—"

"Don't fuss, Harry," Hermione said, giving him a withering stare. "What Ron doesn't know won't hurt him. It's not like anyone's going to go boasting about this to everyone, is it?" she challenged.

She had a good point, Draco thought with deepening gloom. He wasn't going to boast about seeing Granger in a sexual situation – even if it was (please, please God) just a hug or a peck on the cheek. The sight would, in all probability, scar him for life. As would the experience of kissing Harry in public. Even the thought of being kissed was making his hands go clammy with expectation – there was no way he'd be able to get out of this with his dignity intact.

"Well, what first Granger?" Pansy asked.

Granger opened and closed her mouth like a fish, then pursed her lips. "Hugs," she said, and then reeled out a list of instructions.

It was, Draco thought, as he mechanically hugged first Pansy, and then (ugh) Granger, rather like being ordered about by some kind of deranged Auror. Granger had a terrible determined light in her eye and she was ticking things off and making notes like a madwoman, apparently making them hug in every possible combination and noting down the results. After several rounds, he'd even managed to hug Harry without feeling particularly moved by the experience – there was something about Granger that

robbed the situation of any kind of sexual vibe whatsoever, for which Draco was grateful if bemused.

And then they moved on to kisses.

It was an interesting experience, Draco thought, watching two girls snog. He'd never thought the idea of girls together was particularly thrilling, but seeing two girls he actually knew locking lips was so unsexy as to make him question his own manhood. Was there something wrong with him? It wasn't just that it was Granger – or that Pansy wasn't exactly the most attractive of girls, with her strange squashed features. It was just that . . . Well, he didn't know exactly. He suspected that no two girls snogging would get him going.

Draco shot a quick glance at Harry. Harry looked faintly nauseated, and when he caught Draco's eye he pulled a face and they shared a strange moment of 'oh God, how gross is that?' Draco wondered if that puzzled Harry as much as it did him.

When the girls had done, the door was still very much in absence. Hermione cleared her throat, wrinkling her nose. "Well, that didn't work either." She made a note. "Right, your turn, boys."

Draco looked at Harry. Harry looked at the floor – or rather, he stared at the floor, as if by ignoring the situation it would go away. Draco felt bizarrely irritated. It wasn't that he wanted Harry to be enthusiastic about it, exactly – or rather…

Draco got up and stomped over to Harry, grabbed a handful of his hair and tugged his head back. He planted a hard kiss on Harry's mouth and then stomped back to his seat, trying not to go red. Stupid, fucking Potter. Stupid, fucking Pansy. Stupid, fucking Granger. Why couldn't they all just leave him alone to sulk for the rest of his life?

"Didn't work," Hermione said, making a note.

When Draco risked a glance at Harry, Harry had one hand up to his mouth, and was gingerly feeling his lip. He had a puzzled expression on his face. Well, fuck him, Draco thought. He wasn't about to enlighten

him – he didn't know himself why he suddenly felt so mad.

"And was completely disappointing," Pansy drawled. "What are we going to do now, Granger?"

Granger looked appalled for a moment, then a wave of relief washed over her face. "I suppose we should try other combinations."

"Other combinations?" Harry said, rather faintly.

Granger nodded. "I kiss you – and Draco – and you kiss Pansy – and me."

"I am not kissing you," Harry said firmly.

"Excuse me?" Granger said, sounding offended.

"You're my friend. And Ron would kill me," Harry protested. "I'm not snogging you, Hermione, and that's an end to it."

"Well, what do you suggest then, Harry?" Hermione snapped. "We're in danger of being stuck here for the rest of our lives, unless—" She turned purple. "You and Draco," she said, very faintly, "you didn't, you know, go further, did you, before?"

It was Draco's turn to go purple. Harry was a similar hue. If only Pansy would turn that colour as well, they'd have a matching set, Draco thought.

"Um," Harry said.

Draco winced. He was impressed how, without using a word, Harry had landed them both right in it.

"I suppose," Pansy said with a snort, "you could try the kiss again. I don't think you put nearly enough effort into it."

"Um, why?" Harry said faintly. "It didn't work just now."

Granger looked interested. "Maybe if you kiss Draco, that would work." She made a note. "I didn't think about order or reciprocity when I was making my chart." She looked up at Harry, and then switched her gaze to Draco. "Well, go on then," she ordered.

"We're not performing monkeys," Draco muttered. "At least I'm not," he added, trying not to look as nervous as he felt as Harry slid over to sit next to him.

He expected a short, hard kiss – rather along the lines of the one he'd planted on Harry's mouth just a few minutes ago. He was entirely disconcerted by what came next – which wasn't a kiss. It was Harry's hand, sliding around the back of his neck and tangling in his hair. And then Harry still wasn't kissing him, he was looking at him very seriously, tugging slightly on Draco's hair to get him to look back. It was hideously embarrassing, and Draco wasn't quite sure why his mouth suddenly felt so dry – or why he (equally suddenly) felt so turned on.

"Harry," he said. He meant it in an impatient, 'get on with it' kind of a way, but it came out more like a whine. He sounded like he was begging.

"Goodness," Pansy said, sounding quite unlike herself. "Potter's quite intense, isn't he, Granger?"

"Shut up, Pansy," Harry said, without taking his eyes off Draco's face.

And then – Draco's heart sped up so much he could feel it in his mouth – Harry bent forward and nibbled on his lower lip. Nibbled on his fucking lip. Although it was more of a suck than a bite – but one that

ended with teeth. And it was so fucking hot that Draco felt a bit like he was going to spontaneously combust – because it was weird, on the one hand, and it felt kinky without actually being kinky, and it made Draco think of what it would be like to have Harry's mouth sucking on another, more intimate, part of his body.

Draco gasped and broke away, trying not to pant, but Harry didn't look ashamed of himself. He just grinned at Draco, a lopsided smile that made Draco's insides flip, and bent forward again to kiss Draco properly. He was so soft and warm and enthusiastic, without being in the least bit sloppy, and Draco wanted – he didn't know what he wanted, exactly, but it involved Harry and a bed, and a complete lack of an audience.

"Er, that's enough," Granger said. "Time out!"

"Granger," Pansy said, sounding disappointed. Not as disappointed as Draco felt though, although he was trying his best to conceal it. At the sound of his friend's voice Harry had stopped immediately, pulling back and clearing his throat, turning away from Draco and towards Granger.

"Well it's not working, Parkinson," Granger said sternly. "We need to explore more avenues."

"Oh," Pansy said, an evil glint appearing in her eye. "You mean we get to order them about?"

"I'm not sure I'd put it like that, exactly," Granger said, but she didn't say it with nearly enough conviction for Draco's liking.

"No-one is ordering me about," Draco said, wanting to point this out before things got out of hand. "Absolutely not."

"I think you should stick your hand down Potter's pants," Pansy said.

"Parkinson!," Granger squealed, and then wore a face that clearly said that that was something she

wouldn’t be averse to seeing.

"Um, excuse me?" Harry said.

"Oooh," Pansy said. "Or you could do Draco first. Which do you think, Hermione?"

Draco noticed, trying not to grind his teeth, that Pansy had just called Granger by her first name. The girls were bonding. Bonding over his utter humiliation. A friendship founded on voyeurism didn't bode well for the future. Pansy was such a cow. How dare she corrupt a Gryffindor into her foul ways?

"I—" Granger said, clearly conflicted. "I don't think—" She stopped. "Harry?" she asked, turning to him. "I'm really sorry."

Harry groaned. "This is ridiculous," he said. "I'll only do it if you promise to absolutely never, ever tell Ron."

Draco couldn't speak for a moment. When he'd regained the power of speech he said, "That's it? Of all the things to sell your soul for, you pick immunity from Ronald Weasley?"

"You've never been teased by Ron," Harry said, grinning. "He'd never let me forget this if he found out."

"And what do I get from this experience?" Draco asked.

Harry raised an eyebrow and Draco suddenly felt very, very hot.

"Oh, and you two are turning your backs," Harry added.

"What?" Pansy said.

"Of course," Granger said. "You have my word."

Pansy muttered something but Granger pulled on her arm, and together they shifted a sofa so they were sitting facing the wall, rather than into the room.

There was an uncomfortable silence. Draco stared at Harry – and Harry smiled at him, rather ruefully. "Quiet in here, huh?" he said. Draco snorted and Pansy giggled, before Granger whacked her and she subsided into small, brief laughs that she obviously couldn't stop.

"What shall we do?" Draco said – or at least mouthed to Harry.

Harry rolled his eyes and slid off the sofa to kneel in front of Draco. Draco's heart was beating so loudly that he was sure everyone in the room could hear it – and they could definitely hear the rustling as Harry went for the fastening of his trousers. Before he could protest – and he wasn't sure he would have, even had there been an appropriate moment – Harry had yanked Draco's trousers from under his arse and down.

Draco felt like a bit of a twat sitting there in his boxers, trousers falling to his ankles. He was in company after all – even if the company had its back to him and was trying not to laugh. He felt short of air but he didn't dare try to breathe deeper, because then the girls would know.

He couldn't stop himself from taking a sharp breath though when Harry's face pressed between his legs, his nose rubbing against the material covering Draco's cock. Draco made the transition from 'mostly hard' to 'so hard it hurt' in nought to ten seconds as Harry pressed open-mouthed kisses to his cock through his boxers, taking wet licks through the fabric that were infuriatingly gentle and certainly designed to drive Draco to the brink of insanity.

Draco was trying his best not to make a noise, he really was, but he couldn't stop himself. It was like someone else was in charge of his lungs, and each gasp and mewl sounded horrendously loud in the

quiet of the room.

"Enjoying yourself, darling?" Pansy said suddenly.

"Fuck off," Draco managed, his eyes rolling back in his head as Potter did something particularly delicious with his tongue.

"Language, Draco," Pansy said cheerily. "What would your mother say?"

Now that was an unpleasant thing to think about.

"Draco," Harry said, patting him on the hip. "Stand up."

"Ooooh," Pansy said. "Audio description, how fabulous."

"Pansy, don't," Granger said, but she was almost giggling.

Draco glared at Harry, but did as he was told. He just wanted to get this over and – fucking hell, perhaps he didn't. Harry tugged Draco's boxers down with one smooth move, and before Draco could even react, he took Draco's cock into his mouth.

Draco would have fallen – his legs suddenly feeling weak and unsupportive – if it wasn't for Harry's hands on his hips, holding him steady. Harry's mouth was so warm and wet, and he was sucking gently, but enough that Draco knew he was not going to last very long. Even the distressing sight of the backs of Granger and Pansy's heads wasn't enough to put him off.

Even the noises that Harry was making wasn't enough to put him off. A kind of wet, squelching sound that seemed to fill the room. There was no way that the girls couldn't tell what that was – what was

currently being done to him, rather enthusiastically if he was any judge.

Draco found, to his shame, that he couldn't hold back his moans any longer. Swear-words began to feature, and his hand moved down to tangle in Harry's hair, quite without his permission. Harry began to speed up, and Draco felt a hot, unbearable tightness tug at his groin, his legs shaking so much it was a wonder they hadn't given out from under him.

"Fucking hell," Draco groaned and came, managing, by some miracle, not to fall over and squash Harry flat.

And then, not sure what the fuck was wrong with him, Draco flopped on the sofa and tugged Harry hard on top of him, pulling him into a hard, vicious kiss. Harry's mouth was really wet and he tasted odd, but Draco shut his eyes tight and tried not to think about it.

"Don't you fucking dare turn around," Draco announced to the room in general, then shoved his hand between his and Harry's bodies, fumbling for Harry's buttons and shoving his hand down his trousers and round his cock before his brain could catch up with him and tell him that was a bad idea.

Draco had never touched anyone else's cock apart from his own, and never considered that he might – except, if truth be told, over the past few days, when he'd been able to think of little else. Harry's cock was very hot to the touch, and Harry himself made a funny breathy noise when Draco made an experimental movement up and down.

Draco noticed almost idly that the door had appeared the moment he'd touched Harry, but he felt disinclined to stop. Instead he shoved at Harry, pushing him up so Harry was sort of straddling Draco's thighs, and Draco himself propped up by the arm of the sofa. It was mortifying, feeling Harry's gaze on him, but more exciting than anything else – particularly when he spat into his hand and wiped the slick mess up and down Harry's cock and Harry made that noise again, kind of like he wanted to die.

"Are you actually returning the favour, Draco?" Pansy said, her voice strained but tinged with amusement. "That's a new one on you."

"Shut up, Pansy," Draco said. Harry's eyes had fluttered shut and he was breathing very fast and shallow as Draco wanked him off, his hips bucking. It was quite a sight.

"Are you okay, Harry?" Granger suddenly said.

Harry opened his eyes unexpectedly, and Draco found himself staring right into pure green.

"Uh, fine," Harry managed, wetting his lips. He reached forward with one shaking hand and stroked Draco's cheek with his thumb. "Oh God, Draco," he mouthed.

There was silence from the girls. Draco found he couldn't look away from Harry's face – his lips parted, his face flushed and his eyes wide. He was so fucking lovely, it was unbelievable. He sped up his wrist and Harry bit his lip, eyes widening even further. He came almost silently, coating Draco's hand and the front of his jumper with strings of white, before half-collapsing on Draco, his cheek against Draco's own.

*****

"We're never speaking of this," Harry said as he walked back to the Gryffindor tower with an oddly quiet Hermione. "Never, ever, ever," he repeated, just in case she hadn't understood the first time. 'Just,' he said to himself, 'as Ron and I will never, ever speak of that night with the Firewhiskey'. He grinned at the memory, half-wincing as he remembered the look on Ron's face when they'd woken up and realised exactly what they'd done. It had been fun, and clumsy, and loving – but it had been Ron, and Ron was Ron, and he could keep his cock to himself for the rest of eternity, as far as Harry was concerned. Apparently Hermione knew, but Harry had never dared bring it up in case she garrotted him. He liked being alive – it suited him.

Hermione giggled. "I can't believe you did that – and then Draco—"

"What did I just say about never speaking about it, ever?" Harry said sternly.

"I can't not!" Hermione sniggered. Then she gasped. "You weren't – I mean you didn't…"

"Didn't what?" Harry said, feeling immensely weary. It was late at night, after all, and it had been a very long day.

"Do it," Hermione whispered.

"No," Harry said shortly.

"Hmm," Hermione said.

Harry felt a dire premonition. "Don't you two dare make us go in there again," he said.

"Gosh," Hermione said. "So you nearly did it, did you?"

Harry bit his tongue – it was the only way to stop himself from wailing. The whole situation was too bizarre for words. He still hadn't wrapped his head around the idea that he liked Malfoy. He wasn't good with identifying his own feelings, but he was pretty sure that he wouldn't feel quite so attracted to Draco if he didn't like him. After all, he'd never particularly thought Draco was fit before – it was only now, now that Draco wasn't acting so objectionable, that Harry thought he was rather beautiful, in an angular, severe way. He liked the expression that Draco had on his face – more and more – when Harry was with him. Sort of vulnerable and innocent. It made Harry think that there was some hope that Draco wasn't pure git all the way through – and that there was hope that he had at least one or two redeeming features. It wasn't love – but it was more than like, and for a long time Harry had never expected he'd even tolerate Draco, let alone like him.

"You know, you are allowed," Hermione said rather reflectively. "No reason why you shouldn't. Might do him some good as well. I suspect he's been feeling sorry for himself."

"He does have a reason," Harry said, remembering how bad he felt when his wand was broken. "It must

be hard for him, what with his wand not working." He smiled through a yawn. "It's stupid, really. I can't control my magic properly, and he can't either – but for two completely different reasons."

"Mm," Hermione said. Then she made a strangled gasp. "I'm going to the library!"

"Now?" Harry said, yawning again. "Do it tomorrow morning."

"Oh," Hermione said. "No, I'll just go and get a few books. I can read in bed."

"Okay," Harry said, and wished her goodnight. She was insane, his friend, but then he supposed he wouldn't have her any other way.

*****

Harry was having a dream. It was an odd dream, and he wasn't quite sure what it meant. He was almost awake, but not quite, and he both recognised the people he was seeing – and he didn't. He knew it was a dream because there was Professor Snape, and Snape was dead, but if he wasn't then there was no way he'd be dressed like that – like a pirate, Harry realised, with a hooked hand and an eye-patch. And there was a ticking noise, coming from an acromantular, painted green, and when he looked around there was Ron and Dean and Seamus, dressed in ragged Muggle clothes and odd warpaint. He fell deeper into the dream.

"Potter," said a voice. It was a very irate voice. It sounded liked Draco, except Draco called him Harry now, Harry thought, trying to wake up. "Potter, wake up before I kill you dead."

Harry shook himself awake – except he couldn't be awake, because the floor was rocking and he was tied to something, and when he looked down at his feet he was wearing pirate boots. "Huh?" he said, blinking and hoping it would go away.

"What the fuck have you done?" Draco said. "What the fuck is this?"

"Um," Harry said. "Don't blame me. I've only just woken up. It must be your fault. Are we in the room of requirement?"

"I haven't got a clue," came the tetchy reply. "I just woke up tied to you, dressed in this, with a deep desire to pull out your intestines and wind them around a stick."

"That's not very nice," Harry said. Then his brain caught up. "What are you wearing?" he asked. This all felt oddly familiar – much like his dream, he thought. Had the Gryffindors put on a play, and they were playing the starring roles without giving their permission?

"Never mind," Draco muttered. "The only thing worse than wearing it, would be you seeing me wear it."

Harry strained his head round to try and see, but Draco shoved at him and he gave up, instead turning his attention to the ropes tying them together. They were surprisingly loose and, even though Draco seemed to be doing his best to keep them tight, Harry had them free in no time. He turned around and – did his best not to die of laughter.

Draco was in a dress. It was a demure dress with long sleeves and a long, full skirt. It had a high collar and some of Draco's hair was in short, stubby bunches. When Harry looked down at Draco's feet he was wearing sensible girl shoes and white socks.

Harry broke into sniggers, despite his best intentions, and despite the murderous look Draco was giving him.

"Well, what the hell are you supposed to be?" Draco spat. "Peter fucking Pan?"

Harry looked down at himself. He was wearing a really odd green outfit, with clashing pirate-esque accessories. He thought back to his dream, complete with Captain Snape-Hook and the ticking

acromantular-slash-crocodile. "Er, actually yes, I think so," he said. He broke off to die of laughter a bit more. "Which makes you Wendy," he managed, between huge gasps for air.

"I'm going to kill you!" Draco all but screamed, launching himself on Harry. They fell in a tangled heap and rolled, the floor lurching beneath them.

"Er, is this real?" Harry asked. "Surely my dream hasn't come real."

"If you dream about me in a dress you're more fucked up than I thought," Draco snapped. He shifted uncomfortably. "Don't even mention the underwear, or you definitely won't get out of here alive, Potter."

Harry tried not to smile. "It's Harry," he said. "Please, Draco, I'm sorry."

Draco glowered at him, but Harry thought that the effect was rather diluted by the hair and the clothes.

"Fine, whatever," he said. "Just get us out of here, and possibly I'll refrain from chewing your balls off."

Harry concentrated. If they were in the room of requirement – although he had no idea how they could be – then all he had to do was require it to get back to normal. He shut his eyes, hoping that would aid the process. When he opened them again, Draco had his hands on his hips, which almost made Harry laugh again.

Harry looked around again, trying to bite down the snigger that rose to his lips. Thank goodness, he thought, they were back in the room of requirement. It had a certain nautical theme still – it looked like a cabin with a huge bed and a stuffed parrot in a cage – but it wasn't swaying, and there seemed to be no immediate risk of crocodile attack. No door, though, Harry noted, and the portholes had no view beyond them – just plaster walls, spoiling the illusion.

Draco was still in a dress though. Harry couldn't help but notice that.

"Why don't you take it off if it bothers you that much?" Harry suggested, sitting down on the edge of the bed and tugging off his boots.

Draco went a kind of dull red. "I'm wearing—" he started, then broke off, going even redder. "No," he said. "I'd really rather not."

Harry sat on the bed, legs crossed. The bedside table had two glasses on it, and a bottle of dark coloured liquid. He poured out two glasses, taking a sip from one. It was Muggle rum and it went down a treat. He felt better already.

Malfoy sat down next to him, very upright, his skirts fanning out around him, and grabbed the other glass, knocking the contents back. "Yuck," he said, then held out his glass to be refilled. Harry did so, and Malfoy repeated the process.

"Do you think you should?" Harry said, rather dubiously.

"Harry, I'm wearing a dress," Draco said, continuing to hold out the glass. "And a corset. And girl's knickers. And knee socks. Give me a fucking drink, will you?"

Harry poured quickly, but Draco didn't drink this one as quickly, sipping it in silence for some minutes. Then he sighed. "Now I am slightly drunk," he said, sounding very disagreeable, "get me out of this ridiculous getup, would you?" He presented his back to Harry, who took in the long row of buttons down the back.

Harry started at the top and worked his way down, feeling like he was unwrapping a particularly exciting present. The dress parted to reveal creamy shoulders and the hard, rigid lines of a corset, which grazed Harry's knuckles as he went down. When he'd finished Draco stood up, raising his arms over his head, and Harry tugged the whole dress up and over his head, revealing Draco's slender, corset-clad form beneath.

"Get it off," Draco said, sounding somewhere between infuriated and breathless, and Harry fumbled to undo the laces. It was hard work, unthreading the cord, and at first he didn't realise that it unfastened proper from the front. Then he spun Draco round, undoing the hooks and trying to ignore that Draco was wearing frilly knickers – very tented at the front – and socks topped with lace.

When he'd finally got Draco out of the corset, Draco made a sigh of relief that made its way right to Harry's crotch, and lay back on the bed. Then he reached up and tugged Harry down on top of him. "I hate you," Draco said, his eyes glinting and his mouth sullen.

"C-Can I—" Harry said, not daring to go on. He'd never wanted to sleep with anyone so much in all his life, or been so terrified or confused about his desires.

"Can you what, Potter?" Draco said, raising an eyebrow.

"Can I, you know?"

Draco snorted. "I have no doubt you could, Potter, but the question is whether I'll let you, or not."

"Please," Harry said.

To Harry's great amazement, Draco swallowed hard, his adam's apple bobbing in his throat, and then nodded. "If you hurt me, I really will kill you," he said, rather indistinctly. "Got that?"

Harry nodded, and leaned over to the bedside table, hoping that – for once – the room of requirement would deliver what he required: namely, lubrication, and lots of it. He sighed with relief when he came up lucky, and placed the small jar on the bed beside him.

Draco looked up at him, his face tense, and Harry felt moved to kiss him. This turned out to be a good

plan. Draco sort of relaxed and sort of didn't, kissing like he was trying to prove something, hooking one leg around Harry's calf and pulling him hard on top of him. Harry found out a few more things he liked about Draco – the way he writhed when Harry applied a tongue to the side of his neck, and the way his pale skin blossomed with red when Harry sucked on it, tonguing a bruise to the surface.

"Fucking vampire," Draco said, and Harry liked the way he said that but tilted his head back further, allowing Harry even more access to his throat.

And he liked the way Draco bucked under him, needy and demanding, giving up control to Harry while he took away every ounce of Harry's self-control with it.

Draco allowed Harry to roll him over onto all fours and pull off the rest of his clothing without complaint, although he flushed right down his spine and along his buttocks and he tensed. He didn't exactly relax when Harry pressed a line of kisses along his arse – much less when Harry pushed his face closer between his cheeks – but he didn't move away either. He only swore – very quietly and indistinctly – when Harry licked a long, wet line with the flat of his tongue right down the middle of his back and didn't stop – flicking over the pucker of his arsehole and down between his legs, stopping to nuzzle his balls.

When Harry repeated the action he pushed his arse a little closer towards Harry's face with a wordless plea, and Harry obliged. It was kind of weird, licking someone there. But it was fucking hot, as well. Draco's skin was warm and clean, and flushed a wonderful warm pink. Even the sight was the hottest thing ever – Harry could see Draco's arsehole quivering, and each time he licked it Draco made a soft, gasping noise, and then his hand came down to wank himself off, before Harry grasped his wrist and pushed it away.

Draco was muttering a string of obscenities now, soft and under his breath, and he was more relaxed, so Harry thought he'd try something out. He pointed his tongue and pushed, his tongue slipping past the ring of muscles and out. Draco groaned – he actually groaned – and said "Harry," as if he was scandalised, but bucked back against Harry's tongue so that it slid inside him once more.

Harry reached down to the jar beside him and slicked up several fingers, sliding one inside Draco, inch by inch. Draco tensed, but he soon relaxed again, mewling and bucking his hips – particularly when Harry reached round and squeezed the base of his cock tight.

Draco was loosening around Harry's finger, so he pushed in another two, his own cock pulsing uncomfortably in his trousers at the sound that Draco made.

"Please," Draco said, sounding incredibly pissed off. "Please."

Harry almost fell over with eagerness, letting Draco go and pulling off his own clothes, almost falling off the bed in the process. He slicked himself up with a generous amount of lube, slathering his right hand up and stroking it over Draco's own cock. Draco made a noise like a sick cow and arched his back.

"Can I?" Harry said, his mouth suddenly dry.

"Yes," Draco breathed, bucking against Harry's hand. "Fucking hell, Harry."

Harry stroked his left hand down Draco's back and positioned himself against Draco's arsehole. "Tell me if you need me to stop," he said, and pushed.

Draco made a startled noise as Harry breached the ring of muscles, slipping in, and then sliding back out. He was breathing very heavily now, ragged gasps, and his neck bent forward when Harry did it again.

"Hurts?" Harry said, feeling Draco's erection wilt under his hand.

Draco breathed out. "A bit," he said in a small voice. "Keep going."

Harry stroked Draco's back again, pushing in and out in gentle stages, as Draco breathed in that disconcerting, ragged way. Then he angled his hips and pushed a little harder, burying himself almost all the way inside Draco's arse.

"Okay?" Harry asked.

Draco was silent for a moment. Then he nodded. "Better," he said.

Harry figured that 'better' wasn't all that great, and was relieved that, when he reached back between Draco's legs, it didn't take long before Draco was erect again. When he started cautiously moving, sliding his cock out a fraction, Draco made a noise – but it was a different one to before. This time it was breathy, but in a good way – and Draco mumbled something that sounded both shocked and complimentary, his cock growing even harder in Harry's hand.

Harry suddenly felt a great need to see Draco's face. He slid out and gently pushed Draco round and on to his back, hooking Draco's legs up and onto his shoulders, before sliding back in. Draco's face was as red as a tomato, but he gazed up at Harry with a hint of his usual smug expression – until, that is, Harry moved again, and his lips parted in a wordless cry.

Harry suspected that he wouldn't last long. Draco was so tight and hot around him, and Harry was so turned on. Draco had to come first though, he was determined about that. So he grabbed Draco's right wrist and pulled it towards him, wrapping Draco's fingers around Draco's own cock. Draco's face went even redder, but then his wrist started working, and he threw his head back, mouth falling open.

Harry had never seen anything so hot, ever. Draco Malfoy, spread out in front of him, wanking himself off, while Harry's cock slid in and out of him. Fucking hell.

Draco's legs began to shake and his hand sped up. His cock spurted liquid over Draco's stomach and hand, and Draco let out a shaky, shaky sigh and opened his eyes.

"Here," Draco said, smirking. He reached up and slid a finger, wet with come, between Harry's lips.

Harry came hard, pumping what felt like gallons of liquid into Draco's arse, in several electrifying jolts.

He slid out and managed not to collapse on Draco, choosing instead to roll next to Draco and pull him into a hug. He didn't mean to fall asleep, but he couldn't help it, drifting off into a light, delicious snooze to the feeling of Draco's breath on his face.

*****

Draco woke up with a jolt and a sense of disorientation. When he shifted he felt sore and achy in unusual places, and for a brief moment he wondered where the fuck he was. Then he registered the warm body next to his, and the arm flung across his side, and he remembered. For a while he felt too mortified to open his eyes, memories of the night's entertainment flooding back to him, and when he did he didn't feel any less self-conscious. Harry was staring at him – although it wasn't really a stare, more of a warm, unfocused gaze. He looked weird without his glasses, Draco thought, although he couldn't remember at what stage in the proceedings Harry had removed them.

"Morning," Harry said, smiling a wonky, nervous smile. "At least, I think it's morning. It's kind of hard to tell in here."

Draco blinked at him. "You weren't watching me sleep, were you?" he asked suspiciously.

Harry didn't answer the question, but his blush told Draco the answer. Merlin. He hoped he hadn't drooled, because that would have been an attractive sight.

"Aren't you needed somewhere, oh great one?" Draco asked rather sleepily.

"Uh, no," Harry said. "Didn't you hear?" Then he frowned. "And don't call me that."

"Hear what, our saviour?" Draco asked, grinning.

Harry prodded him hard in the side and smiled back. "Last time I did some magic – moving some building

bricks around – I overdid it a bit."

Draco raised an eyebrow. "A bit?"

Harry's eyes slid away from Draco's and he appeared embarrassed. "Yeah," he said. "I put them down with more force than necessary," he admitted. "I couldn't help it. My control's been really fucked up lately."

Draco didn't feel like he had anything to say to that. It was a fucking pain not having a working wand – he'd have rather had Harry's problem than his own. Still, he thought, if he'd really wanted a wand he could have found a used one and done some second-rate magic until his own wand decided to give him a break. He'd thought it easier, on the whole, to just leave it alone for a while – people were kinder, more sympathetic, to a wand-less wizard, and Draco found that he didn't mind being pitied as much he'd thought he would. After all, his escape from jail was basically down to his lack of wand – the jury had pitied him, so he'd snivelled a bit and the idiots had let him off with just a public apology to perform. The apology itself had been unpleasant, of course, but the newspapers had switched from 'evil Death Eater child' to 'unfortunate victim of Death Eater propaganda', and he suspected the Malfoy name was already well on the way to regaining its former standing. He was proud of that.

"How are you feeling?" Harry suddenly asked, his forehead creasing. "After – you know."

Draco stared at him, trying not to die. Was it really necessary to talk about it? It was weird enough talking to Harry normally, without Harry bringing up what they'd done. Every time he looked at him he could remember – vividly – exactly where Harry's tongue had been last night, and that Harry had watched him wan—

"Draco?" Harry said, sounding worried.

"I'm fine," Draco replied quickly, in case Harry said anything embarrassing.

"You sure?" Harry said, still sounding worried, peering at Draco with his forehead one big frown.

"Yes," Draco snapped, then he rolled his eyes. "I'm fine," he said again, this time more softly.

Harry's face relaxed and Draco felt very gloomy when he realised that he was pleased that Harry had relaxed. What the hell was wrong with him? It wasn't like he was in love with—

Draco froze, unable to clear that thought from his brain. He wasn't – was he? The idea was preposterous. Harry got under Draco's skin just as much as before. He was just as annoying as before – preying on Draco's mind constantly, without permission, making him want to scream in frustration. Just because Draco had allowed him to – to do that to him, did not mean…

"Hey," Harry said, very softly, and he didn't say anything else, just ran his fingers gently through Draco's hair.

Draco wanted to feel patronised – he wasn't a dog to be soothed by his master's touch – but, terrifyingly, he did feel soothed. He closed his eyes and leaned into the touch, feeling drowsy and disturbingly happy.

When he opened his eyes again, however, Harry himself didn't look soothed. His face was tense and he was biting his lip, although he tried to smile when he saw Draco looking at him.

"What are you stressing about?" Draco said, not quite believing he was actually attempting to make the Boy who fucking Lived feel better.

Harry blushed. "You," he said, then smiled wryly. "I mean – you don't regret…" He trailed off. "Do you?"

"You are such a… a… Gryffindor," Draco spluttered, unable to think of a worse insult.

Harry smiled. "Sorry. I know. I can't help it. You – don't though, do you?"

Draco found himself in the unbearable position of having to tell Harry no, he didn't regret offering his arse and his – curse it – his virginity to him. The alternative was saying he did regret it, and what could be gained by that? It would be a lie – not that that bothered him especially – and it would be a pointless one. So it was the embarrassing truth then. Draco scowled. "I would hardly have let you do it if I thought I would regret it," he said. Then he smirked, looking on the bright side of the situation. "You should feel incredibly privileged." He was going to expand on his theme when Harry closed the gap between them and kissed him.

Draco's heart raced. It felt different somehow. Then he realised. This was the first time Harry had kissed him without the impetus of the disappearing door. The door was there. Draco wasn't sure when it had appeared. Had it been last night? He couldn't remember. It hadn't played a part in his decision to – to do that thing with Harry.

Harry's kiss was soft and slow – too slow, Draco thought at first. Infuriatingly so. Each touch of lips sent shivers through him. It was too slow to stop his mind from fixating on what might come next. Harry's fingers were a warm, distracting weight against his side, one thumb rubbing circles against his hip. Draco shivered and tried to speed things up. Harry just smiled though and, if anything, managed to slow things down even further.

Draco felt like he was thirteen and having his first kiss all over again – with all the nerves and worry and the overwhelming arousal of it all. It was hard to breathe. Hard to focus. And just, well, hard, his cock throbbing and leaking, demanding to be touched.

Draco didn't want to beg. He was determined not to beg. He absolutely was not going to beg. "H-Harry," he said, in a voice that was almost a whine, and bucked his hips against Harry's.

Harry smiled against his mouth and, for a heart-pounding moment, Draco thought his worries were over when Harry's hand slid down his chest. But it didn't go further than his stomach, drawing ticklish trails along his skin that made Draco's tummy muscles jump and his cock twitch.

Draco reached the limit of his patience. He was going mad. If someone didn't touch him – he – he – he'd have to touch himself, for fuck's sake. So he did so, reaching between his own legs and taking a firm hold

of himself. He groaned, open-mouthed, into Harry's mouth.

Harry drew back and looked at him. Draco was going to stop. Any second now. But it felt so good, and Harry was watching him and fuckfuckfuck he was actually being watched. And now Harry was jerking himself off, eyes flickering between Draco's hand and his face. And Draco was going to come in the shortest amount of time ever. He could already feel orgasm approaching. He was going to…

Draco came, looking into Harry's eyes. He'd never felt so vulnerable and stupid in all his life. But then Harry made a choking noise and pulled an odd face, and Draco felt warm liquid splash against him, before Harry reached forward to kiss him hungrily. Harry hooked one leg around Draco's, forcing him closer, and Draco closed his eyes and kissed back for all he was worth.

*****

"Stop it!" Harry said, grinning at Hermione and trying not to blush. "You promised you wouldn't laugh. I only told you because you said you wouldn't laugh."

"Did he have to go back to his dorms in a dress?" Hermione said – or at least, that's what Harry thought she said. She was laughing too hard for him to be certain.

"Our clothes had turned to school uniform by the time we, er, woke up," Harry said.

Hermione made a snorting noise and wiped her eyes. "I would have paid to see that," she said. Then she straightened her school robes and pushed her hair back from her face. "You've really got to do something about you and Draco though, Harry. If you can travel to the room of requirement just by dreaming, you're going to get yourself in all sorts of trouble. How did you get out this time?"

"Um," Harry said, trying to maintain his dignity. "I don't want to go into the details."

Hermione's eyes widened. "Did you – all the way?"

Harry tried to think of a good answer to that – one that he could say without revealing anything at all. Unfortunately Hermione knew him too well.

"You did!" Hermione said. "Goodness." Then she frowned. "But what will you do if you get stuck in there again? Get married?"

Harry paled. "Don't even joke."

Hermione smiled mischievously, twirling her quill. "I bet he'd look very fetching in a wedding dress."

"Who would?" Ron said, entering the room and sitting down next to Hermione. He looked up at Harry. "Who're we mocking right now?"

Hermione shot a panicked look at Ron. "N-nothing," she said. "No-one."

Ron eyed her balefully. "Such lies," he said. "You'll go straight to hell."

"Hmph," Hermione replied, tossing her hair. "Lucky I don't believe in it, then, isn't it?"

Ron gave her a friendly whack to the arm, and she glared at him, before turning her head away.

"Go on, spill," Ron said, turning to Harry. "I know you've been hiding something, and enough's enough. I'm your best mate. You're denying me my God-given right to mock you mercilessly at every opportunity. Spill your secrets so I can make you feel worse – er, I mean, take you out and buy you Firewhiskey and commiserate."

"Promise you won't tell anybody else, ever?" Hermione said.

"Hermione!" Harry protested.

"You know he's going to find out eventually," Hermione said. To Harry's horror she leaned over to Ron and whispered in his ear for some time.

Ron's expression cycled from intrigued to horrified to amused to horrified, several times over. When Hermione had done, he leaned over and clapped Harry on the arm. "I'm so sorry, Harry," he said gravely. "But don't worry, mate. A few dozen years in the Janus Thickey ward should see you right. I'll bring grapes."

"Ron—" Harry started, but Ron interrupted him.

"Seriously mate, you're nuts, but if I have to put up with Malfoy then I'll do it for your sake." Ron pulled a face. "But you're buying me drinks for the rest of my life. And you can never complain again about anything I do, ever. Deal?"

Harry smiled, relieved. "Thanks, Ron," he said.

Hermione's face relaxed. "Don't worry, Harry, I'll keep him in check," she said. Her eyes sparkled. "Anyway, if he gets too uppity, you can just tell him all about what you and Draco do in be—"

"Argh!" Ron said, shoving his hands over his ears. "Mercy! Mercy!"

Hermione hit him and Ron unfolded, grinning. "I did have an idea about the room of requirement," Hermione said, turning back to Harry.

Harry held up a hand. "I don't want to know."

"But Harry," Hermione said, frowning. "If you just—"

"No, really," Harry said firmly. "Draco and I can work it out for ourselves."

"Okay," Hermione said, sounding highly dubious. "But Pansy and I—"

"You're friends with Parkinson?" Ron interrupted. "What the fuck?"

Harry took advantage of the momentary distraction to escape. He wasn't convinced that Hermione held the answers to his current situation, whatever she implied. And he wasn't about to get stuck in the room again with her and Pansy – not when things between Draco and himself were so…

Harry jammed his hands in his pockets and made his way to the Slytherin dorm before he could change his mind. He had no idea what this 'thing' with Draco was – just that he was happier right now than he'd been in a long time. It was unexpected, and it was bizarre, but there it was.

Besides, the mystery of the room was centred on himself and Draco, not on Hermione. There was no reason why they couldn't solve it themselves. Together. Harry smiled. Once they'd done a bit more kissing, that was.

*****

"Um, this is nice," Harry said.

Draco took a sip of his wine and tried not to give in to the urge to hit his head on the table. When Harry

had turned up outside the Slytherin dungeons and – and waited for him, sending rumours flying in less than five seconds – Draco had done the only thing he could think of. He'd put on his special supercilious expression, tilted his chin, and sneered at Harry – stomping off at high speed so that Harry followed him, and then pulling Harry along until they were outside of the school grounds.

"Apparate us somewhere," he'd snapped, and when Harry, looking bewildered, had asked where, Draco had said, "anywhere but here," and scowled even harder.

So here he was, dressed in school uniform, in one of the fanciest restaurants in wizarding Paris, for fuck's sake. So much for privacy. They'd be splashed over all the papers the next day. Although, Draco thought, doing his best to look on the bright side, at least they'd be showing a Malfoy in a positive light. As long as he didn't make Harry cry, that was, and the temptation was enormous.

"Is this not right?" Harry asked anxiously. "You did say anywhere…"

Draco suppressed a sigh. "It's fine, Potter, stop going on."

Harry's face fell. "You called me Potter," he said. "It's not fine, is it?"

Draco tipped his glass, swirling the wine around. "It's not exactly private, is it?" he said. "Or discreet. Or—"

"Right," Harry said. He stared down at the table. "Sorry."

There was an uncomfortable silence.

"Is this a date?" Harry suddenly said.

Draco swallowed a mouthful of wine the wrong way and was overcome by a powerful coughing fit.

When he'd recovered his eyes were watering and he bet he looked ridiculous. "What?"

"Forget it," Harry said, looking away. "It doesn't matter."

Draco raised his chin and looked down his nose at Harry. "If you're trying to court me, you're not doing a very good job, Potter," he said, as snootily as he could manage. It was hard work, the way his heart was pounding. "There are established rituals. I am a pure blood, you know. Which rules you out as a potential candidate, by the way," he continued. "And it should be me courting you—" Draco stopped. "What?"

"What what?" Harry said.

"I don't know," Draco said. "You're being an idiot."

"So are you," Harry pointed out.

"Am not."

"Are too."

"Am not," Draco said again. "I'm just—" He paused. What the hell was he doing, anyway? The hero of the wizarding world wanted to take him out to dinner, casting the name of Malfoy in a positive light to the world's media. Why was he being such an idiot about it all? He frowned. He just found everything about Harry so disconcerting, these days. It was no reason to abandon his principles. He needed to get his parents pardoned, and then find a nice pure blood girl and continue the Malfoy line. That was his role in life.

Why then did it now suddenly seem so – so unpleasant? Was he really going to throw away everything the Malfoy name stood for on the strength of one, albeit fantastic, fuck? And where the hell had that thought come from, anyway? He was having dinner, not dithering about whether to accept a proposal.

"Just what?" Harry said.

Draco looked at him. "I have no idea," he said. "What were we talking about?"

Harry smiled, very faintly. "We'd just agreed what an idiot you were."

Draco snorted. "Fuck off," he said mildly. "Did not."

"Did too," Harry replied, and grinned.

Draco couldn't stop himself from grinning back. And, after a few more glasses of wine, he forgot all the reasons why he shouldn't be smiling.

*****

"What are you doing?" Draco said, almost sick with laughter. Harry had picked him up and was staggering down the path that led to Hogwarts. Draco clung to him with all his strength. Harry wasn't all that strong, and he suspected he'd soon be dropped. He didn't like the idea.

"Carrying you home," Harry said, out of breath.

"Why?" Draco said, shrieking as Harry nearly let him fall.

"Can't Apparate," Harry said. "Next best thing."

"Put me down," Draco said sternly. He was drunk but he wasn't that drunk. "Why can't you Apparate us

back?"

"Well, to tell the truth, I didn't mean to take us all the way to Paris. And that place! I've been there before, but it's so posh. I was aiming for Hogsmeade."

Draco gawped at him.

"I'm impressed I managed to get us back anywhere near school. I don’t want to try again in case we end up in Japan, or something. And since you can't use your magic at the moment…" He trailed off.

"Can't you just let me beat you for once?" Draco said, the words spilling out without his permission.

"What?"

"I want mastery of my wand back, Harry," Draco mumbled. "If I can win its allegiance, then I can use it again." He looked up at Harry. "Please?"

"Are you sure it doesn't work?" Harry said.

Draco nodded. "I tried it when you gave it back to me," he said. "It didn't—"

"But that was then," Harry said, this time in a smaller voice. "Have you tried again?"

"What would be the point? I haven't beaten you in anything," Draco snapped. The wine bubbled through his system. He felt raw and tired. "I bet I wouldn't win a game of exploding snap if I played against you. It's fucking ridiculous."

Harry's face was odd, Draco thought, as he tried to calm down. Embarrassed and yet calm, all at the same time. "But you've won me," Harry said tentatively, almost as if he was saying it to himself.

Draco stood there. He felt like all his muscles had seized up. He managed to clear his throat. "Um," he said.

"Sorry," Harry said. "I expect you didn't want to hear that."

Draco's head was a swirl of nonsense. He couldn't think straight. Couldn't process anything. Had he really heard what he thought he'd heard? Had he really just claimed victory over Harry fucking Potter, after all this time? And if so, why didn't he feel happier about it? He didn't know what he felt, for fuck's sake. He felt confused and sad and – yes – so happy he could burst. Burst into tears. And what the fuck was that about?

"And it's not like I'm a prize," Harry mumbled. "I mean, Merlin, I didn't mean it like that. How big-headed did that sound? I meant—"

"Harry," Draco said, very slowly.

Harry stood very still. "Yes?"

"Shut up."

"Right. Right. Sorry. Right."

Draco grabbed Harry and pulled him into a hug so tight it was uncomfortable. The discomfort helped distract him from his thoughts. It was easier to shove up against Harry – to take a firm grip on his hair and yank his head against the side of his own – than to say something back. Fucking Harry Potter. Even when he lost, he won. Whatever he did he made Draco feel confused and raw and pained – even in this.

*****

Harry didn't know how they'd managed to get back to school, but they'd managed it eventually. Every few metres Draco had stopped, tugging Harry into yet another hug, or wrapping an arm around his waist so that it was hard to walk. He hadn't said a word, which worried Harry, and his face was red and cross.

Harry hadn't meant to say anything quite so soppy, but the wine had forced it out. He'd always had a bad habit of saying the truth, and though he wasn't so good at the emotional stuff, once he'd worked something out he didn't have much difficulty in saying it – even if he said it a bit indistinctly. He guessed, from the way Draco was acting, that Draco had got the picture.

The problem was, Harry had no idea what to do next. Should he ask Draco to be his boyfriend? He thought that would sound a bit stupid though. Kind of immature. And, from the sound of it, it definitely wouldn't fit in with traditional wizarding courting rituals. He didn't want Draco to laugh at him, after all.

He didn't want to not ask Draco to be his boyfriend either, though. Because he kind of liked the idea of holding hands with Draco, and going flying with him, and – Merlin. What was wrong with him?

And now they were inside the school and Harry still didn't know what to do.

Draco grabbed Harry's wrist and pulled him to the entrance of the Slytherin dungeons, and in. When the got to the entrance of his dormitory he put his finger to his lips and went in, leaving Harry standing outside the door like an idiot. After several minutes he wondered if Draco had just gone to bed, leaving him standing there, but then Draco slipped out, grabbed Harry's wrist again and pulled him along.

Draco led the way to a door, still within Slytherin quarters, and shoved Harry in, following close behind.

Harry blinked. It was a small bedroom, empty and with an air of disuse.

Draco locked the door and turned to face Harry, his expression tense. "We'll have to be quiet."

"Where are we?" Harry asked.

"It's a bedroom," Draco said slowly. "For sleeping in. You know—"

"Don't," Harry said. "I'm not stupid."

Draco took a deep breath. "Sorry. It's a prefect's bedroom. We're all sleeping in the dorms this term, though." He pulled a face. "We chose to do it that way. Don't the Gryffindor prefects get their own rooms?"

Harry shook his head and sat down on the edge of the bed. "Why—"

Draco pulled his wand out of his pocket and tossed it on to the bed.

"Oh," Harry said.

"I thought I could try it again," Draco said, sounding very disagreeable. "If you don't mind helping."

Harry looked at him. Draco was standing very stiffly, but he was trembling around the edges and his jaw was very tense. "Of course," he said. "Come here."

Draco sat down next to Harry, very awkwardly, but made no move to pick up his wand.

"Here," Harry said, picking up the wand. Then he dropped it.

"What?" Draco said, looking at him oddly.

Harry stared at the wand. "It felt odd," he said. "Kind of fizzy."

Draco also stared at it. Then, as if it could bite, he picked it up himself. "Doesn't feel odd to me," he said. "Doesn't feel anything." He shook his head. "Like it's just wood. There's no point—"

"Don't give up right away," Harry said, reaching to take the wand. His fingers wrapped around both Draco's hand and the wooden rod within it. There was a surge of magic, which felt a bit like epic pins and needles, and Harry felt a current flowing through his arm and down into Draco.

Harry went to pull away, disconcerted, but Draco placed his other hand on top of Harry's sandwiching Harry's hand between his own.

The tingling relaxed and grew more strange and more pleasant. It was almost like the magic was running back and forth between them, cycling around and setting all his nerves on edge. Everything tingled.

Draco pointed their wrapped hands – his wand still enclosed by them – at the door and muttered a locking spell. It worked instantly.

"Now you try," Draco said.

"Me?"

Draco nodded.

Harry uttered a sound-concealing spell, not entirely sure what the point was. He expected it to work. He'd used Draco's wand before. What he didn't expect was how well it would work though. The magic felt so smooth, so controlled. It was almost like he didn't have to say the words, or even think them. The magic just knew what to do, flowing out of their joined hands via the wand.

They separated hands and Harry stared at Draco. "Um," he said. "What?"

Draco wet his lips, not looking at Harry. "This is impossible," he said.

"Tell me about it," Harry said.

"You can't be my – I mean I can't have. We've only been – for a week. It—"

Harry eyed Draco. He had the nasty suspicion that Draco knew something he didn't. What was Draco burbling about? "Explain," he said, as sternly as he could.

Draco opened and closed his mouth like a beached fish. Then he said, very stiffly, "it appears that I—" He stopped. "Merlin."

"Draco," Harry said.

Draco stared at the wall. "Trust," he said, as if it were a dirty word. "I trust you." He pulled a face. "Except it's more than that. We—" He put a hand up to his forehead. "You gave me back mastery of my wand," he said. "And I suppose I must have – Merlin – trusted you enough to let you have it back. I submitted to you. Fucking hell." His voice was so low that Harry had to strain to hear it.

"This is – something that other people have done?" Harry asked, trying to get his head around it.

Draco nodded, closing his eyes. "Most people don’t try it though. And those that do usually end up without control of their own wand."

Harry digested this in silence. His head spun. Did this mean what he thought it did? He swallowed, his mouth suddenly dry.

"Well, say something," Draco said, sounding on the verge of hysterics. "What—"

Harry didn't know what to say. If he said anything at all it would be stupid and soppy and embarrassing. But Draco looked so awkward that he had to do something. So he kissed him, and that turned out to be the best thing he could have done.

Draco moaned and clutched at the front of Harry's jumper, pulling him close and kissing and biting like a wild thing. He was aggressive and needy, and Harry kind of liked it. Draco tugged Harry's jumper over his head, nearly taking his ears off, and Harry laughed, kind of breathless, and returned the favour.

They paused. Draco's chest was rising and falling quickly, and his hair was a mess. He moved as if to push Harry down on to the bed, then stopped.

Harry made a decision. He lay back, tugging Draco down on top of him. "You can," he said, when Draco looked uncertain. "If you want."

Draco wet his lips, then nodded. "I don't know h—" he said, his lips twisting.

Harry kissed him in response, feeling Draco's rapid heart-beat against his chest. "Clothes off," he suggested, and Draco nodded again, fumbling with his buttons and skinning out of his uniform at top speed, before helping Harry with his.

Harry lay there, naked and aching, with Draco looking down at him. Draco was a mess, his neck still dotted with love bites, and his lips reddened and sore-looking. Harry had never seen anything so beautiful in all his life.

And then Draco – sweet Merlin – dipped his head and took a long lick along the length of Harry's cock, his hair tickling Harry's stomach. His mouth was wet and hot, and his fingers dug into Harry's hips. Harry flung his head back and curled his fingers into the sheets. Draco's tongue was sliding up and down Harry's cock at an agonisingly slow pace. He pulled back Harry's foreskin and swirled his tongue around the head. Harry's hips bucked so hard they would have hit the ceiling, if it hadn't been for Draco's hands, pinning him to the bed.

"Fucking hell," Harry groaned. "God."

Draco kissed the head again – and again, and Harry squirmed, trying not to die.

"Uh, lube," he managed, when Draco raised his head to smirk at Harry, just a little.

Draco coloured, but reached for his wand and a pot thwacked into his hand, summoned from Merlin knew where.

Harry reached for it and then gently tugged Draco's right hand towards him, sticking several fingers in the pot and swirling them around.

"Uh, one first," he managed to say, fighting against his embarrassment, and spreading his legs wider.

Draco took in a sharp breath then bent his head down again, taking Harry's cock full in his mouth. Harry gasped, overwhelmed. But before he could get used to the sensation he felt a finger slide wetly between his arse-cheeks, pressing against him. He tried to relax and the finger pushed inside. "Oh God," Harry said. It was too much. The hot, wet suction around his cock. The finger inside him, which was moving now, fucking him as his hips moved helplessly.

Draco let his cock slide out of mouth and moved forward to kiss him. It was a wet, sloppy kiss, and Harry nearly came just from the feel of Draco's tongue against his.

Draco rolled over, pulling Harry on top of him and pushing the jar of lube towards him. His skin was slick with sweat and made an incoherent noise and bucked his hips.

Harry wasn't quite sure what Draco meant, but he had a plan and this was as good a way as any. He picked up the jar and dug out a wet glob of lube, reaching down and rubbing it generously over Draco's cock. Draco was already damp with pre-come, his cock rigid and reddened. Draco made a soft 'oh' sound and reached up to clutch at Harry's shoulders.

Harry positioned himself, taking hold of Draco's cock and lowering himself on to it. Once he'd taken it in an inch or so it slid in easier than he'd expected. It stung a little, but he took it slow and soon Draco's cock was sheathed all the way in.

Draco was silent apart from quick, quiet breaths – but when Harry moved up and down, seeing how it felt, he groaned. His hands slid down Harry's upper arms and tightened. His eyes were closed.

"Open your eyes," Harry murmured, and Draco did so, his lips parting in another groan when Harry moved again.

It felt odd, Harry thought. Both tingly and uncomfortable, and when he moved a certain way it sent a pulse of arousal straight to his cock. When he moved faster it felt better – more intense. And the way Draco was moaning. The look of wild abandon on his face. Harry thought he'd come just from that.

Then Draco pushed at him, his expression shaky but determined. He motioned to Harry to get off and roll over, so Harry did so. Draco leaned over him, managing to sheath himself back inside Harry.

It took a while for Draco to get a rhythm going. It wasn't enough time for Harry to pull himself together though. It was just too much. Then Draco reached down for his cock. He rubbed it in jerky,

uncoordinated movements, but it still felt incredible. Harry clenched his muscles around the intrusion inside him. His cock jerked. Draco moaned and his wrist moved faster, his hips almost matching the rhythm.

Harry came hard and Draco started to slam into him, so hard it wasn't comfortable. Then he stopped dead, his face contorting, and moved once more, slowly, biting his lip. Harry couldn't feel him come, but he did feel him slide out. He felt wet and sore between his legs, and disproportionately happy.

"Oh," Harry said, remembering his plan. He reached over to the bedside table. "Catch."

Draco held Harry's wand in his hand, a puzzled look on his face. "Why are you giving me this?"

Harry smiled, trying to breathe more slowly. "For you," he said. "Returning the favour."

Draco frowned. "That's not funny," he said. "Don't take the piss out of me."

"I'm not." Harry reached forward, taking Draco's hand in his own. To his relief he felt the odd, tingly magical sensation again. It built and then dissipated, as before.

Draco stared at him, almost looking lost. He summoned his own wand, and then let it fall, using Harry's wand to raise the bedcovers from the floor and on top of them. Then he passed Harry's wand back to him. "Better check it still works for you," he said, in a low, odd-sounding voice.

Harry did so. It did – perfectly. It was as if the past months of uncontrollable magic had been nothing but a dream.

"I don't know what to say," Harry said eventually, when the silence got too uncomfortable for him to bear.

Draco snorted. "You never were very good with words," he said. "Or thinking," he added, his lips quirking into a grin. "Or anything else, really," he continued.

"Hey," Harry complained, picking up Draco's wand – just because he could, and it was oddly satisfying to do so – and casting several cleaning spells over them. "Don't be a twat."

"I am never a twat," Draco said, snuggling into the covers. "I am always sophisticated and charming and—"

"Modest?" Harry suggested.

Draco nodded against the pillow. "That too."

Harry laughed and curled up around him. "I don't know why I like you so much," he said.

Draco snorted. "And I you," he replied. "It defies all logic."

"But you do?" Harry asked.

"Idiot," Draco said, rather haughtily. "And I mean that. If you doubt me now, you really do have jelly instead of brains, like I suspected all along."

Harry couldn’t bring himself to be insulted. He just tugged Draco even closer to himself – ignoring Draco's muttered implication that he was a jellyfish, instead of a jelly, all tentacles instead of limbs – and relaxed against him as he drifted off into sleep.

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"Harry, I'm sorry, but I really do need to tell you how to fix the room of requirement," Hermione said. She grabbed hold of Harry's arm. "Stop being so stubborn."

"Er," Harry said, "hello, Hermione. How long have you been waiting there for me?"

Hermione scowled. "Not long," she said. Then she evidently noticed Draco, because she coloured. "Oh, hello Malfoy," she said. "This involves you too."

"You can call me Draco if you like," Draco said, in a tone that suggested that he was in great pain.

Harry grinned at him, and then at Hermione. "Thanks Hermione, but—"

"No, no. Listen to me," Hermione said strictly. "I've done lots of research. Harry, Draco requires you because you still have mastery over his wand, I expect. I'm not sure how you're going to give it back yet, but there must be a way. I'll do some more thinking and—"

"Hermione, listen—"

"That's why the room requires affection," Hermione continued, not listening at all. "Because it's trying to work out a way you can give mastery of Draco's wand back to him, without giving up control of your own."

"HERMIONE," Harry said loudly.

Hermione started. "Yes? I bet the door appears when you go in first, Harry, because it's not so essential to you that you sort things out for Draco. It's more important from Draco's perspective, obviously, and—"

"We've already sorted it all out," Draco said, smirking. "Don't go on about it, Granger. You're being boring."

Hermione blinked. "What?"

"Yeah, Draco's got control of his wand again," Harry said, deciding that it wouldn't hurt Hermione to think they'd actually worked it out, rather than stumbling upon the solution by accident.

"And you've still got control of yours?" Hermione said, staring at Harry in a meaningful way. "I mean - yours."

"Yes," Harry said uncomfortably. He hadn't thought about the elder wand. He supposed that Draco was now master of that too. Still, he'd cross that bridge when it came to it – if it ever did. It was safely buried in Dumbledore's tomb, and he was the only one who knew its location. There was no need to worry.

"Good," Hermione said. Then she looked thoughtful, tapping a finger against her lips. "I wonder if I can require the room now?" she said. She frowned at the wall and, quite suddenly, a door appeared. "How interesting," Hermione said. She opened the door. "Go in then," she said. "Draco first."

"Why?" Harry asked.

"So we can double-check it's all sorted," Hermione said. "It's not that I don't believe you, Harry, when you say you've fixed it…" Her words trailed off.

Draco stomped into the room, dragging Harry behind him. The door shut behind them. And didn't disappear.

"Well, thank fuck for that," Draco said. Then he grinned. "Although I think we should hide out here for a bit, give Granger a fright."

"You're being a git again," Harry said, shoving him and then changing his mind, tugging him back for a kiss.

Then Harry remembered something he'd been meaning to ask for a while. "You don't really find my scar sexy, do you?" he asked dubiously.

Draco reached up and brushed Harry's hair aside. He moved in and licked the scar, very wetly.

"Ughhh!" Harry said, trying to move away, but Draco – almost helpless with laughter – attacked him again with his tongue.

Soon Harry was laughing as much as Draco, wiping off Draco's spit and trying to rub it off on Draco's shirt. Draco was dodging and they collapsed on a sofa, still laughing.

Draco smiled at Harry with obvious affection, before he composed his face into its usual haughty sneer. "Come on, Harry, let's go and mock Granger some more, shall we?" he suggested, getting up and dragging Harry after him.

Harry allowed himself to be dragged. It was ridiculous, really, the whole situation, and sudden and all kinds of odd. But whatever it was, there was one thing that was for sure: Harry liked it. He really, really liked it.

And from the look on Draco's face, when he turned back to smile at Harry, his face alive with mischief, Draco really liked it too.

And that was all that really mattered, in the end.

THE END