From the Great Beyond: 1/1

by Alisanne

Pairing(s): Harry Potter/Draco Malfoy, past Draco/Astoria and Harry/Ginny implied.

Warnings: Epilogue compliant, infidelity.

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Beta(s): Calanthe_fics, Empathic_Siren and Sevfan.

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From The Great Beyond

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“Draco...”

Draco’s eyes narrowed as he looked about the ramshackle room. There was plenty of broken furniture

for him to hide behind. Was he beneath the lumpy, stained bed perhaps, or behind one of the broken chairs? But no, there were no footprints in the dust covering the rotted floorboards, and the grime piled into the corners was undisturbed. Where was he, then? Were had that delicious man gone?

“Lars?”

“He’s not here.”

Draco spun. His mouth dropped open. It couldn’t be. That would mean-- “Snape? You again? I must be dreaming.”

Snape raised an eyebrow. “I imagine so,” he said. “Although that begs the question why you keep dreaming about me, does it not?”

Draco tilted his head. “Who cares? Where’s Lars?”

Snape smirked. “The well-endowed man who you keep dreaming of? Is that his name? Interesting.”

“You saw that?” Draco asked.

"Yes," Snape said.

The quirk of his lips conveyed that he knew what Draco and Lars had got up to. Draco almost bit his lip, but remembered just in time that this was his dream and he wasn't a little boy anymore. Snape shouldn't be able to affect him. Right?

He crossed his arms and raised his own eyebrow. “Maybe you like what you saw. Maybe that's why you keep snooping about my dreams.”

Snape chuckled. “Oh, yes. That's why I'm here. To watch you play schoolboy games with a man that looks...remarkably familiar.”

“What?”

“You don’t think he looks like a certain schoolmate of yours?”

“I don’t have to answer your questions, no matter how often you ask them.” Draco looked around. “What is this filthy place, anyway?” As he glanced about, the walls wavered between wooden planks and the traditional brocade pattern that typically decorated the walls of Malfoy Manor.

Snape shrugged. “I’m not the one in control of these surroundings,” he said. “This is your dream.”

Draco narrowed his eyes and Snape’s robes turned a deep magenta with yellow polka-dots. “I see what you mean.”

Rolling his eyes, Snape turned away. “This is clearly not the time to talk to you. We’ll talk later.”

“Talk to me?” But Snape was already gone, a peacock standing in his place. The bird opened its mouth, a raucous cry emerging, and Draco winced.

“Draco? Draco?”

Draco turned his head, startled to find himself in his bedroom, his head resting against his pillow. Grabbing his wand, he sat up.

“Lumos.”

He illuminated the corners of the room, heart settling back into its normal rhythm when nothing untoward was revealed.

“Just a dream,” he muttered. He chuckled softly. “A fucking weird dream, though.”

Putting out the light, Draco pulled the sheets up to his chin and turned over. Maybe he could still get back to his dream about Lars, this time without Snape’s unwanted presence.

As he closed his eyes, Draco briefly wondered why he was dreaming about Snape after so many years. Then, with a yawn, he fell into a dreamless sleep.

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“Where are you, you bastard?”

Astoria was screaming again.

Draco poured himself a double shot of Ogden’s finest. He needed all of the fortification he could stand. This row had been building for several days, after all, and the revelations in the Prophet had probably been the final blow.

“Come out here and face me like a man!”

Draco swirled the snifter, watching the amber liquid cling to the sides of the crystal before falling back to join the rest of the fluid at the bottom. Like a man? If she’d been a man perhaps things would have gone

far better in their marriage.

“Answer me, you fucking shirtlifter!”

Smirking, Draco took a sip. There had been no shirts lifted. Plenty of kilts had been lifted and no few trousers dropped, but no shirts. She really needed to get her facts straight. Clear. He meant clear.

He heard her sharp heels tapping on the marble stairs as she approached. Glancing down at the parchment he’d been perusing ever since that fucking Skeeter woman’s article had come to his attention, he frowned.

“I know you’re in there, you--” The door flew open and she was standing there, her mousy brown hair in disarray, her chest heaving with emotion. “I have had it! I will no longer tolerate this loveless farce of a marriage, you bastard. I do not have to put up with being the laughingstock of all my friends--”

“What do you want, Astoria?” Draco interrupted, his quiet tone a stark contrast to her screeching.

“I want a divorce.” Astoria bit her lip and waited, eyes glittering; whether it was with triumph or actual tears, Draco had no idea. “I can’t do this any more.”

“Do what exactly?” Draco asked, knocking back the rest of his drink and rising to his feet. “Have your every whim catered to, your every random wish paid for?”

“It’s not about the money, Draco.” She looked defeated now, and Draco narrowed his eyes in preparation for whatever she had planned next. In his experience when she looked her most vulnerable was when she was at her most dangerous. “I need a partner, a lover, at the very least a friend. We used to be friends, do you remember?”

Draco crossed his arms. “I think that was before you tried to poison me,” he ground out.

“I didn’t mean to do that, it was a mistake! Must we relive every past mistake, because if so, we’ll be talking about that affair you had with that boy in London last year--”

Holding up a hand, Draco stemmed the tide of words. “I think we’re beyond that, don’t you? So, I repeat, what do you want?”

An unreadable look crossed her face. “Very well. If you must be like that, then I want half of everything,” she said matter-of-factly. “It’s that or I go to the papers. Skeeter’s already offered me one hundred thousand Galleons for the story of my life with not-so-reformed Death Eater, Draco Malfoy.”

It called upon all of his training as a Malfoy to shrug as if he didn’t care and turn away. Clenching his hidden left hand into a fist, Draco walked around the desk, all the while trailing his right hand over the ancient wood. His father had used this desk, and his father’s father before him. It was oak, fashioned from trees smuggled out of the forest of Brocéliande, and like practically everything in the Manor, it was a historical artefact. She wanted half of everything?

Draco raised cold eyes to Astoria’s and smiled unpleasantly when she inadvertently stepped back. “Have you forgotten what our marriage contract says?” he asked.

Astoria crossed her arms defensively. “Of course not. I was there when it was negotiated and I’m aware that it was all but set in stone. Our fathers and the solicitors made sure of that.” She tossed her hair and regarded him silently for a moment. “But none of that matters any more. Even if it says you can’t give away the Malfoy stuff, and let’s face it, who would want it, you’d better find a way to give me the equivalent of half the estate in money or I’ll have a nice chat with Rita.”

“So this is what it’s come to? Blackmail?”

Astoria coloured but didn’t look away. “I shall do what I have to for myself and my child.”

“Scorpius stays here.”

She smiled and inclined her head. “We shall see. I suspect we’ll have to negotiate about him.”

Draco shook his head. “You are unbelievable. Scorpius is not part of the estate, he’s a Malfoy and as such he stays here.”

“He should be with his mother.”

“Not if she leaves his father.”

“I suppose that depends on the reason she’s leaving.” Astoria pursed her lips. “All those men hanging about can’t be healthy environment for a young, impressionable boy...”

Draco bit back a curse. “You have some nerve, you bi--” Taking a deep breath, Draco collected himself. “As you wish, Astoria. Just...leave.”

“You can’t make me go.” Astoria smirked and put her hands on her hips. “The Manor is mine, too.”

“But this office is mine,” Draco drawled coldly. “Get out.”

As if responding to his mood, the door slammed in Astoria’s face. He could hear her gasp and for a moment Draco hoped fervently that the door had smacked her in the face.

“I want my share for having to put up with you, you bastard,” she screamed through the door before walking away.

He poured himself another Ogden's and with a shaky hand raised it to his lips. "What the fuck am I going to do?" he whispered. The room provided no answer, and with a sigh, Draco scribbled a note. Summoning an owl, he attached the parchment to its leg and told it where to deliver the letter. That done, he grabbed the bottle and settled in to get drunk.

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"Get up, imbecile!"

Draco started. Unfortunately the settee was small enough that when he moved he fell off.

"Ow! Fuck!" he cried, rubbing his head gingerly.

Blinking, Draco finally managed to focus on a figure bent over him. "Astoria, didn't I tell you to get the fuck out?" he groaned.

The cork of the Ogden's bottle smacked him in the forehead and Draco scrambled backwards. "What the fuck?!"

"Your language has certainly deteriorated," a smoky voice said. "I would allow you a chance to gather your wits, Mr. Malfoy, but we simply do not have the time."

Draco sighed. He knew that voice, he'd been hearing it in his dreams for weeks, after all. "Snape? Shit, did I fall asleep again?"

A piece of rolled-up parchment hit him on the head and he groaned. "Stop that!"

"Do you generally endure pain as part of your dreams?" the Snape-voice asked.

Draco shook his head in an attempt to clear it and moaned as his headache blossomed from throbbing to a loud pounding. “Not usually,” he muttered.

“Then you should not be asking idiotic questions.”

Draco had finally convinced his eyes to work, and there, wavering in front of him appeared to be his former Head of House. Draco narrowed his eyes. “This is a strange dream.”

The Snape spectre pinched its nose, the familiar gesture making Draco blink. He tilted his head, closing his eyes as the room spun. “Oh God, I’m going to be sick,” he said.

“Enough, Draco. We do not have time for this. Take that.”

A potion vial appeared in front of him, and Draco reached for it, missing a few times before his hand-eye coordination managed to work enough to pluck it out of the air. He sniffed it cautiously.

The Snape figure crossed his arms and scowled. “Oh for-- That’s from your own cabinet! It’s a commercial Pain Potion.”

Draco squinted. He recognized the label. "Thank you, Merlin," he muttered to himself as he uncorked the vial with clumsy fingers. With a shaky hand, he brought the vial to his lips. After a couple of tries, he finally managed to swallow the contents. Warmth spread though his body and his headache receded.

“Why are you bloody haunting me?” he muttered.

“What an interesting choice of words,” Snape said.

The tone of his voice made Draco look up.

Snape was smiling. Unpleasantly. Draco shuddered.

“I must tell you that you are wasting your life here, Draco.”

Draco leaned his head back against the wall, wincing as he hit it a bit hard. “Wait, I’m not actually dreaming you, am I?” His eyes widened and he grinned. “You’re a ghost! You’ve returned twenty-one years after your death to me to tell me--” he frowned, “--that I’m wasting my life?” Draco peered at Snape’s feet. “You’re not dragging chains, are you?”

Snape rolled his eyes.

“No, then.” Draco pursed his lips, the humour of the situation beginning to occur to him. “Shouldn’t you have, I don’t know, moved on by now or something?”

“Why do ghosts linger in the earthly plane, Draco?” Snape asked, sounding exasperated.

“When they have unfinished business... Oh!” Draco tried to stand but the room was still moving too much for him to accomplish that, so he settled back against the wall and attempted to catch his breath. “I’m your unfinished business?”

“You could say that.” Snape stared closely at him. “I know that your parents chose your wife for you for the sole purpose of having an heir to continue the Malfoy name. Fortunately, that duty is now done, and you are now able to fulfil your own purpose.”

“Purpose?” Draco laughed bitterly. “I don’t have any purpose any more. Now that I’ve had Scorpius...” He frowned. “Did you hear what she said earlier? Were you here? She wants to take him away! She threatened to go to the papers and tell them lies about me unless I find a way to liquidate the Malfoy

assets and give her half..."

"You married a Slytherin, Draco. Were you not prepared for this? What sort of Slytherin are you?"

"There's nothing I can do," Draco said. "Her father had us at a disadvantage because of our family's role in the war, so the marriage contract favours her."

"Thus, your first act must be to get her to violate the contract." Snape tsked. "My, how the mighty have fallen."

"And how do I do that? The only thing that was excluded was Malfoy land. You expect me to set up a tent?"

Snape sneered. "Think, Draco! I imagine there must be some act that she could perform that would negate the contract."

Draco sighed. "Yes. If she commits adultery while on Malfoy soil, the contract is null and she is considered in breach. She's well aware of that, so it has never happened and likely never will. I have my suspicions about what she may have done off Malfoy land, but..." Draco shrugged.

"Unless I am mistaken, you have not exactly been a paragon yourself, Draco. Unless Lars is your imaginary dark-haired, green-eyed friend." When Draco blushed, Snape smirked. "Your parents likely thought you would settle into a standard arranged marriage where both partners do what they please as long as it is discreet."

Draco flushed brighter. Snape wasn't saying anything he hadn't already said to himself. "Well, the various murder attempts on her part have not been so convenient," he blustered. "She tried to poison me once!"

"Then fix it," Snape said implacably. "Have you forgotten everything that I taught you, everything about

being a Slytherin?”

“That’s all well and good, but it’s not as if a potion could fix this.”

Snape smirked. “Conveniently enough, there is one that I have invented since the last time we spoke.”

Draco leaned forward, interested despite himself. “You can brew in the afterlife?”

Snape rolled his eyes. “No, but I can use my brain. There is not much else to do but think ideas into being,” he said cryptically. He eyed Draco critically. “Have you lost your abilities, Draco? You used to be such a promising student...”

“I can still brew.” Draco tossed his head.

Snape smiled. “Indeed? Well, show me.”

Draco sighed and stood. He was a bit wobbly, but managed to make it down to the dungeons without falling, his head clearing a bit more with each step. His cauldrons were where he’d last left them. When had been the last time he’d tried to brew anything, anyway...?

Brewing with Snape commenting acerbically over his shoulder was familiar and comfortable, and as the alcohol completely left Draco’s system, he began to enjoy himself. By the time he was done and had bottled the potion, he felt better than he had in a long time. “What is this?” he asked, eyeing the colourless, odourless fluid warily. “There’s a caveat in the contract about me trying to poison her, you know...”

“It’s not poison. That would be far too obvious. What you need is a potion to make your wife show the public her true colours. And if she happens to violate her marriage contract at the same time, then so be it.”

Draco slowly smiled. “And this will make her do that?”

“Let us say that this should encourage her to follow her impulses.”

Draco yawned, feeling tired. “I don’t know if that will be enough, but thank you, Severus. It’s a start. What do I owe you?”

“At this time you require sleep. And some Pepper-Up when you awaken. As for what else you may be required to do, we shall speak more later.”

A sudden lassitude overcame Draco and he barely managed to call out for one of the house-elves. “Bed,” he gasped at the diminutive creature, and as the room swirled around him, he slipped into a dreamless sleep.

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Draco’s head was killing him when he woke up. “I am never drinking again,” he vowed, as he swiped his hand back and forth across the bedside table in search of the Pepper-Up Potion. He’d never been so grateful for a potion in all his life.

Stretching, Draco sat up and rubbed at his still bleary eyes. Casting a soft Tempus, he frowned at the time. It was well after ten in the morning and he only had an hour to prepare for the meeting he had called with the family barristers. “Fuck,” he muttered again, freezing as Snape’s words from the night before came back to haunt him. “I really do need to clean up my language,” he muttered as he climbed out of bed and padded to the bathroom.

A hot shower and the convenient cup of tea his house-elf had waiting for him as he stepped out went a long way to making him feel more human. As Draco finished getting dressed, inspecting his pristine outfit in the mirror, he smiled.

That had been an odd dream last night, but perhaps his subconscious was trying to tell him something. There had to be some action he could take to protect himself and Scorpius from Astoria's machinations.

With one last swipe of the brush through his now shoulder-length hair, Draco tied it back in a ponytail and straightened his shoulders. While he was at his solicitor's office he would see exactly how iron-clad their marriage contract was.

He ignored his copy of the Prophet that was beside his breakfast dish, opting instead to go straight to the offices of Baddock, Bletchley, Harper and Turpin. If anyone could save the Malfoy estate, it was them.

His walk through Diagon Alley was interesting. People kept staring at him, and when Draco looked back they would duck their head and mutter. No one seemed inclined towards violence, however, so Draco let it pass. There had probably been some Skeeter article in the paper again. He really would have to see if he could issue some sort of injunction against her.

Glancing down at the paper that had arrived by owl that morning, he re read the address printed there. Looking up, he waited as the building, hidden beneath a Fidelius Charm, revealed itself to him. When it was there, he tucked the paper into his robes and walked forward.

"Lord Malfoy," the attendant murmured as he passed through the heavy doors leading into the solicitors' offices.

Draco's shoulders relaxed slightly as he was shown to one of the plush conference rooms.

The offices were located in an exclusive area of Diagon Alley, occupying a space almost next to Gringotts, in fact. Only established clients had access to the address, and they catered exclusively to pureblood families of excellent means.

"Lord Malfoy."

Draco rose to his feet when Lisa Turpin entered the room. Turpin was the first and only non-Slytherin to have made partner in this group, and having seen her at work, Draco wasn't entirely sure if she hadn't been mis-Sorted into Ravenclaw. "Miss Turpin."

Lisa smiled. "It's good to see you, Draco," she said, slipping gracefully into a chair.

"You look well," he replied. "Married life is clearly agreeing with you."

"Indeed it is." She stared at him. "I cannot say the same for you, however."

Draco sighed. "You were always too perceptive for your own good," he grumbled. "Or am I actually broadcasting?"

"Actually..." She was fucking twinkling at him, Draco realised with a start. "I saw it in the Prophet today."

"Perhaps I should have taken the time to peruse it this morning," he said, reaching for the copy she had placed between them.

Lisa simply sat back and waited for him to find the article, although he could hardly have missed it, given the boldly flashing scrolling headline the cover sported. Exclusive! Malfoy Bride Caught in Compromising Position! Rita Skeeter tells all! The picture beneath it featured Astoria, her arse bare to the world, scrambling to cover herself as a man who was clearly her paramour tried to crawl away behind her. Featured prominently in the background was the Malfoy Stables Crest. As Draco watched, she began screaming what were clearly epithets at the camera. Then the picture looped again and he saw them kissing, Astoria's arse moving in an unmistakably rhythmic motion that stopped abruptly when she looked over her shoulder at the camera.

Draco couldn't help it. Shock gave way to mirth and he burst into long, loud laughter.

Lisa pursed her lips, and when he neared the end of his hysteria, she said, “So, the panicked owl we received last night may have been a bit, shall we say, premature?”

Draco flushed. “I may have been drinking when I sent it,” he admitted.

“No, you were not. You were just very upset, Draco,” she said meaningfully. “You were not drinking. In fact, you rarely drink, since that would be a bad influence on your son, whose sole custody you hope to obtain now that his mother has so clearly demonstrated her unfit nature and her desire to break your marriage contract.”

Draco nodded. “Does this nullify the contract?” he asked.

“Most conclusively. The copy we had in our vaults spontaneously appeared on my desk this morning with the words ‘null and void’ across it in bright red. Apparently she forgot the caveat about not fornicating on Malfoy property.” Lisa smiled. “All I want to know is, how did you do it, Draco? The timing is quite, shall we say, convenient?”

Draco held up a hand. “I swear, Lisa, I had nothing to do with it.”

She peered closely at him, and he could feel her deftly rooting through his memories. “Hm, it appears you’re correct,” she finally said, sitting back. “Even better. Well, I wouldn’t worry about it. Her lawyers will try to pin it on you but they will not succeed.”

“Will I have to give her money?”

Lisa rose, gathering her parchment and the newspaper. “Do you want to? It will look better if you offer a small amount early on and have her refuse. That way you can completely cut her off and the public will be on your side when the facts somehow appear in the press.”

Draco nodded. His father's decision to employ this group for all Malfoy legal matters was once again vindicated. "I just..." He paused.

"Yes?"

"Why would she have done that? It's so stupid."

Lisa shrugged. "She always struck me as an impulsive woman. Perhaps she thought she could get away with it. Or perhaps she has a fetish for almost being caught in a compromising position, never thinking it would actually happen. In the end, does it matter? It's exactly what you needed to have happen."

Impulsive? Astoria? Draco wracked his brain trying to remember where he'd just heard that... "...now," Lisa concluded. "We'll be in touch."

"What was that?"

Lisa lifted an eyebrow. "Perhaps you're more upset than you know," she observed. "I said, go home now and we'll contact you soon. The contract is all but voided but for a few formalities that we shall handle."

He nodded.

She narrowed her eyes. "And, Draco? Be sure to be seen today in Diagon Alley and of course, be serious. No laughing, no joking. In fact, no expression at all would be best, that way your reaction can be ascribed to shock. And no clubbing."

Draco rolled his eyes. "Really, Lisa..."

“And do owl your son. I’ve no doubt he’s seen the newspaper.”

Draco blanched. “Oh dear God! I have to contact Scorpius--”

She held up a hand. “As soon as I saw the article I contacted Headmistress McGonagall and she agreed to let you use the Floo in her office to speak with him.”

After Draco had a chance to Floo his son, who seemed surprisingly calm given the news, Draco again thanked Lisa and left the law offices with a lighter heart.

Once he was out on the bustling street, Draco was hard pressed not to smile, however. Now that he knew what the sympathetic looks being directed his way meant, it was difficult not to play it up a bit more. But Lisa was right, he needed to be serious, sombre, almost desolate. Which was likely why he ended up bumping into the last person he’d expected to see that day.

“Oof! Sorry,” a familiar voice said, and Draco, startled, looked up into green eyes.

“Potter?”

“Oh, Malfoy, hullo.”

It was the first time Draco had seen Potter since, well, school. They had both returned to Hogwarts for an eighth year because of the war, but they had studiously avoided each other, Potter sticking to the Weasleyette like a limpet, and Draco fraternising only with the few Slytherins who had returned with him. The announcement of Potter’s impending marriage had come as a surprise to no one. The announcement of his divorce last year, however, had been far less expected.

Draco inclined his head politely. “I suppose it’s too much to expect that you watch where you’re going?” he asked.

Potter smiled. “Ah, you’re still the same, I see.” He took a deep breath. “It’s fortunate that we ran into each other, actually.”

“Quite literally as it happens,” Draco said dryly.

Potter’s flush was very satisfying. “Yeah, well, I wasn’t sure you’d even be out today, given...well you know.”

Embarrassing Potter was a sport he’d never tire of. “No, I don’t know,” Draco said, deadpan.

“Oh. Um, well. I, um, saw the paper today, and I just wanted to say, well, that I was sorry.”

Suddenly tiring of the game, Draco nodded curtly. “Indeed. It was certainly a shock to me. Well, if you’ll excuse me--”

“Malfoy, wait.” Potter was chewing his lower lip, and Draco was suddenly transported back to their school days when he’d be unaware that his instinctive antagonism towards Potter had actually been sexual tension. There was no mistaking it now, though. Draco had the overwhelming urge to chew Potter’s lip for him.

“What is it?” he asked, dragging his eyes away from Potter’s mouth.

“Maybe I can help you,” Potter said, surprisingly. He held out a printed card which Draco automatically accepted, too shocked to refuse; at least that would be his explanation to himself later.

“Help me?”

“I’m a mediwizard. I specialize in mental maladies and traumatic emotional events. What you’re going through definitely qualifies, and I think I can help you work though some of the issues.”

Draco drew himself up to full height, chagrined to see that Potter was somehow taller than he was. When had that happened? “I’ll have you know that I do not require assistance in personal family matters,” he said coldly.

Potter shrugged, seeming to be unperturbed. “Keep the card anyway,” he advised, turning away. “Just in case you change your mind.”

“I never--” But Potter was already gone, having somehow disappeared in the milling crowd. Some instinct, Draco could never have said what, made him tuck the card securely into his robes before returning home.

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The wards refused Astoria entrance to the estate, so Draco spent the evening supervising her sister, who showed up requesting a chance to recover some of Astoria’s things. Daphne’s vicious looks his way had set Draco on edge so he went to bed early, hoping he would not dream.

Two hours later, unable to sleep, Draco sat straight up in bed. “Tippy!” he called.

“Master is needing Tippy?”

“Yes, I require a Sleeping Potion-- Oh, hullo, Snape.” Draco waved to Snape who was leaning against the wall.

Tippy blinked up at him. “Master?”

“Yes?”

“Who is you talking to?”

Draco frowned. “To Professor Snape. Well, I suppose he would be Headmaster Snape, really. He’s the ghost standing over there.” Draco pointed.

Shaking her head, Tippy backed away. “Master is sick? There is no ghost in Malfoy Manor, Master.”

“What are you talking about, Tippy? Don’t be rude. He’s right there--” But Tippy was pulling on her ears in distress.

“She cannot see me, Draco,” Snape said. “In fact, I imagine that no one but you can see me.”

Draco gaped. “Tippy, you may go,” he managed after a moment, still staring at Snape. “W...what are you?” he asked once the house-elf was gone.

Snape was leaning against the wall, arms crossed, a smirk on his face. “It is easiest if you think of me as a ghost, Draco.”

“But you’re not?” Draco swallowed hard, his hand shaking slightly. “So, what do you want?”

“You were not frightened last night,” Snape reminded him.

“I was drunk!” Draco protested. “No one’s frightened when they’re drunk. Plus, I thought you were a ghost.” Then, he narrowed his eyes. “Wait, so if you’re not a ghost you really have been appearing in my dreams?” Draco crossed his arms.

“Indeed. And interesting dreams they’ve been, too.”

Draco flushed. “Those were private.”

“Who can I tell?” Snape asked. “You’re the only one who can see me.”

Draco frowned. “Good point. So what are you, then?”

“At the moment, you may consider me to be the voice of your conscience.”

“I didn’t think I had one of those,” Draco muttered.

“Your wife may not think so after today either,” Snape said, “but I believe that you do.”

Draco’s head snapped up. “My-- Wait, you mean I actually caused what happened? We really did brew a potion last night?”

Snape raised an eyebrow. “You truly do not recall?”

“I... Vaguely. I thought it was just a really involved dream.” Draco blinked, then smiled. “You mean I actually composed a potion that made Astoria do that?” Then, his eyes widened. “Wait, but...how? I mean, I didn’t administer it... And what if people find out?”

“Let us say that she likely...inhaled it,” Snape said. “And ‘composed’ is perhaps a bit strong. You just followed my instructions adequately.” He smirked. “No one will ever realise what happened.” He narrowed his eyes. “And if you require reassurance, it did not make her do anything she did not want to do, Draco; in fact, it did not even make her do anything that she hadn’t done before. It just allowed her

to go about her regular activities in a way that would force her to have to bear the consequences."

Draco waved his hand. "Yes, yes," he said impatiently. "I know she brought it on herself." He sighed. "Yet I am under no illusions. It could easily have been me that Skeeter found in that position."

Snape pursed his lips and nodded. "You have become far more self-aware than I would have anticipated," he finally said. "It appears that my choice was correct."

"Choice?"

Straightening up off the wall, Snape approached the bed. "Yes. I require something of you, Draco. Wouldn't you say that my helping you rid yourself of your unfaithful wife is worthy of some sort of repayment?"

Draco nodded slowly. "I suppose so. What do you want?" he asked. "I can't imagine it's money. Do ghosts even use money?"

A fleeting smile curved Snape's lips. "I had also not anticipated that you would be droll in your old age," he said. "And the baldness definitely surprised me."

Draco's gaze grew icy. "That was a low blow."

Snape held up his hand. "I only mention it because I believe I can rectify your unfortunate hairline, but if you'd rather I not give you the formula that I have worked out--"

Draco sat forward. "You can?" He smiled, ire forgotten. "Many people have tried to make a hair-restoration potion but no one has succeeded. You'd make millions..."

"If you will recall, I have no need for money at the moment. If that ever changes, however, you shall be

the first one I contact."

Draco grinned. "Right. So what do you want me to do?"

"I want you to go back to Hogwarts and become the Potions professor."

Draco shook his head. "This isn't a dream," he declared. "It's a nightmare."

~

After the third night of no sleep because of Snape trying to convince him to apply for the Potions professor position at Hogwarts, Draco was almost ready to do it just so that this 'haunting' would stop. His eyes were drooping so much as he tried to eat his breakfast that his head almost landed in his bowl of porridge when he briefly drifted off.

"Shit!" When lukewarm porridge landed in his lap, Draco swore loudly before spelling the mess away and going back up to his room to change. Rummaging through his wardrobe, he came across the robes he'd been wearing when he'd run into Potter a few days earlier and almost of their own accord, his fingers pulled out Potter's card.

Draco stared at the Floo coordinates printed on the card for a few moments. What would it hurt if he asked for a consultation with Potter? This was his job, and it didn't hurt that Potter was an attractive man. An attractive straight man, unfortunately, but that couldn't stop Draco from looking at him.

Decision made, Draco pocketed the card. He had some errands to run at Gringotts and then he would see if perhaps Potter could get him sorted.

His business at Gringotts was concluded with a minimum of fuss, and when Draco stepped outside, he hesitated before heading for a public Floo. He hated using those but he hadn't wanted to leave from the

bank. The goblins knew too much about their clients as it was.

He found a decent one next to Madam Malkins, and after a swift look around he pulled some of his personal Floo powder out of his pocket and called out the coordinates, stepping into the green flame.

A moment later, Draco stepped into a tastefully furnished foyer. A smiling receptionist greeted him. “Good afternoon, sir. Do you have an appointment?”

He nodded. “Draco Malfoy. I sent an owl this morning.”

She looked down at her parchment for a moment then gestured towards a discreet door behind her. “Yes, he’s expecting you. Do go through.”

“Hello, Malfoy.” Potter was standing beside a large desk. To one side of the room there was a chaise with a chair next to it and on the other side were a cluster of armchairs.

“Come in,” Potter continued a moment later when Draco remained poised at the door. “Would you like some tea?”

“Do you have anything stronger?” Draco muttered, stepping in.

Potter smiled. “I’d not advise that in the first session,” he said.

“But the second?” Draco asked.

“By then we may both need it,” Potter deadpanned.

Draco only just resisted smiling as he took the seat Potter gestured towards. “Perhaps this was a mistake,” he said, even as he sat down.

“Maybe,” Potter replied as he, too, took a seat. “But I think we should actually complete a session before we decide that.”

Despite himself, Draco found he was relaxing in Potter’s presence. Perhaps this could work. “Well, if you insist on being logical about it,” he murmured.

Potter grinned. “They teach us that during our training,” he said, leaning back in his chair. “Never make assumptions before you even know what your client needs.”

“How enlightened of you,” Draco said. “So you’ve discovered that not all Slytherins are evil incarnate?”

“I never thought all Slytherins...” Potter paused, then sighed. “Well, I may have thought that at twelve, but I have grown up since then.”

And very nicely, too, Draco thought, allowing his eyes to wander a bit before refocusing on Potter’s words.

“...possible I think it would be best if we could put aside our former antipathy and work together. From the owl you sent earlier, it sounds as if you’re having a difficult time dealing with your wife’s infidelity.”

Draco shrugged. “I know I said that, but that’s not why I’m really here,” he said.

“Oh?” Potter leaned forward, eyes sharp. “Why are you here, then?”

Draco swallowed. “I’m not sure how to put this, actually. I’ve been having these, um, visions, and I

thought maybe you could help me with them."

"Help you with them how, exactly?" Potter frowned. "And what sort of visions?"

"I keep seeing...someone. He appears late at night usually, and the first time I was somewhat intoxicated, so I ascribed it to that, you know? Anyway, he's appeared since then and it turns out he wants me to do something."

"Who is it?"

"You'll think I'm mad."

"Try me."

"Snape."

"Oh. Well that makes sense I suppose since you were close--"

Draco shook his head. "No, that's not what I mean... Well, yes, it's Snape who appears to me, but that's not why I said his name. I said it because he's here now." He pointed behind Potter.

Potter turned his head to look and after a moment turned back towards Draco. "I don't see anyone," he said carefully. "What is he doing?"

"You can't see him either? I'd hoped--" Draco got to his feet. "Why are you here?" he asked Snape, who was lounging against the wall behind Potter, smirking faintly.

Snape shrugged. “I thought I might overhear something interesting,” he said. “Don’t let me disturb you.”

“You’ve been eavesdropping on me?” Draco asked.

“What is he saying?” Potter said, also getting to his feet.

Draco shook his head. “Nothing, really--”

Snape raised an eyebrow. “I think you should tell him what I want, Draco. He is apparently your counsellor now, and, despite his interesting resemblance to Lars, I suspect he may actually know something about counselling. And who knows? Perhaps he will agree with me.”

Draco blushed furiously. “He looks nothing like Lars,” he muttered.

“Who’s Lars?” Potter asked, looking back and forth between Draco and the space occupied by Snape.

“No one!” Draco snapped. He glared at Snape. “Plus, he won’t agree with you if I tell him that it’s your advice,” Draco continued. “He always disagreed with you.”

Potter moved towards Draco slowly. “Maybe you should lie down, Malfoy,” he said softly. “Relax a bit. You seem agitated.”

Draco narrowed his eyes. “I am not insane,” he said clearly.

“I never said--”

“But you were thinking it!”

“Well, to give him his due,” Snape said from the corner, “you are currently speaking to someone he cannot see or hear.”

Draco shot an irate glance at Snape. “You are not helping.”

Potter was very close now, and at that, he smiled. “Snape isn’t helping? That’s hardly surprising. He never was the most helpful person.”

Snape’s eyes widened then narrowed, and Draco laughed. “At least he knows you,” he directed towards Snape before allowing Harry to lead him over to the couch. “Potter, I’m fine,” he insisted.

“You may feel better if you lie down,” Harry advised.

“Perhaps you should suggest that he lie down with you?” Snape said blandly. “You’d likely feel even better.”

Draco growled and Harry stared at him. “Is he still talking?” he asked.

Draco nodded. “Most definitely.”

“What is he saying?”

Draco bit his lip and hesitated.

“Oh, just tell him,” Snape said irritably. “Tell him that I am encouraging you to return to Hogwarts and actually do something with your life.”

“It’s okay, you can tell me,” Potter urged, resting a distracting hand on Draco’s arm. “I won’t judge.”

Snape snorted disbelievingly and Draco fought back a grin. “He wants me to apply to be the Potions professor at Hogwarts,” Draco finally managed. “He hasn’t said why yet, though.”

“I have my reasons,” Snape said. “If you do not do it, I shall have to find someone else to assist me.” With that, Snape turned and faded from view.

Potter, his hand still on Draco’s arm, had settled next to him on the chaise. “Is that such a bad idea?” he asked. “You loved Potions when we were at school.”

“That was over twenty years ago,” Draco reminded him. “I have not exactly kept up with the field in the meantime. Plus, Hogwarts already has a Potions professor and the Headmistress isn’t exactly my biggest fan.”

An odd look crossed Potter’s face before he began to laugh. Draco tried to sit up, but Potter held him down with an arm. Draco tried not to ponder the power inherent in that gesture. “What’s so amusing?” he asked.

“A couple of days ago, Minerva Flooed me. She mentioned that her current Potions professor, Mr. Philpott, has decided to pursue an opportunity in Tibet, so now she has no one to teach Potions. She was quite distraught at the prospect of having to run the class herself.”

Draco sat up, batting Potter’s hands away when he tried to restrain him. “For God’s sake, I’m fine,” he said irritably. When he was eye level with Potter, he said, “So you think I should apply for the position? Why?”

“I think you want to apply,” Potter said. “Snape may be appearing to you as a manifestation of that subconscious desire, but in the end, I think you’re the one who wants to return. Perhaps out of a desire

to prove yourself. Is there some reason you can't return? What do you do, anyway?"

"I manage the Malfoy holdings," Draco snapped. "I am quite busy, let me assure you!"

Potter held up a hand. "Sorry, I'm not criticising, but I thought that would be done by other people?"

Draco crossed his arms. "I have people who make recommendations about what to invest in, yes, but I have to make the final decisions."

"And this consumes all of your time? It satisfies you?"

"I--" Draco looked away. "Fine! The Malfoy estate practically manages itself," he said tonelessly. "Is that what you wanted to hear? I spend the majority of my days rattling about that house and my nights out clubbing--" Draco clapped his hand over his mouth.

Harry nodded, his expression untroubled. "It sounds to me as if you need to find something worthwhile to do, and these visions of Snape that you're seeing may be your subconscious trying to tell you that."

Draco pursed his lips. He had been restless for a long time, he had to admit. "What about McGonagall?" he asked. "Would she even entertain the idea?"

Potter grinned. "Malfoy, if I said Voldemort himself had been resurrected and wanted to teach Potions, she would probably hire him. She does not want to have to teach that and manage her headmistress duties at the same time."

"I suppose I can brush up on current Potions techniques easily enough," Draco said thoughtfully.

"It wouldn't surprise me if Snape stopped appearing to you once you apply for the position," Potter said. "It may be that you just need to make the attempt. And if she does accept you, we could be at Hogwarts

together."

"What?" Draco sat up straight.

Potter ran a hand through his hair. "Yes, that was the main reason that Minerva Floo called me. Apparently, not only has she lost her Potions professor, but Poppy Pomfrey decided that it was past time to retire. She is planning to move to the south of France and grow lavender."

"WHAT?"

Potter nodded. "I know. All these people deciding to be so spontaneous and follow their impulses at the same time is very strange. Still..."

"Impulses?" Draco narrowed his eyes. Could the potion he and Snape brewed have had anything to do with this? But how would it have got to Hogwarts? "Does Minerva suspect that anyone may have influenced them?" he asked.

"Influenced? I don't see how." Potter stood up. "Anyway, that's why I was a bit conflicted about taking you as a client. I am thinking about accepting the position of mediwizard there, so I wouldn't be available for continued consultation if you needed me. I have partners who can--"

Draco shook his head. "No. If you decide to take the Hogwarts position I'll manage."

Potter spun towards him. "If we're both there then I can still help you sort through your feelings, Malfoy," he said. "I think that these visions may go away by then, however."

Draco allowed himself to hope. "May I contact Headmistress McGonagall using your Floo?" he asked. "Perhaps she would consider my application more seriously with you here."

“Of course.” Potter gestured towards the fireplace. “Go ahead.”

And as Draco spoke with the surprisingly friendly Minerva McGonagall, Potter’s warm arm pressed to his side, Draco thought that perhaps he really had seen the last of Snape.

~

Scorpius took the news that his father was to become his Potions professor with no little enthusiasm. Gratified at the positive reaction, although he imagined it was more related to his son’s anticipation of an easy O in Potions, Draco pulled out of the Floo and rubbed the back of his head.

The past few days had been a whirlwind of activity, what with packing, taking the Potions applications test that McGonagall had sent him (Draco had preened at the fact that he had scored higher on it than any other previous applicant for the post, with the exception of Snape) and making sure that all his estate affairs were in order before his move.

The Prophet had his name splashed all over the cover with speculation about whether he was retreating from the world as a result of his heartbreaking split from his wife. Draco smirked every time he looked at it.

His solicitors had recommended he offer Astoria a settlement and, to his and their surprise, she had taken it. Apparently she had competent counsel, too. His divorce would be final in a few weeks, and from what he could tell, Astoria seemed to be as relieved as he was.

Snape had not reappeared again since that time in Potter’s office, for which Draco was grateful. Although he missed his old mentor, seeing him appear had been disconcerting, to say the least.

~

The day Draco arrived at Hogwarts to take up his post was uncharacteristically warm. He’d chosen to

Apparate to Hogsmeade and then walk to Hogwarts, thinking the exercise would do him good, but soon after setting out, he'd ended up stripping off his robes. Feeling much lighter in his shirt and trousers, Draco walked briskly, caught up in his thoughts as he made his way back to the scene of some of the best and the worst times of his life.

He passed the Shrieking Shack and wondered if any of the current students dared visit the place. No doubt the stories of all that had happened there kept it deserted but for the boldest of students. "It's probably where the Gryffindors have their club meetings," he muttered darkly, picking up his pace to move by faster.

Soon the castle loomed before him and Draco slowed down to admire it. The feeling of homecoming surprised him.

"Oi! Malfoy!"

Draco spun, his wand in his hand, but he lowered it as he saw who was approaching. "Potter," he said dryly. "Don't tell me you're arriving today as well?"

Potter grinned. "Yes, it took me this long to get everything arranged in my office. Poppy leaves tomorrow and I wanted to have at least a day with her so she could fill me in on all she does." He shrugged. "I imagine there will be a lot of cooperation with the Potions professor for brewing medication and the like, don't you?"

Draco allowed Potter to catch up then he turned back towards the castle, Potter in step beside him. "Yes, I suspect there will be the opportunity for some cooperation between us."

"I certainly hope so," Potter said softly.

Draco risked a glance at him. Was Potter blushing? "I have been meaning to thank you for suggesting me to Minerva for this position," he said as they walked.

Potter shrugged. “It wasn’t a problem,” he said. “You’re perfect for the job. I remembered how much you used to enjoy Potions.”

“It was my favourite subject,” Draco admitted. “I considered making it my career when I left school, but my parents would not hear of it. So I married Astoria and the rest is history.”

“Isn’t it interesting how our lives have turned out? At first we bowed to other people’s expectations yet in the end we’re both doing something completely different.”

“That’s certainly true,” Draco muttered. “My social life is about to change, that’s certain.”

Potter smiled. “My ex-mother-in-law used to say that when a door closes a window opens. Maybe you’ll find some unexpected social opportunities here. You never know.”

Draco blinked. What was Potter suggesting? He’d been resigned to accepting that his sex life would likely consist of wanking from now on since Lars had not expressed any interest in coming to visit in the wilds of Scotland, and honestly, Draco did not blame him. “What sort of social opportunities?” he asked.

Potter ducked his head. “Oh, I don’t know,” he said. “We’re both divorced men with school-aged children. I’m sure we’ll find we have a lot in common.”

“Like what?”

“Like perhaps the reason we’re both divorced.” Potter smiled. “I have my theory.”

“What are you say--?”

“Here we are,” Potter interrupted. “And look, there’s Minerva.”

They were greeted by the Headmistress, who was waiting for them at the front door. “Welcome, gentlemen,” she said crisply, shaking first Potter’s hand, then reaching for Draco’s. “I am so very relieved to see you both.”

“Headmistress,” Draco said, meeting her eyes a tad nervously. This was the first time he’d been in her physical presence since leaving Hogwarts so many years ago. He exhaled with relief when she did not hesitate to take his hand.

“It is especially good to see you, Professor Malfoy,” she said. “Thank you for responding to our need for a Potions master.”

“I am excited at the prospect, Headmistress,” he replied, following her inside.

She nodded. “Poppy is in the infirmary, Mr. Potter,” she said. “She indicated that she would wait there for you.”

Potter nodded. “Great. Well, I’ll see you both later, then.”

Draco nodded. “If you don’t mind, Potter, please let her know that I would like an opportunity to talk to her as well before she leaves.”

“No problem,” Potter said. “Headmistress.”

Draco was very careful not to watch Potter walk away. The last thing he needed was McGonagall suspecting he was bent. He didn’t think he could conceal it from her forever, but he didn’t have to flaunt it, either.

As they walked up to her office, Draco tried not to feel like a naughty schoolboy; it was difficult, however, since this place seemed to bring that out in him. By the time he was seated before her desk, Draco felt about twelve again.

“It’s strange coming back, isn’t it?” she asked after setting the teapot to pour them each a cup of tea.

He nodded cautiously.

Minerva smiled. “We may not have parted under the best of circumstances, Mr. Malfoy,” she finally said, “but I think we can get past all that, don’t you? I trust you to keep politics out of the classroom and to provide the best education to the students you can.”

“You may be assured that I shall do my utmost to give them a solid education, Headmistress,” Draco replied. “And I’ll leave the politics to others. That is one thing I learned years ago.”

“Excellent,” she said. “Now, shall we discuss what I covered in the two weeks we were missing a Potions professor so that you can plan your lessons?”

The two hours that followed were simultaneously terrifying and exhilarating for Draco. Minerva was formidable at the best of times, but as she quizzed him about how he intended to proceed with his lessons, Draco found he was being put through his paces. He evidently passed, however, since at the end she was smiling. “Well, you seem to have given this some thought. Shall I show you to your laboratory so you can begin to set it up as you like?”

Draco nodded, exhaling a deep breath. “Oh, I meant to ask. Who is Slytherin Head of House?”

“To be honest, I have been functioning in that capacity since Philpott left.” Minerva slanted a look at him. “I was hesitant to ask you to accept that duty as well, given that you are arriving in the middle of the year.”

Draco raised an eyebrow. The snakes were going to McGonagall for advice? He cleared his throat. “It wouldn’t be a problem,” he said. “I’m a firm believer that only someone who grew up in our House can understand our issues.”

“Very well.” She smiled. “Then that job is yours as well, Professor.”

They arrived at a familiar set of heavy doors. With a start, Draco realised that these had been Snape’s quarters for as long as he could remember. He hesitated before following Minerva in, almost afraid that he would see Snape there, but the place was empty, just basic furniture pieces left behind.

“If you have furniture that you’d like, feel free to request it. The board of governors have agreed to allow me to requisition the full budget in order to get your stores restocked.”

Draco nodded, perusing the stores carefully. “Is there a specific supplier that you use?” he asked, fingers brushing the jars he remembered admiring as a student.

They talked about what he would need for lessons on Monday, and, nodding, Minerva left him.

With a sigh, Draco opened the doors that led to the private area, smiling as he took in the well-worn chairs and sofa, and the bookshelves. Not yet prepared to brave the bedroom, he emptied his pockets, placing his shrunken trunk and several furniture pieces he’d brought with him onto the floor. He enlarged them again and decided to set off to see if he could find Potter. If he was correct, the elves would set things to rights by the time he returned.

The infirmary was as he remembered it, including the antiseptic smell that assailed him as he entered. To the left, he saw Potter and Madam Pomfrey examining the contents of a tall cabinet.

“...and this is where I keep the dittany,” Pomfrey was saying. When she spotted Draco she paused. “Why hello, Mr.-- oh, excuse me, Professor Malfoy.”

“Hello, Malfoy,” Potter echoed.

“Potter. Madam Pomfrey,” he said, taking her hand and bowing low over it. “I thought they said you were retiring, but you hardly look old enough.”

Her eyes warmed and she smiled. “Mr. Potter and I were just going over some things before he takes over, did you need anything?”

Draco shook his head. “No. I can wait until you two are finished.”

Potter shrugged. “Actually, I need to get started setting up some items in the office, if you don’t mind. I can leave you two to your discussion.”

Poppy inclined her head. “Call if you need anything, Mr. Potter. I've been in that office most of my life and I know every nook and cranny.”

“I will, Poppy. And thank you for your time this afternoon.” Potter turned towards Draco and nodded. “Malfoy,” he murmured before turning and heading to his new office. Just before he darted in the door, he turned back and flashed a brilliant smile at Draco.

Draco felt as if he'd been hit with a mild Stinging Hex. Perhaps Potter really wasn’t as straight as Draco had originally thought. He waited a beat before turning back to Madam Pomfrey, still trying to shake the image of Potter from his mind. She was staring at him with a calculating gleam in her eye, nodding as if she knew something. Draco couldn't help the flush that spread across his neck.

“It’s nice to see you two getting along for a change,” she said.

Draco cleared his throat. “Yes, well, we’re both adults now, so...” He paused to collect himself before continuing. “If you don’t mind, I have a question for you.”

“I don’t mind at all,” she said. “Ask away.”

“I was just curious as to the timing of your decision,” Draco said carefully. “It seems awfully sudden and, well, impulsive.”

“Oh, it may look that way, dear,” Madam Pomfrey said. “But it’s been coming for a while now. One night a couple of weeks ago it occurred to me that I needed to retire while I’m still young enough to enjoy it.”

“So you weren’t...influenced?”

She raised an eyebrow. “Who could have influenced me and to what end?” she asked.

Draco nodded. “I have no idea,” he said, smiling in what he hoped was a reassuring way. “I was just curious. So, what potions did the former Potions professor provide for you? I need to have an idea of what needs restocking so that Potter will have adequate supplies.”

As they talked, Draco put his suspicions out of his mind. Potter was probably right. Snape had been some sort of manifestation of his subconscious, and now that he had done what he’d apparently wanted to do for a while, everything would be fine.

~

His fifth-year Ravenclaw/Hufflepuff class was just walking out when Draco spotted Potter at the door. “Potter,” he greeted him, waving his wand to douse the flames underneath his cauldron. “What can I do for you?”

“You heard that the Headmistress had to go to London, I take it?”

Draco inclined his head. “I was at the staff meeting,” he said.

Potter blushed delightfully. “Yes, well, she pulled me aside afterwards to ask if I would make arrangements for the third years to be escorted for their first Hogsmeade weekend.”

Draco made a noncommittal sound. Potter couldn’t possibly be asking what he thought he was. Could he? They had been dancing about each other for several days, occasional, seemingly accidental touches, lingering looks... Draco recognised flirtation when he saw it, even when it was being done by someone as clearly inept as Potter.

“I thought maybe we could get some supper at Rosmerta’s tonight. It would make a change from eating in the Great Hall.” He hesitated and Draco raised an eyebrow.

“Yes?”

“A while back you said something about a man named Lars.” Potter looked determined.

Draco nodded. “He was someone I had a brief fling with.” He shrugged. “I haven’t spoken with him in a long time and have no plans to renew our acquaintance.”

Potter smiled. “Right. Brilliant. How about dinner, then?”

“Possibly. Who will bring the children back?” Draco asked, trying hard to hide his elation.

“Neville has agreed to do it.”

Draco pretended to ponder this. “That seems acceptable,” he finally said, gathering his parchments. “It

will be nice to have a chance to talk out from under the view of several hundred children."

"Good, it's settled then," Potter said. "I'll meet you by the door at eight tomorrow morning."

Nodding in what he hoped was a casual way, Draco watched Potter edge out of the room before allowing a smile to cross his face. He had some papers to grade, but then he could spend his evening planning his seduction of Potter. Life was good.

Pushing his way into his quarters, Draco looked up, gasped, and dropped his parchments. "Snape?"

Snape was standing there, smirking. "Surely you did not think I was finished with you, Draco?" he said silkily. "Getting you to return to Hogwarts as Potions professor was only the first step."

"Fuck me," Draco breathed.

Snape rolled his eyes. "It appears to me that you're hoping for that sort of attention from Potter," he said dryly.

Draco flushed and, in an attempt to gather his parchments and his wits, bent down. "I thought I was rid of you," he muttered.

"You mean you believed that rot about me being a manifestation of your subconscious?" Snape snorted. "Dear me, Draco. You really have lost your edge, haven't you?"

"What do you want?" Draco managed from between clenched teeth. "If it wasn't just for me to return to Hogwarts, then WHAT?"

"Returning to Hogwarts was just the first step. Now I need you to locate something."

Draco raised an eyebrow. “I’m on a treasure hunt?” he asked. “What about all that you said about not needing money?”

Snape sighed. “Who said it was money? Do pay attention.”

“What is it, then?” Draco collapsed into a chair, crossing his arms.

“The beginnings of a formula.” Snape held Draco’s gaze. “A very special formula.”

“It would have to be for you to go to all this trouble. What is it for?” Draco asked, interested despite himself.

Snape hesitated, and Draco narrowed his eyes. “Look, you have to tell me or I won’t...”

“A Reanimation Potion.”

Draco’s mouth fell open. “But those are only legend--”

“I was very close to a breakthrough on it,” Snape sniffed haughtily. “If it had not been for the Dark Lord’s atrocious timing...”

“That’s certainly the truth,” Draco muttered. “But it’s a bit too late for you now, isn’t it? I mean you’re dea--”

Snape’s sardonic stare finally penetrated.

Draco sat up straight. “Wait, why would a ghost be interested in a Reanimation Potion unless...” His eyes widened. “You’re really not dead? Your body is alive but...unconscious somewhere? How did you manage that?”

Snape shook his head. “It took you long enough to realise,” he muttered. With a sigh, he began pacing. “I managed to place my body in stasis and under a Notice-Me-Not Spell just after Potter left. If all had gone according to plan, I would have been discovered when the Aurors came to investigate the scene, but someone evidently had a different idea.”

“You think someone hid your body?”

“No, I think no one ever came,” Snape said. “As far as I can tell, my body is still in the same place, and I am alive, but barely, and apparently a few years ago the Shack was declared unstable, a Repelling Spell placed on it. I suppose they decided that I deserved to remain there unburied.” Snape said the last bitterly.

“But...so... If you’re alive then how are you appearing to me and no one else?”

“It took me years, but I finally mastered the ability to project my astral body to a specific target.”

“Why me?”

Snape sighed. “I tried your father, but--”

Draco nodded. “Azkaban wasn’t kind. He...died only a few years after we thought you did.”

“So I discovered. I tried others but it turns out that there are only a few people who can see astral projections.”

“And I’m one of them.” Draco shook his head. “I thought I was mad!”

“I had to try for several months to actually get it to work,” Snape said. “For a long time I could only manage to introduce myself into your dreams.”

“You mean that was you?” Draco scowled. “I really thought there was something seriously wrong with me!”

Snape waved a hand. “You forget, I’ve seen your dreams.”

“Snape--”

“Relax, Draco. I was joking. No one can hold your dreams against you, least of all me.”

Draco crossed his arms. “My father would have found a way,” he said, looking down towards his feet.

Snape pursed his lips. “I think you might have been surprised,” he murmured. As Draco’s head snapped up, he smiled. “Now, are you going to assist me?”

Draco sighed. “Of course I’m going to help you.” He narrowed his eyes. “Wait, did you find some way to bring some of that potion here to influence Pomfrey and Philpott to leave?”

Snape shrugged. “If I had, the potion would only have encouraged them to follow their dreams. It will not make someone do anything he or she doesn’t want to do.”

“I understand you wanting Philpott gone so I could take his spot, but was Pomfrey just an accident?”

Snape smirked. “Believe what you like, Draco,” he said. “However, I am not in the business of matchmaking.”

Draco rolled his eyes. “Where is the formula?” he asked.

“My notes were secreted in the safest place I know,” Snape said.

Draco blinked. “Wait, not--”

Snape nodded. “You see why I needed you to be a member of the staff?”

“But she’s always in there.”

“She is in London at the moment,” Snape reminded him. “Potter just mentioned it.”

“Where exactly did you hide it?”

“Shall we go now so that I may show you?” Snape asked. “Who knows when she will choose to return?”

The trip up to Minerva’s office was uneventful, although Draco did hold his breath a few times when ghosts floated by them. None of them acknowledged Snape’s presence, however, so Draco relaxed. Apparently astral bodies were invisible to ghosts as well.

After speaking the password clearly to the gargoyle, Draco entered the Headmistress’ office, flanked by Snape.

Several of the portraits blinked down at Draco, but none paid him any particular attention, and no one

appeared to notice Snape at all.

“There is a secret compartment,” Snape said, walking over to a nondescript bit of the wall. He pointed. “Tap out the pattern of the Slytherin House song.”

Draco quirked an eyebrow but did so, drawing back as the wall moved once he completed the last stanza. A small, square compartment was revealed and sitting in it was a square of parchment. Reaching his hand in, Draco grasped the parchment.

“Malfoy? What are you doing?” said a voice from behind him.

Draco spun, still holding the parchment. “Oh, hullo, Potter I’m just, um--”

But Potter wasn’t looking at him; he was staring, slack-jawed, at Snape. “Snape? Oh my God, you mean Draco wasn’t imagining you?”

Snape sighed. “Indeed,” he said. “And now you are aware of my presence.” He narrowed his eyes. “Why is that?”

“Snape? Did he say Snape?” Phineas Nigellus Black was peering down from his portrait.

Draco closed his eyes. Potter could ruin this all with one wrong word.

“Er, no, sorry,” Potter said, surprising Draco. Even Snape seemed taken aback. “I was mistaken, Phineas. Just a joke between Malfoy and me. Malfoy, why don’t you come with me. We need to talk.” Potter sent a firm look Snape’s way before he turned away.

Draco touched the wall and it resumed its former configuration, and with a glance at the suddenly very

interested portraits, he walked out.

Potter was waiting, arms crossed.

“Potter,” Draco began. “We--”

Potter put a finger to his lips. “The walls have ears,” he whispered. “Follow me, both of you.” With that he started out for the infirmary.

Draco hurried after Potter, Snape following closely. They walked by several portraits but no students, fortunately. Draco wasn’t sure that he wanted it getting out that he and Potter were spending time together after hours, at least not until he had a chance to prepare Scorpius for the possibility, although now that he thought about it, that wasn’t a bad idea...

“In here,” Potter said, opening a door and ushering them inside.

Surprisingly, Potter’s quarters were bright, airy, and well decorated. “I need a drink,” Potter muttered, heading for a sideboard. “Want anything?”

“Unfortunately I am not exactly corporeal,” Snape observed dryly.

“I’d love one,” Draco said. “Ogden’s Old if you’ve got it.”

“Of course,” Potter muttered, splashing some fiery liquid into two glasses before carrying one over to Draco and taking a sip of the other.

After a long swallow, Potter looked over at Snape. “So what are you exactly? I assume you’re not a regular ghost since not everyone can see you.”

Snape inclined his head. “How uncharacteristically observant, Potter.”

Potter shook his head and drank some more. “Some things never change,” he muttered. Taking a deep breath, he blurted out, “Before we start, I need to say something. I regret that I wasn’t able to save you that night, Snape. When I saw those memories and realised all that you’d sacrificed so that I could have a way to defeat Voldemort... I...I’m sorry, all right?” He rubbed the back of his neck. “Believe it or not, you’re a large part of the reason I decided to go into medicine in the first place. I always wished that I could have saved you.”

Eyebrow raised, Snape regarded Potter for a long moment. “If that is indeed the case,” he finally said, “then you may not have actually lost your chance to do so.”

Potter’s eyes widened and he looked back and forth between Snape and Draco. “What are you talking about?” he asked. “You’re...alive?!”

“Could you say it a bit louder?” Snape growled. “I believe that there may be some residents of Hogsmeade that are unable to hear you clearly.”

Blinking, Potter knocked back his drink and wandlessly levitated the bottle over to him for a refill. Draco held out his glass for more as well.

“OK,” Potter finally said after another swig. “What were the two of you doing in Minerva’s office?”

Draco glanced at Snape. “We may as well tell him,” he said. “Maybe he can help.”

“Very well. It seems we will hardly be able to keep him in the dark now since you’ve all but told him,” Snape muttered.

After shooting an exasperated look at Snape, Draco sat down next to Potter on the sofa and explained the situation quickly, Snape interrupting frequently to either contradict or elaborate. After about ten minutes Potter was shaking his head, a gobsmacked expression on his face. “I keep wondering if I’m drunk,” he said. “Only I don’t think I’ve had enough Ogden’s.”

“Much as I would love to drink more with you, Potter,” Draco said, eyeing the half-full bottle of alcohol regretfully, “what we really need to do is figure out this formula. Severus, did you say that you were testing this? How far had you got?”

“Severus?”

Draco flushed but held his ground. “We’re about to reanimate you. I think we can call you by your first name, don’t you?”

Severus muttered something but Draco ignored him, pulling out the parchment he’d retrieved from Minerva’s office. “Look at this,” he said, spreading it out on his lap so that Potter could see.

Potter leaned close to examine the parchment, and Draco gave in to impulse and inhaled deeply. Potter’s scent, a complex mixture of soap and bitter herbs, floated by his nose and Draco closed his eyes for a moment.

“This makes sense, actually,” Potter said after a moment. “A Mandrake base with asphodel and crocodile skin is brilliant, although maybe if we add--”

“Apparently you do actually know something about potions,” Severus interrupted, a pensive look on his face. “I had thought to have you simply assist Draco with preparation of ingredients, but perhaps this will be faster if we all collaborate.”

Draco blinked, almost laughing out loud when Potter’s mouth fell open at the implied compliment.

“Well, what are you waiting for?” Severus asked, pointing towards a set of cauldrons. “Start brewing! The faster you make the potion the sooner I can reinhabit my body and get on with my life.”

“We’ll need to test it,” Potter said.

“I volunteer,” Severus deadpanned.

Potter rolled his eyes. “I am not testing an unknown potion on the person who I’m attempting to reanimate,” he said stubbornly. “We have to find a test subject.”

“Who do you suggest?” Severus growled.

“Perhaps a rat, or a mouse--”

“We’ll worry about that later,” Draco interrupted. “By my calculations this will take several hours to make as it is, and if we hope to actually perfect it before Minerva gets back, we need to start now.”

“Very well,” Severus said. “I have had a while to contemplate possible additions and I think if we start with an addition of Graphorn--”

Potter shook his head. “I suppose this means I won’t be drinking any more tonight,” he sighed, setting down his glass. “Fine, let’s get started.”

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They worked through dinner, one of the house-elves responding to Potter’s call for a meal for two in the infirmary. Not the most auspicious first date, Draco realised, but as he watched Potter suck the last of his pudding off his spoon, and felt a corresponding tightening in his trousers to the sensual ideas that gave

him, Draco vowed he would manage something more romantic the next time they ate together.

In the early morning, Draco rubbed his eyes. “Right, I’m going to try the powdered unicorn horn.”

Potter was next to him as he sprinkled the silvery power in, and they both gasped as the solution, formerly a dull red, turned silvery-grey.

“That’s promising,” Potter whispered, his breath tickling Draco’s ear.

“Mm,” Draco replied, lifting the stirring rod out to inspect the liquid. “I think we have a decent prototype.”

Severus was immediately there. “You know,” he said, peering at the liquid. “I believe you are correct.”

“Right, now to find a test subject,” Potter said. “Only I think we all need some sleep.” He flushed and looked at Severus. “Er, do you...?”

“I do not sleep, per se,” Severus said. “I find it is easier for me function at night, however. Shall I locate a suitable test subject?”

“How?”

“As Draco will tell you, I am able to control some limited aspects of the physical world. I am sure I can encourage some small rodents to come to you.”

Potter yawned. “Okay,” he agreed. “Just give me a few minutes to locate the belladonna before you send them in.”

“You’re going to poison a defenceless animal?” Draco asked, eyebrow raised.

Potter smiled. “You think any mouse who’s survived with Mrs. Norris around is defenceless?” he asked. “Plus, I’ll save it. I really think this will work.”

Once Severus was gone, Draco leaned against the table and yawned. Catching Potter’s look, he smiled sheepishly. “Sorry, just tired.”

Potter waved a hand. “It’s two in the morning, Dra--Malfoy,” he said. “I think you can be forgiven for being tired.”

Draco pursed his lips. “You can call me Draco,” he finally said. “We’re...friends, I think.”

“On our way, anyway,” Pott-- Harry agreed. “First names, then?”

Draco nodded. “One thing before Severus returns,” he said.

“Yes?”

“I appreciate you helping him. I know he wasn’t your favourite person--”

Harry shook his head. “I meant what I said earlier about regretting that I couldn’t save him, you know,” he said quietly. “It wasn’t enough, but I hoped that clearing his name and naming my son after him would let his name live on in some small way.”

Draco grinned. “I wondered about that,” he said. “Albus Severus is quite the name to saddle a child

with."

"As opposed to Scorpius?" Harry asked, a smile playing about his lips.

"At least it has style," Draco said loftily.

Harry moved closer. "Perhaps Al will bring his name back into favour," he said. "He's a remarkable boy."

"So is Scorpius." Draco moved closer, too.

"I'm sure he is," Harry whispered, his eyes darting between Draco's eyes and his mouth.

"The rodent hordes are coming," Severus said suddenly from behind them, making both Harry and Draco flinch and move away from each other. "And must I remind you that we are working to animate my body, not other things?"

Harry blushed brightly. "Right, so where's my test rat?" he asked, reaching for a bottle as about ten rats scurried into the room. A loud yowl outside the door told them that Mrs. Norris was not pleased that her quarry had escaped.

With a flourish of his wand, Harry immobilized two of the rats with a Stunning Spell. He Summoned them with a flick and caught them in his hand before carefully caging them. Draco admired Harry's hands as he dosed the rats with belladonna, and wondered what they would feel like if the flourished and flicked and kneaded across his skin.

Harry waved his wand over them, momentarily breaking the spell that had enveloped Draco. "Right, their vital signs are slowing down. I'm putting a standard Stasis Spell on them." After a few moments he looked up. "They're out. I don't know if this approaches your state, Severus, but I think it should be close enough. You were poisoned with venom, after all."

“You don’t say? Now that you mention it, I do recall something about a large snake in those last few moments,” Severus said sarcastically.

Shaking his head and maintaining a steady hand, Harry administered a drop of the new potion to one rat, prying its mouth open. “I wouldn’t be such a git if I were you,” he said conversationally. “I do hold your life in my hands at the moment.”

“If I truly believed that, I would give up right now,” Severus muttered.

“Is it working?” Draco interrupted. “Based on the formula I should think it would work fairly quickly.”

“Nothing yet. Something should be happening soon, though. Maybe we need a larger dose? I was pretty conservative.”

“This is assuming that you made it correctly,” Severus sniped. “Why I thought I could trust the two of you to do this is beyond my--”

Draco gasped and leaned closer to the rat. “Wait! It’s awake,” he breathed, pointing at its twitching tail. A moment later a leg moved, and soon the rat was bouncing excitedly around its cage. The other rat appeared dead to the world.

Harry moved closer to Draco, his hand brushing by Draco’s briefly as he waved his wand to check the rat. “It seems to be fine,” he pronounced, smiling up at Draco.

Draco stared back, captivated by the look in Harry’s eyes...

“I would appreciate it if we could all keep our attention on the topic at hand, which, as I recall, was reuniting me with my body, which is no doubt deteriorating as you two stand here making cow eyes at

each other," Severus said dryly.

"What?" Harry blinked and looked at Severus, mouth falling open. "Cow eyes? I don't think--"

"That's quite clear," Severus snapped. "You're the purported mediwizard, Potter! Come up with the appropriate dose, find my body, and administer the cure!"

"Shouldn't you know where your body is?" Harry asked. "All I know is that it was never found. I did my best to clear your name, by the way, so you would be given a hero's memorial."

"So I understand." A dull flush suffused Severus' cheeks. "Your efforts were...appreciated."

"But you'd be even more appreciative if we got on with it?" Harry grinned. "Well, I know a few ways we can get to the Shack."

"There is a Repelling Spell on it," Severus said.

Harry nodded. "Yeah, I know. Hermione and I worked out a counter-spell." At the stares from Draco and Severus, he shrugged. "What? We thought we might need to go back in some day, and since when have we ever listened to the Ministry about that sort of thing?"

"Reckless, ridiculous, brash..." But Severus was smirking as he mumbled.

Decanting the potion into several of small bottles, Harry pocketed them and grabbed several blankets, which he shrunk and put in his pockets. "Let's do this," he said. "While everyone is still asleep would be best," he added wryly.

"How are we going to prevent people from seeing us?" Draco whispered as they left the infirmary.

“I thought of that.” Harry held up a cloak made of shimmery fabric. “With this. And no one can see Snape, anyway.”

“You still use that thing?” Draco asked, shaking his head. “Incredible. How’s it going to cover both of us?”

“We’ll manage. I guess we’ll just have to get close,” Harry said, blushing at Severus’ snort.

Walking behind Harry beneath the Cloak was as pleasurable as it was painful. Draco had to stand very close to Harry to fit beneath the fabric, close enough to feel the heat from Harry’s body, close enough for Draco to again smell Harry’s unique scent. Predictably, Draco’s body reacted, and since he couldn’t exactly get any further from Harry and still remain under the Cloak, Draco gritted his teeth and thought of Filch dancing on a table wearing nothing but a corset.

It worked to some extent. By the time Harry led them through several hallways and down a few corridors that Draco could not honestly ever remember having seen as a student, Draco thought he would be able to keep his hands off Harry. At least until they revived Severus. After that, all bets were off.

They walked through a filthy passage, emerging in a dilapidated shack that looked vaguely familiar.

Slipping out from under the Cloak, Draco looked at Severus. “This looks familiar,” he said.

Severus nodded. “It should. I believe I have showed you this place before.”

Draco nodded slowly. “In dreams,” he said. “I vaguely recall...”

“Yes. It was when I was trying to find a way to communicate with you, before I mastered the art of astral projection. I was attempting to show you where I was, but as you had no idea that I had survived, you did not understand.”

“So where is your body?” Harry asked, looking around. “This place isn’t that big as I recall, and I don’t, well, see you.” A regretful look crossed his face as he stared at a dark patch on the filthy floors and before he knew what he was doing, Draco pressed a comforting hand to Harry’s shoulder. Harry’s grateful smile in his direction made a warm feeling spread through Draco.

Severus sighed. “Oh for... If I could have your attention for a moment?” he said sarcastically, smirking as Draco flushed. He pointed. “My body should be there. Someone will need to reverse the Concealment Spell, however.”

Nervously, Draco pointed his wand, not sure he wanted to see Severus’ body after twenty-one years in this place, Stasis Spell or not. “Finite Incantatem,” he said. When nothing happened he gripped his wand more tightly and raised his hand to try again.

“Maybe if we do it together?” Harry suggested. Clasping Draco’s wand hand in his, he cast along with Draco.

Under their combined magic Severus’ body appeared and Draco sighed, sagging with relief. It took a moment for Harry to release his hand, and Draco didn’t protest.

Severus looked asleep, and despite the large area gouged from his neck, none the worse for wear. His clothes had not fared as well, however; areas had rotted away, and a lot of Severus’ thin, almost emaciated body could be seen.

Harry immediately rushed over and knelt on the floor next to Severus. Waving his wand, he did a series of medical scans before he smiled and sat back. “Actually, he’s physically not too bad.”

“Indeed?” Severus’ astral form was still looking at them from across the room. “Well, what are you waiting for? Administer the potion.”

Harry pulled one of the vials out of his robes, opened it and glanced over at Severus. “Get ready to rejoin

us," he said.

Severus sneered. "Do get on with it, Potter. While I'm still young."

Draco sniggered, then kneeled next to Harry. "Can I help?" he asked quietly.

"Hold his mouth open," Harry instructed, uncapping the Reanimation Potion vial and pouring about five drops into Severus' open mouth. Both he and Draco massaged Severus' throat to assist its ingestion.

"That should've worked," Harry said after a long moment.

"Then why is my consciousness not back in my body?" Severus' astral form was staring at them, his arms crossed, a fierce frown on his face. "I shouldn't be able to talk to you if--"

"Severus?" Draco blinked at the blank space that existed where Severus had just been standing. He looked back down at Severus' body which was quite still. "Should we try more of the potion?" he ventured.

Harry bit his lip. "Let's give it another minute or so," he said. "There was a bit of a delay before the rat returned and Severus is quite a bit bigger--"

Draco's eyes widened. "Fuck me, he certainly is," he interrupted faintly, pointing to Severus' groin. "He's huge, and he's hard."

"He's what?" Harry gaped when confronted by Severus' erection. "Bloody hell."

"I didn't think he'd have enough blood to do that," Draco murmured.

Harry didn't have time to react to that, however, as just then, a shudder wracked Severus' body and blood began gushing from the wound in his neck.

"Oh no you don't," Harry muttered fiercely, reaching into his robes and pulling out some gauze and several other vials. In seconds he had stemmed the flow of blood and forced a bezoar into Severus' mouth, all the while casting healing spells.

The skin of Severus' neck began to knit closed before Draco's eyes, and when, a moment later, he sat up struggling for breath, Draco helped him. "Severus?"

"A...moment," Severus gasped, his voice faint and hoarse from disuse. Harry handed him a bottle, which he tipped back and drank.

To Draco's shock, Severus pushed away from them, and stood up without assistance. He seemed unabashed by his nakedness and by his erection. When Harry tried to get close enough to throw a blanket over him, he shook his head. "I'm fine. You were...remarkably competent, Potter. It was more than I expected."

Harry shrugged. "Actually I've had a lot of time to consider what I would have done differently that night had I but known. I've gone over it so many times that I had it all worked out." He blushed and maintained eye contact. "But I need to check you over, so if you'll just sit down..."

"Nonsense. I feel fine, better than I did before my unfortunate run-in with the Dark Lord's pet." Severus smirked. "And I have things to do, people to see."

"But you're na--"

But he was speaking to empty air. Snape had disappeared, and Harry turned to Draco. "When do you think it'll occur to him that he's naked?" he asked.

Draco shrugged. “Whenever he gets where he’s going, I imagine.” He smirked. “It will be a surprise to anyone who may be there, though.”

Harry shook his head. “Who knew he was hung like that?” he said.

Quirking an eyebrow, Draco decided it was time to show his hand. “Mm, we all knew,” he said. “How do you think I first knew I was gay? With him as my head of House, there was no doubt.”

Harry regarded Draco steadily. “It was Ginny who first suspected I was gay,” he finally said. “The day we agreed to the divorce she told me to find someone and be happy.”

“And have you?”

Harry smiled. “I’m working on it.”

“I see.”

“So, do you think that the Reanimation Potion had something to do with how very...alive Snape was when he regained consciousness?” Harry’s tone was speculative.

“That didn’t occur to me, actually.” Draco eyed the vial Harry was still holding, which was now half full. “Your theory has merit, however. How do we research the other effects of this new potion?”

“I volunteer,” Harry said quietly as he stared at Draco.

Draco smiled. “Good,” he whispered. “So do I.”

Despite the fact that their first kiss was at the centre of the shabby Shrieking Shack, it was also all that Draco could have asked for. Lips tingling, Draco pulled back from Harry and his amazing mouth and wordlessly dragged him back to Hogwarts.

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The owl tapping at the window made Draco stretch his pleasantly sated body and look up. “It’s back,” he said, licking his lips at the pleasant view he was presented with when Harry slid out of bed and walked to the window to let it in.

Harry stood there and read the letter, smiling faintly before he handed the owl a treat and sent it away without a reply. “That was from Neville, who says the Hogsmeade trip went well,” he said, padding back over to the bed. “Our children were apparently very well behaved.”

“Thank God.” Draco looked Harry up and down, eyes lingering on his half-hard prick. “It looks as if the effects of the potion finally wore off, which is also a good thing. I thought we were going to have to summon a mediwizard to get it to go down.”

Harry raised a brow. “You have a mediwizard,” he reminded Draco. “And I think I did a bloody fine job of getting it down. And then up again.”

“Not without help.”

Harry crawled on top of Draco. “That’s true,” he whispered. “You were very helpful with the experiments. There’s just one thing left, though.”

“Oh?”

Harry nodded gravely. “Yes. Now you need to take it to be sure that our observations are correct. We may need longer than forty-eight hours to be sure of the effects.”

“The things I do for science,” Draco murmured, reaching for Harry.

“Yes, you’re very self-sacrificing,” Harry said dryly. “Oh, and I almost forgot!”

“What?”

“Apparently the rumour is that a dark-haired, half-naked man showed up in the Three Broomsticks a couple of nights ago and dragged Rosmerta out from behind the bar and up to a room. She seemed quite pleased about it, though, and there is even talk about a wedding.”

Draco blinked. “Well fuck me,” he breathed.

Harry grinned wickedly. “That was the plan,” he murmured, and Draco thought about Severus no more.

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